

**Challenging authoritarianism in Tegal municipality on Java's north coast during the era of  
*reformasi* 1998-2004<sup>1</sup>**

Anton Lucas

The Flinders Asia Centre  
School of Political and International Studies  
Flinders University

The last five years has seen remarkable political change at the district and municipal (kabupaten/kotamadya) level in Indonesia. For the first time in nearly fifty years free elections were held in June 1999, and again in April 2004, for more than 250 local district and municipal assemblies (DPRD- Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat). These DPRD (Dewan) have been a focus for the implementation of regional autonomy and decentralisation at the district and municipal level. As freely elected assemblies, local DPRD have become a focus for NGOs to address a range of social issues. Until the 1999 national election, the military (ABRI) and Golkar dominated the local district and municipal DPRDs, and rubber-stamped executive decisions.

Since June 1999 in Tegal municipality, party representation in the Dewan has changed dramatically (with Golkar losing control for the first time in 30 years). As a result the DPRD is now a much more vocal financial watchdog and critic of the executive. It is also the elected body empowered by Law 21/1999 to implement regional autonomy and decentralisation. As an elected assembly, the Dewan has also become a focus for community protest about a wide range of social

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and political issues (such as local taxes, competition in the fishing industry, the town's poor water supply, and environmental issues). This paper argues that, since the June 1999 national elections, the local assembly has successfully begun to challenge the authoritarianism of the Suharto regime, and will continue to do so.

In a recent edited collection of essays on political change in Southeast Asia, Heryanto and Mandal identify important social formations that have challenged authoritarianism in Malaysia and Indonesia since 1998, when 'reformasi' began. These include women, public intellectuals, art workers, industrial workers, and environmental and Islamic activists. Heryanto and Mandal and their contributors argue that the key to understanding democracy and authoritarianism is to look at power and social relationships outside as well as within the state<sup>2</sup>. In analysing what the post-authoritarian state might become, the contributors focus on the 'contradictory features of non-statist agencies, structures, practices and histories'<sup>3</sup>. The essays include studies on development and good governance, Islamic NGOs, women's movements and the role of culture activists in social change.

This preliminary study looks at similar processes, which have created new democratic spaces in Tegal municipality, on Java's north coast, since 1999, including both state and non-state agencies. In searching for the beginnings of anti-authoritarian spaces since 1998, this paper will look at a number of issues. Most important are the changes in political representation in the local assembly brought about by the national elections in 1999 and 2004. These new actors are part of the state (members of the elected assembly), and their role in challenging authoritarianism is crucial. The paper then discusses important issues around which debate takes place in the context of better local governance, namely local taxes, and the mayor's accountability speech. Following Heryanto and Mandal, the roles of non-state actors, namely Tegal's harbour workers, the local press and the creative arts activists in establishing new democratic spaces in Tegal municipality will also be analysed<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Ariel Heryanto and Sumit K Mandal 'Challenges to authoritarianism in Indonesian and Malaysia' in Heryanto and Mandal (eds.) *Challenging Authoritarianism in Southeast Asia: Comparing Indonesian and Malaysia* (London, RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), pp.1-2, 14.

<sup>3</sup> The essential questions for Heryanto and Mandal's study on authoritarianism are 'the constitution and history of ... non-statist agencies, the dynamics of their assets and liabilities and their structural relationships outside their immediate circles'. Authoritarianism is seen as a set of diffuse relationships where power is never totally concentrated on a single person or group and is without legal or moral accountability to the public. See Heryanto and Mandal, 'Challenges to authoritarianism', p.14.

<sup>4</sup> This paper also acknowledges the research on grass roots impacts of regional autonomy and decentralisation presented at the annual Percik-Ford Foundation conferences from 2000-2004, which have informed my recent research in Tegal in many ways. This research is presented in the four volumes of conference proceedings: Nico L Kana, Pradjarta Ds., and Kutut Suwando, et.al., *Dinamika Politik Lokal di*

The story of the removal of Tegal's corrupt New Order Mayor in 1998 was a dramatic event linking *reformasi* to Tegal's revolutionary past<sup>5</sup>. Protests, which began on 20 May 1998 (the day before Suharto's downfall), culminated between 9-11 June in mass protests throughout the city. These began after Apito Lahire, a leading cultural activist, read a poem about the Mayor to an angry crowd in front of his office<sup>6</sup>. In subsequent protests hundreds of shops, several banks and at least one car dealer showroom was looted and burned. . This protest focussed on HM Zakir, the corrupt mayor of Tegal who was trying to hold on to power as long as he could against a campaign by a coalition of students (from the local Panca Sila University), NGOs and Tegal's creative arts activists<sup>7</sup>. In March 1999, the Golkar dominated municipal DPRD then chose Adi Winarso, a former ABRI (navy) officer, as the new Mayor, a choice which conformed to New Order more than *reformasi* politics<sup>8</sup>.

More democratic elections, decentralisation, a DPRD with more power to question the executive, NGOs with more space to question policies, as well as a vibrant community of cultural activists, have contributed to pushing back authoritarianism in Tegal municipality. With the numbers of parties has gone from three (during six elections of the New Order) to 46 in 1999 and now 24 in 2004, the DPRD is a very different body to what it was under the New Order. Although it is no longer a rubber-stamp for executive government, it is not yet representative, in the sense that individual members 'represent' their electoral districts. With the introduction of a semi-district system of voting, names of candidates of many of the 24 parties who contested the 2004 election appeared on the ballot papers for the first time.

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*Indonesia: Perubahan, Tantangan dan Harapan, Rekaman Proses Seminar*, Percik and Ford Foundation, 2001; Nico L. Kana, Pradjarta Ds, Ketut Suwondo, *Politik Pemberdayaan: Dinamika Politik Lokal di Indonesia, Rekaman Proses Seminar Kedua*, Salatiga, Percik and Ford Foundation, 2002; Nico L. Kana, I Made Samiana, Pradjarta Ds. et. al., *Pluralitas Dalam Perspektif Lokal: Dinamika Politik Lokal di Indonesia, Rekaman Proses Seminar Ketiga*, Salatiga, Percik, Ford Foundation and Oxfam, 2003; Ketut Suwondo, Nico L. Kana dan Pradjarta Ds., *Partisipasi dan Demokrasi: Dinamika Politik Lokal di Indonesia, Rekaman Proses Seminar Keempat*, Salatiga, Percik, Ford Foundation, Oxfam, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> See Anton Lucas, 'Reformasi Lokal di Jawa Pasisir: Kasus Jatuhnya Seorang Walikota di Tegal', in Jim Schiller (ed.) *Jalan Terjal Reformasi Lokal: Dinamika Politik di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta, Program Pascasarjana Politik Lokal dan Otonomi Daerah, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2003), pp.161-197.

<sup>6</sup> This poem (see appendix) and its author is discussed later in this paper.

<sup>7</sup> In an open air shadow play, Tegal's famous puppeteer Ki Entus Soesmono symbolically disposed of the mayor at the end of a performance adapted for *reformasi* from the wayang repertoire. See Anton Lucas 'The Mayor who fell down the well', *Inside Indonesia*, no 59, July-September 1999, pp. 12-13.

