

# Social Criticism of Mochtar Lubis in Headlines About Rene Coenrad Featured in Indonesia's Raya Daily from October 1970 to January 1971

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## ABSTRACT

This research investigates Mochtar Lubis' social commentary through the editorial position of *Harian Indonesia Raya*, focusing on the Rene Coenrad case from October 1970 to January 1971. The death of Rene Coenrad during a soccer match between students and police cadets at ITB highlighted the underlying tensions between students and the government at the outset of the New Order period, following their joint attempt to overthrow the Guided Democracy regime in 1966. This study employs historical and content analysis techniques, analysing primary sources including headlines and articles from the *Indonesia Raya* newspaper. The initial section examines the socio-cultural background of the Rene Coenrad case and subsequently delves into students' reactions to it. The following section examines the early New Order government and Mochtar Lubis' role at the *Indonesia Raya* newspaper. The central theme of this article centres on Mochtar Lubis' social commentary in connection with the Rene Coenrad case, a crucial example of escalating student-government conflicts at the beginning of the New Order period. Exploring the complex relationship between students and the government throughout Indonesia's history is deeply captivating; students have consistently played a crucial role in moulding the nation's historical context. To fully understand the social commentary in Mochtar Lubis' editorial on René Coenrad, it is crucial to understand the portrayal of contemporary events and their underlying importance.

**Keywords:** *Headlines, Harian Indonesia Raya, Mochtar Lubis, Press History, October 1970 to January 1971*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The editorial page of *Harian Indonesia Raya*, penned by Mochtar Lubis, primarily concentrated on the country's political scene. Mochtar Lubis, the managing editor, was identified as the main author of the editorial by [1], and he contributed two-thirds of it. Editorials written by Mochtar Lubis are recognizable by the presence of three asterisks in the lower right corner of each article.

Mochtar Lubis allegedly did not deliberately select specific themes for inclusion in his headlines, according to [1]. These themes emerged naturally from events that took place during the period in question and drew the attention of Mochtar Lubis and *Harian Indonesia Raya*.

The author conducted research on headlines by Mochtar Lubis in *Harian Indonesia Raya* concerning René Coenrad. René Coenrad was first mentioned in *Indonesia Raya* newspaper on October 8, 1970. A journalist from *Indonesia Raya* published an article on October 6, 1970, detailing the shooting of students in the article titled *Bandung Bergolak*. Several victims were injured and killed on the student side following an incident that took place after students and Akpol cadets played football in an attempt to reduce tension between the authorities and students.

The René Coenrad case is a tragic event following the G 30 S catastrophe in the preceding era. After several years, the nation encountered another intricate instance involving the misuse of authority. The criminals have been tried, but it still raises questions.

The development of the Rene Coenrad case is examined in Mochtar Lubis's reflective account of law enforcement practices. The main highlights in this article are five headlines:

"Development of Spirit and Mind" dated October 13, 1970; "Understanding the Background of Student Demands" dated October 15, 1970; "Has Coenrad's Killer Been Identified?" dated October 21, 1970; "Court in Search of Truth and Justice" dated December 22, 1970; and "The October 6 Incident Case" dated January 4, 1971.

Results from two studies cover a similar subject matter and time period, specifically students in the early years of the New Order regime (1968-1974): A study by Francois Rallion in 1985 examines student politics and ideology at the time of the regime's establishment; meanwhile, research by Aria Wiratama Yudhistira in 2004 explores the increasing tensions between students and the government, which were shaped by the prevailing culture and popular culture of that era. [2] research concentrates on the student movement in Bandung during the period of the new government's establishment.

Nonetheless, none of the three studies focus on newspaper articles (in the form of editorials) that were contemporaneous to the events and centre attention on the murder of Rene Coenrad.

This study aims to examine the ideas presented in journalistic writings associated with the Rene Coenrad case, with a particular emphasis on the editorial written by Mochtar Lubis concerning the case.

Journalism encompasses more than just reporting news; it also involves crafting headlines, voicing opinions, and creating essays that reflect the author's critical perspectives on events and the prevailing attitudes of their era.

Journalistic works often feature original sources that provide a comprehensive view of a specific era, encompassing its social, economic, cultural, and political dynamics. The phrase "let history be the judge" is a well-known expression in historical context.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 *First Literature*

[3] University of Washington History dissertation "Kim Songhwan's 'Mr. Kobau': Editorial Cartoons as Genre Weapons in the South Korean Search for Democracy, 1945-1972" is a dissertation that examines the life of a Korean cartoonist who wrote and drew editorials for *Tonga Ilbo* magazine. The cartoonist drew 4-panel comics that carried a democratic message, criticizing the authoritarian implementation of democracy in South Korea while facing threats and defending the country's position from authoritarian North Korea. Emily Hall's dissertation and argument rest in part on the idea that there was no clear view of democracy, nor was there a uniform definition of the concept—by both conservatives and progressives—or consensus on how to achieve it as a political structure during the 1950s and 1960s. There were many topics covered in editorial cartoons during this period that can be classified as promoting some of the various ideas surrounding democracy. While each is worthy of study, Emily Hall primarily focuses on three democratic ideals that are consistently featured in Kim Songhwan's work: the right to vote; the right to assemble or protest; and freedom of the press. While the article that the author discusses is about the type of writing (reflective) headlines from a Mochtar Lubis and the object of writing, namely the tragedy of René Coenrad, the relevant thing in Emily Hall's work is the subject of writing history through headlines written or described by a journalist who highlights the circumstances or situation of his day.

