

Usman Balo: From Bad Boy to Freedom Fighter

Bustan¹, Bahri², Najamuddin³

^{1,2,3}*Department of History Education, Faculty of Social Science and Law, Universitas Negeri Makassar*

**Corresponding author. Email: bustan@unm.ac.id*

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the work of a figure of freedom fighters from Sidenreng Rappang South Sulawesi. The person in question is Usman Balo. He is known as a freedom fighter during the revolution in Sidenreng Rappang. Usman Balo is interesting to review because it is considered a controversial figure. On the one hand he is considered as a person who has a hard temper and likes to fight with others in childhood. Even in a source Usman Balo is also said to have a wife of more than a hundred people. On the other hand, Usman Balo was a patriotic man defending the community and his people from colonization. This underlies the author to reveal the story of this character. This paper is a study of history and figures using a qualitative approach to analysis. As for the steps that research uses historical stages, namely, heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography

Keywords: *Usman Balo, Fighter, Freedom.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Usman Balo is a phenomenal figure in the history of Indonesia's struggle for independence in South Sulawesi. Various versions of Usman Balo. On the one hand he is seen as a valiant freedom fighter and has his own patriotic charisma. On the other hand, he is sometimes considered a violent and violent figure because his attitude does not want to submit to anyone.

Usman Balo is seen as a controversial figure because of his unusual views and activities carried out by the public at large. Courage in struggle and is known to have more than a hundred wives. In addition, he is also respected and praised by many people for having a firm character in defending the weak. But on the other hand, in his struggle, he is also known as a figure of combat, anarchist and militant. Not infrequently people call them robbers or blackmailers. Both sides of this are judged and understood as acceptable realities [1], [2]

Usman Balo has two opposing sides there is a patriotic and humanist attitude inherent in his soul and there is a militant attitude in his daily life. This attitude is inherent in him as a result of the dialectic of life that he experienced. The figure of fighter Osman Balo who is seen by many as a controversial figure is equipped with a mysterious, unique and phenomenal veil.

La Semmang or his full name Usman was born in 1920 in Sidenreng Rappang South Sulawesi. He was born in the environment of bugis sidenreng rappang natural society. He comes from a simple family that is

deeply rooted in the local culture that has traditionally spawned fighters who defend the dignity of the Bugis community.

Not a little contribution he gave, almost all his young age was entrusted for the nation and filled with war violence. To explore more about the personality, principles of life and activities of Oesman Balo in the struggle for independence, it is necessary to explore the various spaces of time that make up it.

2. METHOD

This research is qualitative research with descriptive forms of analysis. The research stage is done by finding and collecting references. Read and analyze data from literature, select and assign informants. Data analysis used in this study is a descriptive-qualitative analysis technique in accordance with this type of research using historical approaches, namely heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography [3]. Descriptive analysis techniques attempt to present data as is, both historical data and data obtained through various approaches used. Qualitative analysis is an attempt to collect, classify, interpret the data through the approach used so as to obtain results from this study [4].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. *Origins of Usman Balo*

Regarding the origin of Usman Balo until now there is no clarity about his family tree. The information only mentions that Usman Balo is the son of a merchant of La Teggang and I Tida. Then the father of his parents was a village chief. Since Usman Balo was born and raised in a very simple family environment, he never imagined himself active in the struggle for independence [5].

Childhood passed by him with suffering as the Indonesian family during the Dutch colonial period. For him, everything goes without burden and is completely natural. The influence of the outdoors makes it grow strong and stocky. Usman Balo has a strong body and he is liked by many friends. A lot of people are happy to hang out with him. The patriotic Emberio had been ingrained in him. A hard family life made Usman Balo grow into a brave man [6].

In addition to family life that can shape a person's personality. Usman Balo who was born and raised in bugis area is certainly bugis personality and upholds its cultural values. So, it is not surprising in the culture of the Bugis community strongly upholds the attitude of consistency in speech in bugisnya terms said taro ada taro gau. This belief for those who understand being the strength of the indicator of courage or awaraningeng [7][8].

The concepts of Bugis cultural life are then implemented in everyday life, either as a social or personal or individual entity. Usman Balo as one of Bugis' sons, certainly has a deep personality about his cultural values. These cultural values are then implemented in their social life. According to Anhar Gonggong that:

But the core of the populist people of South Sulawesi lies in what is known as siri which has a driving dynamic to do supported by pesse which is a tool to strengthen the sense of togetherness as a citizen of South Sulawesi. This is at least in the environment of bugis-makassar community [9].

