



Boedi Oetomo: the Multi Ethnic and Pioneering Organization to the Spirit of Nationalism

Winahyu Adha Yuniyati^{*}; Leo Agung S; Wardo

Department of Teacher Training and Education, Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia
Email: winahyu_11@yahoo.co.id

<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v5i3.147>

Abstract

The Dutch government had once launched the Ethical Policy in Indonesia, leading to the birth of the national movement. Indonesia implemented the national movement as an effort to build nationalism spirit of the people. The aim of this study is to analyze the nationalism spirit of Boedi Oetomo organization members during the movement period. This employed historical method, in addition to using literature study to analyze the data. Boedi Oetomo was the first organization established during the national movement in Indonesia. This organization is engaged in social and education, as a result of Dutch colonialism in Indonesia. This organization was run by scholars or students consisting of various ethnic backgrounds in Indonesia. From studies of literature, it is found an analysis of the nationalism spirit that appears on the members by joining Boedi Oetomo organization. The diversity of tribes, races and religions within the organization had never been a reason for dispersion, however, it is just a symbol to unite and realize the ideals of the Indonesian nation. Although Indonesia consists of many islands and the people of different ethnic and class backgrounds, but by the spirit of nationalism can unite them.

Keywords: Nasionalism; Organization; Boedi Oetomo

Introduction

The republic of Indonesia consists of thousands of islands from Sabang to Merauke. Every island is bounded by vast waters, thus it can cause a sense of independence for an island. The growth of the island by independence will lead into cultural diversity. Culture will arise from the development of the customs of people living on a particular island. Each district or regional area has its own customs, habits and languages that are often not fully understood by other groups (Christina & Andran., 2008: 10).

Indonesia's diversity is not something that can trigger concrete problems in development to form a sovereign nation. Since many times the Indonesia was united by binding colonial rule. Kahin (2013) emphasizes that the Dutch Government mobilized people from different tribes and cultures into a political unity (p. 31). Making the Indonesian nation feel within a fate and life struggle.

Sense of national unity becomes one of the great motivations in achieving life prosperty within a country. Unity and sovereignty are the two things underlying a national identity. Identity or uniformity is

urgently needed to establish a sovereign nation. The nation according to the poet Ernest Renan (1882) in Soekarno Muda (2015:13) said thoughts is a life, a principle of reason, which occurs from two things: first the people must first share a narrative; both peoples must have the will to live one.

A sovereign nation is needed to create a sense of nationalism or love of the country. According to *Kamus Bahasa Indonesia* (the Great Indonesian Dictionary) that nationalism derived from the word 'national' and 'ism' which means the understanding of nationalism constituting the meaning of consciousness and the spirit of love for the country, having a sense of nationality or nurturing the national dignity. Other opinions on nationalism which is a cultural phenomenon rather than a political phenomenon because of its existence rooted in ethnicity and promodern culture (Hutchison., 2000: 34). Thus, it can be formulated that nationalism is an awareness and passion for the love of the country, which is rooted in the ethnicity and culture.

While the nationalism according to Soekarno is nothing but to downplay all the groups who do not feel as "one class, one nation" (2015:15). The motto of one group and one nation leading some of the Indonesian people to be aware of the importance on having sense of unity. Thus, in 1908, a number of STOVIA medical students established an organization known as Boedi Oetomo.

Boedi Oetomo is the first national movement organization in Indonesia. The organization was founded by STOVIA medical students. The members consist of students from different regions with diverse cultural backgrounds. The diversity of backgrounds reflected by members of the organization is not a barrier to a movement, nevertheless as a manifestation of unity within the organization. However, Boedi Oetomo moved on social and educational fields. Although at the time it had not moved in political activity, but this organization had given a description of unity within diversity. Unity within diversity reflects a meaning to build Indonesian nationalism. Nationalism is deemed to be the milestone to achieve the noble ideals of the Indonesian nation.

Methodology

The research method undertaken by the author on Boedi Oetomo as a multi-ethnic organization of nationalism builders is a historical method, along with method of literature studies to analyze the data. As Louis Gottchalk (1983) notes that the test also analyzes the historical testimony to find a valid, authentic and reliable data, as well as synthetic attempts to establish the data of a credible historical story (p. 32).