<sup>8</sup> HM Zakir was dismissed before his term of office ended. According to Home Affairs Ministry regulations, a new Mayor had to be chosen within 6 months. The Golkar dominated DPRD (elected in the last New Order election of 1997) was still in power in March 1999, by which time a new Mayor had to be chosen to replace HM Zakir. The outcome would have been different if the post-June 1999 *reformasi* elected DPRD (dominated by PDI-P) had chosen a new Mayor.

**Towards post-authoritarian politics in Tegal municipality: the elections of 1999 and 2004**

Some election data for Tegal municipality is shown in Tables 1-2, while Table 3 shows the radically changed DPRD after the elections of 1999 and 2004.

**Table 1:**  
**Elections results in Tegal municipality 1999 and 2004 (major parties)**

	PDI-P		PKB		Golkar		PAN		PBB		PK/PKS		PD		P3		Total votes cast
	Total votes	%	Total votes	%	Total Votes	%	Total vote	%	Total votes	%	Total votes	%	Total votes	%	Total votes	%	
<b>1999</b>	56,224	<b>44.4</b>	21,597	<b>17</b>	16,226	<b>12.8</b>	15,903	<b>12.6</b>	1,790	<b>1.4</b>	1,523	<b>1.2</b>	0	<b>0</b>	5,861	<b>4.6</b>	<b>125,581</b>
<b>2004</b>	33,215	<b>25.7</b>	20,256	<b>15.7</b>	21,873	<b>16.9</b>	11,993	<b>9.3</b>	2,740	<b>2.1</b>	9,727	<b>7.5</b>	12,627	<b>9.8</b>	6,006	<b>4.7</b>	<b>128,889</b>
<b>Percentage change</b>		<b>-18.7</b>		<b>-1.3</b>		<b>+4.1</b>		<b>-3.3</b>		<b>+0.7</b>		<b>+6.3</b>		<b>+12.6</b>		<b>+0.1</b>	

Sources: Lance Castles, personal communication, July 1999

KPU ( Komisi Pemilihan Umum) website at <http://tnp.kpu.go.id/Tabulasi/DPRDII>

**Table 2:**  
**2004 Elections Results in Tegal (municipality and kabupaten), Provincial and National Assemblies**  
**(Percentage of vote of 8 major parties)**

	PDI-P	PKB	Golkar	PAN	PBB	PK/PKS	PD	P3
Tegal municipality	25.7	15.7	16.9	9.3	2.1	7.5	9.8	4.7
Tegal kabupaten	27.2	27.9	11.2	7.2	0.7	6.0	4.5	7.7
Central Java	29.8	14.8	16.2	7.4	1.2	4.8	6.3	9.1
DPR RI	19.4	11.7	21.1	6.4	2.5	7.1	7.5	8.3

Source: KPU website at <http://tnp.kpu.go.id>

**Table 3: Composition of the Tegal DPRD, 1997, 1999, and 2004**

<b>Party</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2004</b>
F-PDIP (FPDI)	1	12	8
FKP (Golkar)	11	4	6
F-PKB		5	5
F-PAN		4	4
F-PBB		1	0
F-PPP (FPP)	5	1	1
F-TNI/POLRI	5	3	0
PKS		0	2
PD		0	3
PPIB		0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>24*</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>

\* *Fraksi* affiliations of two 1997 Dewan members unknown

Source: Data from interviews in Tegal, May 1999 and July 2003

While PDI-P lost 4 seats in the Dewan and the Moon and Star Party (PBB – Partai Bulan Bintang) lost its only seat (the military lost their 3 allocated seats), only two of these 8 seats went to Golkar (whose vote increased by 4 per cent). The rest of the seats went to minor parties, 3 seats to Partai Demokrasi (PD), 2 seats to the Justice and Welfare Party (PKS-Partai Keadilan Sosial), and one seat to the New Indonesian Union Party (PPIB- Partai Perhimpunan Indonesia Baru).

Table 2 shows that one of the two new parties, PD polled stronger in urban Tegal municipality, than in the rural areas of the kabupaten. There are several explanations for this. One is that information on PD was more quickly available to voters through the urban print media. President Megawati's action in removing PD leader Soesilo Bambang Yudoyono from her cabinet was talked about in Tegal, but in rural areas the election talk was about the former political figures such as Abdurachman Wahid. A more likely reasons is that patrons still

influenced client voting patterns in rural areas, while the poor people felt safer voting for who they liked in the city<sup>9</sup>.

The rise of the PKS in Tegal, as in other regions is partly explained by the fact that its leaders were well known through a door- to door campaign to explain its anti- corruption policy. Local leaders organized Qur'an chanting groups, and had a reputation for helping victims of local natural disasters (fires and floods). PKS also enforced a rule that a person who nominated for the DPRD had to resign from executive positions in the party or other organisations<sup>10</sup>. Local party members of smaller parties in Tegal are concerned about a new law (Undang-Undang Susunan dan Dudukan 23/2003), which gives party branches the right of recall of DPRD members once again. This was a New Order regulation which, while used to enforce much needed party discipline, gave the party executive power to squash dissent or different opinions of Dewan members. These 'dissidents' were recalled from the assembly if they criticised the party policy and replaced by more compliant people<sup>11</sup>.

It is likely that the new party PKS will form a grouping (*fraksi*) of 7 seats consisting of PD, PPIB and P3 in the new DPRD. With the same number of seats as Golkar, they will be able to capture one of the three deputy chairs of the Dewan. PAN, with only 4 seats, will no longer have formal *fraksi* status in the new Dewan of 27 members, and will be left out in the cold. With this new PKS-PD *fraksi*, the future for another five years of DPRD activism is assured.

### **Engaging the Dewan in post-authoritarian politics since 1999.**

A quick survey of the monthly volumes of newspaper clippings 'Tegal in the news' ('Kotamayda Tegal dalam berita pers')- produced by Tegal's municipal community relations

<sup>9</sup> In the countryside poor people felt they were still obliged to vote according to the wishes of powerful patrons, eg. If a Golkar leader said 'Ayo ikut nyoblos' ('Follow me and vote for Golkar') then the person felt obliged to do so (Pers. com. with Prasodjo Soemarno, 10 May 2002)

<sup>10</sup> In practice this meant that a sitting Dewan member could not be an executive member of the local branch of the party. The importance of this rule cannot be overestimated. The Tegal branch of PAN got itself into a self-destroying internal conflict which split the party (the party chairman Hadisucipto is now head of *Fraksi* PAN in the Dewan). It cost Rp. 50 million to be a PAN candidate in the election, Rp.10 million for the 'Amien Rais for President campaign', 10 million for the Tegal PAN branch, and the rest for their own campaign funds, including making T Shirts to give out at rallies.

<sup>11</sup> PPIB, the minority Muslim party of prominent national economist Syahrir, won a seat in Margadana election district. Agil, the local candidate was known there as a practitioner of 'Islam aseli' (pure Islam), with a strong mystical (kebatinan) orientation. According to one informant 'He does not respect man made objects' ('Dia tidak mau menghormati barang yang dibuat oleh manusia') such as the Indonesian flag, krises, or statues (pers. com. with Prasodjo Soemarno, 10 May 2004).

