

Karo during the Revolution, 1945-1949

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Abstract: The people joyfully welcomed the proclamation of independence that echoed through Tanah Karo. However, the independence was tested by the arrival of Dutch colonialists who sought to re-establish themselves. This study aims to explain the emergence of the nationalism movement in Tanah Karo and the development of the idea of nationalism during the revolutionary period that filled the movement. This research uses the historical method, which consists of heuristics, source criticism, interpretation and historiography. The sources used are archival documents, interviews, contemporary newspapers, and other sources relevant to this study. The results showed that the emergence of the nationalism movement was brought by Karo intellectuals who were members of the PNI. They came from economically well-established families and studied in Medan. The youth from Karo played an essential role in building the spirit of nationalism as a driving force in the people's struggle against the Dutch colonialists who sought to regain power. The transmission of the idea of nationalism was brought to Tanah Karo through media in the form of writings, speeches, training, learning and other things that aroused the passion of the people's resistance. Meanwhile, in the dynamics of the movement carried out through the spread of ideas of nationalism, there was a conflict between the ranks of the struggle, which could then be reduced by strategizing the struggle because there was a fear that the enemy would use the atmosphere.

Abstrak: Proklamasi kemerdekaan menggema hingga ke Tanah Karo disambut rakyat dengan gembira namun sebagai upaya mempertahankan kemerdekaan dengan kedatangan kolonial Belanda yang ingin berkuasa. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan kemunculan pergerakan dan berkembangnya gagasan nasionalisme di Tanah Karo. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode sejarah yang terdiri dari heuristik, kritik sumber, interpretasi dan historiografi. Sumber yang digunakan adalah sumber arsip, dokumen, wawancara, surat kabar sezaman, dan yang relevan dengan studi ini. Hasil penelitian yakni kemunculan pergerakan nasionalisme dibawa oleh kaum intelektual Karo. Mereka berasal dari keluarga yang mapan secara ekonomi dan menempuh pendidikan di Medan. Peran para pemuda Karo dalam membangun semangat nasionalisme sebagai motor penggerak perjuangan rakyat dalam menghempang kolonial Belanda yang ingin berkuasa kembali. Transmisi gagasan nasionalisme dibawa melalui media-media berupa tulisan, pidato, pelatihan, pembelajaran dan hal lainnya yang membangkitkan gairah perlawanan rakyat. Sementara itu dinamika pergerakan yang dilakukan melalui penyebaran ide-ide nasionalisme sempat menuai konflik antar barisan perjuangan yang kemudian dapat diredam dengan menyusun strategi perjuangan, hal ini karena terdapat rasa khawatir suasana tersebut dimanfaatkan oleh musuh.

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INTRODUCTION

The movement that emerged in the early 20th century in several regions continued the previous pre-national struggle against colonialism. There is a difference between the two: the emerging nationalism movement has another, more organized form, has clear principles and goals that are long-term and has an ideology to create an advanced society with the maturation of the desire to establish a state (Kartodirdjo, 1992). Finding the form of this political movement cannot be sepa-

rated from the consequences of the policies implemented by the Dutch and Japanese, giving rise to people who are aware of the fate of their nation. They aspired to eliminate discrimination, social, economic and other differences by establishing an organization as a means of struggle. The birth of various movement organizations as a new phenomenon in the history of the nationalism movement must be seen as a long and inseparable chain that provides its color (Poesponegoro & Notosusanto, 1984).

In the 1930s, one of the colorings of the emergence of movements of both social and political nature was in cities, including in East Sumatra, one of which became a feature of city life (MC. Ricklefs, 2008). In general, the emergence of the urge to form movement organizations was related to social and economic inequality and the problem of defending the conditions of plantation contract workers and the takeover of people's lands by *onderneming* companies. As a result, there was an expansion of the idea of nationalism by the movement in the environment created by the Dutch colonial government, which raised awareness of the search for national identity. The search for national identity manifested in the presence of the Budi Utomo organization, previously founded in 1908 by Pirngadi, a doctor from Java. Organizationally, Budi Utomo was able to connect regions in Sumatra with Java. Through the newspaper Soera Djawa, Budi Utomo demanded improving labor conditions in the plantations (Kahin, 1985). In addition, there was the emergence of other nationalist organizations such as Sarekat Islam, brought by Abdul Muis in his speech saying that the purpose of the formation of Sarekat Islam was to destroy the contract labor system and pale *sanctie* (Noer, 1985). Sarekat Islam also campaigned for economic democracy to improve the lives of workers and peasants. In addition, there were also Muhammadiyah and Al Washliyah organizations that spread their wings to Tanah Karo, Tebing Tinggi, Simalungun and Tanah Alas (Castles, 2001).