This study concerns collecting the historical data, which is relied on the literature studies. The process is syntactical or sequential based as written by Ismaun (1984), in which the historical method contains four important steps or techniques as follows: 1) Heuristic is the primary step for the writer in the process of collecting the information materials related to the problem of writing scientific journal. 2) Criticism, historical criticism is a critical assessment of the data as well as the already existing historical facts. Additionally, the historical facts are also processed using historical criticism. The result is then called historical evidence. Historical evidence is a collection of facts and information that have been validated, to be trusted as a good basic evidence to test and then interpret a problem. 3) Interpretation, is an interpretation of the analysis of the data as well as the collected facts. This procedure is employed to interpret data and facts, connect various data and facts and finally make interpretations. 4) Historiography, is a step after performing stages in the historical method of collecting data, data criticism and interpretation then as the last stage of the historical method is the writing of history (pp. 94).

Results and Discussion

Beginning of Boedi Oetomo Organization

Boedi Oetomo Organization was founded by some STOVIA medical students (Komandoko., 2008: 10). The great adhesive of the students is very noble, that is to realize the ideals of the Indonesian nation, which is unity for independence. This is just like the opinion of Ir Soekarno (2015: 17), that we must be independent so that we can freely set up a new group. Unity of the students in addition to being pushed with great resolve, they also have the spirit to promote unity and national unity. Students who carried out the study on STOVIA college were those who came out of various regions of diverse cultures, thus they had a great passion to unite the nation from an organization.

The diversity of tribes, cultures, races and religions had never been an obstacle in establishing an organization. The diversity of members of the organization becomes a milestone for the founders to working collectively. Christina S Handayani (2008) put forward a view that equality in a society tends to place itself in a balanced position (p. 13). As a manifestation of the social equality realization, the great spirit of collectiveness among the organizational founders, making the establishment of the organization more easily realized.

The pioneering of Boedi Oetomo organization realized on the presence of a character named Wahidin Soedirohoedoso. He was a former STOVIA medical student who deliberately came to give the spirit of struggle to achieve the ideals of the Indonesian nation (Komandoko., 2008: 41). Wahidin's presence has cultivated a passion for the students who want to establish the organization of the national movement. Furthermore Wahidin together with the founding students of the organization realize the establishment of the organization.

The Boedi Oetomo organization was established by STOVIA medical students coming from different backgrounds and strengthened by Wahidin Soedirohoesodo. This organization was chaired by Soetomo, a founder of an organization with high morale, and supported by all members of the organization. Both Soetomo and the other members worked collectively to advance the Boedi Oetomo organization (Komandoko., 2008: 47).

Cooperation among the founders of the organization has led to a real decision, namely the establishment of the organization on May 20, 1908 (Komandoko., 2008: 46). This organization was established under the ideals of changing the Indonesian national fate against the shackles of Dutch colonialism. This organization engaged in both social and education. In the social field, this organization had sought to help Indonesians eradicating the burden of orders resulted from the Dutch colonial government. In the field of education, this organization helped to educate the people of Indonesia to be able to know the writing system, it was expected that the Indonesian people could be able to distinguish where the harmful and profitable.

All the movements was carried out by Boedi Oetomo organization both in the field of social and educational at that time solely oriented to help change the fate of the Indonesian nation, but did not interfere with the existence of the colonial government. Boedi Oetomo's organizational attitude was sufficiently considered moderate or cooperative with the colonial government (Ricklefs., 2011: 249). Thus, nearly all movements of the organization was supported by the colonial government.

The Boedi Oetomo organization in its movement was a noble and available in supporting much progress for the Indonesian people. Numerous organizational movements were the evidents if the Boedi Oetomo organization could build nationalism and love the nation for the struggle of the Indonesian nation to liberate its people from the shackles of foreign colonialism. A movement through diplomacy step was expected to accelerate the Indonesian national movement to realize the ideals which have long been

coveted. In line with Ir Soekarno's statement that "Living up the mass-action, to achieve Indonesian Independence" (2015: 21).

First Boedi Oetomo Congress

First congress of Boedi Oetomo organization was held in Jogjakarta. Implemented through careful planning by the management and members of the organization. This event was organized through several preparatory meetings, thus it could be done accordingly. The preparation all committee of the congress with various preparations was expected to hold a successful congress. The various preparations carried out, such as conducting preparatory meetings, preparing congress participants' invitations, time and place of implementation and discussion results to be discussed (Komandoko., 2008: 58).