The important nature of siri in the human life of Bugis-Makassar is also illustrated by Abu Hamid Abdullah in Gonggong that:

In the lives of Bugis-Makassar humans, siri is a principled element in them. There is not a single value to defend and defend on the face of the earth besides series. For bugis-makassar humans, siri is their soul, their self-esteem, and their dignity. Therefore, to uphold and defend a series that is considered polluted or polluted by others, bugis-Makassar people will sacrifice anything, including his most precious soul for the sake of the establishment of siri in their lives [9] [10].

The concept of siri is implemented in everyday life by the people of Bugis-Makassar individually. So that siri in the bugis-makassar community is generally a symbol of honor that must be maintained what and whatever the risks. Because Usman Balo is the son of Bugis, it automatically has a personality like the Bugis. But when narrowed down again, Usman Balo is a Bugis who has rappang or To Rappang.

3.2. *Usman Balo's Involvement in The Struggle Warriors*

Usman Balo was one of those who witnessed and experienced firsthand the Japanese atrocities in South Sulawesi. This Japanese system of government caused hatred in the soul of Usman Balo. Therefore, when Japan surrendered unconditionally to the allies, Usman Balo was one of the most aggressive and welcomed japan's defeat. After Japan surrendered, he was active in the struggle for independence [6].

News of the proclamation was welcomed in Rappang South Sulawesi by conducting a ceremony in an open field in the City of Rappang. In the ceremony attended Usman Balo as the red and white flag, for the first time the song Indonesia raya sung in this area. Since then, Usman Balo has been active in the struggle to maintain independence and joined the fighting army known as Laskar Ganggawa. In his confession Usman Balo as written rashid Djibe describes that:

I joined the Army led by Andi Cammi, initially our parent unit of no more than 15 people, with only a few guns. But from the beginning, the Dutch judged this small army to ignite the fire of war with a terrible [11]

So since then, Usman Balo who is a bad boy, likes to fight and so on takes a new life path as a freedom fighter. He then joined the fight. The next way of life is fraught with danger by passing through various battles. The establishment of the Laskaran organization in Sidenreng Rappang, South Sulawesi was inspired by the news of the arrival of allies who brought NICA troops with the aim of disarming Japan and repatriating to his country again will also later hand over Dutch power represented by NICA to re-colonize Indonesia. While the people in this area from the beginning supported Indonesia's independence, it means that it will clash with the wishes of the NICA.

The formation of this Ganggawa Warriors, then the struggle of the people of Sidenreng Rappang in maintaining independence is getting sharper and increasing. Since then, Usman Balo has been active in the struggle. Usman Balo later became a confidant of A. Cammi. According to captain Lape that "Usman Balo is basically A. Cammi's confidant. It was he who called Usman Balo to join him."

After Usman Balo joined other fighters through Ganggawa Warriors, then began a new chapter in the history of Usman Balo's life. If previously he was

always considered a bad boy, fond of fighting, and so forth. He is now being treated as a fighter. He has put all his energy and thoughts into the nation and the State of Indonesia. Usman Balo who was then a member of the Ganggawa Army also took a role that was not more or less important with other fighters.

Activities carried out by Usman Balo as a member of Laskar Ganggawa. At the beginning of its establishment is to continuously try to raise the spirit of the struggle to maintain independence, try to get support, arms and membership, establish relationships with other struggle movements in South Sulawesi and try to get experienced personnel to foster its members. These activities are described by Usman Balo as written by rashid djibe that:

For months we visited the villages again, no more tight but with red and white on the collar, firearms clasped in the hands, and with the flames of independence burning in the chest. The Ajattapareng region was prepared as a terrain for guerrilla warfare. Areas that include; Parepare, Pinrang, Enrekang, Barru and Sidenreng Rappang, have been burned by the flames of independence. In the years that followed, the region was congested by the smoke of engines mixed with the smell of the corpses of martyrs who offered their souls for independence [11].