Furthermore, the development of nationalism was increasingly important with the presence of the Indonesian National Party (PNI) by M. Iwa Kusuma Sumatri and Sunaryo in Medan. PNI activities entered the Tanah Karo region brought by several figures such as Rakutta Sembiring Brahma and Selamat Ginting; they were active in teaching activities at Taman Siswa, focusing mainly on education, language and national culture. The PNI movement was considered dangerous to the Dutch colonial government because it actively disseminat-

ed nationalist ideas to remote areas (Blumberger, 1931). Marxist ideas also entered to radicalize the political movement. Its strength lay not only in the expertise and skills of its leaders but also in its program that directly threatened the interests of the Dutch colonial government and the Crown. The party successfully organized a labor strike at the port of Belawan in 1925 (Sinar, 1986). The communist party gained sympathy from the workers, who developed a militant and anti-Dutch attitude. Its activities drew the attention of the Dutch colonial government, which prohibited Dutch employees from joining the PKI and even created a network of spies on plantations to monitor PKI activities. The PKI leaders who brought this idea to Tanah Karo included Nerus Ginting Suka and Nolong Ginting Suka (Bussy, 1928).

The movement was carried out underground during the Japanese occupation because Japan prohibited political activities. Instead, the movement leaders from Tanah Karo participated in official organizations formed by Japan. On August 15, 1945, Japan had to leave due to attacks from the Allies, which finally left a promise of independence that the movement pioneers must immediately realize. The movement actors rushed to carry out the proclamation of independence to realize efforts to establish an independent state (Hatta, 1970). The news of the Proclamation of Indonesian independence on August 17, 1945, in Jakarta was officially brought directly to Sumatra by Teuku Muhammad Hassan, accompanied by M. Amir and Abdul Abbas, who were members of PPKI representatives from Sumatra. On August 25, they returned on August 29, TM. Hassan and M. Amir arrived in East Sumatra to broadcast the news of the proclamation. Tanah Karo finally heard the news of the proclamation via airplane telegram; this news was even brighter when T.M Hassan arrived in Tanah Karo in October on a mission to spread the news of the proclamation (Prima, 1976).

The study of revolution as a comparison was conducted by Anthon E. Lucas (2019). The revolutions in these three regions were in Tegal, Brebes and Pemalang. The events in these three districts showed social protest against Dutch exploitation. In voicing the ideals of the people were the struggle bodies in the city as well as radical kiai and lenggagong (bandits) (Lucas, 2019). In addition, John R.W. Smail (2011) explains that the social events that raged during the revolution were certainly not immediately present but a continuation of the previous series of events. The accumulation of people's disappointment over the strong social pressure

from Dutch colonialism naturally led to the emergence of social movements.

Based on the explanation above, this paper seeks to explain the emergence of the nationalism movement and the dynamics of the movement in Tanah Karo during the revolutionary period in 1945 until its culmination in 1949. Karo intellectuals filled the revolutionary period in Tanah Karo by driving the revolution, who had been equipped with nationalism education. They came from economically established and respected families in their area. Hence, it was easy for the movement actors to transmit ideology to the people in Tanah Karo so that they could fight against colonialism that was trying to be re-entrenched in Tanah Karo. plus in their struggle, they were incorporated in units in the form of laskar and TRI, which were used as a forum for struggle.

METHOD

This research uses the historical method as a stage to reconstruct the events of the revolutionary period in Tanah Karo in the period 1945-1949. (1) *heuristics* is the first step researchers take in tracing primary and supporting sources. Researchers found Algemene Secretarie, *Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service* (NEFIS) 1946-1949. *Enquentte Commissie Regeringsbeleid 1940-1945*, Terugkeer naar Nederlandsch- Indie, Indian Division Weekly Intelligence Summary, Batavia, March 1946, J.M. Somer (Direcur Centrale Militaire Inlichtingendienst (CMI) Signalement September 1948, De Ontwikkeling van de Toestand in Z. Sumatra Oostkust, Memorandum J.M. Somer. Sumatra Oostkust, Memorandum Payung Bangun Kommandant Stoottroep Brigade A Tanah Karo, as well as supporting sources through antiquarian collections, contemporaneous newspapers *Het Nieuwsblad voor Sumatra*, November 1945, interviews with family members of veteran legions who had joined the Halilintar Regiment and family members of Rakutta Sembiring Brahmana. The following process: (2) source verification is carried out to select and sort out sources, which are then carried out the process (3) interpretation of data that has been obtained as material for reconstructing events through the stage (4) historiography.

PRE-REVOLUTIONARY TANAH KARO

Geographically, the Tanah Karo region has hilly land conditions surrounded by mountains with an altitude of 140-1400 mpdl; the coordinates are 2° 50' L.U, 3° 19' L.S, 97° 55' - 98° 38' B.T. 2 volcanoes are still active, namely Sibayak and Sinabung.

