

Democracy, Civil Society, and Nonviolence

After decades of dictatorship under Suharto the democratic development in Indonesia is moving in a good direction. The state system is improving and a civil society is growing in size as well as importance. Any state pretending to be democratic is completely dependent on the existence of a strong civil society as a watchdog, corrective, and complement to the state.

The state power, like all other forms of power, will always be a possible source of corruption and other forms of misuse. The role of the many civil society actors is always follow what is going on; tell when things needs to be told, react when reactions are needed, and protest when times calls for protests. For a civil society to be strong, effective, and able to act wisely there is a need for high quality knowledge about how to act. Good intentions are ?ne, but far from suf?cient. Skills in how to organise effective actions, good campaigns, strong movements are essential.

The translation of the present handbook is an important step and can be a starting point for a new phase in the Indonesian civil society. Not only Muslim countries all over the world would bene?t from a huge and critical voice from a Indonesian civil society able to mobilise people, train them in effective nonviolent actions, organising campaigns, and disseminate the nonviolent solutions to pressing con?icts. Nonviolence is an integrated and necessary part of all democracies. To train and educate people, groups, and nations are crucial for a peaceful development. I know that WMC Indonesia is an excellent organisation for taking on such an important task. Their history and present work speaks for itself.

I am sure this book will not be collecting dust in the bookshelves but be used as the tool it is meant to be. And soon I hope to see new version with revised and expanded chapters based on practice and experiences from the Indonesian reality. Then we need to translate the updated Indonesian version to other languages. This is how the "globalisation from below" is functioning when it is at its best; Empowering people ?ghting for rights, equality, and justices all over the world. Sharing our experiences and inspiring each other. The present book has contributions from several countries and cultures already but will of course bene?t from the wisdom among the proud and experienced peoples of Indonesia. I wish all the readers and practitioners the very best luck with this book. And brothers and sisters all over the world are already waiting to hear from the actions following trainings and seminars based on this handbook.

J?rgen Johansen Peace and Con?ict worker

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