The first thing which must be conducted in preparing the congress was the preparation of the meeting. As Komandoko (2008) wrote before the event, a meeting was held on August 8, 1908 at STOVIA (p.61). Preparatory meetings were held by Boedi Oetomo members of organization. The first congressional preparatory meeting discussed various congressional designs. The various congressional designs were further discussed and decided by the congress preparatory committee.

The congress committee decided in accordance with the outcome of the preparatory meeting, and approved by all participants. Members of the organization in preparatory meetings generally comprised of the STOVIA students of heterogeneous social backgrounds. The following heterogeneous backgrounds were from various regions of Indonesia, in addition to the descendants of prijaji families who had the opportunity studying at the STOVIA campus. Based on such reasons, it is expected to provide various information on invitations which would be distributed into various regions, in order to meet the invitation of the congress.

The congressional invitations were expected to be evenly distributed throughout Indonesia, thus the congress could be followed by all regional representatives. This was undertaken to convey the purpose of Boedi Oetomo organization, in which to change the fate of the Indonesian nation from the shackles of Dutch colonialism. In addition to conveying the people's aspirations, the existence of Budi Oetomo has at least set up an evidence which must be acknowledge by the colonial government that the Indonesia nation could implement the assembly as a manifestation for the sense of nationalism. It is this self-confidence which gave the Boedi Oetomo's determination in search of the Great Java (Indonesia) (Soekarno., 2015: 14).

In planning the first congress of Boedi Oetomo organiaion apart from the subject of invitation would also determined the venue to conduct. In accordance with the outcome of the preparatory meeting, a decision is made regarding the place and time of the congress. The venue for the congress was held in Yogyakarta School of Education, the congress was agreed in October.

On the basis of various congress preparations, at least it has resulted in the sharing of decisions which can then be decided and followed up by the organizing committee. The follow up of the meeting was proceeded well. This is evidenced by the implementation of appropriate congress held in the Yogyakarta School of Education and conducted on October 3rd to 5th, 1908 (Komandoko., 2008: 60).

The first congress was attended by invited guests from various regions in Indonesia. The invitations are present in accordance with the results of planning meetings. Invitations came from various groups such as the lower *priyayi*, government representatives from various regions up to non-cooperative youth against the colonial government. Even so the event in the congress went quite well.

The implementation of the first congress, in addition being assisted by a moderator or mediator in congressional discussions. The moderator at the first congress was led by Wahidin Soedirohoesodo, he was appointed to be a moderator for he was considered to have a neutral view both from Indonesian society and from colonial government. This is as reported by Komandoko (2008) that Dr. Wahidin Soedirohoesodo was appointed as chairman of the congress (p. 61).

Implementation of the first congress led by the moderator produced some discussion. The main discussion is the desire to change the fate of the Indonesian nation from the shackles of colonialism. The efforts undertaken to realize the organizational desires were manifested through several organizational movements. The organization was engaged in social and education. Furthermore, the organization's desire could be realized through the social field and the application of education for the people of Indonesia.

In addition to convey the aspirations of the nation, the congress also discussed the existence of organizational committee in a formal legal. The former implementation of Boedi Oetomo organization was only implemented by STOVIA medical students. This organization was initially only held with limitations because among the organizers were still in the process of studying at an institution. Furthermore, it was decided the form of a new organizational structure.

The organizational structure of Boedi Oetomo at the first congress resulted in a verdict that the chairman of the organization was awarded to RAA Tirta Koesoemo from Karanganyar, Central Java (Nagazumi., 1989). Besides, the chairman also decided various other memberships. Instead, the congress did not choose one of the organizing committee that had supported the establishment of the organization (Komandoko., 2008: 67). This was decided since the previous committee were in charge of an institution, thus their moving space at that time remains limited.

The decisions in the first congress proved to all the presence participants, even to the entire archipelago emphasized the unity in diversity was important. This proved that the people of the archipelago had really adopted modern thinking. Namely the thought to create and realize the national ideals to be independent or free from the shackles of foreign colonialism.

Second Congress of Boedi Oetomo

After the first congress was done well, and made decisions. Furthermore, the implementation of Boedi Oetomo organization experienced the stages of movement in accordance with the results of the first congress. The organizers had been agreed upon, then they would implement the Boedi Oetomo organizational movement.

Implementation of organizational movement initially run by new boards, specifically on the leadership of R.A.A Tirtokoesoemo (Nagazumi., 1989). He ran the organizational movement in accordance with the first congress decision, which was willingly to change the fate of the Indonesian nation through social and educational fields, regardless they remained moderate to the Dutch colonial government.

