

MODERN ELITE SOCIETY AND NATIONAL MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Since the reformation happened to this country, publications on several main events, which were sometimes causing some resentment, have been appeared. They include a widespread corruption issue involving executive, legislative, judicative or private elements; a notorious issue of a house member caught up as he played his gadget to watch a porn video; as well as an issue of a ruined PSSI congress held on May 20, 2011. Then, why don't we, as a nation well known for its decency and friendliness, show our tolerance? What is wrong with us? As this question showed up to the ground, there were also excuses replying; we are not ready for democracy, our leaders are indecisive, our education system was so messy, and so on and so forth. To analyze this, we can refer to a certain past moments. Koesome Oetoyo, in 'Pewarta Prijaji', August 1900 explained that priyayi were those who worked as clerk, teacher, foreman, police agent, and etc. Koesome Oetoyo, in 'Pewarta Prijaji', August 1900 explained that priyayi were those who worked as clerk, teacher, foreman, police agent, etc. Accordingly, those involving in the aforementioned cases are priyayi, even a high class priyayi. This article focuses on study of modern elite society and national movement in Java since 1900-1942.

Key Words: national movement, priyayi, pangreh praja, STOVIA, keraton

Introduction

If we relate this concept to the concept of aristocracy and nobility, those who became a 'new *priyayi*' (modern elite) in the society have not been morally and ethically ready. One who has become a *priyayi* should do some acts that can make them different from the grassroots. This is described clearly by Umar Khayam in his novel of *Para Priyayi* reflecting a scene of Japan arrival where a (teacher) lower *priyayi* asked to resign from his job as he did not want to bow to Japan. From his work, however, it can be seen that being a *priyayi*, one should be loyal to the ruler, tended not to be creative, and lived like a flow of water. Since the

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position was surely be honored, they did not need doing unusual things such as those reflected in the message of Ngoro Seten addressed to Sastrodarsono, his son, as he got his first position as teacher assistant (low *priyayi*).

“You know, Le, this is a stepping stone of your life. You are priyayi now. You are not a peasant anymore. You should remember, Le. Your world will be different. You should know how to act in your new world. If you are careful enough, honest and loyal to your supervisor and government rules, you will have a higher position. Your way to be a priyayi is about your face, Le”.
(Kayam 1992; 38)

Generally, Javanese can be divided into two big different groups. During the colonial time, the major part included those who lived in villages. They are peasants: the minority (grassroots). Above the social status, there are the *priyayi* (Geertz 1960: 227– 260). They were those who used to rule the land. The gap between the two social classes was widely open. Even, a lowest *priyayi* could be a ruler in his own territory. If he passed the peasants, they should bow to show their respects and loyalty. The noble *priyayi* lived as the holder of *apanage* in royal land, and hold a governmental position in the monarchy system that was led by a king or worked in the Dutch East Indies government.

After 1900, along with the raise of ethical politics involving education, migration, and transportation, especially the education, there was a new phenomenon, namely the emergence of the new *priyayi* (modern elite). Most of them are youths from *pangreh praja* (local government officers) family who used their better chance to have a higher western education. They were often unsatisfied with the modest acts of elite who rule Java. They did not want to follow their parents. Education offered them new possibilities to have a different field in government. New positions widespread in front of them, including a clerk, teacher, foreman in agricultural field, state doctor, translator, supervisor at irrigation department, etc. Some of them lived independently choosing an independent carrier as a private doctor, teacher at private school, lawyer or journalist.

The new *priyayi* got their job and social status thanks to their education. This group, compared to *priyayi* of *pangreh praja*, was more open to all potential youths from the lower class. The new *priyayi* was the aspirator of nationalism. As aspirators to the nationalism, the *priyayi* showed up in cities, instead of in the peasants' abode in the village. This shows us that the emergence of new ideas came from cities influencing the society. It was such as that happened in Batavia, Surabaya, and Medan. Moreover, since its establishment in 1901 to the closing in 1904, 'Insulinde' magazine published in West Sumatera, used to encouraged 'development' and asked to enter 'a new developed world'. In this situation, campaign to a modern education was also encouraged (Kompas, 20 Mei 2011).

Through the western education, the new young *priyayi* got acquaintance with European thought, on politics and on democratic government, as been reflected in France Revolution. The new intellectual *priyayi* could accept the democratic western thought as well as the western culture. It is reflected in *Para Priyayi*

where Sosrodarsono could see that his sons had been changed. He remembered, long after he left his home, he kissed his parents' hands, yet when his sons did the same, they hugged and kissed him and cried. He was aware that since his sons had been graduated from HIS (*Hollands Inlandshe School*).

