

Indonesian Discourse on Democracy: The process to Guided Democracy

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In 1959, the first president of the Republic Indonesia, Soekarno' abolished European-style parliamentary democracy, and introduced a regime he named Guided Democracy (*Demokrasi Terpimpin*). This paper explores the process whereby Guided Democracy was established in 1950s, in terms of political discourse around "democracy". In the discussion, the words "democracy" (*demokrasi*), "revolution" (*revolusi*) and "people" (*rakyat*) are also focused on as key terms. Along with Soekarno's language, the language of the Communist Party of Indonesia and partly the language of Mohammad Hatta, the first vicepresident, are taken as examples for comparison.

During the first half of 1950s, the discourse that democracy is base on multi-party system and general electoin, as well defined in Hatta's language, was dominant. Although Soekarno had insisted on a single state party before the independence and refused an European-style democracy, he realized the expectation of nation that the coming general election in 1955 would resolve all the difficulties the new nation faced at that time, and didn't dare to promote his hidden idea. Once he found disappointment to the result of the general election prevail, however, he began to promote his idea on "democracy" to form alternative discourse. He defined "democracy" as a tool to accomplish the Indonesian Revolution that was not yet completed. Soekarno's 'Revolution' itself had no concrete meaning, while he stress the spirits and souls of Revolution. Under the Guided Democracy, no general election was held. But Soekarno could know the will and aspiration of people because he was the spokesman of them. The

people in the real world disappeared and an abstract concept of people in Soekarno's language.

Once Soekarno's language became dominant in the political discourse, other political forces were forced to obey or be involved in it. The Communist party, which had formulated the revolution in its own right, could not be an exception. It emphasized the parliament elected by the people and the democratic rights in order to maintain its position in politics, but it had no effect. In 1959, the Guided Democracy was inaugurated under the alliance between Soekarno and the army, reinstalling 1945 Constitution and dissolving the Constituent Assembly elected by people. In the next year the parliament was also dissolved, and two parties were dissolved. In such situation, the Communist Party had to depend politically on Soekarno, and its language got to be filled with Soekarno's.