

The Local Heroes from Rural Banjarnegara

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Abstract— Banjarnegara is a mountainous area with a large part of its rural and remote territory. However, it does not let Banjarnegara left behind from the history of the Indonesian national independence movement. It also appeared that local leaders had a vital role in the national independence movement at both local and national levels. Unfortunately, the studies about the local leaders of movement from Banjarnegara are still limited. In fact, the dynamics of the pre-independence national movement involved the Banjarnegara people and its central figures. In addition, the existence of the national movement is still happened today, it is *Syarikat Islam*, which still has a strong existence in Banjarnegara today. Therefore, this paper aims to examine the local leaders from Banjarnegara who have vital roles in the struggle for national independence. Two of the central leaders were Soemitro Kolopaking and K.H. Ichsan. Both represent the spirit of the times and lead Banjarnegara to be an area of national movement basis.

Keywords— *Banjarnegara, National Movement, Local Leaders, Syarikat Islam*

I. INTRODUCTION

Banjarnegara is one of the regencies in Central Java Province in the mountainous area. With an area of 1,069.73 km², half of the area is at an altitude of 501-1000 meters from the sea level, and most 30% of the area is above 1000 meters from the sea level. It is why Banjarnegara become an area that is comfortable as a residence. Banjarnegara is flanked by other regions. In the north, Banjarnegara is bordered by Pekalongan Regency and Batang Regency. In the south, it borders Kebumen Regency. Banyumas Regency and Purbalingga Regency border on the western part. To the east, Wonosobo Regency is the boundary of Banjarnegara Regency [1].

Its mountainous region and flanked by various regions do not necessarily cause Banjarnegara to be ahistorical. Indeed, various historical dynamics at the national level also influence Banjarnegara and its people. Interaction between people and Hindu Buddhist influences can be found in the Dieng region. Here is the oldest temple complex dated back to the beginning of the 8th century AD. Arjuna, Semar, Srikandi, and Gatotkaca Temple are estimated to be built in the early 8th century. Meanwhile, there are also Puntadewa, Sembadra, and Bima temples which were built around 750 AD [2].

Meanwhile, interaction with Islam has been noted along with Islamization in Demak period of occupation.

Various figures became preachers of Islam in Banjarnegara included Sunan Giri Wasiyat, Sunan Giri Pit, and Nyai Sekati. Another figure involved with the establishment of Banjar Village as the forerunner of Banjar Petambakan is Kiai Ageng Maliau. This figure is estimated to live in the period of Demak Kingdom [3].

Entering the VOC (The Dutch East India Company) period, Banjarnegara was involved in a war between the VOC, Pakubuwono II, and Mas Garendi. This war was referred to Geger Pecinan in Kartasura. Mataram Kartosuro was led by Paku Buwono II. Meanwhile, the territory of Banjar Petambakan was under the leadership of R. Ngabehi Mangunyudo, who had the title Hadipati Mangunyudo I. At that time, R. Ngabehi Mangunyudo received an order from Paku Buwono II to destroy the VOC lodge in Kartosuro. During the war, the Regent of Banjar Petambakan was killed during an attack on a Dutch lodge. It made him known as Mangunyudo Seda Loji [3].

People of Banjarnegara also had a role in the Java war 1825-1830. In this war, Regent of Banjar Watu Lembu, Raden Ng. Mangunyudo III, was on Diponegoro's side [3]. The involvement of the Banjarnegara people closely related to the Diponegoro War was also found in the story of the establishment of Adipasir Village in Banjarnegara. The name Adipasir was adapted from one of Diponegoro's soldiers named Adipati Anom who was left behind by the group of troops. The meeting between *Adipati* Anom and a group of Diponegoro troops took place in an area called *Adipasir*. This name means "the arrival of the *Adipati* at the expected time."

The involvement of Banjarnegara people in Java war at that time because those regions were controlled by Diponegoro troops. Some of these areas include *Bobot*, *Pegunungan Perahu*, *Ajibarang*, *Banjarnegara*, *Puncak*, and *Marden Semagede* [4]. Geographically, the Banjarnegara region and its surroundings of mountainous were very suitable for guerrilla strategies.

The involvement in the Diponegoro war was also attended by "ulama" (Islamic scholars) in Banjarnegara. One of *ulama* of Diponegoro was Kiai Muhammad Musa. He had become one of the leaders in Banjarnegara and his descendants and close relatives from generation to generation become the *Penghulu* (Islamic legislative authorities) in this city [5]. The participation of Ulama in Diponegoro's struggle was not surprising because at that time, a number of Diponegoro troops were led by Ulama. They included Kiai Gozali, Kiai Imam Ropii, Kiai Imam

Nawawi, Haji Nginggo, Haji Ibrahim, Kiai Kasan Besari, Kasan Munadi, H. Usman Ali Basah, and Kiai Mojo [6].