The sulfur substance produced impacts the surrounding soil to be fertile; it has a content of andosol type. The cool air temperature ranges from 16°-27°C with an air humidity of 28%; the rainy and dry seasons have a 9- 3 ratio with annual rainfall between 1000-4000 mm (Paulus, 1917). Such natural conditions are an advantage, as well as its strategic location close to the center of government in the lowlands of East Sumatra; this makes it necessary for the Karo people to fulfill their needs by seeking relations with lowlanders. The need for salt for the Karo became necessary to move down the mountain, carrying several goods that the "barter" system exchanged. The mobilization of their needs was slow because of the estimation of the long journey from the highlands to the lowlands. Finally, some Karo people settled in the lowlands while trading and planting pepper and tobacco to meet their needs on the East Coast of Sumatra. Those in the highlands are called the Karo gugung people, and those in the lowlands are called the Karo Jahe people (Anderson, 1971).

By the end of the 19th century, Dutch rule was entrenched throughout the East Sumatran lowlands, exploiting the area for plantations that brought considerable profits to the Dutch. At the end of 1871, the Sultan of Deli began to grant licenses to lease land in Karo districts without consulting the head of the urung and the Karo people. The Sultan of Deli considered the Karo people's territories in East Sumatra his conquered territories (Secretarie, 1872). The Sultan's actions turned out to be mistakenly ignoring customary law because he felt that he favored the Dutch, which angered the Karo people. The culmination of this event was when the Sultan dared to hand over a land concession in the Sunggal area to a Dutch company based in Rotterdam without consulting the head of the Karo urung (Hoogenboom, 1872).

The situation became so heated that the chiefs of the plantation organized a plan with the Karo Jahe community to attack the plantation by burning the plantation's tobacco drying wards to the ground and setting fire to the houses of the plantation masters. This problem in November 1872, The Dutch East Indies central government decided to form a military Expeditionary corps to pacify Tanah Karo. The expedition aimed to secure foreign private plantations such as Arensburg, Rotterdam, Perseverance and others (Jeeger, 1874).

The political strategy used by the Dutch colonial government was to apply the *Pax Neerlandica* and *Pacificatie Penetratie* policies to the interior of the Karo Highlands. The aim was to tame the re-

sistance of the Karo people, who were challenging to conquer, and the Dutch considered Tanah Karo as the last area that was still independent because it had an essential meaning in its natural resources (Schadee, 1918). In overcoming the resistance of the Karo people, J.T Cremer, as the director of *Matschappij* Perkebunan Tembakau Deli, took the initiative to cooperate with the *Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap* from Rotterdam to finance him to enter Buluh Awar first. The aim was to reduce the resistance of the Karo people in the Upper Deli and Upper Serdang areas to the interior of Tanah Karo (Joustra, 1890). Missionary J.H. Neuman arrived in Buluh awar with Van den Berg. Besides preaching the gospel, their arrival also brought modernization to the Karo people. He translated the Bible into Karo, opened schools in Kuta Jurung, Sirengit-rengit and Sembahé, and coordinated education. In addition, the missionaries taught the population practical farming and gardening methods and opened markets to benefit the Karo people (Varekamp, 1940).

This method made Tanah Karo a supplier of horticultural crops in the form of vegetables and fruits such as cabbage, potatoes, chilies, corn, and others. The geographical position is strategic as a link to the Medan area to market crops to the center of the East Sumatra presidency. Several market areas in Tanah Karo, such as Berastagi, Tiganderket, Tigalingga and Tigabinanga, one of which is a developing area as a trading center for horticultural commodities that supply the needs of the people in Medan. Kabandjahe, on the other hand, is used as the administrative government center of Tanah Karo so that trading activities are not as busy as in Berastagi and at several other points (Smith, 1990, p. 102)

Commodity distribution is accommodated by people who run this business: elites, businessmen, penghulu and essential people. One of them is the family of Koran Karo-Karo, the son of Tentu Karo-Karo. This family made a living by selling crops to Medan using an ox cart. From the proceeds of his sales, Koran Karo-Karo was able to have a proper education in Medan and was enlightened by the idea of nationalism. Lantak Gintings, the father of Jamin Gintings, was also an elite group in Tanah Karo. They sold their crops at Pajak Bundar (Petisah) because of his father's extensive relations so he could get an education at MULO. Produce from Tanah Karo was also widely marketed, such as at Pajak Sentral, Pajak Pancur, Pajak Sukaramai and others in Medan (Sebayang, 2022).

