

**INFORMATION PANIC:
A CASE STUDY ON BOEDI OETOMO IN THE COLONIAL REPORTS
1908 – 1915 AND 1930 - 1935**

**PANIK INFORMASI:
SEBUAH STUDI KASUS BOEDI OETOMO DALAM LAPORAN KOLONIAL
1908 – 1925 DAN 1930 – 1935**

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Abstrak

Pemerintah koloni Belanda terjangkiti “wabah” yang disebut dengan “panik informasi” tentang situasi di koloninya, Hindia Belanda. Salah satunya adalah laporan (series *Mailrapporten*, *Verbaalarchief*, dan *Kolonialrapporten*) mengenai Budi Utomo, salah satu organisasi terkenal awal abad ke-20. Kementerian Urusan Tanah Jajahan menerima banyak laporan mengenai Budi Utomo, selama periode pentingnya, awal berdiri dan jelang bubarinya. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mendalami kepanikan informasi tentang Budi Utomo, meneliti pokok bahasan apa yang didiskusikan dalam laporan pemerintah koloni dan bagaimana Parlemen Belanda dan Menteri Urusan Tanah Jajahan mendiskusikannya.

Kata Kunci: Panik Informasi, Boedi Oetomo, *Mailrapporten*, *Verbaalarchief*, Laporan Kolonial

In the 19th and early 20th century, the Dutch Colonial Government had experienced an endemic that so called “information panic” about the situation in the Dutch East Indies. One of the case of this information panic is the reports about Boedi Oetomo, one of prominent organizations during early 20th century in Dutch East Indies. The Ministries of Colony in the Netherlands gained many reports from the colony about Boedi Oetomo, namely during its crucial period: the early years of its establishment and the decline of it. This paper aims to examine information panic about Boedi Oetomo. Moreover, this paper also examines the subjects that were discussed in the government reports and how the Dutch Parliament and the Minister of Colonies discussed about this organization in the Netherlands.

Keyword: Information Panic, Boedi Oetomo, *Mailrapporten*, *verbaalarchief*, Colonial Reports

INTRODUCTION

Between 1906 and 1907, a pensioned Javanese doctor, Wahidin Soediro Hoesodo (1857-1917) who was educated in *School tot Opleiding voor Indische Artsen* (STOVIA), a School for the Trainings of Native Doctors that was established in 1902, visited several places in Java to spread his ideas about elevating Javanese people through education and to collect money for scholarship fund for Javanese people. During this activity he met two young STOVIA scholars: Soetomo and Soeradji, who were influenced by Dr. Wahidin. The three of them, together with other Stovia students established an organization which is called Boedi Oetomo (Noble Endeavor) in May 20th 1908. Boedi Oetomo (BO) is the first modern organization established in the Dutch East Indies, which establishment day is still commemorated in present Indonesia as the national awakening's day (*Hari Kebangkitan Nasional*).

In the beginning of its establishment, BO's objective was mainly focusing on education. As stated in its statute article two, this organization is aimed to help the indigenous development in Java and Madoera (*membantoe madjoenja tanah dan boemi-poetra di poelau Djawa dan Madoera*) (Verslag Boedi-Oetomo Tahoen I dan Congr II, 1910: 2). This organization was in the beginning exclusive for the Javanese *prijaji* (the nobles) in order to improve their educational level. The establishment of this first organization as well as the statute was reported in the East

Indies' local newspaper, *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, on the 13, 17, 18, and 22 of July 1908.

The Dutch East Indies government supported the establishment of the organization as it was in line with the implementation of the "ethical policy" in which the colonial government was responsible for the welfare of the native people in their colony. The main objective of BO, according to its statute, indicates that this organization is not a political organization because it was meant for the education of the indigenous people, thus the Dutch East Indies government supported it. Furthermore, BO was considered at that time as an "agent" of the Dutch East Indies government because some of their members were also civil servants in the government (Nagazumi, 1992: 61-62). Nevertheless, since 1915 the perspective of BO changed from educational perspective into political perspective. Nagazumi argued that the turning point of this changing was when BO delivered its opinion regarding Indies militia. Militia will enable native people to participate in defending the country. The shift of interest became a point where the colonial government became to consider BO as a political organization. BO submitted what was called as the "famous Bandung motion" to the Governor General to pay special attention to the "complaints and opinion raised with regard to the militia" (Nagazumi, 1992: 102). This is the point where the colonial government began to consider BO as a political organization.