(Humas – Hubungan Masyarakat) office for 2000-2001 for local government purposes - show the kinds of issues the DPRD was dealing with in the early *reformasi* period.

As well exerting financial control - being a watchdog on money issues (reviewing budgets and identifying budget ‘holes’), Assembly members, lead by the PAN *fraksi*, are reportedly rejecting bribes from the executive (the head of the Social and Political Affairs office) to pass the Mayor’s accountability speech; rejecting gifts (cars and motorbikes), passing controversial new local taxes on a range of services; dealing with water disputes, and the mismanagement by the local water company (PDAM); dealing with fishermen’s protests on the price of fuel and harassment from fishermen from other regions and dealing with the illegal Kalimantan timber smuggling trade. But it is the revenue raising levies, which cause the most controversy, because it imposes new burdens on the economically weak members of the community, such as market traders.

### **The problem of local levies (*retribusi*) and an NGO response**

While regional autonomy law 22/1999 allows districts and municipalities to raise taxes through levies, the impact of such levies (*retribusi*<sup>12</sup>) is a political issue. When the DPRD doubled the levy on market stalls operated by petty traders. PDI-P opposed the move, ‘which clearly will impose a burden on poor people’, but they were defeated by a vote in the DPRD<sup>13</sup>.

*Reformasi* activism in Tegal as elsewhere in Indonesia saw an upsurge in NGOs working for democratisation and reform. Some of these NGOs were prepared to work with the state, if it did not conflict with their own reform agendas. One NGO which has closely monitored the work of the DPRD, and has protested about taxing services, is Armadaya, led by Bambang Siregar, a student leader of the movement to oust the Mayor in 1998

In a 2001 memo to the Dewan, Armadaya addressed the issue of government levies, an issue, which is widespread throughout local government in Indonesia.<sup>14</sup> The memo made a strong

<sup>12</sup> *Retribusi* are described as ‘local government levies in return for services (‘pungutan uang oleh pemerintah (kota praja dsb) sebagai balas jasa’) *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, third edition, 2002, p.953.

<sup>13</sup> Tegal petty traders protested when the levy of Rp 200/m<sup>2</sup> per day on stalls was doubled, ‘Retribusi naik, pedagang pasar resah’, *Radar Semarang*, 9 February 2001.

<sup>14</sup> An important East Java study conducted by *Jawa Pos* on impacts of regional autonomy in East Java found that many district governments were taxing services as a way of raising revenue. The study found that during *reformasi*, local governments were adding levies on a wider range of services, and rates were increasing, in order to raise local budget revenue (*pendapatan asli daerah*). It is a matter for debate whether there are more *retribusi* in the era of *reformasi* than there were *pungli* (*pungutan liar*, illegal payments) under the New Order (personal communication with Chris Manning). Of all the levies, levies on health services were the most widespread making up 50% of total income from all government levies. Joko Susanto et. al., *Kemajuan Berkebabasan, Kebebasan Berkemajuan: Otonomi Award dan Otonomi Daerah di Jawa Timur* (Surabaya, Jawa Pos Institute of Pro-Otonomi, 2003) pp. 66-69. Levies are made on services which include location and building permits, ground water exploitation, effluent disposal, hotels and

critique of 7 DPRD Raperda (*Rancangan Peraturan Daerah*). This *retribusi* Raperda were an attempt to increase local revenue by Rp 11.5 billion, through imposition of levies on local businesses, and services. Businesses included slaughtering livestock, rice milling, aquaculture, and tourism, massage parlours and hairdressing. Levies on services included tickets purchased at the bus terminal. The main NGO criticisms of these Raperda were lack of consideration of the impacts on the poor. The memo criticises lack of public debate on other ways of meeting the municipal budget deficit<sup>15</sup>. For the DPRD the ongoing issue in a municipality with no natural resources is how to raise revenue (and increase salaries to Dewan members), without putting new financial burdens on poor people?<sup>16</sup>

### **Mayoral accountability speeches**

From the early 1970s, President Suharto's accountability speeches (*pidato pertanggungjawaban*) became 'discourses of accountability' for provincial and district government heads as well as the President. As Jackson has argued, for Suharto these accountability speeches themselves came to set the criteria against which the President's accountability could be judged. Development and economic progress came to be the measures of accountability. During the New order these speeches became a 'ritual of government' rather than 'a true reflection of the aspirations of the people'<sup>17</sup> Presented only every five years when the national MPR was convened after national elections, they were never challenged.

Under the regional autonomy act 29/1999, in theory accountability speeches could become more than just rituals. Local DPRD now used them as a way for the legislative to review annually the achievements of the executive. Local assemblies have the power to force the bupati/mayor to resign if a majority of the Dewan members rejected the accountability speech<sup>18</sup>. However in the *Jawa Pos* study of impacts of *reformasi* on 38 kabupaten and municipality in East

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restaurant operation, and local industry (*Ibid.* p. 101). Whether these levies are more widespread than the illegal levies or *pungli* (*pungutan liar*) under the New Order has not been demonstrated (pers. com. with Chris Manning, 1 July 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Memo to the chairman of Tegal municipal DPRD II from Armadaya chair Bambang Siregar, 6 August 2001; interview with Bambang Siregar, Tegal, July 2003.

<sup>16</sup> DPRD basic salaries (without allowances) rose in the period as follows: 1999, Rp. 750, 000; 2000, Rp. 1,050,000; 2001-2002, Rp. 1,950,000; 2003, Rp. 2,950,000; 2004, Rp. 4,400,000 (pers. com. with *fraksi* PAN member Abdullah Sungkar, 30 June 2004).

<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Jackson (2003), 'The politics of *pertanggungjawaban*: contesting the meanings of accountability in two new order texts', *Rima – Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, Vol. 34, no 2, Summer, pp.35,36.

<sup>18</sup> Under the revisions being proposed by the Ministry of Home Affairs to the Local Autonomy Law, an accountability speech has to be rejected twice before the mayor/bupati/governor has to resign. (Jim Schiller, pers. com., 20 April 2004). This will strengthen the power of the executive, even though bupati and mayors are going to be elected by popular vote in future.

Java province, show that it is still a symbolic i.e. predictable event, which does not affect local Dewan politics.<sup>19</sup>

In Tegal municipality, neither the format, nor the content of the Mayor's accountability speech has changed much since the New Order. The New Order measures of accountability - development and economic progress - are more important now that local government has to attract investors to meet budget shortfalls no longer guaranteed by the central government. In his last accountability speech before standing successfully for re-election as Mayor of Tegal (in January 2004), Mayor Adi Winarso announced that numbers of families below the poverty line (*miskin*) had risen during the economic crisis 1999-2001, but then declined, and was now 12,695 families (18% of 67,000 families). The Mayor then went on to say that, although Tegal's total income had increased, the city's budget still depended for 75% of its income from central government assistance<sup>20</sup>. The Mayor then gave as his 'achievement' a list of infrastructure development projects<sup>21</sup>.