### 2.1 *Second Literature*

[4] at the College of the Arts of Kent State University on "James Francis Cooke's Editorial Motifs in "the Etude" Music Magazine, 1907-1957". This dissertation discusses the struggle of an editor who wrote headlines in the music magazine "the Etude" in the course of American music that continues to evolve between maintaining old musical pragmatism (classical music) and welcoming new musical style innovations. James Francis Cooke was a strict editor on the issue, especially related to the magazine "the Etude" and the legacy of its founder. The relevance between the topic of the dissertation written by Jeanne Adair Hansen and the topic of the dissertation proposed by the author is the position or attitude of the media towards the spirit brought by the media and the traditions that have been attached to the media for many years. In the case of Harian Indonesia Raya, led by Muchtar Lubis, as the author of the headline or editorial of Harian Indonesia Raya, a loud voice that is critical has become a characteristic and standard of Mochtar Lubis in writing articles, headlines, and books that he has written, especially editorials in Harian Indonesia Raya.

### 2.2 *Third Literature*

[5], University of Indonesia, with the topic "Hair gondrong: a portrait of power over young people 1967–1974" This thesis wants to see how power is applied to young people. It is seen in a case when long hair was banned in the period 1967–1974. The relevance of this article is how to analyze the ideas in the headlines in a historical period; in this case, the headlines written by Muchtar Lubis related to René Coenrad in the early days of the New Order and how the situation of the times drove the tragedy from a cultural perspective.

## 3. METHODS

The main analysis in this article is based on Rene Coenrad's editorials and news articles published in the Harian Indonesia Raya newspaper. This study uses content analysis of editorials written by Mochtar Lubis and related articles on the topic. Historical research is essentially related to content analysis, as all such research relies heavily on examining the content of documents. Content analysis is a research method that involves drawing conclusions from available data by systematically and objectively identifying the characteristics of a particular message [6].

This analysis utilises conventional historical methods. The first stage involves collecting relevant resources connected to the topic, including editorial layouts and articles published by Harian Indonesia Raya. The credibility of these sources is subsequently assessed. The subsequent stage involves interpreting these sources, and the final stage is writing the article.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 *The Rene Coenrad Case Within a Social, Political and Cultural Framework*

The popular culture being discussed pertains to the counterculture movement of the 1960s in America, which emphasized resistance to societal norms in several aspects such as philosophy, culture, and socio-economics. The younger generation conducted opposition using many platforms like film, music, and fashion.

The most notable aspect in this example is the lifestyle that highlights many aspects such clothing, the type of car driven, and distinctive hairstyles. The standout feature of the youthful generation during that period was the group known as hippies. During the Cold War and its

associated proxy conflicts, hippies were sometimes linked with the use of psychedelic substances in pursuit of relaxation or healing, an association often viewed negatively.

Hippies see the world as a symbol of love and unity. Characteristics of the hippie subculture often feature long, flowing hairstyles and colourful attire paired with wide-legged jeans. The vehicle employed is a Volkswagen Beetle embellished with vibrant decorations, acting as the central location for activities and representing a lifestyle that diverges from conventional marital norms.

Popular culture from the United States impacts numerous regions across the globe. The culture of this society has been shaped by the tumultuous period during which the United States was embroiled in proxy conflicts with left-wing governments. During Indonesia's transition from the Guided Democracy regime to the New Order, young people there adopted a broad range of American popular culture.

Popular culture today is shaped by Korean and Japanese influences and encompasses a wide range of elements, including music, films, fashion, beauty trends, and culinary traditions, spanning multiple generations. During the 1960s, the expressions captured the fashionable appearance and lifestyle considered "cool" at that time, encapsulating the essence of the era with the phrase "Peace, Love, and Freedom."

The younger generation's sentiment was influenced, leading to calls for regime change in 1966, despite widespread ignorance about authoritarianism in the country. Peter Dale Scott revealed information from a CIA document in his paper "The Role of the CIA in the Overthrow of Soekarno," which disclosed that there was regular and extensive collaboration between the military and academics. The collaboration involved students who participated in numerous protest and demonstration events [2].

The early New Order period, often referred to as the honeymoon phase, from 1968 to 1974, which marks the beginning of the New Order, came to an end sooner than anticipated, despite its harmonious integration of previously opposing elements. As the New Order started, President Soeharto's actions, which solidified his control over all areas, began to be noticed from the beginning (Taufik Abdullah and Christanto Wibisono's introduction in [7]).

Following the downfall of the Guided Democracy regime, the New Order started to align itself with the Western side, as the New Order regime was starkly different from the Guided Democracy regime, which had traditionally supported countries on the left; this alignment created an opportunity for Western culture to penetrate people's lives, a phenomenon of interest not only in politics but also in shaping the community's lifestyle, specifically amongst students who at that time were benefiting from the harmony resulting from their support for the New Order regime.

The student population, as the target audience for foreign culture, also absorbed the popular culture prevalent at that time, with the most notable aspect being the fashion and appearance of the 1960s generation [5].