The establishment and the progress of BO were reported to the Netherlands by the Governor General as they were significant in the East Indies. The Dutch government, in this case the Minister of Colonies, received regular reports from the government in the colonies. There were exchange of letters between the Governor General in Batavia and the Minister of Colonies in the Netherlands. All of these documents can be found in the so-called *verbaalarchieven* and *mailrapporten*. *Verbaalarchieven* is one long, continuous series of decisions in the form of minutes (*minuut besluiten*), ordered by date of record. The incoming documents were added to the decisions. He also added that this chronological ordering system was made mandatory in 1823 for all ministries and was to be used by the General Secretariat in the Dutch East Indies as well (Jeurgens: N/A: 15). Meanwhile *mailrapporten* (mail reports) started to be used in the East Indies when the Minister of Colonies received a profound discontent with the quality of the official reports. Through a modification of his instruction, the Governor General was required with every mail dispatch to send in a brief account of the main affairs of government that had presented themselves in the East Indies Archipelago. The official name for these notes was *mailrapporten van wetenswaardige bijzonderheden* (mail reports of interesting occurrences), but they have become widely known under the term *mailrapporten* (mail reports) (Hugenholtz, 1980: 71). Through *verbaalarchieven* and

mailrapporten, the Minister of Colonies in the Netherlands attempted to solve the so-called ‘information panic’ about the situation in the Dutch East Indies as the Minister of Colonies need as much as possible information about what happened in the colonies. The physical distance between the Dutch East Indies and the Netherlands, and the importance of the matters in the East Indies, ‘the King and the minister of colonies had developed a kind of Endemic ‘information panic’ about the situation in the East Indies. There was always a fear that the colonial administration was withholding or delaying sending the crucial information (Jeurgens, 16-17).

BO was mentioned in both the *verbalen* and *mailrapporten*. By studying these systems, this paper attempts to examine how the Dutch colonial government (Governor General) reported about BO to the Minister of Colonies in the Netherlands. More specific, what kinds of subjects were discussed in the government reports regarding BO? Also, how the Dutch Parliament and the Minister of Colonies discussed about this organization in the Netherlands? The period of this research is limited from the year 1908 to 1915 (the early years of BO) and the year 1930-1935 (the period of the decline of BO) (Nagazumi, 1992: 1).

RESEARCH METHOD

In order to answer the research questions, I am looking at the *verbalen* and the *mailrapporten* that were sent by the Governor General to the Ministry of

Colonies between 1908-1915 and 1930-1935. Regarding the discussion about BO between the Dutch Parliament and the Minister of Colonies, I use the Proceeding of the State General (*Handelingen der Staten Generaal*) between 1908 and 1915, and, between 1930 and 1935.

First I will give brief background on the relation between BO and the colonial government in order to see government's responds toward the activities of BO. After that, I will analyze the colonial reports (*verbalen* and *mailrapporten*) regarding the early years of BO (1908-1915), and its decline (1930-1935). Each of these sections also includes discussion about BO between the Dutch parliament and the Minister of Colonies. This paper ends with a conclusion.

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Boedi Oetomo and the Colonial Government

Nagazumi points out that the Dutch colonial government was very enthusiastic about the establishment of BO. The government expressed deep interest from the outset. The appointment of Raden Adipati Tirtokoesoemo (Regent of Karanganyar) as the first chairman of Boedi Oetomo has attracted the colonial government to pay more attention to this organization. When Tirtokoesoemo was appointed, he asked his superior, Wijers (the Resident of Kedoe), to grant him to be the president of BO. The colonial government was very happy that Tirtokoesoemo became the president of BO. It indicates that the establishment of BO has

been accepted gladly by the government (Nagazumi, 1992: 52).