Entering the Japanese rule, propaganda was

carried out through radio transmitters that they wanted to help the people participate in the prosperity of Greater Asia; a lively welcome from the local population of Tanah Karo to the Japanese military occurred for several reasons. First, there was a feeling of disgust at the Dutch colonial treatment that had oppressed the people to the point of social and economic destitution. Secondly, the growing fighting spirit of the previous Tanah Karo movement from the PNI, PKI, Gerindo, and others instills the spirit of independence in the population (Pulungan, 1979). The arrival of the Japanese was assisted by the Fujiwara Kikan line, famously called Barisan "F." Fujiwara Kikan was a military intelligence organization formed by the Japanese affiliated with Japanese army troops who were present to carry out intelligence and sabotage activities under the leadership of Major Fujiwara Iwaichi. Tanah Karo was one of the target areas of F-Kikan's intelligence operations in expelling the Dutch. This lineup was filled with members of the Indonesian People's Movement, Gerindo, who were anti-Dutch colonialism (Umum, 1977).

Meriam Ginting and Kolah Ginting from the Tanah Karo branch of the Indonesian People's Movement (Gerindo) first arrived in the Lingga region after escaping the Dutch. Major Fujiwara Iwaichi welcomed them to foster good relations with the Karo people. The meeting resulted in an agreement to attack the Dutch. They then contacted the Gerindo people to join F-Kikan to strengthen Japan's cooperation in tackling colonialism. Kolah Ginting was given the task of appealing to the sympathies of the Karo people to secure infrastructure critical installations from Dutch attacks and prepare the logistics necessary for the Japanese military landings (Langenberg, 1976)

The leaders of the Tanah Karo "F" line were Meriam Ginting as commander and Kolah Ginting as deputy commander. Some of the people who joined were Geliren Sinulingga, Gandil Bangun, Borong Bangun, Baleng Sinulingga, and Nembah Bangun. While from Barusjahe, there were R.M Pandia, M.S Depari, Djaga Depari, Pajak Sitepu and Keterangan Sebayang. They were former PNI people during the final days of Dutch rule and joined Gerindo to continue the national movement; they had the same influence, vision and thoughts to abolish the feudal and anti-colonial system. The tactics of the Gerindo movement were cooperative in conducting the movement (Gouverneur, 1945).

The Japanese target with the F-Kikan line was to expel the Dutch army under the leadership of General R.T Overakker, who had made headquar-

ters in Kabandjahe on March 9, 1942. The strategy was carried out through the Siantar route via Sari-budodolok and then arrived at Kabandjahe; they struggled to collect weapons at several points in the area by seizing the Dutch headquarters in Tiganderket, even the villagers also helped make a blowgun whose bow was poisoned then a sand bomb filled with chicken eggs mixed with pepper and chili. In addition, catapults were also made to throw stones and amulets that the villagers thought could be used as bullet props. After successfully carrying out its mission, the Japanese then dissolved F-Kikan and political parties; this was done so that the previous momentum would not be utilized by the youth and the Karo people so that it would become a boomerang against Japan (De Soematra Post, 1943). The youth movement kept their minds; they realized that the strategy of the independence struggle needed an organization to equalize perceptions. Several actors, such as Selamat Ginting, Keterangan Sebayang, Nerus Ginting, Nolong Ginting, Rumpia Bukit, Meriam Ginting, Borong Bangun and Rakutta Sembiring, agreed to form the Karo branch of the National Committee, as a form of representation of the voice of the people about their desire to break away from the shackles of colonialism (Brahmana, 2022)

In 1943, the Pusera (People's Economic Center) organization was formed to defend nationalism as a new political struggle tool to keep the Japanese suspicious. The aim was to raise the awareness of the Karo people about the importance of building economic and political independence. The articles of association were deliberated in Limang village and refined in Kabandjahe. Pusera was filled with former PNI and Gerindo members. In a short time, it had 8,000 members. Rakutta Sembiring Brahmana, Tama Ginting and Selamat Ginting were trusted to manage it, assisted by Bosar Sianipar and Mantas Tarigan as secretary and treasurer (Velde, 1947). The headquarters and all activities of this organization were set in the city of Berastagi; this was because when it was in Kabandjahe, the Japanese had first established a cooperative body to take care of all the needs of the Japanese, the body was named *Sangyo Kumiai*. To avoid Japanese suspicion, Berastagi was chosen as a safe place. Former PNI Karo members supported Pusera's funding and welcomed the organization. They campaigned *underground* to the Karo people from house to house about Pusera's vision and mission as a forum for people's defense. They invited the people to sabotage the economy that the Japanese built in Kabandjahe (Brahmana, 2022).