Nevertheless, the fighters continued to carry out awareness activities against the people of the meaning of independence. "In the implementation of these activities, they are always supervised by NICA forces. Several times they were forced to make contact with NICA forces even though the incident was not planned." (Muchlis, 1993:174). The same is said by Usman Balo that:

The KNIL and Dutch police barracks located in various places are serious threats that really must be taken into account. They choose strong discipline, have quality weapons and the quality is much greater than our weapons. They continued to stalk our movements with adequate transportation equipment, and telecommunications. Surely, they are far superior and ready to pounce on us. It's in those circumstances that our troops have to move. (Rashid Djibe, 2001:7)

In April 1946, when ganggawa's entourage on their way to Suppa rested in polojiwa village they were attacked by NICA forces. The attack was faced persistently by the Ganggawa Warriors who were under the leadership of A. Cammi. "The incident resulted in ganggawa class losing two main characters, Petta Irajeng and La Kitta" (Muchlis, 1993:174). While on the dutch side had to give up two of its soldiers who died in the battle. Usman Balo elaborates that:

We are fully aware that we must not dissolve into prolonged sadness. The departure of Petta Irajeng must be able to trigger a war with even higher spirits. It must be admitted that in the first battles, many of us were a

little confused, the explosion of weapons, gunpowder and blood was new to us [12].

Usman Balo said at the time of the attack A. Cammi was wounded by gunfire from NICA troops. Because the resistance was unbalanced, most of the Ganggawa forces were forced to spread out seeking refuge. A. Cammi who was injured was rescued and transported to Suppa area for treatment.

To build the organization more steadily and compactly, the members of the Ganggawa class were again gathered on June 15, 1946 for a meeting [13]. From the results of the meeting was reached the word agreed to perfect the name of the class organization into ganggawa rebel ranks.

After all the activities carried out were considered to have matured to carry out attacks on NICA, then "on June 7, 1946, by the central board of the Ganggawa Rebel Agency invited the local Group in this case the Kampong Faction to hold a meeting in Bola tengngaE" [13]. From the meeting it was agreed to launch an attack on the NICA headquarters located in the city of Rappang.

On one occasion ganggawa's army led by A. Cammi was trapped by NICA forces in Carawali. In this battle A. cammi was unable to escape and was shot dead. This, as Usman Balo says in Rashid Djibe describes that "it is conceivable how furious and enraged the Dutch forces were with the pointed bamboo attack. Dutch attacks stepped up. The battles of the Army in the following days continued. In langnga, PalangcangngE", Garessik and many more. The height of Dutch anger was demonstrated by the battle of Carawali who managed to shoot dead our leader A. Cammi, The Netherlands with his actions to prove that the ideal of independence was dead. The Battle of Carawali that killed A. Cammi for Usman Balo was a very sad event. He said he wasn't with A. Cammi in Carawali. Because previously he was assigned to communicate with other warriors. As described by rashid djibe that:

I had a meeting with the leader of the young Keris Warriors from Mandar, who was dinegeri Mandar. Held a meeting with Andi Selle who led the Indonesian people's struggle body, as well as with Andi Sose. The meetings are intended as an effort to coordinate between classes to improve the movement. Another task we did before was to pick up and provide beach security for expeditions coming from Java. The expedition led by Latief successfully landed with sealamat. But the expedition, led by Murtala, really made a splash. Kedatangnya picked up with sporadic shots from the Netherlands [6]

However, the task carried out by Usman Balo was monitored by the Dutch. Usman Balo's meetings were known to NICA soldiers. When Usman Balo returned from his duties he was faced with attacks from the NICA. The battle of Usman Balo with the NICA side was the most decisive six-hour battle in New York.

Even in this new battle, Usman Balo's body was almost torn apart by Dutch bullets. For six hours, Usman Balo had to survive in the water to save himself. This event then became a history in itself for Usman Balo. Many people thought that Usman Balo had been killed. According to the captain lape was hit by bullets, and for six hours in the water was a unique and mysterious event or beyond logic. At such times only God can help his servants.

The death of A. Cammi in the battle of Carawali did not dampen the resistance against the NICA army. According to padding dg. Wake up as written by muchlis (1993:177) that "with the passing of A. cammi with several other Ganggawas. A. nohong as deputy leader cannot replace A. Cammi" position. This situation prompted Syamsul Bachri to take the initiative to join BP. Ganggawa with the Indonesian Republic Struggle Body (BPRI) in suppa under the leadership of A. Selle.