Although the government was pleased for Tirtokoesoemo's appointment, they were still not in a hurry to grant BO's statute. BO's statute was agreed by the government in 28 December 1909, one and half year after its establishment. According to Nagazumi, the government was careful not to express any premature opinions on the movement and was in no hurry to grant the recognition of BO as a legal organization. The government was anxious about the difference between the older and the younger members of this new organization. The unsigned article, as Nagazumi cited, described the colonial government's attitude toward the BO:

“Much will depend on the attitude of the government toward the new organization, and the government faces a difficult choice: whether to rebuff, against its will, the older officials, who are less enlightened, but faithful and unimpeachable with regard to adat, or to turn against the more enlightened younger elements...”(Nagazumi, 1992: 52)

Furthermore, during the time between the first and the second congresses, when the nature of BO was as yet unclear, the attitude of the Dutch officials was particularly speculative. They tended to think in terms of its use to the government rather than of its value for its own sake. The Dutch officials tried to find a practical means of using the organization for a more

efficient and effective administration (Nagazumi, 1992: 61-62).

Until 1915, the colonial government was satisfied with BO. The shift in the interests of the BO occurred in the year 1915. In this year, BO supported the idea of militia plan before the government had formulated a more concrete policy on the defense of the Dutch East Indies. According to the report of the tenth years of BO (*Verslag Boedi Oetomo Tahoen Kesepoeloeh 1917-1918*), it began its interest in politics when a general session was held in Bandung. The participants came from the representatives of each BO's chapter. They discussed mostly about the indigenous militia. The famous Bandoeng motion was then acknowledged, as stated:

“De algemeene vergadering van Boedi Oetomo gehouden te Bandoeng op den 5 en 6 augustus 1915.

Overwegende, dat voor verdere geleidelijke vooruitgang van deze landen urgent is, dat de rust en orde geen oogenblik wordt verstoord:

Overwegende, dat het volk het zijne moet bijdragen om bedoelde rust en orde te verzekeren;

Overwegende, dat een staand-leger in ieder geval duurder zal blijken dan militie;

Acht de invoering van de militieplicht voor de Inlanders noodzakelijk, doch geeft, aangezien bedoelde vergadering in de details der uitvoering daarvan, met het oog op de vele daarbij gerezen bezwaren

in het duister tast, de noodzakelijkheid te kennen, dat omtrent deze materie het Gevoelen van het volk wordt gehoord zoodat een Volksvertegenwoordiging in het leven moet worden geroepen.

(The general session of Boedi Oetomo was held in Bandung, in 5 and 6 of August 1915.

Considering that it is urgent for further gradual progress of this land (Dutch East Indies) that peace and order are not disturbed;

Considering that the people have to contribute to assure the peace and order in the country;

Considering that a standing army is more expensive than militia;

Considering the introduction of militia duty the indigenous is necessary, but gives, considering the referred session, details of the realization of the plan thereof, in the view of the many, thereby raised objections, to know the necessity, that the feeling of the people should be heard so that a people's assembly should be convened.) (*Verslag Boedi Oetomo 1917-18, 11-13*)

This motion became an indication that BO showed its interest in politics. Furthermore, at the same session, the executive board (*Hoofdbestuur*) declared the statement of principles of BO, and announced this to the members. There are

Table 1. Openbaar Verbaal Ministrie van Kolonien

| <i>Verbaal</i> | <i>Subject</i> | <i>Hoofdenlijst</i> |
|-------------------|---|---|
| 26-05-1909 No. 31 | <i>Bewerking der Javaansche publiek opinie tegen het opiumgebruik</i> | <i>Opium</i> |
| 3-11-1909 No. 53 | <i>Boedi Oetomo</i> | <i>Naamlooze Vernootschappen & Verenigingen</i> |
| 21-02-1910 No. 11 | <i>Tegen het optreden van de Regent Japara als commissaris in het hoofdbestuur van Boedi Oetomo</i> | <i>Naamlooze Vernootschappen & Verenigingen</i> |
| 2-04-1910 No. 13 | <i>Boedi Oetomo</i> | <i>Naamlooze Vernootschappen & Verenigingen</i> |
| 22-07-1914 No. 9 | <i>Boedi Oetomo in verbandt met het standpunt van het Indisch leger ingenomen tegenover militiadie eene (...) persoonlijkheid vertegenwoordigen</i> | <i>Naamlooze Vernootschappen & Verenigingen</i> |