On the other hand, most of the new *priyayi* felt unsatisfied with their condition, being forced by colonialist, since there were many chances to have a good carrier, but they cannot take a role in deciding the way how the government should be and only played as a low class employee. They, however, did not like feudal traditional Java customs where hierarchy was maintained by the old *priyayi*. From this point, western education actually had created a new young generation which are firm, independent and reliable.

From Local Nationalism to Indonesian Nationalism

Profession as a doctor, at first, was only like achieving an academic title from The Dutch, yet it did not affect the low social status of the owner. Javanese *priyayi*, particularly bureaucratic *priyayi*, accepted medical officers adversely. They did not like the new *priyayi*. It was more to their envy towards various facilities got by the medical students. A medical student got 8 to 20 gulden, almost twice higher than the clerk apprentice. That was also different from the school for future officers (OSVIA) where a student should pay for their tuition. A medical school graduate had salary of 75-150 gulden, equal to the salary of vice district officer who had served for 16 years. Though they got big salary, because of their low position as professional *priyayi*, they did not get a decent attention; such as what had been told by Ahmad Djajadiningrat, the regent of Serang that Javanese doctors got a bad treatment in society. Doctors were treated as irrigation or police officers. He also admitted that he did the same to a doctor came to his house to help his sick wife. Djajadiningrat treated the doctor as if the doctor was not much than a vice district officer.

The doctor then decently reminded Djajadiningrat on his rudeness and told the regent a story he experienced at his school time. When he learned at STOVIA, there was a son of a regent who had ever borrowed his clothes to go to a dance ball. The doctor, then, told how high was the position of the regent's son later became a regent, while he, himself, who had been long in the department, was still in the same low social status as a doctor. As he listened to the story, Djajadiningrat was very ashamed and finally did apologize for his rudeness (Scherer, 1985).

The intellectual skill built through western education and cultural social condition then became one of the factors towards a more developed thought, such as those of Ciptomangunkusumo and Soetomo. Because of their parents' bad experience as well as their own intellectual, their intuition towards unfairness in society were getting sharper and sharper. Accordingly, he played a more important

role in Javanese social and economical issue compared to the other senior *priyayi* or any other class.

Among the founder of Boedi Oetomo which was established on May 20, 1908, were Raden Soetomo, Tjipto Mangunkusumo, and Gunawan Mangunkusumo who were STOVIA students. They were insisted by a Javanese doctor, Wahidin Soedirohusodo who had travelled along Java to revive Javanese. Budi Utomo means 'a noble ethic'. It was also reflected in their motto 'santoso waspodo nggajoeh oetomo' which means force and intellectual to reach nobility. Their symbol which was designed in 1917 included the letters of BO stabbed by an arrow referring to the God's words. It was also surrounded by feathers symbolizing 'past, present, and future time, as well as the symbol of the development of physic, soul and moral. The symbol was hung on a five strip color ribbon which reflected hard work (black), bravery (red), wealth (yellow), prosperity (green) and purity (white). The students who became the members did not run for open politic aim, but hey wanted to have a developed Java, particularly through the widespread western education.

The establishment of Boedi Oetomo symbolized the rise of first indigenous organization in Indonesia having western model, namely an organization of which the committee was periodically changed, having bylaws and constitution as well as programs, and holding meeting where the members are allowed to vote. The spirit of BO depleted when the founder were taken from ambtenaar. A regent of Karanganyar, Tirtokusumo has taken the chief position. As BO was taken over by the *priyayi*, the students establishing BO started to be dismissed. Adalah dokter Cipto Mangunkusumo yang segera terlempar dari BO karena usulnya agar BO bergerak dalam politik pergerakan kebangsaan ditolak. It was Doctor Cipto Mangunkusumo who was firstly dismissed from BO since his suggestion on improving their movement to be a national political movement was rejected. Since then, BO let themselves to be involved in an emancipatory cultural nationalism and to explore their basic identity on a cultural divinity. BO encouraged the National Javanese Cultural Congress in 1920. Within the organization itself, there were some members who intended to build 'Javanese intellectual organization' but it was failed. Cultural Nationalism is a part of the development of national awakening. This tendency was a part in deciding the self identity, there was a colonial interest in one side promising modernity as well as an oppression towards independence, on the other hand, there was also a concern on inherited ethnical cultural proud that should be negotiated with another ethnical communities.