At that time, long hair was the most striking appearance style, and it emerged as a trendsetter, being the most popular and sought-after style among the younger population, especially among students. This raises issues not only in terms of visible style, but also in the roots of the hairstyle, which is often quickly adopted by the younger generation due to its origin in popular culture from countries that have made advancements in certain areas.

At that time, the United States held leadership over Western nations. The government's perspective, dominated by military and older generations, might be seen as undemocratic, yet its main concern for the future of young people was rooted in stricter eastern norms on relationships, with long hair being a relatively minor issue compared to the corruption and state misappropriation protests led by students at the time [5].

Sinar Harapan's first move was to report the raid on long hair, which occurred on December 11, 1966, with the government then maintaining the operation through the police. On January 3 and 23, 1967, Kompas reported on ABRI raids in Bandung, as well as in Jakarta on January 22, 1968, where hair raids were held at the behest of Governor Ali Sadikin, who was Jakarta's Governor at the time, as noted by [5].

The hair cut raid reached its climax at the ITB campus, sparking tensions and protests by ITB students against the state authorities through a satirical "anti-fat people movement." This resulted in clashes that included the Akpol Sukabumi cadets of the class of 1970. The increasing tension led to the suggestion of an amicable match after a meeting of the police and ITB community. Unfortunately, the sport, which was initially intended to foster sportsmanship and camaraderie, escalated into intense conflict during the soccer match, ultimately resulting in the tragic death of René Coenrad after a confrontation with the cadets.

Cadets were responsible for his death, however, it was police brigadier Djani Maman Surjaman who was held accountable. The pupils felt sorry for the person who committed the act when they saw it happen. Adnan Buyung Nasution attempted to argue in Djani's favour, yet the ultimate verdict remained in his favour. Djani was imprisoned for 18 months in 1972 following René Coenrad's death, which was attributed to his negligence. The students were prosecuted in the years 1973–1974 alone. In the context of the Rene Coenrad incident, Muchtar Lubis exercised social criticism through his intellectual responses as the editor-in-chief and journalist of *Harian Indonesia Raya*, a daily newspaper with a reputation for being highly critical in Indonesian journalistic history.

#### **4.2 Student Reactions to The Rene Coenrad Case in The Early Phase of The New Order Regime**

The government's attempt to exert control over the younger generation, especially students who were embracing their newfound freedom of expression following the fall of the authoritarian regime, led to increasing tension. Contrary to expectations, they encountered cultural barriers related to their physical appearance. The most rigorously enforced rule concerned long hair, a fashionable style among young individuals during that time.

Young people with long hair are usually viewed negatively and associated with a link to crime or seen as lacking civilisation. Rene Coenrad, who was a student at ITB, has been identified as the deceased person. The victim's mother expressed her remorse in Dutch while at the funeral home, according to news reports. In a gesture of respect, ITB halted all academic operations until receiving an official reply from President Suharto.

Represented by Minister Mashuri of Education and Culture and Danjen Akabri (now known as the TNI), as well as Inspector General Sutopo, the government visited the deceased person and released an official statement to move forward with the case.

The statement by President Suharto was printed in the *Indonesia Raya* daily newspaper on 9 October 1970. In his statement, the president expressed support for the ITB student council's request to urgently resolve the case.

The student council had stated that they would lose trust if the situation was not addressed immediately. The same publication also reported the reaction of University of Indonesia students to the death of ITB student Rene Coenrad. An official statement was released expressing total resistance to those who infringe upon the autonomy of higher education (*Harian Indonesia Raya*, October 9, 1970).

Escalating tensions between the military (ABRI) and civilians, particularly students, led to protests at prominent universities in Indonesia as a result of the students' response to René Coenrad. The protests increased the interaction between the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI) and civil society.

#### **4.3 The Early Years of New Order's Rule Were Characterised by A Specific Political Climate**

The New Order government's initial years can be characterised as a coalition between the military and civilian groups, including students, secular intellectuals, professionals, anti-communist party leaders, and a large number of rural and urban Muslims [8].

The alliance being discussed has its roots in the 1966 demonstrations, and it continued until Suharto became president in 1968, following the 1965 ideological civil war that caused considerable loss of life and resources.

The alliance arose from an economic collapse that affected all sectors, primarily triggered by inflation reaching nearly 1000% and intensified by the state's use of ideological competition as a political means. Following their initial close interaction, ABRI then had to interact with students again at the beginning of the New Order period.

The shift in power of the New Order during the prevailing political climate was characterised by an alliance between military and civilian groups. Gradually, the military took control of various civilian groups, including students, secular thinkers, professionals, anti-communist party leaders, and many Muslims, in both rural and urban areas, under the pretext of attaining national stability.

Under the New Order regime, three main features stood out: the military's expanded participation in civilian duties under the principle of dual function, the regime's dominance over civil and political organisations, and the regime's application of Pancasila ideology as a tool for exerting political control [9].

Anything that deviates from this is considered harmful to the nation's spiritual and moral well-being. The New Order regime's attempts to establish "national stability" between 1968 and 1974 sparked unrest among various organisations and civilian forces. The early New Order government was engaged in establishing the political framework during the initial phase of the New Order.

As the country began to achieve national stability and consolidate its political framework, inevitable clashes and tensions arose with civilian groups (students, secular intellectuals, professionals, anti-communist party leaders, and a significant number of Muslims in rural and urban areas) over various issues and incidents.