Dewan members' reactions to the speech varied. New Order style discourse came out in statements such as 'Under Adiwinarso's leadership there has been a lot of development in the economy and in government'. An F-PKB spokesman said that 'almost all the Mayors homework had been completed', except for the Tegal market (Pasar Pagi) redevelopment, under dispute between the municipality and a developer since before Adiwinarso took office. In supporting the accountability speech, F-PKB reminded Dewan members that a national survey had ranked Tegal third out of 134 districts/municipalities according to its ability to attract investors<sup>22</sup>. But F-PKB was concerned about the impacts of 6 new shopping malls in the past three years: 'Has the Tegal municipal administration anticipated the impacts of shopping malls on small businesses?' With the new northern by-pass road in mind, *Fraksi Golkar* asked the administration to do more reduce corruption in the implementation of large-scale infrastructure projects<sup>23</sup>. F-PDIP on a positive note commented: 'Before the government was authoritarian (*bersifat otoritatif*) now it is more

<sup>19</sup> *Kemajuan Berkebebasan*, pp. 75-76. Also local community reactions to accountability speeches were not investigated in the *Jawa Pos* study.

<sup>20</sup> Local government revenue rose from Rp. 8 billion in 1999 to Rp. 38 billion in 2004 (pers. com. with Abdullah Sungkar, 30 June 2004).

<sup>21</sup> These included a new fish market and two other markets, a business promotion centre, road widening, slum development, and beach erosion. '12.695 keluarga miskin masih kategori miskin: walikota: APBD didominasi bantuan pusat', *Suara Merdeka*, 14 November 2003.  
<http://www.suaramerdeka.com/harian/0311/14/dar5htm>.

<sup>22</sup> The survey was carried out nationally by the Monitoring Committee for the Implementation of Regional Autonomy (Komite Pemantauan Pelaksanaan Otonomi Daerah).

willing to take people's aspirations into account (*sedikit lebih aspiratif*). *Fraksi PAN* wanted the Mayor to discuss sustainable policies (*bijakan yang berkesinambungan*) in his end of term of office accountability speech. Voicing its disappointment, F- PDI-P rejected Mayor Adi Winarso's end of term of office accountability speech on a technicality<sup>24</sup>. *Fraksi PAN* accepted the speech, with strong reservations (*catatan keras*), namely the financial problems of projects and companies had not been resolved<sup>25</sup>.

After the long period of authoritarian local administration during the New Order years, political change is slow. Now Dewan members interrogate the speech, asking for more clarifications, and less rhetoric. The passing of speech is important. In July 2000, the executive tried to bribe the DPRD to accept the Mayor Adi Winarso's first accountability speech. Enough Dewan members refused the bribe to make it embarrassing for the rest, and named a member of the executive - the head of the Social and Political Affairs section no less- as the person involved. Having been exposed, the Mayor had no choice but to report the matter to the police. The F-PDIP spokesperson (whose comment that speeches were now taking account of people's aspirations we noted above) also said that more accountability of projects which have come under 'public scrutiny' (*sorotan publik*). Public security of development projects is now the norm rather than the exception. After no public scrutiny of projects, of corrupt officials, the fact that the Dewan can put projects under 'public scrutiny' is important for good governance.

**'What does *reformasi* mean?' ('Apa artinya ada reformasi?'): Tegal harbour workers as 'victims' of *reformasi*.**

As a coastal city, located at the intersection of Java's two busiest arterial roads connecting Jakarta with the provincial centres of Semarang, Surabaya and Yogyakarta, Tegal's

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<sup>23</sup> 'Realisasi proyek fisik masih perlu diperjelas', *Suara Merdeka*, 17.11.03. The largest infrastructure project is a northern bypass road to take the Semarang/ Surabaya east bound traffic around the city into a northern bypass.

<sup>24</sup> Because of the mayoral elections were held in January 2004, the last three months of his final year in office went unreported).

<sup>25</sup> Namely the construction of *persesaine* fishing boats and nets, the Aneka Usaha company, Sebayu FM (a local commercial radio station), and the state owned local municipal water supply company (PDAM). The Mayor shrugged off the issue of the three financially troubled projects by saying that project auditing was the responsibility of the regional and provincial Auditing Board (Bawasda, Badan Pengawasan Daerah), implying this was not a responsibility of the Dewan. 'Perhitungan tiga bulan belum dilaporkan: FDI-P tolak LPj AMJ [Laporan tanggung jawab masa akhir jabatan] Wali Kota', *Suara Merdeka*, 12 December 2003, at <http://www.suamerdeka.com/harian/0312/12/dar3.htm>. The municipal government has been trying to sell off the local water company for more than a year, without success. The buyer refuses to sign the contract, probably because of more water shortages and infrastructure problems. On PDAM's problems see

harbour has become something of a stepchild of development. Relying on 70 boats a month bringing cargo to the region, its current status as a class IV harbour only allows ships under 100 gross tons to dock. Dredged to a depth of three meters in December 2003 at a cost of 1 billion rupiah, bigger boats have to wait for high tide to enter the harbour and 4 recently ran aground<sup>26</sup>.

Tegal harbour's reputation however lies not in its size, or the number of boats which dock each month. It was the destination of millions of cubic meters of illegal timber during Suharto's new order. Tegal harbour provided a convenient place of illegally importing illegally logged Kalimantan timber.

Before Suharto's downfall, A. Kie (or Ponco Diyono, alias Aki Ponco), the Chinese *cukong* who controlled the illegal timber trade was taken to the Tegal district court, receiving a five year jail sentence, and a fine of 30 million rupiah<sup>27</sup>. This was not a large fine considering that he was accused of the corruption of an estimated Rp. 2.379 billion. As well as payments to the Mayor, he was accused of bribing local government and State Forestry Corporation officials, who were responsible for supervision of timber entering and leaving Tegal harbour. The judge announced that 4 trucks, 6 boats and two saw milling companies were put out of action (*terbunkum*)<sup>28</sup>.

Ironically, the *reformasi* era actions to stop the illegal timber trade, on which the harbour's economic activity was based, reduced employment for Tegal's harbour workers (TKBM - *Tenaga Kerja Bongkar Muatan*). The severe downturn in economic activity affected the lives of 600 workers and their families employed to unload the illegal timber<sup>29</sup>. In March 1999 the situation was nearing boiling point. Most workers sought work elsewhere as fishermen or *becak* drivers, leaving about 60 TRBM still waiting for work in the harbour. A leader of the cargo workers interviewed by the local news tabloid *Tegal Tegal* said

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'Air sering macet, target PDAM tak terpenuhi', *Suara Merdeka*, 19 November 2003 at <http://www.suamerdeka.com/harian/0311/dar13.htm>.

<sup>26</sup> The manager of the state owned Pelindo, which runs the harbour, said they were waiting for high tide to dock, not because they had run aground. 'Kapal besar tak bisa masuk dermaga Tegal: menunggu air pasang', *Suara Merdeka* 3 March 2004 at <http://www.suamerdeka.com/harian/0403/03/dar8.htm>.