Moderate or cooperative attitudes with the Dutch government meant not only to showing resistance against. The implementation of the organization was always under the supervision of the colonial government. The colonial government's control over the organization established a cooperative relationship and regular control over all the organizational activities (Komandoko., 2008: 88).

The cooperative relationship between the colonial government and the Boedi Oetomo organization was not to improve organizational progress, however, it stood to hamper the organizational

work. Furthermore, a lot of problems began to emerge, especially at the time of the implementation of organizations which were authoritatively controlled by the colonial government. The arising problems ranging from the aspects of financing, membership and organizational activities (Nagazumi., 1989).

The various problems that had arisen from the Boedi Oetomo organization will then be reported in the next congress. The second organizational congress took place exactly one year after the first congress. The board reported various problems including one year of movement.

The implementation of the second congress was very different from the first congress. At the second congress, there was no discussion related to the main purpose of Boedi Oetomo organization (Komandoko., 2008: 87). At the congress only reported various problems arouse within the organization during one year. The congressional report submitted by the congressman was not a step forward for the organization, but only the organization's report to the colonial government. The second congress report also reviewed the use of language in the organization. Among the results of the report is the approval of Malay language as the official language in the organization. Language is one of the tools used for communication (Rusdisunhaji., 2012: 5). By the decision of Malay language as the official language of congress, it is expected that all congress guests can understand the committee's report.

The activity report at the second congress of Boedi Oetomo was addressed to the colonial government. It should be understood that the invitations which were present in the second congress were the prijaji or local government, the Dutch colonial government and some ethnic Chinese in the report did not convey activities in building up the Indonesian society.

Based on the results of the second congress, there are indications of various organizational problems that must be resolved. The issue then becomes the main discussion of the congress. Until it ended up with the decision of the second congress (Komandoko., 2008: 90). The problem was taken as a step to resolve financial problems within the Boedi Oetomo organization.

Boedi Oetomo as an Inspiration for the Spirit of Nationalism

Boedi Oetomo organization was considered part of the national movement, which was established on the basis of a strong background. Some of these backgrounds include the internal and external factors beyond the organization (Nagazumi., 1989). The external factors include the success of the Asian-African nationalism, Japan's victory over Russia in 1905, and the entry of new world ideas.

The organizational formation factor from within was motivated by the longing for the glory of the past, the emergence of the intellectuals and the most important is the desire to unite and reveal the sense of Indonesian nationalism. Indonesian nationalism was born out of mutual consciousness.

Nationalism was established in the national body and spirit (Soekarno., 2015: 44). It is as reflected in the establishment of Boedi Oetomo organization as one of the organizations on the national movement of the Indonesian nation. Being the first organization established to change the fate of the Indonesian nation from the shackles of colonialism. As a manifestation of the sense of unity in diversity of the Indonesian nation (Fahrurrozi., 2017: 75).

Boedi Oetomo is the first organization founded by some Indonesian people. Founded in 1908 by STOVIA medical students. This organization is one of the Indonesian manifestations of consciousness aimed at changing the fate in order to achieve prior goals. The very ideals of the Indonesian nation was to avoid the burden of the shackles of western colonialism. This organization was founded by some

Indonesian people with diverse ethnic backgrounds. Established by several students who were bound within an institution.

A group of medical students who founded Boedi Oetomo organization are students who declare themselves as people who care about the fate of the nation. They are not from one region, nor a tribe. They come from different regions with diverse cultural backgrounds. They are united on the grounds of Indonesia, a country worth fighting for. Thus they are united in an association called Boedi Oetomo.

Boedi Oetomo organization was founded and raised his name by medical students (Komandoko., 2008: 11). However, after the organization's first congress seemed to forget who founded it. None of the founders of this organization were incorporated into the organizational structure. However, there was no possibility for the founders of the organization to release responsibility. When this organization weakened and nearly dissolved, the founders went along reinforced the organization in which they were struggling for. This was done for the sake of national unity, especially in the body of the Boedi Oetomo organization.

Unity within members of the Boedi Oetomo organization could actually provide a good example of the Indonesian nation. What a precious was the unity in fighting for the fate of the nation (Soekarno., 2015: 50). Unity as one of the power of the nation to reclaim its rights and obligations as a society, in case we break up, it will then facilitate the foreign nation utilizing the existing resources in Indonesia. Vital roles in building up social chain and linkage among folk healer and community (Addai., 2017: 4).