#### **4.4 Mochtar Lubis, Indonesia Raya Newspaper, and Social Criticism in His Written Works**

Harian Indonesia Raya and Mochtar Lubis themselves highlighted nearly all the aspects of this period in their journalistic work. Meanwhile, the Indonesian press history at that point was experiencing the rise of personal journalism.

Rosihan Anwar stated that this phenomenon arose as a reaction and consequence of the significant events taking place, specifically the transfer of Dutch sovereignty to Indonesia at the Round Table Conference on December 27, 1949. Indonesian journalism marked the beginning of the personal journalism era [10]. This period persisted into later epochs, particularly the early New Order.

Mochtar Lubis stated that personal journalism inherently highlights the subjectivity of the editor-in-chief in media-produced journalistic products. In contrast, [7] findings showed that the New Order's ascension had given rise to optimism for improvement and a restoration of the press's dignity, which had lost its values in the preceding era, but the new regime, backed by most national elements, was not superior to its predecessor [1].

During the early years of the New Order (1968–1974), Mochtar Lubis and Harian Indonesia Raya's key feature was the representation of intellectuality that concerned the regime's aspects (such as national stability and the creation of political structures) intersecting with civilian powers at that time. The main highlight was primarily the editorial products and journalistic content published by Harian Indonesia Raya over this period.

Editorials express the legal perspectives and stances of the journalistic press on real, significant, and sometimes contentious matters that emerge in society. The editor's opinion serves as a voice for the press institution, reflecting both its stance and legal perspective. The editorial voice is a collective representation of the journalists and staff at the publication, rather than the views of specific individuals serving on the editorial board or working in production and distribution. The

author's name is not included in the editorial, as it is a voice representing the press institution, according to [11].

Mochtar Lubis's intellectual manifestation of social criticism in the editorial is indeed connected to the events that took place at that time. According to Atmakusumah's testimony in 1997, Muchtar Lubis wrote two-thirds of the headlines in the Indonesia Raya daily, which were indicated by an asterisk in the lower right corner of his articles. One-third of the remaining articles were written by the editor of Indonesia Raya daily in Muchtar Lubis's absence, without the asterisk in the lower right corner.

Muchtar Lubis and Harian Indonesia pursued their journalistic careers as a vocal opposition to the authoritarian Old Order regime, while maintaining a keen interest in the New Order government. The interest was clearly visible in the journalistic material at the start of the New Order government.

Support and hopes for the regime were frequently expressed in special content, including headlines featuring open letters to the president, Muchtar Lubis' travel reports on modern countries at that time, especially in capitalist nations, and special content on developed countries published by Harian Indonesia Raya.

Throughout the 1970s, Muchtar Lubis and the Indonesia Raya daily started drawing attention to several cases that prompted criticism and media coverage, resulting in the permanent banning of the Indonesia Raya daily by the New Order government, which he backed in 1974 following the Malari case.

#### **4.5 Mochtar Lubis' Social Criticism of The Rene Coenrad Case Appeared in The Headlines of The Daily Indonesia Raya**

Muchtar Lubis initiated his social commentary through the title of a headline that referred to the term "pembangunan," which served as a critical commentary directed at all aspects of the nation at that time. Muchtar Lubis' headline was sparked by the tragic death of René Coenrad, which prompted him to reflect on his nation's past, present, and future through elaborate thought.



## TADJUK RENTJANA I

## PEMBANGUNAN DJIWA DAN SIKAP PIKIRAN

MAHASISWA ITS. Renee Konrad, adalah nama terahir, dari serangkaian nama yang sudah terlahir pandjangan terlahir di Indonesia tentang orang-orang yang dapat dijadi korban kekerasan dan kezaliman dari orang-orang yang merasa diri lebih kuat. Na sibja yang malang jadi skandal nasional, karena kebetulan ia seorang mahasiswa, seorang anggota kelompok mahasiswa ITS yang terkenal militan dan mahir menjajalakan isi hati dan pikiran mereka.

Tetapi berapa banjaknya, Renee Konrad lain yang telah jadi tuh jadi korban kekerasan di tanah air kita selama ini, yang sama sekali telah tidak memperlihatkan reaksi perlawanan dan luap kemarahan.

Mereka yang menderita siksaan dalam pemerintahan perkar, dalam tohisan tanpa berjangka waktu, yang hati mereka di-injak-injak, tanpa suatu kemungkinan memintakan keadilan.

Korban manusia Indonesia yang dilanda roda besi kekuasaan dan kekuatan yang ganas masih berdjatuh di mana-mana di tanah air kita.

Kita tidak akan menemui sasaran dengan melampirkan tanggung-jawab dan kesalahan pada ABRI. Atau pada angkatan kepolisian. Orang-orang yang memakai kekerasan dalam usaha memertakikan manusia yang dihadapinya tidaklah terdapat di kalangan ABRI saja. Djuga di kalangan rakyat sipil, tjukup banyak tersebar sikap-serupa ini. Pengerjokan, penjerbuan, kerumoh atau kas ter-badan atau orang-orang yang menimbulkan kemarahan atau ke-kesalan, adalah hal-hal yang terjadi terlahir banjak di negeri kita.