<sup>27</sup> 'Pelaku korupsi kayu ilegal di Tegal dihukum lima tahun', *Suara Merdeka*, 16 January 1998.

<sup>28</sup> 'Pelaku korupsi kayu ilegal di Tegal dihukum lima tahun', *Suara Merdeka*, 16 Januari 1998. According to an interview with a local Chinese *cukong* (businessman), Aki Ponco Diyono was paying the Mayor Rp. 150 million monthly from 1991-1996 (a huge amount before the economic crisis). See Anton Lucas 'Reformasi Lokal di Jawa Pesisir', p.183.

<sup>29</sup> The casual workers were observed to be silent (*bunkam*), sullen (*cemberut*) and often irritated (*sewot*), because the ban on illegal timber trade meant a drastic decline in livelihood. The Tegal police chief felt sorry for the workers in the harbour who were unemployed for an indeterminate period. 'Pelabuhan Tegal: sebuah potensi yang tersia-sia', *Tegal Tegal* no 6, 5-20 January 1999.

Kami memang *kelara-lara*. Masalahnya soal bongkar muat kayu ilegal di pelabuhan-pelabuhan lain sampai sekarang masih tetap berjalan. Kalau begitu apa artinya ada reformasi. Contoh: Cirebon, Semarang, Juana, Jakarta. Tetapi mengapa disana tidak ditutup seperti di pelabuhan Tegal<sup>30</sup>.

The question was a reasonable one. Tegal harbour workers felt that they had lost their livelihood because of *reformasi*, illegal Kalimantan timber was still being imported through other harbours on Java's north coast. The harbour workers protested to the DPRD, threatening to burn the illegally logged Kalimantan timber stockpiled in the harbour.

Mayor Adi Winarso proposed a 'technical', rather than a political solution. Dredge the harbour to allow ships bigger than 1000 tons to unload their cargo in the harbour<sup>31</sup>. So he announced a dredging programme to deepen the harbour to allow large ships (300-10,000 tons) to dock in Tegal harbour.

However cargo workers continued stop work actions, boycotting selective police attempts to impound illegal timber. Cargo workers complained that some ship with illegal cargoes were docking and unloaded the cargos without being inspected. One boat left the harbour with its cargo of hardwood timber (*meranti*) while the police and the State Forestry Corporation (Perhutani) were interviewing the captain<sup>32</sup>. Cargo workers refused to unload illegal timber confiscated by the police as a protest over loss of work due to the clampdown on illegal timber.<sup>33</sup>

By July 1999, only four months after mayor Adi Winarso had taken office, A.Kie alias Aki Poncodiyono was reportedly to be back in business importing illegal timber from Kalimantan. He even gave an interview to *Tegal Post* saying he hoped that everyone would support 'revitalising' Tegal harbour. He promised to bring in only legal timber (*kayu berbaju*) (sic)<sup>34</sup>. 'Tegal harbour has been asleep for a long time' he said, 'why should people with good intentions have obstacles put in their path? We want to do business so the dockworkers can make a living, so the harbour is busy, why can't Tegal harbour be the same as the others?'<sup>35</sup>

<sup>30</sup> 'We are suffering because in other harbours illegal timber is still being offloaded. What is the meaning of *reformasi*? Why aren't Cirebon, Semarang, Juana and Jakarta [harbours] closed like Tegal?' ('TKBM pelabuhan Tegal ancam lakukan aksi pembakaran', *Tegal Tegal* no 9, 5-20 March 1999).

<sup>31</sup> 'Soal pelabuhan Tegal: sedang dicari solusinya', *Tegal Tegal* no 17, 20 July-5 August 1999 (I am grateful to Richard Curtis for making a this and several other issues of *Tegal Tegal* available for researching this paper).

<sup>32</sup> 'Kapal yang bawa kayu gelap lolos', *Suara Merdeka*, 19 June 1999.

<sup>33</sup> 'Buruh pelabuhan boikot aparat: ratusan kubik kayu ilegal diamankan', *Bandung Pos*, 18 June 1999.

<sup>34</sup> 'A. Kie kembali bermain kayu', *Tegal Post*, no 7 20 July 1999 (I am grateful to Richard Curtis for making available his collection of *Tegal Post* newspapers for this paper).

<sup>35</sup> 'Pelabuhan Tegal, ramai kayu atau ramai jegal jegalan antar juragan?', *Tegal Post* no 7, 20 July 1999.

### ***Simalakama* timber– ‘Damned if you do and dammed if you don’t**

As *Tegal Post* pointed out (in two leading articles and an editorial) the illegal timber problem in the reformasi period was (and still is) a case of ‘damned if you do, and dammed if you don’t’<sup>36</sup>. The livelihood of hundreds of workers is at stake. After *reformasi* began, dockworkers were free to protest, so timber importers used their plight as an excuse (*tameng*) for importing illegally logged Kalimantan timber. Businessmen and officials who receive bribes from them to turn a blind eye use the fate of these workers. They say the harbour workers’ livelihood is more important than the fate of the forests of Kalimantan from where the timber is cut. *Tegal Post* thought it was a clever argument. When the harbour was finally dredged, it made little difference, because it was not deep enough, to allow the bigger boats to dock.

So the battle to stop importing illegal Kalimantan timbers through Tegal harbour began again in late 2003, with a new campaign directed from police headquarters in Jakarta called Operation Wanalaga. Local police have confiscated thousands of logs without proper documents. This time police could guard the timber because it was moved to a warehouse. Yet people are still cynical of the police actions. Confiscating illegal timber from trucks inside the harbour is one thing, finding who are the owners is another, especially as the boat captains who know the origin of the timber and its owners, all disappeared before police could interview them<sup>37</sup>. The battle over inter island smuggling of illegal timber between regions in Indonesia is not yet over.

### **Creative activity – art and activism in the era of reformasi**

Mandal argues that in challenging authoritarianism, cultural activists were forced to keep art and ideology, cultural and politics apart in public discourse at the national level during the New Order<sup>38</sup>. In Tegal local artists faced more intimidation and harassment than in Jakarta during this period. Mayor HM Zakir suppressed local cultural activities, by refusing to grant permissions, or to make it difficult to find venues for performances<sup>39</sup>. His thirteen years as mayor is seen as a disaster for the Tegal arts community. Nurngudiono, the leader of Tegal’s *reformasi* musical

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<sup>36</sup> Buah sikamalama is a mythical fruit which brings bad luck to someone dear to the possessor if he/she eats it, and bad luck if he/she doesn’t eat it.

<sup>37</sup> ‘Polresta tindaklanjuti hari Operasi Wanalaga: kayu temuan diamankan digudang’ *Suara Merdeka*, 3 September 2003 at <http://www.suaramerdeka.com/harian/0309/03/dar8.htm>

<sup>38</sup> Sumit K. Mandal (quoting Kenneth George) in ‘Creativity in protest: arts workers and the recasting of politics and society in Indonesia and Malaysia’ in Heryanto and Mandal (eds.), *Challenging Authoritarianism in Southeast Asia*, p.176.