On instruction by Rakutta Brahmana, the Karo people began to take action by no longer bringing their crops in the form of rice, vegetables and fruits in the markets of Tigabinanga, Tiganderket, Tigapanah, the three places are the center of sales of agricultural products of the people set by the Japanese. The *Gunseibu* (Head of the Japanese Military Government) in Tanah Karo began to be confused, so an investigation was immediately carried out by the Japanese kempetai into the actions of the people. The Japanese found out that the cause of the lack of agricultural sales centers in Kabandjahe and several other places was the actions of the Pusera activists. *Gunseibu* ordered the kempetai to search for Rakutta and several Pusera leaders. However, they were not found because they had hidden in remote villages in the Karo region to prepare the following resistance strategy (McCoy, 1972).

EMERGENCE OF THE MOVEMENT: THE TRANSMISSION OF THE IDEA OF NATIONALISM

Efforts to spread the idea of nationalism to the Tanah Karo region were carried out by intellectual actors from Karo who had full awareness of independence and resistance to the enemy. The distribution of the idea of nationalism was brought to the people to block the permeation of foreign powers that tried to enter the Karo region (Monfries, 2008).

Rakutta Sembiring Brahmana was one of them; he attended the *Holland Inlandsch School* (HIS). After graduating in 1927, he continued his education at Taman Siswa Medan as the center of the movement developed political organization so that he began to come into contact with the idea of nationalism. Rakutta also joined the PNI. After graduating, he often returned to his hometown in Limang Village. He spent his time reading books, writing and giving speeches from village to village to foster the spirit of fighting for independence. Because of his activities, he became a target of the Dutch Secret Police (De Sumatera Post, 1931).

Furthermore, the brothers were Tanah Karo Nerus Ginting Suka journalists and Nolong Ginting Suka. Since 1920, they have been involved in the political movement and actively wrote in the magazine of the Melta en Co company in Kabandjahe (Courant, 1929). They aimed to criticize the distorted policies of the Dutch colonial government (De Sumatera Post, 1929). They went in and out of the Tanah Karo area to the highlands to sensitize the people to strengthen their defenses so that there would be no seepage of colonial power in the Karo gugung area because previously, they saw that their

brothers in Karo Jahe had lost many customary lands. The activities of Nerus and Nolong were considered a nuisance to the Dutch government. So, they were often arrested and banished to Boven Digul. Their friends Koda Bangun and Nembah Bangun were also arrested; Radu Sembiring, Nerih Ginting and several others were detained in Arnhe-mia prison in Pancur Batu and Kabandjahe prison. The Dutch did not want anti-colonial seeds like them to spread like a deadly disease (Koerir, 1929).

In addition, there was Selamat Ginting, who considered education very important, so he chose to attend the *Holland Inlandsch School (HIS)* Kabanjahe and then continued his education at *Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs (MULO)*. He actively read newspapers that made him interested in politics. He also had many discussions with important people, such as Sultan Mahmud Latif, his friend who had received a Western education. Selamat Ginting read many of Latif's book collections, making him more critical in his thinking. His political mecca tends to be Bung Karno's thoughts on nationalism and marhaenism (Khairuddin, 1994).

So he decided to return to his hometown to start a movement with his political friends, namely Nerus Ginting Suka, Nolong Ginting Suka, Rakutta Sembiring and Keterangan Sebayang, who understood politics and the nationalism movement. They agreed to form the Kabandjahe branch of the Regional National Committee (KND). Activities carried out made resolutions to be read in front of the Karo community by gathering the population in a field. They joined the PNI as a forum with ideological principles and clear and long-term goals to create an advanced society with a desire to fight together under the leadership of Tama Ginting, based in Berastagi (Khairuddin, 1994).

Jamin Gintings was next. Since childhood, he was interested in school, so at 6, he entered a folk school. He took Dutch language classes at *Schakel School*, Kabandjahe, with his classmate Nelang Sembiring; they continued their studies at MULO. During his education, he learned a lot about the idea of nationalism. During school holidays, Jamin Gintings always returned to the village to spread the idea of nationalism by lecturing and teaching and then gathering friends and relatives in huts where the youth usually gathered ("Mil. Polit. North Sumatera," 1968).

The echo of the Proclamation was heard in Tanah Karo in the fourth week of August 1945, when Djanguda Sebayang, as a telegram post officer in Kabanjahe, received a telegram from the center



Figure 1. The youth of Tanah Karo gather together
Source: National Archives Collection CC0 No.5246

that Sukarno had proclaimed Indonesian independence. Koran Karo-Karo and some of his friends in Kabandjahe received the telegram information very carefully because the Japanese were still conducting patrols targeting movement figures such as Selamat Ginting, Bosar Sianipar, Rakutta Brahmana, Nolong Ginting Suka because they cadre many youths and collaborate with the movements in Medan (Summary, 1946).

