

SUNDANESE AND JAVANESE: SUNDANESE NOBLEMEN POINT OF VIEW TOWARDS BUDI UTOMO

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ABSTRACT

Nationalism was born as a result of the education of colonial government in the early of the twentieth century. At the beginning, nationalism was based on the local or ethnic identities that gave birth to ethnonationalism. This ethno-nationalist point of view caused debates among Sundanese noblemen in responding to the establishment of Budi Utomo branch in Bandung.

Key words : *Nationalism, Ethnonationalism, and Noblemen.*

Introduction

The idea of nationalism in Indonesia was pioneered by the educated people in the early of the twentieth century. These educated people were born from the education provided by the Dutch Colonizers. The education provided by the Dutch colonizers had raised the awareness of native Indonesian that their country had been colonized and was then left behind from other countries. This growing of awareness had encouraged the educated people into the idea of establishing a nation or a sovereign country. The notion on nationality was realized into the establishment of national organizations.

National movement organizations established had diverse backgrounds. Generally, there were two basic categories in the establishment of nationalism: first, the local or ethnic ideologies and; secondly, the national unity. Local ideology means the growing of ethnic awareness as the basis of the establishment of nationalism. On the other hand, national unity is the awareness without local hinders. The examples of local ideology are *Paguyuban Pasundan, Persatuan Minahasa, Sarekat Madura, Kaum Betawi, Sarekat Sumatera, Tirtayasa*, etc; while the examples of national ideology are *Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI), Indische Partij, Parindra*, etc.

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Ethnic awareness among educated Sundanese people had given birth to *Paguyuban Pasundan*. The background of the birth of this organization was the disappointment of Sundanese STOVIA students in Jakarta to the programs and the management of Budi Utomo organization. They saw that Budi Utomo was impartial in treating the Sundanese and Javanese ethnics. These educated people then resigned from the organization and built a new regional-based national movement (Sundanese-based). The dynamic relationship between Sundanese nationalists and Budi Utomo, in fact, did not only prevail in Jakarta. The establishment of Budi Utomo's Branch in Bandung triggered quite harsh reaction among Sundanese Nationalists. What was the point of view of Sundanese Noblemen Nationalists when Budi Utomo's Branch in Bandung was established?

This article tries to see the dynamic thoughts of the Sundanese Noblemen in taking the stance on Budi Utomo. There was a dichotomous view between Sundanese and Javanese ethnics that became the basis of nationalism idea.

The Definition and Status of Noblemen

Sunda is the name given to the native people living in the area of West Java. Not all people living in West Java speak Sundanese. In Cirebon, most of the local people speak Javanese because they stay in a location near the borderline of West Java with Central Java.

Etymologically, the word Sunda comes from the *Sanskerta* word, *sundara*, meaning good-looking, beautiful, postured, and nice. While according to Sundanese language, the word Sunda comes from the word sa-unda (*satunda*), meaning postponement or silo. In the Banten Bay there is Pulo Tundaa which was in the past used as the place for traders outside Banten to store their belongings from Maluku. The word Sunda was also used to name the wife of Prabu Siliwangi from Pajajaran Country, namely Nyai *Mantri Manik Mayang Sunda*, meaning *Nyai mantri a lovely diamond creation* (R. Ma'mun Atmamihardja, 1958 : 7). So, the word Sunda really matches the situation in most of the areas in West Java whose land consists of fertile and beautiful mountains.

As it is common in the structure of any traditional society, Sundanese society consists of two group structures: first, is the elite group or what is usually called as "*menak*" (noblemen) and, secondly, common people—commonly called as "*jalma letik*" or "*cacah*" group (small people or less important group) (Samiati Alisyahbana, 1954 : 1).

Structurally, "*Menak*" or noblemen belong to "*Priyai*" or bourgeois class in Javanese society, particularly in the Mataram Kingdom. Etymologically, the term "*priyai*" is hardly matched the term "*menak*". *Priyai* comes from the word *para-yayi* (the brothers/sisters), the brothers or sisters of the king (Sartono Kartodirdjo, 1993 : 3).

The word "*menak*" is found in the old Sundanese text estimated to be written in the 16th century, namely *Ciburuy (Kropak 632)* texts, on page III,

the third stanza, which says “*Rampes agama, haat heman dina janma, mana urang ka (n) dal kulina, mana urang dipajarkon mena (k) ku nu rama, carik na patikrama, na kurang lanang wadwan, iya.*” (Atja & Salah Danasasmita, 1981a). (We feel happy, then our religion comes into perfection, affection among human beings, then we are considered as high-class people, then we are said to be the noblemen by the “*rama*”).

