

## Freedom Institute, Neoliberalism and Phenomenon of Intellectual Trade

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### Abstract

*This article highlights the phenomenon of the Freedom Institute, an NGO in which one of the main actors, Rizal Mallarangeng, who acts as if "academic, epistemic, objective and rational" (Intellectuals, BBM and Advertising Freedom Institute, Kompas 3/3), advertises on print newspaper in Jakarta. And the Freedom Institute advertisement, which was founded by Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Aburizal Bakrie and his colleagues, has made some people feel "cynical, irritated and frustrated" towards intellectuals who are so easy to "trade knowledge" with all their credibility and capacity. The annoyance and frustration was shown by the Young Kagama Forum in Jakarta (Wednesday, 2/3/2005) which raised it as an issue of "the phenomenon of neoliberalism and intellectual prostitution" in connection with the Freedom Institute advertisement. However, the students and activists who objected to the fuel price hike and were present at the Kagama Youth Forum stated that they were angry and disgusted with why there are a number of well-known intellectuals who so easily involve themselves in neoliberal advertisements that protect the interests of the dominant economic-political power, instead of siding with the oppressed.*

### Keywords:

intellectual; freedom institute; kagama; rizal Mallarangeng; Neoliberalism; Bakrie



### I. Introduction

It is almost inconceivable that the Freedom Institute advertisement, which is supported by 36 intellectuals, actually invites a "strong reaction" from some people. The advertisement for the increase in fuel prices totally supports the policy of the government of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono-Jusuf Kalla (SBY-Kalla) to side with the dominant political-economic interests of the ruling class, especially the political and economic elites who have benefited from the New Order regime for years. With Rizal Mallarangeng's argument that seems "academic, epistemic, objective and rational" the Freedom Institute advertisement, which was founded by Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Aburizal Bakrie, among others, has made some people feel "cynical, irritated and frustrated" towards intellectuals who so easily carry out "knowledge trading" with all their credibility and capacity. Economic actors, basically have very important functions. Because it has two functions at once, namely as a supplier of all the needs of the community, both primary, secondary and tertiary. At the same time, they also function as absorbers of community labor, which can economically increase purchasing power. (Ansari, T. 2019). Development is a systematic and continuous effort made to realize something that is aspired. Development is a change towards improvement. Changes towards improvement require the mobilization of all human resources and reason to realize what is aspired. In addition, development is also very dependent on the availability of natural resource wealth. The availability of natural resources is one of the keys to

economic growth in an area. (Shah, M. et al. 2020) The concept of human resource development is an attempt to improve technical, theoretical, conceptual, and education and training. The types of development are grouped into informal development and formal development: 1) Informal development, namely employees on their own desires and efforts train and develop themselves by studying literature books that have to do with their work or position. Informal development shows that the employee is eager to advance by improving his work ability. 2) Formal development, where employees are assigned by the company to take part in education and training, both those conducted by the company and those carried out by educational and training institutions. (Setiawan, D and Marfistasari, A. 2021)

The annoyance and frustration was shown by the Young Kagama Forum in Jakarta which raised it as an issue of “the phenomenon of neoliberalism and intellectual prostitution” in connection with the Freedom Institute advertisement. The students and activists who objected to the fuel price hike and were present at the Kagama Youth Forum expressed anger and disgust as to why there were a number of well-known intellectuals who so easily involved themselves in neoliberal advertising that safeguarded the interests of the dominant economic-political power, instead of siding with the oppressed.

The intellectuals raised by Rizal Mallarangeng, a very pragmatic liberal, have dared to advertise (read: trade), and were warned by M Fadjroel Rachman sharply and clearly so that they do not run away and dare to be morally, politically and legally responsible in the future. days. But we doubt whether they will not run away and dare to take responsibility, if later the situation gets worse. Experience shows that the “behavior” of our intellectuals is generally escapist and reluctant to take responsibility. Conservation of living natural resources is the management of resources and utilization of living natural resources that are carried out wisely to ensure their availability while maintaining and increasing the quality of diversity and value. Conservation of living natural resources and their ecosystems is carried out through the following activities: a) protection of life support systems ; b) preservation of diversity of plant and animal species and their ecosystems; c) sustainable use of biological natural resources and their ecosystems. (Setyaningrum. E. et al. 2021)

The increase in fuel prices is a victory for neoliberalism. In neoliberalism, the state is the guardian of capitalist interests. It is not surprising that the current government has adopted a policy such as the VOC, which offered business stalls in the Dutch East Indies. (Economist Revrisond Baswir, "The Rise of Fuel is a Victory for Neoliberals", Kompas, 3/3)

## **II. Review of Literature**

### **Trapped in Pragmatism**

It is unfortunate that the SBY-Kalla regime, which has received so much support and a mandate from the people, has in fact repeated the path of the Megawati-Hamzah Haz transition regime which chose the neoliberal path in an effort to consolidate democracy, with IMF-style macroeconomic tightening recipes such as changing social welfare programs, revoking subsidies, weakening/relaxing labor regulations, privatizing and allowing large-scale foreign investment to buy public companies. The poor and ignorant are relatively left behind and neglected in a neoliberal climate that emphasizes individualism with all its potential strength and intelligence in controlling life.