The situation was not conducive, so several Tanah Karo youth leaders took the initiative to go to Medan to consult with movement leaders there. Upon their arrival at the Taman Siswa building on Jalan Amplas, they received an explanation to form the Barisan Pemuda Indonesia (Indonesian Youth Front) (Surbakti, 1978). After that, they returned to form an organizational structure consisting of people who had joined the PNI, Poesra and Boempa, *Gyugun, Kenkokutai* and those who were called to revolution (Edisaputra, 1987) the following duties are: (1) Train and organize youths to expand the fight against the enemy in each village; (2) Struggling to find weapons outside the area, such as Tiganderket, Padang Bulan and Bekala Plantation and entering previous Japanese weapons warehouses; (3) Take turns guarding the headquarters of the sub-branches, branches and centers. Active in all activities for the benefit of the wider community, such as gotong royong and others (Ginting, 2002).

Matang Sitepu also returned to Kabanjahe, the capital of Tanah Karo, to form the Indonesian Youth Front. He contacted various local youths such as Payung Bangun, Jamin Gintings, Nelang Sembiring, Ngerajai Milala and other youth leaders (Khairuddin, 1994) On October 5, 1945, the inauguration of the Kabandjahe branch of BPI took place. This branch had a large number of members so that it could gather the entire Tanah Karo region. Matang Sitepu's leadership journey was defeated in

the Tigapanah incident when there was a weapon struggle in the Japanese military (Komunikasi, 1979).

As a result of the Tigapanah incident, a leadership change meeting was held in Berastagi, attended by BPI members Kabandjahe and Payung Bangun and their men. They were former guerrilla troops trained during the Japanese period and then joined an organization called Talapeta. It seemed that Matang Sitepu was yet to be present, Payung Bangun urged the meeting to continue immediately. However, Selamat Ginting wanted Matang Sitepu to remain in attendance. The power struggle was visible when Payung Bangun urged Matang Sitepu to relinquish his position immediately, and all members accepted his decision. Half an hour later, Matang Sitepu appeared in the meeting room and asked to be relieved of his leadership position. Presumably, Matang Sitepu was already very afraid of Payung Bangun and his men (Karo-Karo, 2022). This meeting only discussed the issue of changing the general chairman, for broader discussions related to changing the new membership formation will be held later in (Sebayang, 2022). As a result of this decision, the leadership of BPI Kabandjhe was transferred to Payung Bangun and changed to PESINDO. A few days after Payung Bangun took office, it turned out that this decision was made without the knowledge of the branch administrators. This reaction certainly caused many protests because it was considered that the election was not carried out democratically (Bangun, 2002).

The situation was immediately resolved with a democratic election meeting of several candidates: Payung Bangun, Selamat Ginting, Rakutta Sembiring, Rumpia Bukit, and Nolong Ginting Suka. The selection of two candidates between Selamat Ginting and Payung Bangun was done in writing and secret, and the results showed that 23 votes chose Selamat Ginting and two votes chose Payung Bangun. Thus, the official decision chose Selamat Ginting to become Chairman of the Pesindo Tanah Karo Branch. Selamat Ginting asked Payung Bangun to be willing as his vice chairman, but the request was not accepted (Bangun, 2002). That day, Payung Bangun withdrew all his troops assigned to Pesindo's headquarters. Selamat Ginting immediately held a meeting with the remaining members and asked them to continue together to fight for independence (Sebayang, 2022).

At the same time, Selamat Ginting invited a meeting of all 25 Pesindo branches. This meeting was held in Dolok Barus near Bandar Baru (Bangun, 2002). Payung Bangun and his members

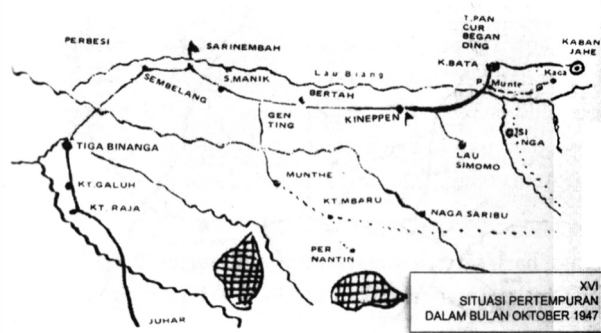


Figure 2. October 1947 Inner Battle Map
Source: North Sumatra Press Museum Documents

formed a laskar called Barisan Harimau Liar. Tanah Karo eventually had two of the largest warrior organizations in every village. The relationship between Napindo Halilintar and Barisan Harimau Liar in several villages and at the branch level has a well-maintained relationship (Bangun, 1998). This can be seen from the cooperation between Napindo Halilintar and Barisan Harimau Liar, which often exchanges information about reports on the activities of enemies attacking the Tanah Karo region in formulating strategies; it is deliberated together to take what actions must be taken so that the enemy can be stopped (Waspada, 1947). In the subsequent development, Jamin Gintings immediately formed Jamin Troops on his experience and training during his entry into the Gyugun organization during the Japanese military government. He was active in organizing former Japanese military officers to become TKR troops. Thus, there were three forces to fight colonialism in Tanah Karo (Said, 1954).