Entering 1947 the struggle of the people never subsided. Similarly, the Dutch crackdown is on the rise. Usman Balo continues his geriya in Passoso. The Dutch saw increasingly violent resistance from the Warriors with strong support from the people, beginning to turn their minds. In early 1947, the Dutch launched operation Passoso. As a result of the attack, the troops retreated. Usman Balo said in Rashid Djibe (2001:15) "I was furious to see the Dutch army, which used the people to urge us, retreating to the corners of the mountains. To fight will mean that it will take no small casualties, and the victims are the people."

Therefore, every day is urged as a result of operation Passoso resulting in food supplies running out. "Just to drink we had to gulp the saliva, the mud water and suck on the wicker shoots. Eat whatever you eat." That's what Usman Balo said. In such a state Usman Balo's forces were starved. Therefore, the alternative that must be accepted is to starve to death or surrender. Eventually Usman Balo and some of his members were captured by Dutch forces. Since then, Usman Balo has had to be behind the iron terasi. Usman Balo later said, that:

In a weak and very miserable state of body, I was taken from prison to prison. This happened around September 1947. Usman Balo was found guilty of various charges, a sentence of 18 years in prison. After listening to the court's decision, I was thrown in jail. I have no regrets. The only thing that is sad, is that if I spend 18 years in prison, then 18 years I cannot give my service to the republic of Indonesia, to the proclamation. A few days later... I was faced with a state trial on the same charge of the next 13 years of the district court, instead of serving a life sentence. With 18 years, 13 years to a lifetime [13]

Not yet finished the sentence of Usman Balo, there has been a fundamental change to the struggle for independence. In 1949 through an international forum, namely the Round Table Competition, the Indonesian nation managed to reclaim its sovereignty. The

international world at that time had recognized the sovereignty of the Indonesian nation, both de facto and de jure. As a result of these changes Usman Balo was released in 1949. thirteen days after the Round Table. After the Round Table Conference Usman Balo was again active as a fighter who defended the unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSION

Usman Balo is a boy who is known to be naughty and likes to fight then becomes a freedom fighter. He is one of those who have a high nationalism towards the nation and especially the Sidenreng Rappang area. In his struggle he joined the struggle of Ganggawa Warriors led by Andi Cammi. The end of Usman Balo's resistance was marked by his arrest through operation passoso. After that Usman Balo was convicted and convicted. Not yet finished the sentence, there is a change in this nation. In 1949 through an international forum, namely the Round Table Compatriot, the Indonesian nation succeeded in reclaiming its sovereignty and Usman Balo was liberated.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Bustan as the head of the research implementer is responsible for coordination and research ideas and Corresponding author
2. Bahri as a member I, acted as the initial problem analysis at the research site and helping data analysis and finalizing article manuscripts
3. Najamuddin as member II acts as a data collector in the field

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the big family of the Universitas Negeri Makassar for allowing us to be able to do research. The same thing I convey to the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law who have provided financial support for this research.

REFERENCES

- [1] H. Juhannis, "The Struggle for Formalist Islam in South Sulawesi: From Darul Islam (DI) to Komite Persiapan Penegakan Syariat Islam (KPPSI)," 2006.
- [2] M. MUSTAMIRUDDIN, "POLIGAMI YANG DI LANGSUNGKAN TANPA IZIN PENGADILAN (Studi Kasus di Pengadilan Agama Kelas 1A Palembang)." UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI RADEN FATAH PALEMBANG, 2015.
- [3] M. Wasino and H. Endah Sri, "Metode Penelitian Sejarah: dari Riset hingga Penulisan," 2018.

- [4] I. Gunawan, “Metode penelitian kualitatif,” Jakarta Bumi Aksara, vol. 143, 2013.
- [5] E. Wulandari, J. Jumadi, and L. Malihu, “Aktivitas Gerombolan DI/TII dan Dampaknya Terhadap Masyarakat Sidrap 1950-1965,” *PATTINGALLOANG*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 160–171, 2020.
- [6] B. S. Harvey, “South Sulawesi: puppets and patriots,” in *Regional Dynamics of the Indonesian Revolution*, University of Hawaii Press, 2021, pp. 207–236.
- [7] M. Bustan and M. Bahri, “Democracy in The Kingdom of Bugis (Noble Value Study in The Kingdom of Bone Century XVI),” in *1st International Conference on Social Sciences (ICSS 2018)*, 2018.