### III. Research Method

The study of James Petras and Morris Morley (Neo-Liberal Political Cycles: Latin America 'Adjust' to Poverty and Wealth in the Era of Free Markets), reveals that there are three possible directions of transition following this neoliberal strategy: first, the transition to democracy. Second, the transition to neo-authoritarianism and the third, the transition to a free market which leads to the cruelty of capitalism-liberalism. The Petras and Morley study, as noted by Coen Husain Pontoh (Tempo, April 14, 2002), concluded that the neoliberal strategy failed to consolidate democracy in Latin America and in Indonesia.

### IV. Results and Discussion

Even the studies of Mark Weisbrot, Samir Amin, Andre Gunder Frank and Peter Berger show that the neoliberal strategy (capitalism) only impoverishes Latin American society because the regimes in the region only serve the interests of MNCs (Multinational Corporations), crony capitalists, military businesses and corrupt bureaucracies. -collusion. Meanwhile, NGOs in Latin America also experienced uncertainty, alienation and disorientation in responding to the failure of this strategy. In the case of the Freedom Institute, I saw the trapping of intellectuals and NGO activists into the pragmatism of a patchy and disorientative movement when dealing with the power of capital and power. To just survive, the patchwork movement is no longer effective because the intellectual position here has been caught between two forces whose interests collide: the interests of the trading state which is pro-neoliberal policy and the people who oppose the policy.

In my opinion, one solution is that the Freedom Institute and its 36 intellectual colleagues as “abdi dalem” of the ruling-business elite can propose ideas and practices about a “social state” that functions to answer problems that occur in civil society. In its actualization, borrowing from the discourse of Frans Magnis Suseno (1994), the state must be placed in the capacity of a “social state” which is fully responsible for the welfare of all citizens, especially the poor and the common people. The importance of “social state” - borrowing John Locke's discourse - is that, in the context of modern democratic society, the state is formed on the motivation of citizen consensus or social contracts associated with solving various problems that cannot be solved individually such as issues of justice, welfare, law enforcement. eradication of corruption-collusion-cronyism, distribution of prosperity, security and so on. In this case, the request or invitation of citizens to the state to be involved in solving problems and challenges that the community cannot solve is called the principle of subsidiarity. Of course, beyond the needs of society, the “social state” is forbidden to interfere in the affairs of citizens.

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In the era of neoliberal globalism, the manifestation of the principle of subsidiarity can be applied to protection and guarantees for the people and workers to have the right to a decent life, not being exploited by multinational companies, protection and guarantees for farmers' products from the entry of foreign agricultural products, as well as protection and guarantees for producers in the trade sector in order to have competitiveness against foreign products.

In terms of neoliberal strategies that tend to harm the poor, workers and the general public, the "social state" is positioned within reasonable limits which can be involved in society at any time without killing civil liberties and citizens' rights. Even the "social state" is obliged to be involved in guaranteeing and protecting its people from oppression and injustice due to neoliberalism which often brings people to the brink of poverty.

If the "social state" which was initiated and actualized by intellectuals and civil society against the current transitional regime does not materialize, and it turns out that the state fails to guarantee justice and the welfare of its citizens, then at that point the state is declared to be dysfunctional. In this case, citizens have the right to deny the state which is realized through the right of self-determination. The emergence of the phenomenon of centrifugalism and separatism in Free Aceh and Free Papua, etc., must be seen in the context of the state's failure to guarantee welfare, justice and human dignity for its citizens.

The Freedom Institute and its 36 intellectual colleagues must be aware of these things and realize that the current transition to democracy driven by political parties has never succeeded in overcoming the multi-dimensional crisis due to the corrupt-collusion-manipulative economic-political system and bureaucracy and the national leadership. ineffective. The strong reaction to the Freedom Institute advertisement should be read in this context, and should be introspection, self-criticism and reflection for the ruling regime and its intellectual "servants".

## V. Conclusion

And the Freedom Institute advertisement, which was founded by Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Aburizal Bakrie and his colleagues, has made some people feel "cynical, irritated and frustrated" towards intellectuals who are so easy to "trade knowledge" with all their credibility and capacity. The annoyance and frustration was shown by the Young Kagama Forum in Jakarta (Wednesday, 2/3/2005) which raised it as an issue of "the phenomenon of neoliberalism and intellectual prostitution" in connection with the Freedom Institute advertisement.

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