R.H. Muhammad Musa, a productive Sundanese writer who produced his works from 1863-1870, gave a definition for the word “*menak*” as in the following:

*“Masing jadi menak djaler istri,
basa menak tea,
ngenak-ngenak ati kuring,
oelah kurang nya timbangan*

(Men or women should be “*menak*”,
“*menak*” means,
to make common people happy,
and men should be sage).

To conclude, the term “*priyai*” is more of a status, while “*menak*” refers more to the characteristics; even though socially, both “*menak*” and “*priyai*” have the same status, which are grouped to the elite group in the Javanese society structure.

The majority of the noblemen positions in West Java are the descents of bupati (the head of a district) (Samiaty Alisyahbana, 1954 : 1). After the fall of Pajajaran Kingdom, the traditional power in West Java was fragmented in the forms of districts ruled by a head of a district called “*Bupati*”. To show the existence of its legal authority, almost all the head of districts in West Java created a kinship and declared to be the descents of Prabu Siliwangi, a mythical figure of Pajajaran king.

The Birth of Paguyuban Pasundan (Pasundan Association)

Paguyuban Pasundan was born as part of the national movement. The national movement was driven by the educated people as a result of colonial education. These educated people came from the elite or modern group (Robert van Niel : 1984). The education held by the Dutch colonization for the elite groups triggered changes in the way they viewed the Dutch colonization and their self-identity as the local people. Westernization gave the foundation of the significance of the local people to develop; then, the idea of nationalism emerged.

In the early of the twentieth century, there was a shift in the meaning of “*priyai*”. The status of “*priyai*” was formerly determined based on the kinship;

generally they came from the authority of the local people. They occupied positions in the authority office, such as head of districts in West Java and ruled from one generation to the next. However, along with the beginning of the education provided by the Dutch colonization, the position of the head of a district required someone to have certain level of education. One of the schools established for the people working in the authority was OSVIA (*Opleidingschool Voor Inlandsche Ambtenaren*) which was established in Bandung around 1900. This school was also known as “**Sakola Menak**” (Noblemen School) (Gedenboek M.O.S.V.I.A, 1929 : 100-101):. Therefore, the status of “**priyai**” or noblemen was no longer based on the kinship but also on the level of education.

The education administered by the Dutch Colonization gave birth to two typologies of the noblemen, namely the bureaucrat and the nationalists. The bureaucrat was the nobleman who had joined the education then directly occupied the position in the government or in the city government. On the other hand, the nationalists were the noblemen who were in the middle of their education and who had finished their education and then actively engaged in the national movements (Savitri Prastiti Scherer, 1985).

In Java Island, the idea of nationalism came up for the first time among the noblemen along with the establishment of organisasi **Budi Utomo** (May 20, 1908). This organization was established based on the idea of dr. Wahidin Sudirohusodo. He was a nobleman graduated from “Dokter Jawa” school (Java medical school) in Weltevreden (later after 1900 was named STOVIA).

Seen from the nobility structure, Wahidin was a lower nobleman, this can be seen from his title, *Mas Ngabehi*. He was born in 1857 from one of the oldest families in Melati village, at the foot of Mount Merapi near Jogjakarta (Akira Nagazumi, 1989). Therefore, Wahidin was the typology of lower noblemen who later improved his status due to education factor.

Wahidin was a sophisticated nobleman. He brought into campaign the idea of the need of education aid or scholarship for the local people who were uneducated to the high noblemen and rich people in Java, so that the local people could gain education. Wahidin’s idea was accepted coldly especially by the officials working in the government office.

Wahidin’s idea was positively responded by the STOVIA students in Jakarta. Sutomo, one of the students of STOVIA, responded to the idea of Wahidin by establishing Budi Utomo on May 20, 1908 in Jakarta. Present in the meeting of the establishment of this organization were students from the School of Botany and Zoology in Bogor, *Sekolah Pamong Praja* in Magelang and Probolinggo, and from *Sekolah Menengah Petang Surabaya* and *Sekolah Pendidikan Pribumi* in Bandung.

Budi Utomo was the noblemen organization. The birth of this organization was the sign of the resurrection of the Javanese culture. The main goal of this organization was to develop the Javanese people. The scope of Javanese people covered the Sundanese, Java (Central Java) and Madura.

