

REENACTING SUKARNO'S AJI PANCASONA IN LEARNING HISTORY

Nyong Eka Teguh Iman Santosa^{1*}

¹UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya

*¹Corresponding email: nyongeka@uinsa.ac.id

ABSTRACT - This article focuses on the functional dimension of studying history, especially in universities. History education should enable students not only to understand past events methodically but more so that they are able to read critically and even be actively involved in the current history in their own time. This study uses Sukarno's writing, *Mentjapai Indonesia Merdeka*, as an inspiration as well as a transformative pattern in the contemporary study of history. The pragmatic analysis is used to approach that goal. The most important lesson from his historical learning is the prophetic integration he carried out with the three dimensions of human existential time: past, present, and future. Knowledge of both archived history (*sejarah terarsip*) and hidden history (*sejarah terpendam*) can be contextualized to live progressively in the on-making history (*sejarah bergerak*) and imagined history (*sejarah terbayang*).

Keywords: Sukarno; Aji Pancasona; Historical Learning; Critical Pedagogy

ABSTRAK –Artikel ini berfokus pada dimensi fungsional pembelajaran sejarah, khususnya di perguruan tinggi. Pendidikan sejarah hendaknya memampukan peserta didik tidak hanya memahami peristiwa masa lalu secara metodis, tetapi lebih kepada mampu membaca secara kritis bahkan terlibat aktif dalam sejarah terkini di zamannya. Kajian ini memanfaatkan tulisan Sukarno, *Mentjapai Indonesia Merdeka*, sebagai inspirasi sekaligus pola transformatif dalam kajian sejarah kontemporer. Analisis pragmatis digunakan untuk mendekati tujuan tersebut. Pelajaran terpenting dari pembelajaran sejarahnya adalah integrasi profetik yang dilakukannya dengan tiga dimensi waktu eksistensial manusia: masa lalu, masa kini, dan masa depan. Pengetahuan baik sejarah terarsip (*archived history*) maupun sejarah terpendam (*hidden history*) dapat dikontekstualisasikan untuk hidup secara progresif dalam sejarah bergerak (*on-making history*) dan sejarah terbayang (*imagined history*).

Kata Kunci: Sukarno, Aji Pancasona, Pembelajaran Sejarah, Pedagogi Kritis

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has given birth to many national and even international figures in the history of its struggle for independence. Among them are known not only through the strives in the path of mass organizing, political diplomacy, or military operation. Some of them are also famous for their pithy writings. One of the most prominent figures with his thoughts is Sukarno or Bung Karno. An activist of the national movement who was later destined to become the first president of a country that liberated itself from colonialism, namely the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Legge, 2012).

Mentapai Indonesia Merdeka (Sukarno, 1964) is an article that marks the long journey of this figure's struggle. This work not only provides an overview of how a new nation was imagined to be established by a colonized people, but can also serve as an inspiring reference for students and teachers on how to read history in a transformative way. It is in the context of exploring lessons for the development of history learning, especially in higher education, from this work that this paper is presented. Based on the literature review, no work has been found that specifically does this. So far, this writing has only been used as one of the references about

Indonesian history and about the figure of Sukarno. While about this book itself is just translation and reviews can be found (Sukarno, 1978).

DISCUSSION

Mentjapai Indonesia Merdeka was written by Sukarno when he was taking a vacation to Pangalengan, Bandung in March 1933. He intended it as a prolegomenon to national struggle for those who just entered in to the field. There are ten sub titles within this *vlugschrift*. They are (1) the causes why Indonesia was not independent; (2) from the old-imperialism to the modern one; (3) Indonesia, the noble land, our rich land where we will be forever; (4) from the East the sun rises, thus wake up and stand up all fellows!; (5) the use of (political) party; (6) the independent Indonesia as a bridge; (7) the one there wants to go there, the one here wants to go here; (8) the forming of power, radicalism, mass-action; (9) on the other side of the gold bridge; and (10) in achieving Indonesia independent.

This book is one of the historical documents that proves that at a relatively young age, namely 32 years, Sukarno as one of the leaders of the Indonesian movement already had a complete picture of the goals of his struggle. As an activist, through his writings, he not only showed his thoughts to the public, but at the same time was a form of education and transformation of literacy to his Indonesian people. He believed that the ideals of his struggle would not be achieved alone, but as a communal struggle as a nation. An interesting phrase he wrote to start his introductory essay, “*Hanya rakyat yang mau merdeka bisa merdeka*”, which means that only those people who want to free who could free.

Sukarno began his writing by reiterating his original concept of *Marhaen* Indonesia. That is the population or common people of Indonesia who are not in power. Where in the entire history of this country, it has always been in a lower and weaker position. During feudalism they were merely the tools of the kings. They don't have the right to determine their own destiny. They are the ones who are always oppressed by the upper class. Until the expression appeared, “*Nek awan duweke sang nata, nek wengi duweke dursila,*” in the day they belong to the kings, in the night they become the prey of evil people. Meanwhile, in the new era of modern capitalism, they must feel no better fate under the stampede of imperialism. And this siding with the Marhaen became the heart and center of Sukarno's political thought, including inside this book.