<sup>39</sup> Richard Curtis ‘ “ Heroics” and survival in local cultural production in Tegal Central Java’, *Coastlines Cultural Magazine*, No 3, 2003, p. 5.

group MSWT (see below) wrote in no uncertain terms what it was like to be an arts worker at the time:

Era M. Zakir, nyaris kesenian ditempatkan pada sudut-sudut tak terjangkau. Diakui walikota yang satu ini memang dipandang paling menyakitkan seniman Tegal. Seniman dipandang serba negatif, dicurigai, diintimidasi, dicekal, walaupun bisa berkreasi pastilah ia seniman bertipe pelacur yang tega menukar harga diri, kretivitas, independensiya dengan sedikit ruang gerak, uang dan nama populer. Mutu reportoarnya jauh dari baik<sup>40</sup>.

Not surprisingly, activist cultural workers were prominent in the student lead popular movement to remove Mayor Zakir from May-September 1998. Activities included making speeches (*orasi*<sup>41</sup>), reading poetry at public meetings and demonstrations, and performances. Culture and politics, art and ideology were no longer separated.

Two of Tegal's most visible cultural workers during *reformasi* are Apito Lahire and Nurngudiono. Apito Lahire's poems are reminiscent of the protest poems of Solo-based poet Wiji Thukul, such as his famous opposition poem 'Warning' (*Peringatan*)<sup>42</sup>. Apito Lahire read out his poem 'Zakir's Demise' (*Sajak menggoyang Zakir*) about why the people should remove the Mayor from office (see appendix<sup>43</sup>) to a crowd assembled at the municipal offices on 9 June 1998. Soon after they joined a mass protest destroying shops, banks, and car dealers show rooms, although miraculously no-one was killed<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> 'During the Zakir era, the arts were pushed to one side. The mayor made local artists suffer enormously. Artists were viewed negatively in every way. They were put under suspicion, intimidated, or banned from performing. Those that did perform were 'prostitute' artists who sold themselves, their creativity and their independence for popularity, money and space to perform but their repertoire was insignificant' ('Yang terkapar yang terlantar', *Tegal Tegal*, no. 7, 20 January-5 February 1999). In this commentary on the fate of Tegal's performing arts, Nurngudiono wrote that by 1998 two well known local dalangs, and no less than 13 local performing arts groups were 'stranded and struggling to make a living because of lack of support from the local government'. In 1997 the local Department of Education and Culture commissioned an all night wayang performance for which it paid a local dalang Ki Soedjono only Rp.350,000.

<sup>41</sup> The difference between *pidato* and *orasi* is that officials make format speeches (*pidato*) which tend to be exhortations about development. Cultural activists in the *sastra Tegal* tradition make *orasi*, exhorting people to think critically and act politically.

<sup>42</sup> On the poetry on Wiji Thukul Wijaya and a translation of 'Warning' see Rossilyn von de Borch, 'Art and Activism: Some Examples From Contemporary Central Java', Flinders University Asian Studies. Monograph no. 4, 1988, pp. 7-27, 73-74.

<sup>43</sup> My thanks to Keith Foulcher for his assistance in the translation of this poem, which will appear, with his introduction, in *Inside Indonesia*, no 78 (October-December 2004) forthcoming.

<sup>44</sup> For Apito Lahire's poem, and his subsequent close shave with the Mobile Brigade (Brimob), see the detailed coverage of these events see 'Masa bergerak Tegal gonjang ganjing' *Tegal Tegal*, no. 25, January 2000, p. 10, reprinted in Lanang Setiawan, *Tegal Dugal Detik-detik Perlawanan Rakyat*, Tabloid Tegal-Tegal, n.d.; for an analysis of this and other cultural activities of the talented Apito Lahire in the context of Tegal's 'assertive popular consciousness', see Richard Curtis, ' "Heroics" and survival', *Coastlines*, pp. 7-

During reformasi, the oppositional arts allowed expression of feelings and emotions pent up for years under the New Order<sup>45</sup>. Apart from the new political freedom, this is partly due to local literary tradition known as *sastra Tegal* (Tegal genre). *Sastra Tegal* has 3 distinguishing features. Firstly it is written in the regional dialect of low Javanese (called locally *bahasa Tegal*), containing local expressions and lots of slang, which gives poets and artists artistic freedom without the constraints of writing in literary Indonesian<sup>46</sup>. Secondly it draws on the popular consciousness of local folk heroes who, from the mid19-century, were rebels against authority (the Dutch, and in 1945 officials who had worked for the Japanese), whose stories are embedded in popular consciousness<sup>47</sup>. Thus it draws on struggles of the ‘little people’ and their daily lives, as well as more mainstream Indonesian literary themes such as love and belonging<sup>48</sup>.

Since the 1970’s Tegal’s social activism has been expressed through the local press, and the performing arts especially theatre, poetry and music. Apito Lahire’s poem ‘A poem of Zakir’s demise’ is an example of *sastra Tegal* during the early days of reformasi. Political protest, which began in Tegal on 20 May 1998, the day before Suharto’s downfall, focussed on Mayor Zakir’s corruption, the money he made in payoffs from the illegal timber trade (see above) and the re development of Tegal’s famous market (the Pasar Pagi). On 9 June 1998 Tegal’s activist dalang Enthus Susmono addressed a large crowd assembled outside the municipal office. Apito Lahire then read his protest poem ‘Zakir’s demise’ (*Sajak menggoyang Zakir* - see appendix). Immediately afterwards the crowd surged out of the municipal offices and onto the neighbouring streets on a protest march through the city. At least 50 shops were ransacked, several banks, department stores and car dealer showrooms were badly damaged (*rusak parah*)<sup>49</sup>.

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8 and Endah Pancaningsih Curtis ‘Gaung lapar mengepung taman kota’ in *Coastlines* no 4, 2004 (forthcoming). My thanks to Richard Curtis for providing me with a copy of Endah’s article.

<sup>45</sup> Mandal’s phrase ‘oppositional arts’ denotes two characteristics of activist art workers visible in oppositional movements in Indonesian and Malaysia since the late 1990s. Firstly, they are diverse and cut across social boundaries, including among them men and women, workers and farmers, and secondly they are occupied with cultural production (Mandal, ‘Creativity in protest’, p. 177).

<sup>46</sup> See for example Suparno E.P., *Dialek Tegal: Kata dan Ungkapan Khusus Dalam Konteks*, Purwokerta, Harta Prima, 1997.

<sup>47</sup> For the story of Kutil one such local hero during the revolution, see Anton Lucas, *One Soul One Struggle: Region and Rebellion In Indonesia*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin 1991, pp. 107-111.

<sup>48</sup> Pers. com. with Tegal cultural activist Nur Hidayat Poso, 4 May 2004. The closest that cultural activism gets among the 28 indicators of regional autonomy in the East Java study of regional autonomy (mentioned early in this article) is under an indicator called ‘facilitation of social participation’. Each indicator is grouped under one parameter in this management discourse (namely growth, equity, sustainability, empowerment, efficiency, sufficiency, facilitation, security, stability, and democracy). The East Java study found that Pacitan kabupaten started a local talk back radio programme, on which heads of local government departments got a compulsory turn to ‘interact with the public’, who could make critical comments and suggestions about government services (*Kemajuan Berkebebasan*, pp.111-112).