The birth of Budi Utomo caused dissatisfaction among Sundanese educated people who were active in that organization. The dissatisfaction among the Sundanese people emerged especially from the students of STOVIA in Jakarta who inspired the establishment of the same organization as Budi Utomo. Budi Utomo was considered as limited to certain people, especially from the Civil Servants and *pamong praja* (Kosoh Sastradinata, 1984 : 123).

In addition, the students of STOVIA coming from Sundanese ethnic were Mas Dajat Hidajat, R. Djoendjoenan Setiakoesoemah, R.G. Koesoema Soedjana, Asikin, Muh. Djoehana, Abdoel Patah, Slamet and Iskandar, were not really interested in Budi Utomo organization that was too Javanese-oriented (Soeharto, 1996 : 3). Furthermore, there were some Sundanese STOVIA students who resigned from Budi Utomo; they are R. Djoendjoenan dan R. Koesoema Soedjana.

Taking place in the house of Daeng Kanduruan Ardiwinata, a Sundanese writer, the chief editor of *Commisie Voor de Volkslectuur* (which was later named Balai Pustaka), these STOVIA students held a meeting on July 20, 1913; the meeting later resulted in the establishment of an organization called Paguyuban Pasundan. Present at the meeting was some students of HBS, KWS, etc. (Suharto, 1996 : 4). The missions of this organization were 1) to glorify Sundanese language and culture; 2) to actively participate in improving the education of the Sundanese people.

The organizational structure of Paguyuban Pasundan (MOh Ali, 1972 : 219) is as the following:

Head	: Daeng Kanduruan Ardiwiranata
Vice Head	: Dajat Hidajat, STOVIA student
Secretary I	: R. Iskandar Brata, an Employee of Firma Tiedeman van Kerchem
Secretary II	: R. Poerawinata, the Secretary of <i>Commisie voor Volks Lectuur</i>
Treasurer	: R. Koesoema Soedjana, STOVIA student
Commissariats	: R. Doedjoenan, STOVIA student
	M. Iskandar, STOVIA student
	M. Adiwangsa, Head of Pasar Senen Pawn Office
	M. Sastrawiria, a teacher of School II of Gang Kelinci.

With the mission of improving education for the Sundanese society, the birth of Paguyuban Pasundan was warmly welcomed by the society of West Java, especially from the educated and noblemen people. In a relatively short time, Paguyuban Pasundan had spread to some districts and even *kawadanaan* (sub-districts) in West Java such as Bandung, Bogor, Tasikmalaya, Sumedang, Manonjaya, Cianjur, Kuningan, Ciamis, Purwakarta (Siliwangi, 20 August 1921).

Paguyuban Pasundan at first was a socio-cultural organization, but later changed into a political organization. This change was influenced by other national movement organizations. Paguyuban Pasundan did not only struggle for Sundanese identity, but also for Indonesian nationalism. This attitude was shown by the organization on September 1926 when it was established a committee of

“*Persatuan Indonesia*” (Indonesia Union) aiming at uniting various political beliefs among national movements along with *SI*, *Muhammadiyah*, *Jong Islamieten Bond (JIB)*, *Persatuan Minahasa*, *Sarekat Ambon* and *Sarekat Sumatera*. (J.Th. P. Blumberger, 1931 : 200).

Paguyuban Pasundan then entered PPKI (Pemoefakatan Perhimpunan Kebangsaan Indonesia) a federation body from various national movement organizations that was formed in a meeting on Desember 17/18, 1927. In that meeting, Paguyuban Pasundan was represented by R. Oto Koesoema Soebrata, Bakri Soerjaatmadja and Soetisna Senjaya (Suharto, 1996).

The nationality attitude of Paguyuban Pasundan grew even stronger in its congress held in Tasikmalaya (March 30 – April 1, 1929). In this congress, R. Oto Koesoemabrata explained that Sundanese people were parts of Indonesia. If Paguyuban Pasundan struggled to improve Pasundan areas in the field of social, economy, culture, etc. it did not mean that this organization separated itself or isolated from other groups. As the vernacular used in their meetings, then Indonesian or Dutch language was used (Suharto, 1996 : 7).