According to Sukarno, when Western imperialism was present, Indonesian society was in a sick state because it was in the middle of an era shifting phase from the old feudalism of

Brahmanism to the new Islamic feudalism. A society that is feverish and sluggish, in turn, has no chance of recovering from the clutches of the giant power of Western imperialism which is very exploitative. Imperialism itself was conceptualized by Sukarno as the offspring of capitalism. In its old version, capitalism was represented by the imperialism of the Oost Indische Compagnie (OIC) or the *cultuurstelsel* of the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC). But along with the development of modern knowledge and technology, the new capitalism introduced imperialism through its machines such as industrialization and the banking system. So, since 1870, the foreign capital flowed into this colonized country through regulatory instruments such as *Agrarische wet* and *Suikerwet-de Wal*. And the flow of dredging domestic wealth abroad was even more massive when the open-door policy was implemented in 1905. Even though they look different, both of them, the old and new imperialism, have the same character, namely "*kehausannya mencari rezeki*," their greed in accumulating capital. While the workers of the common people got very minimal compensation and were left to live in indescribable suffering. In the Dutch East Indies, this exploitation atrocity could be described as the worst in the world. A practice that even someone like Snouck Hurgronje went so far as to say, "*It's so hard for us to hold back we have a feeling of boredom and disgust.*" Sukarno called it "*zaman air-mata*," the age of tears.

In the heap of physical disasters, Sukarno identified suffering that was far more horrific for this nation, namely mental disasters. His spirit and valour in the past have been uprooted by the severity of colonialism. Consequently, the Indonesian people were known as the softest nation in the entire world. The most unconfident nation. From tiger spirit to goat spirit. Ironically, because the suffering went on for so long, they also seemed to believe that indeed they were goat people who always and forever had to be led and guided. But Sukarno's optimism rose that the future of his nation would change for the better. He considered that the people were starting to wake up. They were starting to move to heal themselves from their illness as the fruit of immeasurable suffering that forced them to demand a change. "*It is not dawn because the roosters crow, but the roosters crow because it is dawn.*" However, he realized that change would be slow if only relying on instinct and sheer misery. The acceleration of change in this movement ought to be based on awareness, on the light of knowledge and understanding of the laws that live in society. *Bewust* movement, not *onbewust*. Thus, the movement can never be extinguished. In the process it might have been disbanded, torn down, as if it were turned off, but it would live again, rise again, stand up again. It has a life force like having *Aji Pancasona* and *Aji Candabirawa*. It can't be killed and can't be finished. In the Javanese tradition, Aji

Pancasona is a magical ability that make anyone who have it will be immune from all kinds of sharp weapons. In addition, if he later gets injured, then with just a wash of water, all kinds of wounds will heal and return to normal. Meanwhile, Aji Candabirawa is a type of supernatural powers that allows its owner to get help from a mystical figure who is able to replicate himself to an infinite number of times. Even if he is injured, the drop of blood can also manifest into a new incarnated figure. This makes him powerful and invincible.

Sukarno believed that independence was a necessary condition to be able to eliminate capitalism and imperialism which had made his nation suffer. The illustration he drew was that Ramawijaya would not have been able to defeat the powerful giant Rahwana Dasamuka if he had been bound by his hands and feet; if he had not been free in his will, mind, spirit and life. The movement of the colonized people should aspire to hold the political power (*naar de politieke macht*). Because as long as the power was held by the colonialists, the fate of the people would never change. For that reason, this nation ought to be free. But it should be remembered that "*national-independence is only a bridge, a condition, strijdmoment.*" Beyond independence, what was fought for was a safe building for the people, free from every kind of capitalism.

Achieving independence certainly cannot be done by waiting or remaining silent. It must be attempted through struggle. Quoting Jawaharlal Nehru, "*Every one of our victories, from the big to the small, is the result of our exertion. Therefore, theory and principles are not enough for me.*" For this goal, Sukarno had a trust in collective struggle of ordinary people whom he called Marhaen in an organized manner. The form was a political party that was a pioneer party (*partai pelopor*). Collective power which was assumed to be able to mobilize mass action for the purpose of achieving independence. Mass action is conceptualized as not just a collection of ordinary people, not *vergadering-vergadering-openbaar*. Mass action is an action carried out by the mound of commoners who have blended into a single consciousness, desire and will. They fought revolutionary and radical. They wanted to dismantle the roots of the old society in order to establish a new society with new roots. "*I am a nationalist, but a Marhaen nationalist, who lives with the Marhaen, dies with the Marhaen,*" said Sukarno. In this struggle, he reminded the Marhaen to continue to be vigilant and alert, so that their fate would not be like the French Revolution. The common people were only encouraged to '*peel the jackfruit*' and '*get the sap*', but those who '*eat the jackfruit*' were actually the aristocrats who did not feel the suffering they did. This means that government power in an independent country must be in the iron grip of the Marhaen, in the iron hands of the people. Across the golden bridge of

Marhaen's socio-nationalism is a society without aristocracy and no bourgeoisie, no classes and no capitalism (see Anderson, 2006). His determination to live this line of struggle made him a leader who seems unwanted by countries that are synonymous with capitalism (Subritzky, 2000; see also Weinstein, 2007; Hunter, 2007; and Huges, 2012).