The Dutch began military aggression at five in the morning on July 21, 1947, then were attacked by the Barisan Harimau Liar. BHL concentrated its combat power in Kampung Lalang, Sunggal, Asam Kumbang, Tanjung Selamat and Tuntungan. The Dutch attack towards Kampung Lalang broke the concentration of TRI in several posts such as Klumpang, Klambir Lima, Bulu Cina and Tandem. Many casualties occurred, including Ismail Surbakti, the representative of the BHL commander Karo Jahe, Tukas Sembiring, Jandi Sitepu, and Rata Sembiring. Even in a precarious situation, Jamin Gintings had previously estimated that the Dutch could not penetrate the Pancurbatu-Berastagi defense, which he considered a powerful defense position. Although the Dutch had penetrated the eastern sector, the Karo highland area could be expected to survive. Moreover, there were Napindo Halilintar troops from Simalungun led by Saragih Ras, then the BHL troops of the Upper Deli branch under the leadership of Ngumban Surbakti so that

they were able to defend against enemy invasions (Senduk, 2014).

Jamin Ginting's estimation was wrong; the Dutch did not pass the Pancurbatu-Berastagi route but via Tebing Tinggi-Pematang Siantar, Saribudolok-Kabanjahe until they reached Berastagi to occupy all of Tanah Karo. Through the back road, the enemy entered and broke into the Serdang Hulu area through the Lubuk Pakam-Bangun Purba-Saribudolok route. They entered using motorized tanks mounted with the Red and White flag. Capung and Jager aircraft were also active in this breakthrough movement. They then destroyed the headquarters of the Napindo regiment Halilintar branch in Berastagi (Tarigan, 2009).

After the enemy successfully occupied the Berastagi and Kabanjahe areas, TRI troops under Jamin Gintings, Napindo Halilintar under the leadership of Selamat Ginting and Barisan Harimau Liar under the leadership of Payung Bangun consolidated the division of the battle area ((NEFIS), 1949). The momentum chosen for the attack was carried out on August 17, 1947, the second anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, as well as informing the Dutch that the forces of the Republic of Indonesia could still fight back. The meeting was held in Berastagi, and the results of the cooperation agreement were: (1) Each base is divided equally into three points, namely South Karo, Sarinembah is the military operations area of TRI, Central Karo or Tigabinaga is the military operations area of Napindo Halilintar and North Karo, namely Batukarang is the military operations area of Barisan Harimau Liar; (2) There was to be no mutual disarmament between the laskar and TRI; (3) Conduct scorched earth actions against important objects and cooperate against the enemy (Basri, 1958)

DYNAMICS OF NATIONALISM: CONFLICT AND RESOLUTION, BATTLE AGAINST THE ENEMY

In the struggle of the youth to defend Independence between one group and another group, there are different mindsets when facing the enemy. Differences of opinion and misunderstandings between Laskar groups and between laskar and TRI result in clashes, such as the previous conflict in Napindo Halilintar and Barisan Harimau Liar. It would jeopardize unity, and it was feared that the enemy would take advantage of it (Dagblad, 1947). To address the disharmony that had occurred before, the unity of struggle (*volksfront*) of Tan Malaka was present, and the deliberations were held in Purwok-

erto on January 4-5, 1946, Sarwono Sastro Sutarjo was a figure from East Sumatra who was present at the deliberations and spread it and was brought by Tama Ginting to Tanah Karo. The leaders of all parties in East Sumatra coordinated to unite the idea of gathering the movement. The idea was welcomed by all organizations of the people's struggle, and a body was inaugurated that functioned as a coordinator of the struggle as a form of cooperation between the laskar and TRI named "Markas Agung." In practice, there were often disputes within the (Basri, 1958)

The dispute culminated when it was found that the composition within the Supreme Headquarters was unbalanced between the laskar's position, which was stronger than TRI. The role of figures in political parties was very influential among the laskar in Tanah Karo. This condition made the Laskar fight according to their tastes and needs, making it challenging to apply the discipline applied by the TRI. Although the TRI was under the auspices of the official government, it was not yet a "coercive" force for political purposes. Even when TRI and the Supreme Headquarters were reorganized, there was a clash between the laskar and the British army in Berastagi (Sumatra, 1950). Incorporating the laskar into the Supreme Headquarters did not guarantee the coordination of the struggle for independence. The development of political parties fragmented the command of the struggle. The Laskar commanders obeyed the party leaders more than the headquarters leaders (Prima, 1976)