II. BANJARNEGARA IN THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT PERIOD

The dynamics of national movement infiltrated into various regions including Banjarnegara. Along with the development of colonialism in Banyumas Residency, there was a positive impact that indirectly influences the development of people's lives in Banjarnegara. Previously, access to the Banjarnegara region had been very difficult. However, after the construction of infrastructure of a postal road to Banjarnegara Region in the 19th century and a railroad managed by the Serajoedal Stoomtram Maatschappij (SDS) on 30 April 1894, access to this region was no longer a problem. The train passed to Banjarnegara was a type of steam-powered tram devoted to short distance [7]. This railway line provides not only benefits to people but also the sugar factory which was established in Klampok since 1889.

Transportation access penetrated the heart of Banjarnegara influences to the entry of new ideas and acceleration of the national movement. When the Ethical Policy was implemented by the Dutch Government, Banjarnegara became one of the affected regions. Western education began to be sought by the public, especially after 1907, there were many educational institutions called *Sekolah Angka II* or the second class *Bumiputera (Inlandsche School) (Tweede Klasse)* which many ordinary people followed.

The establishment of schools in Banjarnegara played an important role in the birth of the modern elite which became the backbone of the national movement. This educated group had played a role in bringing a new atmosphere to the development of Banjarnegara history and participating in the movement organizations. They also played important roles in the structure of bureaucracy and society. Because of the education development, figures of national movement were born here, such as Soemitro Kolopaking which was active in *Indische Vereeniging*.

Besides the establishment of Dutch Schools, a religious school was also established during the national movement in Banjarnegara which adapted the concept of modern schools. The school was founded by Syarikat Islam leaders.

The beginning of indigenous elites at the local level was marked by the development of organizations in the early 20th century in Banjarnegara. Before the establishment of Syarikat Islam, in Banjarnegara, it was noted there had been an organization consisting of *prijajis*. *Prijaji* or *Priyayi* was the Dutch era class of the nobles of the Robe, as opposed to royal nobility or *ningrat* (Javanese), in Java, the most populous island in Indonesia. In 1902, it was noted that a *Priyayi* organization called Pandriyo Harjo had been established to "doing what the member's love". *Priyayi* motivation in this organization is to let go of fatigue because they can build interaction with fellow *priyayis*. However, not only in the aspect of hobbies, the organization also played a role in establishing a place used for reading parks in Banjarnegara [8].

Besides the *Priyayi* organization, in Banjarnegara, there was also a women's organization called *Wanita Kencana*. This organization participated in the first women's congress in Yogyakarta together with 29 other women's organizations [9].

This cannot be denied that the development of transportation, education and organizations in Banjarnegara had greatly contributed to the advancement of Syarikat Islam. With this, Banjarnegara during the national movement period became a place allowed the new ideas because of the availability of various supporting facilities. Geographically, Banjarnegara is no longer remote, so it is not surprising that the figures and leaders of national movement were born here, especially from Syarikat Islam. From this beginning, the network of national movements began to be built and formed its own pattern for Banjarnegara Regency.

III. LOCAL HEROES FROM BANJARNEGARA

Although Banjarnegara located in mountainous areas, it does not make Banjarnegara left behind in the aspect of thought, ideas, and new acceleration for people. Here are also the homes for local leaders who had important roles in Indonesia National Movement. These leaders showed that Banjarnegara was open to new ideas and actively played a role in local movements.

An important figure played an important role was Soemitro Kolopaking. Soemitro had a unique position in the national movement. He was born in Papringan, Banyumas on June 14, 1887 and was an aristocratic origin. His father was one of the regents of Banjarnegara.

In his youth, Soemitro was a movement activist from the *Perhimpunan Hindia* which became the forerunner of the *Perhimpunan Indonesia*. As the son of a regent, Soemitro was not confined to *adat* (family tradition) but tended to be free and open minded. That was also made Soemitro to become an important figure who influenced the sustainability of the national movement in Banjarnegara. According to Poeze, he disagreed with his father's wishes, and he chose to enter the HBS in Batavia. After that, at the age of 19, he traveled to Europe by becoming a fourth-class passenger. To fund his life, he became a nurse of sheep and became a miner in Germany. After seven years in the Netherlands, he returned in 1927 and he was appointed regent of Banjarnegara [10]. When in the Netherlands, Soemitro had studied *Indologie* studies. When he was a student, he was the first administrator of the *Indische Vereeniging (Perhimpunan Hindia)* which was founded in 1908 at the instigation of *Abendanon* and *Casajangan* [10].