Regarding party institution which was believed to be the vehicle for the struggle of the Marhaen, Sukarno chose a non-cooperative political path. By doing not compromise with the colonial rulers. Non-cooperation should be a principle of struggle in its all political fields. Why should it be non-cooperative? This is based on the nature of the position of the colonized people who want to be free from capitalism-imperialism in which there is *"opposition in all things"*, whether origin, goals, needs, characteristics, and nature. It is like the conflict between fire and water, wolf and deer, evil and truth. Independence will not be awarded, but must be won. Referring to Karl Marx, *"Nooit heefteen klasse vrijwillig van haar bevoorrechte positive afstand gedaan"*, never has a class liked to give up its rights voluntarily. Then the Marhaen must have real power. The political struggle of the Marhaen people must forever be far removed from experiences that contradict real conditions. *"Forever must stand on the real earth and must not be adrift on a cloud of ideas."* Therefore, the essence of the movement is to organize and strive for the formation of people's power, *machtsvorming*. Marhaen moves not because of ideals, but because he seeks life and establishes life, namely a free and perfect human life, a human life that is human and worthy of humans. If you read his writings on *Nationalism, Islam and Marxism*, the character of the ideological mixture in Sukarno (1969) is not surprising. The experimentation of Nasakom has also strengthened how his consistency of this thinking was maintained and at the same time fought for (Mortimer, 2006; Dake, 2006).

In this paper, Sukarno also paid attention to the character of the vanguard party which he thought was suitable for the struggle of the Marhaen. He gave criticism on the style of democracy developed in Europe and America. For him, democracy at the heart of the vanguard party was *democratisch-centralisme*. Democracy that empowers the top leadership to discipline members who deviate from the party's line of struggle. The Party only knows one mind. There is no freedom of thought in the party. His unity lies in the unity of beliefs. Any deviations should not be tolerated. Otherwise, it would be impossible to lead the masses. So, discipline is an absolute requirement for a vanguard party. This is for an inward approach, as well as an outward approach, the vanguard party must always comply with the *onbewust* will of the masses, the instincts of the masses. Because therein lies the secret power of society. Anyone who betrays this secret power will surely be crushed by the wheels of society. The task of the

party is not to change the will of the people, but to drag and process it from being *onbewust* to be *bewust*. After that, he must educate and galvanize them to experience, see, and feel firsthand what is being fought for. If we read this, then the pattern of guided democracy is indeed a Sukarnoist (see Tan, 1967).

Through this writing, Sukarno showed some of his political thoughts and beliefs in fighting for Indonesian independence. Among them, first, that awareness and desire to change must be raised and embodied in a transforming formation that is in harmony with the knowledge and needs of the era so that it will not be easily subverted. This is typical in the critical pedagogy tradition (Freire, 1970). Second, the movement towards change must grow from the will and energy of the people themselves (*imminente krachten*). Third, significant historical changes cannot be pulled out by individual power, but must be through the power of the radical common people, mass action. Fourth, the *bewust* and radical movement of the common people must be organized, namely through a vanguard party. Fifth, the pioneering party must live through a leadership role that is consistent and disciplined (radical), not soft (reformist) and not going on a rampage (anarchist-syndicalist). Sixth, the goal of the movement is a *zonder* society of capitalism and imperialism in which independence is the bridge. Here, knowledge does not just stop as knowledge. It must guide as well as manifest as action. So history at this point also has a prophetic character where it seems as if it has a mission to give light towards the expected change. Seventh, the principle of struggle must be based on belief in one's own strength (self-help). But this politics of solitude (*kesendirian*) must be understood as the politics of personality (*kepribadian*), not the politics of self-ness (*keDirian*). Eighth, the true democracy that Marhaen aspires to, which was born from socio-nationalism Marhaen, is socio-democracy. Political democracy as well as economic democracy. For Sukarno, “*Anyone who proclaimed socio-democracy, but still had bourgeois or aristocratic traits in his chest, even a little bit, was a two-faced hypocrite.*”

CONCLUSION

From Sukarno's writings, we can draw several important lessons, especially in the context of learning history. Among them, first, that reading history does not have to only focus on the past, but is an unbroken thread of dimensions that have passed, are still ongoing, and will occur. Second, that studying history will not only enable a person to know about past events, both archived (*terarsip*) and those that are still hidden (*terpendam*), but also enable him to carry out a critical analysis of historical realities that are currently being experienced (*bergerak*) and even projections of possibilities that may take place in the future (*terbayang*) with the help of

historical lanterns and mirrors that have been studied. Third, studying history in turn is a transformative process which is not only done to simply know something, but more than that is to be able to do something on the basis of what is known in the present context.

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