The political struggle by Paguyuban Pasundan for its regions appeared when the Dutch colonizer planned to establish West Java Province in 1925. Paguyuban Pasundan suggested Bandung to be the capital of the province and to name the province “Pasundan”. The Dutch government did not grant the name of Pasundan, instead preferred Jawa Barat (*West Java*). After the establishment of the provincial government, the members of Paguyuban Pasundan became actively participated in the Provincial Parliament and District Parliaments (Suharto, 2002 : 20). Therefore, the political struggle of Paguyuban Pasundan was expanded.

A Debate on Nationalism Perspective

There were arguments of nationalism among active Sundanese Nobleman in Paguyuban Pasundan. These arguments occurred during the establishment of Budi Utomo’s branch in Bandung. The argument started when Otto Iskandar Di Nata (Siliwangi, 4 October 1921) gave general explanation about Budi Utomo in relation to its upcoming Branch in Bandung. Active Sundanese Nobleman in Pasundan Community had their own point of view regarding Sundanese nationalism which was different from Javanese nationalism (Budi Utomo).

Otto Iskandar Dinata in December 12, 1921 stated that He joined Budi Utomo because He loved “unity” more than his ethnic (Sundanese). He wanted to join an organization which had culture, the will of independence, and nationalism.

In this meeting Otto Iskandar Dinata invited members from the Pasundan Community and Bandung Regent, Wiranatakoeoemah. Oto Iskandar Di Nata statement had offended members of the Pasundan Community as Sundanese. In his statement, Otto Iskandar Dinata stated as it was printed in *Padjadjaran* magazine no. 30 of August 1921:

“Kuring teu giruk ka Pasundan, tapi deudeuh ka persatuan (eenheid). Pasundan maot, pikeun ngahormat ieu persatuan, sim kuring arek mencit hayam...ayeuna didieu ditambahan nyaeta sareng embe”.

(I'm not interested in Pasundan, but I do care for unity. Pasundan dies to honor this unity, I will butcher a chicken ... and I will also butcher a goat).

Otto Iskandar Di Nata's statement caused severe reaction especially among Pasundan Association members. The reaction came to Otto Iskandar Di Nata as a Sundanese and Budi Utomo as the Javanese organization.

An author with the initial E. Br. (presumably the name of Ema Bratakoesoema), one of the editorial staffs of *Siliwangi* newspaper (Siliwangi 4 October 1921) regretted Otto Iskandar Di Nata's statement, who was willing to sacrifice Pasundan to be a member of Budi Utomo. He should have respected Pasundan as his own ethnic (Siliwangi 20 July 1918).

Odang Prawiradireja, one of the editorial staffs in *Siliwangi* newspaper, did not agree with what Otto Iskandar Di Nata had referred to as “unity” in his writing. Unity is not a matter of bringing together Sundanese and Javanese in the same roof of Budi Utomo, because Javanese and Sundanese have their own places. Pasundan managed the land of Sunda and Budi Utomo managed the land of Java (middle part). The unity range of Budi Utomo according to Odang was limited, which covered Java, Madura, Bali and Lombok (Padjadjaran, 20 July 1918).

A writer with the initial “Talangsara” said that Javanese and Sundanese stated that it was hard for Sundanese and Javanese to get united as Javanese as what Budi Utomo had aimed at. Sundanese is an ethnic with its own identities which are different from those of Javanese. Sundanese has culture, tradition, and language that cannot be treated **javanese**ly, but it has to be treated **Sundanese**ly. According to the writer, if Budi Utomo aimed at covering Sundanese then the organization was regarded as greedy (Siliwangi, 4 October 1921).

S.Pr, an abbreviation of the writer from *Siliwangi* newspaper mentioned that Budi Utomo's desire to unite Javanese, Sundanese, Maduranese and Balinese was considered ambitious. Budi Utomo had the ambition of gathering as many as 30 million people. That attitude, according to the writer, would build “Jawa Agung” (*the Great Java*) in Java land. Other ethnics should comply with the Javanese (Siliwangi, 4 October 1921).

Soetisna Sendjadja compared Budi Utomo and Pasundan in terms of their rules of association. His writing answered the question of Otto Iskandar Di Nata questioning why Sundanese people were rarely eager to be the members of Budi Utomo. Soetisna saw it from the missions and membership of both organizations.

Soetisna mentioned the membership of Paguyuban Pasundan that consisted of three categories, they were ordinary members, consisting of local people (did not necessarily have to be Sundanese but ought to have the same missions as

Paguyuban Pasundan), then there were helping members and honorary members. Whereas in Budi Utomo, there were three kinds of membership: ordinary members, members who gave donation (donator) and honorary members. Only people coming from Java, Bali, Madura and Lombok were able to be the members of Budi Utomo (Siliwang, 4 October 1921).