Resource: Openbaar Verbaal Archives

two points from the statement that showed BO's interest in politics:

“BO will produce and deliver something that can stimulate a feeling, that the indigenous people (in Java) is in an independent state, and can lead them themselves. BO will attempt to make indigenous (from all ethnics) equal (in terms of education, welfare, with the Europeans), and attempt to represent the people in a chamber that will cooperate together with *Kolonialen Raad* that will also be established.” (Verslag Boedi Oetomo 1917-18, 51)

Related to BO's attention to militia, the colonial government began to pay more attention to this issue. The government faced a new situation. The Western-educated native youths, who had originally figured as the targets of the militia system, now showed themselves capable of analyzing the political situation, and bargaining for their

interests. The year 1915 was a difficult one for the colonial government because of the heated discussion of the defense of the Indies. The situation forced the colonial government to reassess the political role of the BO after nearly a decade of relative indifference. Once again, as in 1909, there was a talk of how the organization might best be used to promote governmental policies. The significant difference, however, was that it was now taken for granted that BO was a political party (Nagazumi, 1992: 97-105).

The Early Years of Boedi Oetomo (1908-1915)

1. Colonial Report

Between 1908 and 1915, there are five reports about BO that can be found in the *Openbaar Verbaal* archives. Table 1 shows the subjects of the report.

There are also reports about BO in the *mailrapporten*. Between 1908-1915,

Table 2. Mailrapporten about Boedi Oetomo (1918-1915)

| Mail Report Number | Year | Hoofdenlijst |
|--------------------|------|--|
| 1725 | 1908 | <i>Rechtswezen</i> |
| 1769 | 1908 | <i>Rechtswezen</i> |
| 155 | 1909 | <i>Opium</i> |
| 1864 Geheim | 1909 | <i>Rechtswezen</i> |
| 57 | 1910 | <i>Naamloze Vennootschappen & Verenigingen</i> |
| 1122 | 1914 | <i>Naamloze Vennootschappen en Verenigingen</i> |

Resources: Openbaar Verbaal Archives

there are six *mailrapporten* that can be found (see Table 2).

However, all of the attachments of these *mailrapporten* were attached in the *verbalen* that I listed in Table 1.

The ‘earliest’ report about BO that is available is dated May 26th 1909. Interestingly, BO was mentioned in a report about opium. The subject of the report is the process of Javanese public opinion about opium use. The use of opium in Java was high in the period of late 19th century and early 20th century. East and Central Java became the largest market of opium at that time. The residencies such as Japara, Rembang, and Surabaya, along with Kedu and Jogjakarta contained the largest opium smokers (Rush, 1985: 549-560). The report mentioned that due to the increasing use of opium in the East Indies, the government hoped that, as an educational organization, BO would cooperate with them to tackle the use of opium, especially in Java. This can be seen in a letter written by the Dutch adviser for indigenous affairs, G.A.J. Hazeu, to the Governor General van Heutsz dated

December 30th 1908. This letter was actually the attachment of the mail report number 155 of the year 1909. In this letter, Hazeu paid attention to the process of the BO’s establishment, its aims, and the men behind this organization, such as Wahidin Soediro Hoesodo, R.M.T.K. Tjokroadikoesoemo, and R.M.T. Koesoemo Oetoyo. Hazeu suggested that BO should be considered as a potential organization to be developed. The Dutch East Indies government, according to Hazeu, should not interfere with this organization too much and should give BO the opportunity to develop its organization. Hazeu closed his letter with an advice regarding opium use. By considering BO as a potential organization, the government should ask BO to cooperate against the use of opium (Verbaal 26th May 1909, no.31).