<sup>49</sup> ‘Tegal rusuh, ratusan toko dan bank dirusak: tuntutan walikota mundur’, *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 10 June 1998; ‘Menuntut wali kota turun, massa merusak toko’, *Suara Merdeka*, 10 June 1999; ‘Tegal rusuh, toko-toko

Nurngudiono is the second example of an activist cultural worker whose music cuts across social boundaries. Unlike protest poetry, which is known throughout Indonesia both regionally and nationally, Nurngudiono combines the forthright style of *sastra Tegal* with popular music. As *Tegal Tegal* put it, ‘Nurngudiono was the first person to create a syncretic musical style which combined ‘sacred’ Javanese *gending* with *kroncong*, in a religious mix, combined with *bahasa Tegal* protest poetry’<sup>50</sup>. A primary school teacher, his group the MSWT – Music Sastra Warung Tegal (Tegal Style Popular Music) consists of a wide cross section of players all from the same neighbourhood. They include a construction worker, a factory workers, coolies, buskers, high school students, a security guard, a food hawker, pedicab driver, garment outworker, parking attendant, kitchen hand, truck driver, cashier and a boat mechanic, two bricklayers, a student, and a market trader<sup>51</sup>. Like the harbour workers, several members of the group have lost their jobs because of their involvement in MSWT. After employers heard the cassette recordings of performances, they were concerned that MSWT members would influence other workers, or because performances outside the city clashed with working hours<sup>52</sup>. Other employers have recognised their work, but the competing demands of performance and work commitments are always present.

The era of reformasi has bought new freedom of expression to cultural workers in Tegal. Although local government support is now minimal for the arts and is declining, there is no longer political interference. Venues for performances are easy to find in government owned halls or in parks or in empty land in front of private homes. One local artist says the challenge for cultural workers now is to find a ‘new aesthetic’, new mediums of expression of current social issues through the performing arts in different ways that have artistic merit as well as a political message<sup>53</sup>.

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dan pusat perbelanjaan dirusak: Walikota HM Zakir diberi waktu dua hari untuk mundur’, *Wawasan*, 10 June 2004.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Dialah juga orang pertama yang melahirkan warna musik gado gado antara *gending sakralan*, *keroncong*, dalam ramuan atmosfir religius, *tegalan*, dan syair syair perlawanan’, ‘Nurngudiono: Api di tengah kepadaman’, *Tegal Tegal* no 25, January 2002.

<sup>51</sup> Endah Pancaningsih Curtis ‘Kaki Bergoyang dengan MSWT (Music Sastra Warung Tegal), *Coastlines* No 3 2003, p.13; Richard Curtis, ‘Cultural survival in the ‘Era of Reformasi’: the people orientated performances of Apito Lahire and MSWT, *Coastlines*, No 4 2004 (forthcoming) (My thanks to Richard Curtis for making a copy of this article available).

<sup>52</sup> Endah Pancaningsih Curtis ‘Kaki Bergoyang’, p. 13.

<sup>53</sup> Because since reformasi began in 1998, cultural performances have not been censored, the continual use of words like *korupsi* are eroding their meaning. Likewise, people are becoming bored with too many political speeches (*orasi*). Tegal cultural workers will have to find a new aesthetic or loose their audiences (pers. com. with Nur Hidayat Poso, 26 April 2004).

## The Local Press

In the *Jawa Pos* analysis of the impacts of regional autonomy on local government in East Java, a free press is one of four indicators of democracy. Has regional autonomy strengthened or weakened the local press? Has local government intervened to stifle the press? Have journalists been intimidated?<sup>54</sup>

In Tegal between October 1998 to mid-2000 an independent bimonthly news tabloid *Tegal Tegal* provided wide coverage of the main political and social issues. With an initial printing of 1000 copies, circulation (including neighbouring Pemasang and Brebes districts) increased to 7500 by the end of the first year. *Tegal Tegal* ran stories about village officials being dismissed, unfair village headmen elections, illegal sale of village land (*tanah bengkok*), corruption (timber smuggling, aid for fishermen, the Social Security Net (Jaringan Pengaman Sosial) programme) and the fate of Tegal's harbour workers. Its last few issues had a strong interest in local mysticism and magic. It supported arts activism. Since the demise of *Tegal Tegal*, local news is covered in either the Pantura (North Coast) section of the provincial daily *Suara Merdeka*, or in *Radar Tegal*, the new daily financed by *Jawa Pos*. Both these are part of large press conglomerates, with quite different agendas to locally owned print media such as *Tegal Tegal* and *Tegal Post*. Mayor Adi Winarso used his influence to have a journalist sacked from *Radar Tegal* for being critical of his administration<sup>55</sup>. In this case the Mayor's reaction confirmed fears that open criticism of officials was still not tolerated.

## Conclusion

Is Tegal less authoritarian after two free elections, and more than three years of regional autonomy, which began to be implemented at the beginning of 2001? The *Jawa Pos* study presents two views on the impacts of regional autonomy. The first is a negative view (held by President Megawati).

Pandangan negatif menganggap otonomi daerah hanya melahirkan "raja-raja baru", memindahkan korupsi di daerah, dan menggangu iklim investasi karena masing-masing

<sup>54</sup> The other indicators are supremacy of law, a system of checks and balances, and public responsibility  
Joko Susanto et. al., *Kemajuan Berkebebasan*, p. 24-25

<sup>55</sup> Lutfi AN was a journalist for *Radar Tegal*, the local newspaper for Pekalongan Residency owned by the *Jawa Pos* press conglomerate. In his column 'A Worker's Eyes and Ears' ('Tukang Kebun Meripat dan Kuping'), he offended the Mayor was over the issue of the appointment of the KPUD Komisi Pemilihan Umum Daerah - local Election Commission. Lutfi AN questioned the credibility of the KPUD selection team nominated by the mayor. According to the Mayor, the criticism was 'beyond the beyond the bounds of press freedom

kabupaten dan kota membuat peraturan sendiri-sendiri. Singkatnya, otonomi daerah hanyalah melahirkan masalah baru bagi negara ini<sup>56</sup>.

The opposite view from the same East Java study, is the positive one:

[Pandangan] yang positif melihat otonomi sebagai harapan baru. Pengalihan kewenangan pemerintahan ke kabupaten dan kota merupakan awal dari redistribusi kekayaan negeri ini, pemerataan kesejahteraan, dan meminimalisir ketimpangan pusat dan daerah. Lewat otonomi daerah, inisiatif dan inovasi daerah bermunculan<sup>57</sup>.

Which of these two views applies to Tegal municipality since 1999? The short answer is both situations exist, it is not an either / or situation. On the surface it looks like more of the same. Crony capitalists still have influence in the local economy. The Mayor welcomes investors who want to build shopping malls, which threaten small businesses. The Mayor is looking for an investor to build a large theme park on the beach, reminiscent of Jakarta's Ancol park. Rumours say the Mayor bought votes from some members of the DPRD to secure his re-election in March 2004. It is hard to determine how important money politics was in his election, NGOs will say it just as bad as under the New Order, DPRD members say its been reduced. .