Indische Vereeniging was an organization who had been founded by Dutch East Indies students studying in the Netherlands. In 1908, their members had reached 23 people, so they were motivated to establish an association. This organization was originally aimed at increasing the common interests of the Indies in the Netherlands and maintaining relations with the Dutch East Indies [11]. In that organization, he served as a secretary. When he was a secretary, he was asked by the local court in Leiden to

explain why he used the term *indier* (Dutch), and did not use the term *inlanders* (indigenous people) [10].

After his return from the Netherlands in 1914, Soemitro worked at the tea factory and the Pandjang Estate quinine in Pangrango. He then attended police education in Batavia. After that, he was appointed as a police officer in Bandung in 1919 and later became *Gewestelijk Leider der Veldpolitie* for the Priangan Residency based in Bandung in 1922.

In the same year, he joined *vrijmetselarij* (free masonry) and went home to Banyumas to become a *wedana* in Sumpiuh from 1925-1927. In the free mason order, he was then ordained as the first Supreme Temperature of the Indonesian Great Loge which was inaugurated on 7 April 1955 [12, 13].



Fig. 1. Soemitro Kolopaking and His Wife, 1930

As a regent, he experienced three periods of occupation, the Dutch East Indies, the Japanese period, and the independence period. During Soemitro's leadership as Regent, Syarikat Islam managed to hold several important events. In 1928, the first SIAP congress was conducted, then a scout organization was owned by the Islamic Party. Then in 1934, the PSII national congress was conducted which became the last congress attended by Tjokroaminoto. At the same time, he was considered a figure whose role was to make Banjarnegara the ideal home for the development of the movement. In fact, he was often regarded as a peace between the Islamic Society group, the Kiai Sadrach group, and the Chinese Banjarnegara people. He was often regarded as an admirer of Sadrach's principles [14].

At the end of the Japanese occupation, an Investigation Preparatory Agency for Independence called *Badan Penyelidikan Usaha-Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan* (BPUPK) was formed. Soemitro Kolopaking was a member in this organization and actively provided input for the preparation of Indonesia's independence. He suggested that the independence process need to be achieved as soon as possible [15]. In BPUPK, Soemitro Kolopaking in cooperation with Muhammad Hatta, Soepomo, Wongsonagoro, Radjiman Wediodiningrat, and J. Latuharhary became one of the supporters of efforts to separate religious affairs and state affairs [16].

During independence, Soemitro was a member of the House of Representatives from the results of the 1955 general election. He sat as a member of parliament representing *Ikatan Pendukung Kemerdekaan* Indonesia (the Supporting Association of Indonesian Independence) from the Central Java electoral district [17]. His dedication and character in the community led Soemitro to obtain Bintang Mahaputera Utama on 12 August 1992 based on Presidential Decree No. 0. 048 / TK / in 1992. Previously, he also received the Satyalancana Peringatan Independence Struggle Award No Skep 228 in 1961 and Satyalancana Karya Satya No. 228 of 1961 [15].

Besides Soemitro, there was also K.H. Ichsan. K.H. Ichsan occupied an important position in the process of establishing Syarikat Islam (SI) in Banjarnegara. He was the initiator and the first chairman of the SI Banjarnegara organization. He is the son of Patih Cakra Santa, Patih from Kutoarjo, Kedu. Cakra Santa is the son of Glondong Loano [5]. Glondong was a mention for village elders while signifying an aristocratic status.

Ichsan was born in Loano, Bagelen around 1875/1877. He is also still a descendant of Glondong Krandegan. Krandegan is one of the villages in the center of Banjarnegara Regency. From that genealogy, Ichsan still has a genealogical line to the Sultan Paku Buwono I. Thus, he still has a lineage of *priyayi*.

As a *priyayi* descendant, he apparently had no interest in continuing his education to become a bureaucrat. He chose Islamic studies to become a religious expert because his big family not only worked as a bureaucrat, but also became Ulama (Islamic Scholar). His love for Islam had led Ichsan to study in one of the Islamic boarding schools in Kebumen. After that, he settled in Mecca to Hajj and continued his Islamic Studies deeper for approximately six years from 1900-1906 [5].