Dikalangan ABRI djuga tjukup banyak terdapat manusia Indonesia yang berbudi luhur, yang menginginkan terbinanya per-paula, kemasjatan berdasar keadilan, keadilan, kebenaran, dan kebebasan manusia. Seperti djuga di kalangan sipil terdapat orang-orang seperti ini.

Kita harus bersikap lebih ilmiah guna mendalami sebab-musabab, mengapa sikap jiwa terlahir banjak di antara kita mudah tjenderung memakai kekerasan, menjajah-gunakan kekuasaan untuk menjajalakan sesuatu yang mereka rasa menjangguk per-paula mereka, tak menjangguk mereka, atau menimbulkan antipati terhadap kepentingan mereka.

Kita harus melihat bahwa rakyat kita selama ratusan tahun tak putus-putusnya mengalami tekanan dan penderitaan yang akan tak kunjung habis. Dari zaman pra-pendudukan sendiri, rakyat banjak dihadap di bawah feodalisme yang salim, yang ditertakur oleh pendudukan Belanda dengan berbagai rupa ke-kejaman di luar peri kemanusiaan, ditambah lagi dengan masa pendudukan Jepang yang penuh kekejaman lagi, dan kemudian pergolakan selama revolusi mebah kemerdekaan, yang di-susul lagi oleh rangkaian pemberontakan dan perang saudara antara kita.

Semua ini menimbulkan kegatutan-kedjawaan yang luar-biasa besarnya dari generasi ke generasi. Kehartjuran nilai-nilai moral dan kemanusiaan memuntjak selama rezim Soekarno berikutnya. Orang melihat bahwa hal-hal kemerdekaan, keadilan, kebenaran, keadilan, keadilan, tidak ada lagi, hukum, di hantja di-tjap-kari, untuk kemudian diobok-sobek dengan segera.

Orang banjak dijangkitkan bahwa bodoh dan edan orang yang mau tetap tinggal dijudjur dan setia mendjundjung tinggi hukum dan nilai-nilai moral serta agama, dan yang normal dan wajar dan dijanggop pondol, ialah jika orang pandai menjajal dengan to-njan kiri, sedang tangan kanan menulit—dijangan engkau men-tjuri, jika orang dengan lantang bertera mendukung Nasakom, tapi dalam hati mengutuk Nasakom.

Jika orang tidak lagi dapat berpegang pada nilai-nilai moral dan kemanusiaan, tidak lagi dapat menghargai perlindungan keadilan dari hukum dan undang-undang yang berlaku, jika kita tidak lagi mempunyai sesuatu pegangan apapun lagi, maka dalam ke-adaan jiwa demikian, orang berpaling menjajal dewa besar atau dukun besar yang dihadap akan melindungi dirinya, atau seseorang atau tjenderung pada kekerasan untuk memertakikan se-suatu masalah yang dihadapinya.

Djangan kita seperti ini adalah djaman timbulnya nabi-nabi, atau bangsan yang menipu rakyat, dan „hal-hal adjaib“.

Harion ini selalu menjajal pembangun, terutama pembangun jiwa dan pikiran bangsan kita. Pembangun jiwa dan pikiran tidak dapat dilakukannya hanya dengan bitara dan melontarkan kata-kata saja. Pemimpin yang baik di dalam maupun di luar pemerintahan, harus sanggup memberi tauladan.

Figure 1. Headline "Development of Spirit and Mind" dated October 13, 1970

(Source: *Harian Indonesia Raya*)

The central theme of the title is, of course, the aspiration to build the character and mindset of the nation after undergoing a period of violence inflicted by both foreign powers such as Western colonialism (Dutch) and the Japanese occupation, as well as violence from their own people, related to civil and military conflicts. Notably, Muchtar Lubis also described the people's character at that time, who believed in mysticism, specifically the "dunia klenik" (a belief in shamans who specialize in life goals like success, career, wealth, and even soul mates).

His patients were not only short people, but also befriended by the country's dignitaries at that time, and this even led to a special article about it in the *Indonesia Raya Daily* on November 29, 1970, titled "Masalah Klenik Pada Orang Indonesia." The Zahara Fona "miracle baby" case, which also went viral, was also featured in the November-December 1970 news of the *Indonesian Daily*, a miracle baby claimed by the mother to be able to recite the Koran from the womb and supposedly due to be born in the near future, but turned out to be a big lie after being investigated by the police, and despite this, the mother was even able to outwit the police officers who were guarding her in custody.

Despite this, the public has been worn down by falsehoods disguised as religious ceremonies. The condition can be examined in relation to a society that suffered a significant tragic event (September 30, 1965) and an economy in decline due to the Old Order economic crisis.



Not only that, Muchtar Lubis also condemned the individuals who use derogatory terms like "bangsat-bangsat" and exploit their influential roles to deceive the public. The headline does not explicitly state it, but a closer examination reveals that the criticism targets corrupt officials from state institutions who have business interests, specifically referring to institutions established under the Indonesian constitution to manage the nation's natural resources (UUD 45 Pasal 33 ayat 1, 2, and 3). Then, Muchtar Lubis' frustration with the nation's top officials' hypocritical behavior revealed a disparity between what they said and what they did.