The new political elite in Tegal believes that regional autonomy is the best hope for the future. The Mayor is more accountable, because he has been chosen twice by the DPRD.<sup>58</sup> Indeed Mayor Adi Winarso epitomises both aspects of the regional autonomy debate - democracy/post authoritarianism versus the old New Order way of doing politics. NGO leaders and cultural activists say he is a 'populist' leader. He goes by bicycle on Sundays to visit urban kampungs unannounced. He turns up for discussions organised by cultural activists. He is sympathetic to victims of natural disasters e.g. kampung families affected by flooding. He is tough on environmental degradation (cutting mangroves), and claims he is tough on corruption<sup>59</sup>. He has made efforts to get

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<sup>56</sup> 'According to the negative view, regional autonomy creates new local power holders, moves corruption to the district level, and makes obstacles for investors, because each kabupaten and municipality make their own regulations. Regional autonomy only creates new problems for this country' (Susanto et. al., *Kemajuan Berkebebasan*, p.vii).

<sup>57</sup> 'According to the positive view, autonomy means hope for the future. The transfer of government authority to district and municipality level is the beginning of a redistribution of wealth in this country, social justice, and reducing the wealth discrepancy between the centre and the regions. Regional autonomy creates initiative and innovation' ( Susano et. al., *Kemajuan Berkebabasan*, p.vii).

<sup>58</sup> Even though he was chosen the first time (like 84% of East Java's of bupati and mayors) by a DPRD elected before *reformasi* began. In January 2004 he was re-elected three months before a new Dewan was chosen in the April 2004 elections, a factor which undoubtedly made his re-election possible, as he knew who his political supporters were the old Dewan.

<sup>59</sup> 'Visi misi balon walikota Tegal: jangan ajari kami lakukan korupsi', *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 12 January 2004

NGOs and the press talking with each other. Yet he is not an official who takes criticism easily. Nor is not the only official who plays money politics, either in Tegal or elsewhere in Indonesia<sup>60</sup>. Another question – not discussed in this paper - is have local officials understood their new role and function under regional autonomy?<sup>61</sup> This is an ongoing issue in Tegal, it has been a steep learning curve for Dewan members to master the technical planning literature, let alone respond to documents from the executive branch that contain complicated fiscal and spatial planning models. Some Dewan members are successful businessmen, and have made efforts to learn the literature on these issues so as to be able to contribute to the debate. But since the free elections of June 1999, both the new Mayor and the Tegal DPRD say they have no choice but to take ‘the aspirations of the people’ into account in making laws. In Tegal there will be no turning the clock back to the old authoritarian politics of the New Order. The new assembly elected in May 2004 has 28 new member and a progressive new Islamic *fraksi* of PD and PKS members, replacing the discredited PAN as the reforming *fraksi*. This will ensure the continuation of strong local political debate in the Dewan over the next five years. The Dewan will have another election to organise if district heads have to face direct election by the people sometime during the life of the current DPRD.

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<sup>60</sup> Dwight King suggests that money politics was still a factor in East Java, because half the bupatis and mayors chosen by 1999 elected DPRD were not candidates that were supported by parties which had majorities in local assemblies (Susanto et. al. *Kemajuan Berkebabasan*, p. xv). After loosing the mayoral contest, PDI-P candidate Agil Abdurochim (who won 10 votes) was reported to have said he was distributing Rp. 550 million to stop disgruntled PDI-P Satgas (guards) from rioting ( ‘Satgas PDIP Tegal mengamuk’, *Jawa Pos*, 20 January 2004).

<sup>61</sup> Again in East Java, many officials are reportedly confused about the jobs, and formal planning, financial management and auditing mechanisms are weak ( *Kemajuan Berkebabasan*, p. xvi.)

### Poem of Zakir's Demise

Today we know  
 that the person we looked up to  
 and thought was a good man  
 is really no more than a bandit.  
 Would you believe it, all that timber  
 in our sad-looking harbour  
 belongs to our mayor  
 and his cronies?  
 The morning market was left to rot  
 till it was nothing more than a tin fence  
 around a row of lifeless stalls.  
 But is it really possible  
 that our honourable mayor  
 (who has no honour at all)  
 just auctioned everything off  
 in the prayer house, during the fasting month,  
 as he went about campaigning  
 to get himself nominated  
 for another five year term?  
 And we just nodded our heads  
 and shook his hand, just like  
 the members of our local parliament  
 who didn't have the strength  
 to reject his budget and his nomination.

Today we know that his pockets  
 are lined with the gold  
 he raked off the Chinese middlemen  
 who had no choice but to make up the deficit  
 in the municipal budget.  
 And still we said nothing  
 as he fortified his arrogance  
 with the army's guns  
 and police truncheons knocked us about.  
 We were set against each other!

Today we know  
 that the voices that would bring him down  
 were already there behind everything he said  
 "Down with the mayor,  
 rip off his clothes and put him on trial  
 Block his escape route,  
 issue a letter of dismissal  
 and set fire to his conceited pride."

Today we know  
 we've been deceived by our leader  
 a mayor who betrayed us.  
 So let's shake him off his perch  
 and make sure he's thrown in jail,  
 in this world and the next.  
 Amen

(Source: *Tegal Tegal* no 25, January 2000, p.10)

### Sajak Menggoyang Zakir

Hari ini kita tahu orang yang selama ini  
 kira baik dan berwibawa  
 ternyata sama buruknya dengan garong  
 tak percaya, kayu-kayu di pelabuhan  
 yang sayu itu  
 dimiliki walikota kita dan  
 kongkalikongnya  
 pasar pagi terbengkalai  
 menjadi pagar seng  
 dan kios yang membeku  
 tetapi mampukah kita percaya  
 ketika saat bulan puasa beliau yang bukan beliau itu  
 melelang sahalalah  
 dimusala sambil kampanye pencalonan dirinya  
 untuk 5 tahun berikutnya  
 dan kita manggut-manggut  
 menyalaminya seperti  
 anggota dewan yang tak bertenaga  
 menolak rapbd dan pencalonannya

Hari ini kita tahu di dalam saku bajunya ada berkilo-kilo  
 lempeng emas  
 yang dikuras dari cukong-cukong cina  
 yang dipaksa menyeter  
 untuk menyumbang defisit negara  
 dan kita terdiam pula  
 saat kecongkakannya  
 membentengi diri dengan bedil tentara  
 dan pentungan polisi menggebuk kita  
 kita diadu

Hari ini kita tahu  
 bahwa dalam mulutnya  
 mengendap suara-suara  
 penggoyangannya  
 "turunkan zakir dari kursi walikota  
 copot bajunya, ajukan kasusnya  
 tutup jalan pelariannya  
 keluarkan sk pemberhentiannya  
 dan bakar kesombongannya"

Hari ini kita tahu bahwa kita  
 telah ditipu pemimpin kita  
 walikota yang durhaka  
 mari kita goyang terus dia sampai  
 ngeblos penjara akhirat  
 dan dunia. amin....