BO as one of the product of ethical politics had given a new thought to the new *priyayi* in the East Indies. Cipto as the first generation exiled to Netherland as well as the founder of BO had been an aspirator to the youth exiled to Netherland. Therefore, it was not a question that the 'Indonesia' concept emerged in Netherland. In a foreign, cold and unpleasant country where citizens and villagers belittled non red people, the students learned to praise equity: that they were from a tropical colonialized country, that they were colonialized by a foreign nation and that they had social and political rights. Moreover, they were not only

one voice in thought, they were also equal under the Dutch law, i.e. as *inlander*. Before they arrived in Netherland, education in the Dutch East Indies had given them a same framework. In all Dutch East Indies school, the natives had a firm education: the same grammar book, past Dutch stories and a little portion of the story of the East Indies. The potential youngsters from outside Java came to Java to continue their education and there they got acquaintance with people with a very different cultural background. Therefore, it can be said that in the 20th century, in all school, whether it is in Batavia or in other cities in Java, the spirit as Indonesian has been nurtured. The youngsters were inspired by their seniors in Netherland as well as the former organization members itself.

Besides, there was a unique case on this BO's effect. As there was a cultural renaissance in Java, the *priyayi* who adored Javanese culture realized that they were in a deep crisis as the result of political decrease causing Javanese *priyayi*, *keraton* (Javanese kingdom) and *keraton* people were under the The Dutch power. The ruin of Javanese culture was heartily felt, particularly by the *priyayi* from Surakarta and Yogyakarta which were the center of Javanese culture. Within BO, they found a chance to encourage the revival of Javanese culture. The struggle had its way when the BO chiefs got in touch with *keraton*, such as RMA Soejosoeparto, Pangeran Hadiwijoyo (the son of Pakubuwono X), Radjiman Wediodiningrat as well as the rulers of pura Mangkunegaran. During the time, the Javanese literature was much developed. One of the evidence was the exploration and the translation of Pararaton and Negarakertagama. Because of the publication of Pararaton and Negarakertagama, the *priyayi* got their literature heritage which was lost for centuries. The most important thing is that the image of Java was turned out from passive into the glory one. The image was quoted in historical reviews and text books in colonial schools. It was the sign that BO had given a new atmosphere as well as spirit to the education.

Though BO had been stagnant and tended to be an organization involving in education and cultural field, BO had been an aspirator to the emergence of other organizations, along with the international factors such as the Asia Awakening, i.e. the Asia enthusiasm wave that West can be defeated by their own power. The initiation of BO was followed by *Indische Partije* (established in 1912), a multiethnic organization of Indo-Europe and radical native people which insisted on the independence of The east indies. *Indische Partij* was the first modern association who had a dispute with the government. Its three main leaders, E.F.E Douwes Dekker (the grandson of Multatuli), Soewardi Suryaningrat and Tjipto Mangunkusumo (one of the founder of BO), were later exiled to Netherland in 1913. Besides the *Indische Partij*, there was Sarekat Islam founded in 1912 to defy Tionghoa merchant dominance in Solo, which several years after the establishment they formed their political aims. In 1918, SI had a half million members. After the emergence of SI, there were many political organizations in Dutch East Indies, which either insisted on independent Indonesia or tended to be cooperative with The Dutch.

National Awakening: A Reflection

The national politic condition of Indonesia as has been described in the introduction may be considered as a form of failure of the past national education management. It went through a long education process. If, at the present time, we do an error in education management, a bad result will happen in the decades latter. However, if, at the present time, we are succeed in forming and conducting a good educational system, the good result will be reached in the future. The ethic politics delivered by Van Deventer in 1901 had yielded its affects in 1908. It was marked by the emergence of the new generations which had been continuously developing and led to the youth congress in 1928 as well as the independence of Indonesia.

If, then, education require the students to reach high scores without the implementation of etiquette and the values of national struggle, they will become a pragmatic, instant, and consumptive generation. The recent education has not been able to produce a modern elite class who are able to do a fundamental improvement towards the national life system. The elite society is still struggling for their own position as to keep their own power, instead of building society.

Soetomo, one of the founders of BO, states that: “a good education shall teach the intellectual to dedicate themselves to the country and people, carefully and heart fully, to love their own land and to be ready to sacrifice for their country.” Furthermore, Soetomo also condemned HIS since HIS, as an educational institution, was actually deferred its alumni to continue their school to the Dutch higher school, i.e only 27% of the alumni who could continue their school. Nevertheless, his statement was contended by his opponents such as Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana, who conveyed that western education had hastened a systematic development process. Though, he also admitted that colonial education institutions had made stratification in social status. It was different from the education in Islamic boarding school which considered all the students to be equal, either the have or the poor, they all learned in the school, together.