Lubis' views on this matter can be understood through his experiences during the Old Order; his frustration with the regime's hypocrisy and its defenders' double standards was evident in his writings from that period, and it continued until the New Order was established. In contrast, adhering to laws, norms, values, and ethics involves secretly undermining them in order to serve fleeting interests. Muchtar Lubis' final statement critiques the handling of the René Coenrad case, suggesting that both government and non-governmental leaders set a positive precedent to prevent similar incidents in the future and further highlight the country's history of violence against its citizens.

The second headline about the René Coenrad case offers a severe social critique, concentrating on the bond between students and ABRI. The partnership is marked by student disillusionment that emerged after the overthrow of the Old Order in 1966, as the initial optimism for change gave way to increasing military influence. An unusual alliance of civilians and the military took place at that time, which allowed civilians to make changes with the backing of the military to topple the existing civilian administration. The coalition undoubtedly had aspirations for change tied to past circumstances, but in reality, it was taken over by the military according to its dual-function doctrine.

Muchtar Lubis views the René Coenrad case as an example of the nation's psychological instability. The military's violent actions leading to the deaths of his classmates acted as a trigger for student discontent and anger towards the state of the country, especially with regards to addressing corruption and improving the education system. What's intriguing is that Muchtar Lubis implicitly conveyed his discontent and disapproval by drawing parallels with the student faction concerning the revamped party institution that once supported Nasakom Sukarno-Sukarnoism.

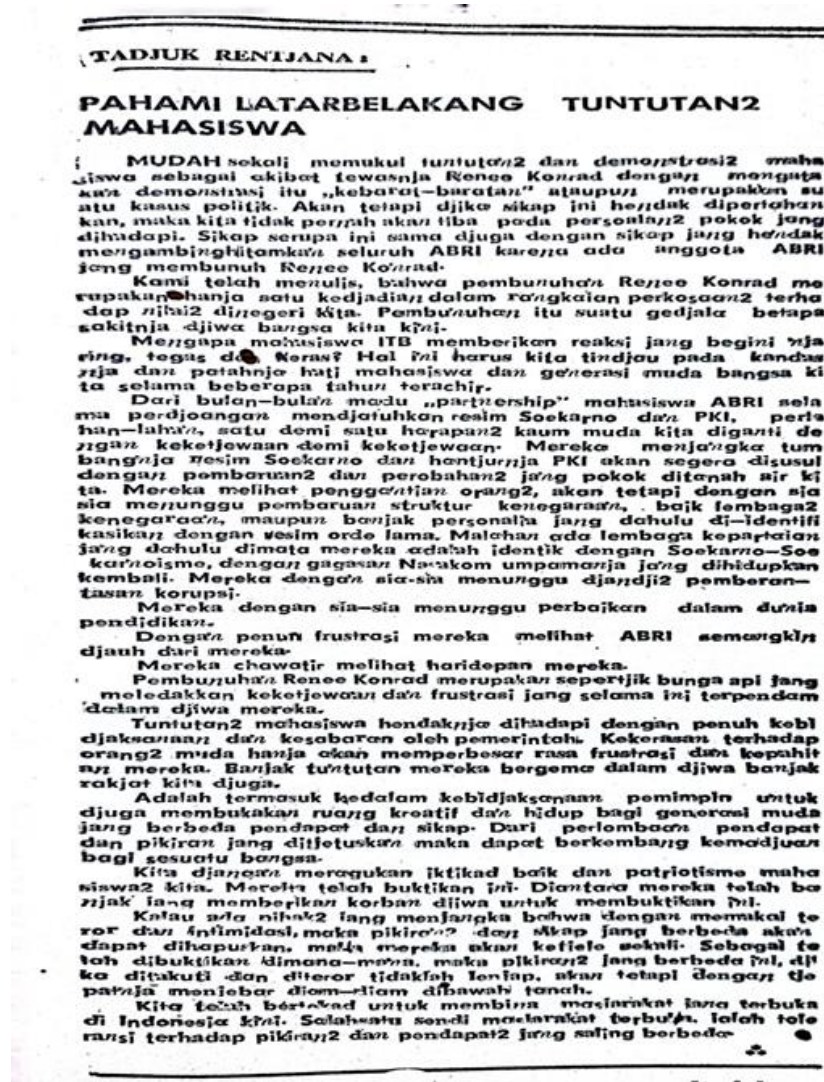


Figure 2. Headline “Understanding the Background of Student Demands” dated October 15, 1970  
(Source: *Harian Indonesia Raya*)

Muchtar Lubis stressed the importance of students in forging the nation's historical trajectory. Despite intimidation and pressure, historical student movements have consistently maintained their resolve. Lubis stressed the importance of preserving democracy and encouraging free speech. Muchtar Lubis suggested that students' demands concerning the René Coenrad case and earlier corruption cases protested during the early stages of the New Order be taken into account. He is hopeful that the government and all national components will provide creative liberty for the younger generation to express their individuality.

Muchtar Lubis's description is linked to the term 'Generation Gap' that was widespread during that period. The idea behind this word was rooted in the widespread conviction at the time that younger people, who had been exposed to other cultures, posed a threat to the country's established customs and values, prompting anxiety among older individuals. The younger generation voiced their opinions on this subject at a symposium they had organised, as documented in the *Harian Indonesia Raya* Articles of November 8 and 9, 1970.

Following the collapse of the Old Order, the primary foe of the West, Western civilization underwent expansion. The change in government resulted in the emergence of 1960s culture, which was adopted by the younger generation in both appearance and lifestyle. A perception of disapproval existed between the older and younger generations as a result of the generation gap.