The dispute escalated when the enemy attacked the defenses in Tanah Karo on a large scale towards Tigabinanga. Laskar and TRI were forced to withdraw from the attack. This incident led to a civil war between Napindo Halilintar and TRI. Many Napindo Halilintar leaders were arrested on orders from Jamin Gintings. The arrests were made to prevent the burning of posts in Tanah Karo by the laskar. However, to prevent civil war, conflict regulation was carried out in Kabanjahe to equalize the tactics of the struggle between Jamin Gintings and Tama Ginting (Inlichtingendienst, 1949). Since there was a dispute between TRI and Laskar, the TRI Supreme Headquarters issued an edict that stated: "To eliminate misunderstandings due to differences in patterns in the strategy of the struggle between TRI and Laskar, this endangers the Republic of Indonesia." There is an affirmation of duties between TRI and Laskar so that there is no clash between the two: (1) TRI is a part of society that must maintain independence. Its duties focused on

defense, and was exempted from work other than maintaining the security of the Republic of Indonesia. TRI is not a form of a caste in society. Rather, it is a part of society that has specific duties; (2) The Laskar remains a people's organization; the TRI will not disarm nor interfere with the election of leaders and the rules of the Laskar's household; (3) TRI held joint negotiations at TRI headquarters in each region; (4) The task of the laskar was to help as a fighting force, to be a reserve in assisting in addition to the TRI (Inlichtingendienst, 1949).

The borrowing of concepts in this study to clarify the historical phenomenon under study refers to the concept of the flow of thought expressed by Eisenstadt regarding the revolution that there are five conditions that an event can be said to be a revolution if it includes several requirements: (1) A radical change of government, based on its legitimacy and symbols; (2) Fundamental changes in all institutional areas of social life, economic reforms and industrialization fostered centralization and political participation; (3) Providing ideological strength and awakening orientation regarding revolutionary images; (4) A radical change in political government based on its legitimacy and symbols; (5) A radical break with everything that has gone before (Eisenstadt, 1984).

The concept expressed by Eisenstadt regarding the revolution that has been described that not all can be implemented in this case study, as a comparison that the events of March 1946 throughout the East Sumatra region, namely Asahan, Langkat, Serdang and Deli according to Anthony Reid are quite gripping that there is bloodshed, murder, rape, confiscation and acts of violence against the feudal and anti-Malay sentiment embedded in the minds of the community and the movement to eliminate all things Malay and people who are Dutch accomplices (Velde, 1948).

The unique thing was seen in Tanah Karo that there was a difference in the atmosphere, and the revolutionary process was fairly orderly; this was because the arrests made aimed at the sibayak and kings were not carried out by the Union of Struggle in Berastagi; they were not killed, treated harshly and only exiled in the North Karo region precisely in Kutacane. After the incident, they returned to a state where the laskar and TRI had taken over the lands. What made the operation of the revolution in Tanah Karo orderly was that there was a strong ethnicity system in the Karo community, which considered that there was a brotherhood in a clan called *Mergasilima*, so the course of the revolutionary process was not as severe as in the

East Sumatra region. The points mentioned by Eisenstadt as conditions for the previous revolution cannot be said to be entirely true in seeing the atmosphere of the revolution in Tanah Karo.

CONCLUSION

The movement of nationalism in Tanah Karo is correlated with Tanah Karo actors who studied in Medan and came from economically well-established families. They have an awareness of building networks on the importance of upholding Indonesian independence in Tanah Karo with ideas of nationalism that must be disseminated to residents in the Tanah Karo region through media such as writing, speeches, lectures and providing training. The movement actors from Karo are members of the PNI, so the idea of nationalism is inherent in them as the motor of the struggle. However, when spreading the idea of nationalism, there were often frictions, conflicts, and misunderstandings among fellow soldiers and between soldiers and TRI.

Since the issuance of the TRI Supreme Headquarters edict to reconcile the feud between the laskar and TRI groups because there were different patterns of struggle according to their respective tastes, this was immediately overcome to unite the tactics of struggle in attacking the enemy. The concentration was on three significant elements in Tanah Karo, which became the driving force, including the Napindo Halilintar Regiment, Barisan Harimau Liar and TRI Regiment I. The three movements became a significant force and spread to other regions. The three movements became a large force and spread at several points in Tanah Karo, such as in North Karo, Payung Bagun, in Central Karo, led the Wild Tiger Row there was Napindo Halilintar under the command of Selamat Ginting, and South Karo under TRI led by Jamin Ginting. The dispute between the People's Army and the TRI could then be suppressed by consolidating between the two parties, namely the army and the TRI so that they would concentrate more on the areas they supported to defend against enemy attacks.

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