

Reader comments on “The struggle for democracy in Indonesia”

5 June 1998

Dear Editor,

Your article about the struggle for democracy in Indonesia is great. The six steps you put forward are, I think, what we Indonesians should give priority to. However, when you write that it is only the working class (labour) who should have the ability to lead the masses of oppressed on the road to genuine democracy, I should say that you have missed the point. The working class is only a small part of the prodemocracy movement in Indonesia. Students, Muslim intellectuals, and NGOs are also playing a great role on the Indonesian scene. We have our own characteristics in the discourse of democracy. Islam in Indonesia has a particular important contribution in the struggle for democracy movement. A recent study by a Swedish scholar, Anders Uhlin, has shown that (in his dissertation Indonesia and the “Third Wave of Democratisation”). It is not true to say that Amien Rais with his Muhammadiyah would not be the possible force to carry out the task, let alone to say that this organisation is presently supporting racism.

YL

29 May 1998



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