The ruling provided an opportunity for the government to take disciplinary action against the younger generation, especially students, which ultimately led to the René Coenrad disaster. The crackdown is a component of a strategy to co-opt civilian authority, specifically students, who have the potential to disrupt political stability through recurrent demonstrations regarding state administration and corruption trials.

In a third headline titled "Pembunuh Coenrad Telah Diketahui?" which appeared on October 21, 1970, Muchtar Lubis criticized the misuse of power by individuals in all sectors, encompassing both high-ranking and low-ranking military personnel as well as influential civilians. Muchtar Lubis uncovered the widespread abuse of authority during the René Coenrad incident. The René Coenrad case was linked to multiple shootings of the LLD (tax police) in the Pakisadji area of Malang, unofficial taxes extorted from truck and bus drivers on public roads, civilians demanding bribes for processing identity cards and parking, and prisoners being delayed by unscrupulous individuals.

Muchtar Lubis suggested that the René Coenrad incident could have been averted if civil liberties were upheld in the country and by the government. Following René Coenrad's death, Muchtar Lubis' societal critique gained significant prominence. Despite Muchtar Lubis expecting significant societal and political changes after the collapse of the Old Order administration, his goal of encouraging social commentary did not happen as he had hoped.

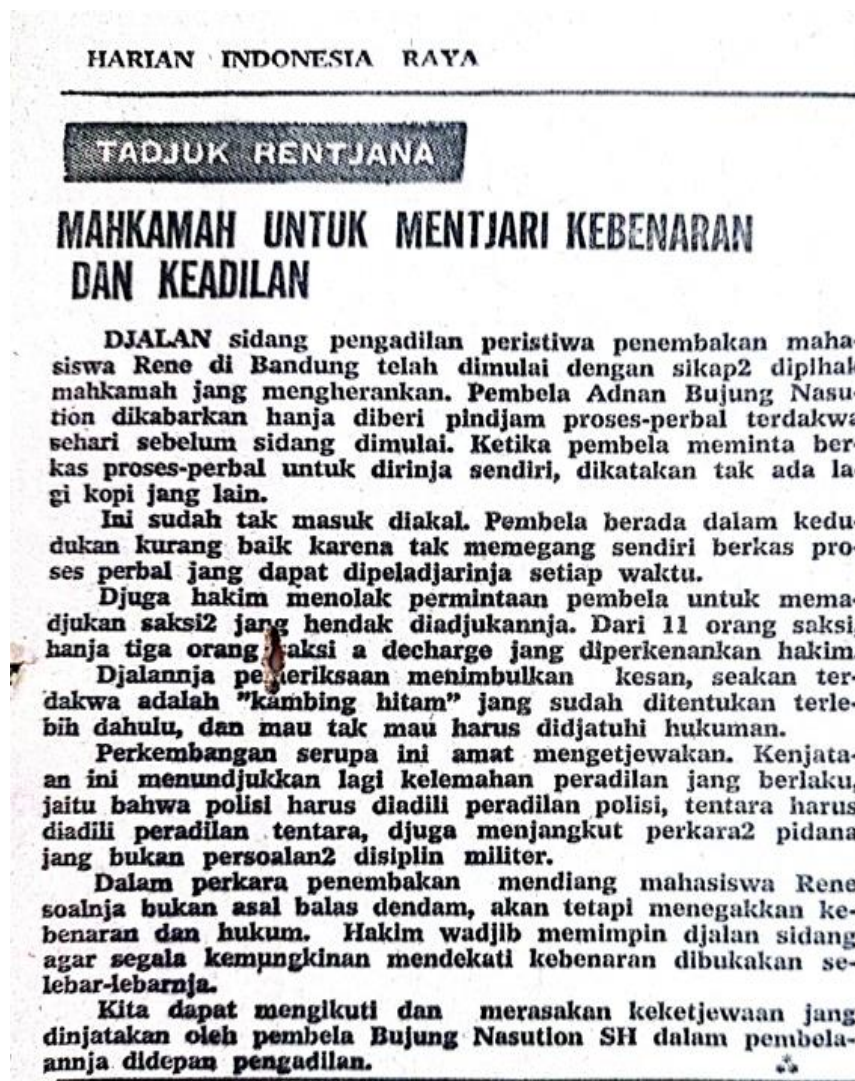


Figure 3. Headline "Court in Search of Truth and Justice" dated December 22, 1970

(Source: *Harian Indonesia Raya*)



Muchtar Lubis' fourth essay on Rene Coenrad focuses on the Rene Coenrad case trial. Bripda Djani Maman Surjaman, the suspect, has now been identified and is standing trial. The legal proceedings seem to be complex and organised in a way that obstructs the suspect's lawyer, Adnan Buyung Nasution, from fully exercising his rights to investigate the case thoroughly. Muchtar Lubis denounced the interpretation that the suspect was being exploited as a scapegoat to cover for other suspected cadets. Following this, the cadets were accused of having connections to senior officials at that time. In his book "Pergulatan Tanpa Henti Volume 2," Adnan Buyung Nasution (2004) refers to Bripda Djani Maman Surjaman as a subordinate who was used as a scapegoat to protect a bigger entity.