During that time, Ichsan studied religious sciences, such as *Fiqh* (Islamic legislation), *Ushul Fiqh*, *Akidah*, *Tafseer*, *Hadith* and tools science study for the Muslim scholars in Mecca. Some of the archipelago Ulama who often became references and teachers for students from the Dutch East Indies included Syeh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi (1859-1916 AD) and Syeh Mahfudz al-Tirmisi (1868-1920 H) [18]. Syeh Ahmad Khatib was important to review because he is an Ulama who supported the establishment of the Syarikat Islam. In 1914, Syeh Ahmad Khatib published an Arabic paper in response to several Sufi criticisms on the Syarikat Islam. In that paper, he mentioned that Syarikat Islam can play a

role in helping the progress of religion and the world, as well as the progress of the sons and daughters as the next generation of the country [19].

Ichsan's departure was for Hajj and deepening Islam in Mecca in a period with the departure of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, founder of Muhammadiyah. The same period between Ichsan and Ahmad Dahlan's departure was not unrelated. There was a possibility that both of them had a relationship at that time. Ahmad Dahlan went to hajj and studied Islam in Mecca in the late 19th century. Then, in the early 20th, Ahmad Dahlan made his second trip with his son Sirod Dahlan. From here, a close relationship between these two figures continued in the next period. This was proven that Ahmad Dahlan entrusted his son with several young men from Yogyakarta to be educated by Ichsan in Banjarnegara [20].

The intimacy between Ichsan and Ahmad Dahlan was also likely to be one of the factors driven the existence of Syarikat Islam in Banjarnegara. Takashi Shiraishi noted that since January 1913, Syarikat Islam Yogyakarta was established and governed by most courtiers and Pakualaman religious officials as administrators. The figures who occupied the Syarikat Islam leadership of Yogyakarta were Ahmad Dahlan as a chairman and Mas Pengoloe Abdoellah Sirat as his secretary. From here, there was a similar pattern between Syarikat Islam Yogyakarta and Banjarnegara. Both rely on the group of santri as organizers of the organization, especially from the kepengulon institution. Kepengulan is the institution of Keraton concerned with Islamic affairs.

Ichsan's involvement in the world of movement in Banjarnegara began when he was become son-in-law of K.H. Hasan Mukmin and returned to Java in 1906 [21]. Hasan Mukmin was the Penghulu Landraad in Banjarnegara Regency, which allowed Ichsan to enter the network of Penghulu (Islamic leaders) and santri in Banjarnegara. In Banjarnegara, Ichsan settled in Kauman. This area was in the west of Banjarnegara square. Here too, he founded a madrasa known as the Madrasah Kidul Masjid (The South Masjid Madrasah).

Before establishing Syarikat Islam in Banjarnegara, Ichsan had been involved in the world of Kepengulon by serving as a Ketib or Secretary. After several years as a *ketib*, he was promoted to become a member of the religious *raad* in Banjarnegara. The main task of the religious *raad* was to provide advice and input to the Penghulu before making a decision. Ichsan's career in Kepengulon was increasingly rising when he was promoted to become the *landraad* chief in Temanggung since 1921. He became the *landraad* of Temanggung until the end of his life in 1929.

The establishment of Syarikat Islam in Banjarnegara cannot be separated from the participation of Muslim scholars and networks of scholars in the early 19th century. The fact was reinforced by the existence of Ichsan who founded Syarikat Islam here in 1913 and led it until 1921. In addition, at the meeting and election of the chairman of the Syarikat Islam Banjarnegara on August 27, 1919, Ichsan was elected as chairman and K.H. Mohammad Noer, *landraad* leader Banjarnegara was also selected as an advisor [21].

While running the Syarikat Islam Banjarnegara, Ichsan actively participated in the congress organized by the Central Sarekat Islam (CSI). At the 1916, national congress was conducted in Bandung, he proposed to all participants to be able to adopt as a pattern of religious education that had been integrated into government schools in Banjarnegara. At the 1917, national congress in Batavia, as a part of the religion, he proposed the importance of improving the quality of the religious *raad* and the decisions produced [21]. During his leadership, Syarikat Islam Banjarnegara was noted as the branches organization that had the largest members compared to other regions in Banyumas. Until 1919, it was reported that the number of Members of Banjarnegara was 11,467.

IV. CONCLUSION

The rural area in Banjarnegara turns out to have an interesting story. Here, the dynamics of the national movement also took place and led local leaders to play important roles in national movements. They were Soemitro Kolopaking who became a Regent in three periods: Dutch colonial, Japanese, and Independence. He was a figure who received education in the Netherlands and returned to Banjarnegara by bringing renewal in the movement. In addition, there were also figures named KH Ichsan founded the Islamic Organization called Syarikat Islam Banjarnegara. Ichsan emerged as a figure who laid the solid foundation of the Islamic Society in Banjarnegara until today. These two important figures that play a role in the history of Banjarnegara are a proof that rural areas also could produce interesting stories and heroism.

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