The mission of Paguyuban Pasundan was to develop Sundanese people in terms of their security, by struggling with educating them and improving their lives, and improve their behavior through education at home and school that would be able to enlarge their knowledge with the hope that the people would gain power and better lives. On the other hand, Budi Utomo's mission was to develop people living Java, Madura, Bali, and Lombok islands.

With that comparison, Soetisna stated that Pasundan was narrow but was large. It was said to be large because its membership was open for all people, not limited to Sundanese people, provided that they have the same mission as Pasundan. It was said to be narrow because its mission was only to develop Sundanese people, without embracing other ethnics.

On the other hand, according to Soetisna Sendjaja, Budi Utomo seemed to be large but was actually narrow. This is so since the membership of Budi Utomo was not open for all Indonesians but limited to people living in the islands of di Java, Madura, Bali and Lombok. In other words, Budi Utomo seemed big only because geographically it was wider-ranging than Pasundan.

Actually, long before the debates between Pasundan and Budi Utomo through the campaigns by Otto Iskandar Di Nata, discussion on Sundanese nationalism had emerged. A writer with a disguise name of "The Theory Maker", in his writing in *Siliwangi* newspaper entitled *Soendaneesch Nationalisme* questioned the implementation of nationalism itself.

At that time, there emerged ideas about *Javaansch Nationalism and Indisch-Nationalism*. According to the writer who suggested the ideas, nationalism should be built based on culture similarities, language, and mother land. *Indisch Nationalisme* was still far from being created, because in terms of culture and language, Hindia Belanda was still different. Would it be the Melayu language or the Dutch language as the lingua franca? There was no agreement yet. The similarity was only found in terms of the state of being colonized. Therefore, the more perfect naming was not *Indisch-Nationalisme* but *Nederlandsch Koloniale Nationalisme* (Siliwangi, 20 July 1918).

On the other hand, *Javaansch Nationalisme* means culture, language, and the place occupied should be Java Island. In terms of culture and language, Sunda could not get into *Java-Nationalism*. Sunda has its own language which is different from the Javanese language, the Sundanese language. In regards with culture, Javanese were highly influenced by the philosophy of "wayang", while in Sunda "wayang" did not have the same place; it was not considered as the philosophy of life. Its main function for the Sundanese people was merely for entertainment (Padjadjaran, 20 July 1918).

The birth of *Paguyuban Pasundan* that was driven by the educated noblemen in West Java with its nationalism idea, should give us the description that among Sundanese noblemen, Javanese is not identical with Sundanese. Even the educated noblemen were worried about the presence of Wiranatakoesoemah as Bupati (Dalem) of Bandung in the campaign meeting of Budi Utomo by Otto Iskandar Di Nata. Many were worried that Wiranatakoesoemah would be taken by Budi Utomo (Javanese) and lost his sympathy towards the Sundanese Association, but that didn't happen (Siliwangi, 17 September 1921).

The polemic with Otto Iskandar Di Nata was solved on September 3, 1922. In July 1922, once Otto Iskandar Di Nata worked in Jakarta, he resigned and then joined Paguyuban Pasundan. In the congress of Paguyuban Pasundan in 1929 in Bandung, Otto Iskandar Dinata was selected as the general chief of Paguyuban Pasundan. Under his leadership Paguyuban Pasundan improved faster and better and became an influencing organization among Sundanese society, especially in the field of education of building schools (Edi S. Ekadjati, 1981/1982 : 102).

Conclusion

Nationalism in Indonesia was born as a reaction towards colonization. The education administered in the era of Dutch colonization gave impact on the birth of nationalism ideas. Nationalism ideas were born among educated people or the nationalist noblemen. The foundation of nationalism in Indonesia was more of ethnic-based, for example Budi Utomo was based on "javanese" ethnic and Paguyuban Pasundan was based on "Sundanese". Such a point of view later on gave birth to debates on nationalism among Sundanese Noblemen especially ones who were actively involved in Paguyuban Pasundan when Budi Utomo Branch in Bandung was established. Sundanese nationalist noblemen viewed Budi Utomo was inclined to "Javanese", and did not really represent the right of Sundanese people. The beginning of the awareness was more of ethnic-based that gave birth to ethnonationalism movement.

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