Table 9.1 The number of native people who got western education in 1900-1928

No	Year	Average rate of Indonesian who studied in western primary school	Average rate of Indonesian who studied in western high school (including MULO)
1	1900 - 1904	2.987	25
2	1905 - 1909	5.175	45
3	1910 - 1914	23.910	135
4	1915 - 1919	33.516	675
5	1920 - 1924	51.308	2.602
6	1925	61.425	4.431
7	1926	64.721	4.799
8	1927	66.824	5.692
9	1928	74.697	6.468

Source: Kahin (1995: 40)

The increase of intellectual number marked the raise of a new Indonesian modern elite society who had a different interest with those of colonial's. They included elite society who were disappointed and were enriched by Islamic modern political social thought that could not conform to colonial social politics. In general, the western political social ideas very encouraged Indonesians' broad social feeling, i.e. to defy the economical and political obedience as well as the slavery of The Dutch. They also implemented their thought into their personal interest that they intended to have an equal position after the foreign domination causing them to have a discouraged feeling as Indonesian.

Table 9.2 Percentage of Local Officers in the East Indies the year of 1938

No	Nationality	Low officer	Low Officer	Middle	M i d d l e Officer	High Officer
1	Europe	0,6	33,3		57,6	92,2
2	Indonesia (Native)	98,9	60,6		38,0	6,4
3	Equalized Indonesian	0,2	3,4		2,0	0,5
4	Chinese	0,3	2,3		1,5	0,3
5	Equalized Chinese	-	0,4		0,8	0,5

Source: Kahin (1995: 45)

A less carrier chance given by the colonial government towards intellectual had worried the group. Only a small part of them who were accepted in the governmental institutions and their salary was much lower than those of non native. 25% of The Dutch school graduates did not get the job in line with their own field. They only got a job in peripheral economical work field. Besides as a teacher in private schools, there were almost no vacancies for them. A big number of nationalistic informal schools existed for twenty years at the end of colonialism were much correlated with the situation. The informal schools were not realized by the colonial as the place to nurture new ideas as well as the place where the new middle class intellectuals who later spread the spirit of nationalism were raised. It was from the schools that the ideas of intellectual elite emerge. They had ideas for development and were eager to establish the national awareness.

Besides, a small number of Indonesian students who studied in Netherland were fully influenced by the political condition as well as political ideas they found there. It is very different from what happen in Indonesia recently. It was the source of their awareness towards their struggle towards colonialism. It was also acknowledged that the idea of the independent Indonesia came from the intellectuals who studied in Netherland, i.e. Perhimpunan Indonesia or Indonesian Union (*Indonesische Vereniging*, 1924).

In the beginning of the second decade of the 20th century, the process of nation formation had become a socio-political dynamic that led to the main incident of October 28, 1928. The eager towards the development was the basic of social life in a more and more complex society. It was in that condition that the intention

to establish a trans-ethnic nation grew and led to the intention to build a modern and developed nation on August 17, 1945.

Accordingly, if the establishment of BO in 1908 could raise new ideas and the new intellectual *priyayi* society as well as lead to a new different world with a systematic organization; would there, 103 years after the national awakening that was symbolized by the increase of education budget as much as 20%, be a new generation with a strong character and a wide knowledge such as Soetomo, Cipto Mangunkusumo, Suwardi Suryaningrat, Soekarno, Hatta and the others? Or, will the big budget only shock the manager that will only encourage a new modus in corruption, instead of encouraging the raise of a generation with strong character and a wide knowledge? A good intention to raise the educational budget that is not accompanied by a particular systematic system and plan will not produce a developed generation; instead it will build a beggar and dependent generation. Hope that it will not be happened, and be taken as the source to contemplate on realizing the national mission, i.e. to build an educated nation!

Conclusion

If only the national awakening means the refreshment towards the national spirit, it then means that it is a must for continuing the ideas stated in the preamble of constitution, particularly to improve what we have been left behind. Therefore, the sovereignty, which is known as democratization and the establishment of humanity, will become the main program. The two issues are the authentic message from national history. They are not ideological infiltration on various discredited elements.

When national awakening had been proclaimed to the nation, the raise of improvement became a must. Science and technology are a must in its dynamic. Therefore, pertaining to the national awakening, the support towards science and technology which is commonly conducted in schools have to be realized by all elements of society to achieve a fair and prosperous society as we all have dreamed.

There is a complaint; nationalism has been considered to be decreasing. Many incidences hit the nation show that there should be any contemplation on the existence of the nation. After we had established the independence as 'the golden bridge' towards a justice and prosperous society, there actually emerged a new hesitancy. However, the future challenge is getting more complex. Therefore, the nationalism should not only be realized. Accordingly, national awareness should be reflected in the social politic management that should be in line with the national idea. It is our main duty.

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