Conclusion

The western nation's occupation in Indonesia had occurred very long, suffering and misery had been a common sight for the people. The national movement was born as one of the real efforts to solve the problems of the Indonesian nation over the shackles of western colonialism. In an effort to solve various existing problems in Indonesia. The national movement in Indonesia was initiated in 1908. The national movement emerged at the start of the Boedi Oetomo organization. This organization was founded by a group of STOVIA medical students. A group of students studying at an institution. They were a group of people coming from different regions with different backgrounds. Differences in social background apparently did not dampen the good faith as students kept the ideals to gather and realize the national dreams. Different background of the organizational members eventually became the prove to the colonial government that verily the Indonesian nation could actually unite, gather and convey their national aspirations through official forums. Through differences, it enables the Indonesian in strengthening the national unity (Lay., 2006: 169). Although having confronted with many arising problems, however, this organization could survive and prove to all groups that Boedi Oetomo was one of the organizations which provided aspiration and helped to establish the people's spirit of nationalism. The great nation is a nation that are capable of defending themselves and proving to the whole world on the greatness of the struggle to unite

Acknowledgment

The author wishes to thank all the parties involved in the process of preparing the article, especially Dr. Leo Agung S and Prof. Dr. Wardo, M. Hum as the her thesis supervisors. In the process of drafting, both supervisors have devoted considerable time and energy to guiding and correcting the article entitled "Boedi Oetomo: The Multi Ethnic and Pioneering Organization to the Spirit of Nationalism."

References

- Agha. S. Hutchison & Kusantan. (2006). The Effects of Religious Affiliation on Sexual Initiation and Condom Use in Zambia. *J Adoloesc Health*, (38)4: 550-555.
- Akira Nagazumi. (1989). *Bangkitnya Nasionalisme Indonesia*. Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti.
- Alwi Hasan. (2007). *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), Edisi Ketiga*. Jakarta: Balai Pustaka.
- Christian S. Handayani & Ardhian Novianto. (2008). *Kuasa wanita Jawa*. Yogyakarta: PT LKIS Pelangi Aksara.
- Cornelis Lay. (2006). Nasionalisme dan Negara Bangsa. *Dalam Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Politik*. 10(2).
- Gamal Komandoko. (2006). *Kisah 124 Pahlawan dan Pejuang Nusantara*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Widyatama.
- _____. (2008). *Boedi Oetomo, Awal Kebangkitan Nasional*. Jakarta: Media Persindo.
- George D Larson. (1990). *Massa Menjelang Revolusi, Kraton dan Kehidupan Politik di Surakarta 1912-1942*. Yogyakarta: UGM Press.
- George McTurnan Kahin. (2013). *Nasionalisme & Revolusi Indonesia*. Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu.
- Kristanto. (2000). *Seribu Tahun Nusantara*. Jakarta: Kompas.
- Milkessa Adei & Faseha Mulu. (2017). Indigenous Wisdom and Folk Healing Practices among Urban Oromo of the Gibe Region in Ethiopia: A Case Study of Jimma and Agaro Towns. *Dalam International Journal of Multicultural and Mulirelligious Understanding*. 3(6), April 2017.
- Muhammad Asngad Rusdisunhaji. (2012). Bahasa Pendidikan Indonesia dan Akar Politik Pendidikan Nasional Pra-Kemerdekaan. *Dalam Jurnal Lingua Scientica*, 4(1), Juni 2012.
- Muhammad Habib Fahrurrozi, Wardo, & Mulyoto. (2017). The Abdul Rivai's thought of Nationalism in the Bintang Hindia Newspaper. *Dalam Jurnal International Journal of Multicultural and Mulirelligious Understanding*. 4(6).
- Nugroho Notosusanto, dkk. (1993). *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia V*. Jakarta: Balai pustaka.
- Ricklefs. (2011). *Sejarah Indonesia Modern*. Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press.
- Robert Van Neil. (1984). *Munculnya Elit Modern Indonesia*. Jakarta: PT Dunia Pustaka Jaya.
- Soekarno. (2015). *Mencapai Indonesia Merdeka*. Bandung: Segi Arsy.
- _____. (2015). *Nasionalisme, Ismamisme, Marksisme, pikiran-pikiran Soekarno Muda*. Bandung: Segi Arsy.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).