The incidents took place amidst cadets allegedly linked to senior officials in the context of the Rene Coenrad case. The Rene Coenrad case involved a disputed suspect who was under pressure from the public, especially students, to bring justice to his deceased colleague. The court proceedings were greatly affected by this. Muchtar Lubis criticises law enforcement in this country due to his disappointment.

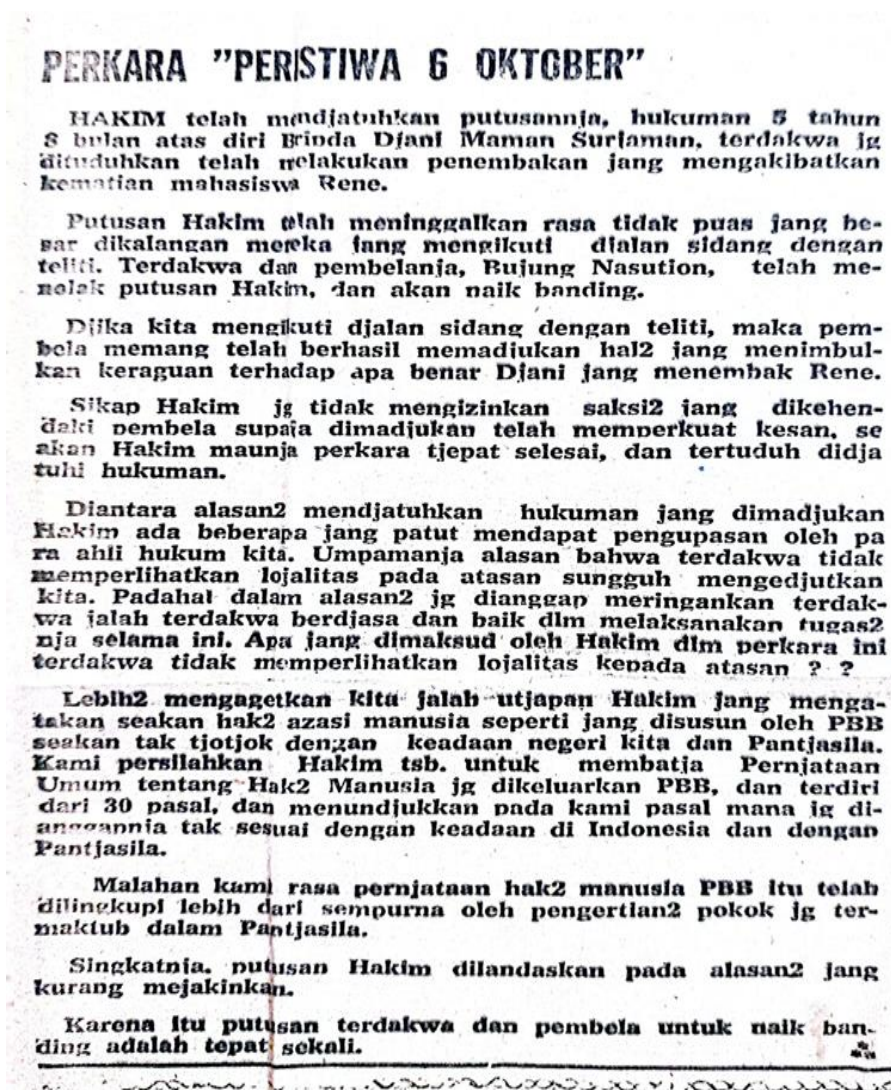


Figure 4. Headline "The October 6 Incident Case" dated January 4, 1971

(Source: *Harian Indonesia Raya*)

Muchtar Lubis' fifth essay on Rene Coenrad summarises the trial and the judge's ruling, which found Bripda Djani Maman Surjaman guilty of carelessness in Rene Coenrad's death and

sentenced him to 5 years and 8 months. Lubis closely followed the trial and concluded that Surjaman was not the real suspect, following the defence's objection which had raised significant doubts about the case's credibility.

Muchtar Lubis criticises the judge's reasoning for not corresponding with common sense and for drawing parallels which do not accurately represent the reality of the Rene Coenrad case and the defendant, Bripda Djani Maman Surjaman, who was unfairly maligned. Muchtar Lubis strongly criticized judges who opposed the UN's human rights, deeming their actions to be in direct conflict with the country's fundamental principles and Pancasila. The judge's decision was seen as damaging to the pursuit of justice and the truth in law. Muchtar Lubis chose to support the defence's decision to appeal in the cases of Adnan Buyung Nasution and defendant Bripda Djani Maman Surjaman.

## CONCLUSION

Mochtar Lubis' skill as a journalist is evident in his use of the editorial page of *Harian Indonesia Raya* to criticise society, as seen in his coverage of the Rene Coenrad case, thereby shaping public debate at that time.

The incident involving students, which was likened to the René Coenrad iceberg, was just one aspect among several others, such as corruption and abuse of power, that were also implicated. Mochtar Lubis' editorials criticising these issues were motivated by his concerns over the René Coenrad case and the growing rift between students and the new government that had formerly enjoyed good relations at the start of the regime.

The new government faced a potential threat to its stability and framework from students' ability to topple the previous administration. During this period, Mochtar Lubis saw a transition from a democratic government to an authoritarian one, with his criticism echoing the actions of the new regime, which he initially backed when it abandoned the democratic path.

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