Besides the letter of G.A.J. Hazeu, another attachment was found in the *verbaal* dated 3 November 1909 number 53. This *verbaal* includes a letter from the first government secretary to the Resident of Kedoe dated 15th October 1908. This letter is also the attachment of mail report

number 1725 of the year 1908. This letter mentioned that the Governor General had followed the news in the newspaper regarding the first Javanese Congress held by BO in Jogjakarta. In July 13th 1908, *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* reported about the establishment of BO in Java, that aimed to increase the educational and economic level of Javanese people. This newspaper also reported about BO's plan to have the first Java Congress in Jogjakarta in September 1909. In this letter, the secretary informed the Resident that the Governor General had no objection upon the appointment of Raden Toemenggoeng Ario Tirto Koesoemo, the Regent of Karanganyar, as the chairman of BO. The Governor General was certain that RT Ario Tirto Koesoemo will lead BO very well.

Furthermore, the *verbaal* of 3 November 1909 includes a letter dated October 24th 1908 from the Resident of Kedoe to the Governor General. This letter is also the attachment of mail report number 1769 of the year 1908. In this letter the Resident informed the Governor General that he was very glad with the appointment of RT Ario Tirto Koesoemo as the chairman of BO (*Verbaal* 3 November 1909 no. 53). These two letters depict the supportive respond of the colonial government regarding the establishment of BO, including the appointment of RT Ario Tirto Koesoemo as the chairman of this organization. The interest of the government can also be seen from the letters. The appointment of a civil servant as the chairman of BO can help the government in

cooperating to fight against the opium use in Java.

The *verbaal* of 3 November 1909 also includes a memorandum issued by the Minister of Colonies. The memorandum stated that BO is an organization that focused on the spiritual and intellectual movement. In addition, this memorandum indicates that the Minister considered BO as a non-political organization:

“...verder werd na nog verschillende oraties het navolgende werkprogram voor 1908-09 ontworpen waaruit het absoluut niet-revolutionaire zelfs zuiver niet-politieke karakter der vereniging duidelijk blijkt...”

“...furthermore, after different speeches, the following work programs (of BO) for the year 1908-1909 that was arranged, clearly turned out to be neither revolutionary nor politic...”

In monitoring the work of BO, the government paid attention to the person in charge of the organization. This can be seen in the *verbaal* of February 21st 1910 No. 11 regarding the appointment of the Regent of Japara, R. M. T. Ario Koesoemo Oetoyo as BO's central executive. This letter is also attachment of the secret mail rapport number 1864 of the year 1909. The letter comes from the first government secretary (De Graef) to the Resident of Semarang. In this letter, De Graef informed that the Governor General has no objection regarding the appointment of the Regent of Japara as the central executive of BO. This *verbaal*

contains the letter of G.A.J. Hazeu to the Governor General dated November 12th 1909 about his advice towards the appointment of Regent of Japara. Hazeu has no objection about the appointment. Besides that, this *verbaal* also includes a letter from the Assistant Resident of Semarang to the Governor General that the Assistant Resident also has no objection towards the appointment (*Verbaal 21st February 1910, no. 11*).

The *verbaal* of 2 April 1910 number 13 contains information about the approval of BO's statute. The letter comes from the Governor General to the Minister of Colonies dated 11 February 1910 that includes a letter from the Resident of Jogjakarta to the Governor General regarding the process of obtaining a decree of statute of BO from the government (*Verbaal 2nd April 1910, no. 13*). All letters were attached in the mail report number 57 of the year 1910. The Governor General answered the Minister of Colonies regarding the publication that BO would like to publish. This publication was regarded as potentially dangerous publication against the European. The Governor General answered the Minister's question by giving the process of the approval of BO's statute and included the secret letters from the advisor for indigenous affairs in the Dutch East Indies dated 20 December 1909. The advisor took into account that the government should let the organization develop. Furthermore, the adviser suggested the Governor General to grant BO their statute.

After 1910 and until mid-1914 there is no more report written about BO. This is possibly because the government did not pay more attention to BO anymore. The appearance of other organizations, such as *Sarikat Islam* and *Indische Partij*, gained more attention from the government. These two organizations were regarded as more radical dan dangerous organizations due to their goals of indigenous' independence. BO was mentioned again in the *verbaal* of 22nd July 1914 under a report regarding indigenous military. This *verbaal* contains a letter from the commandant of army forces of the department of war in the Dutch East Indies (Michielsen) to the Governor General dated May 19th 1914, and two other letters as the attachments of Michielsen's letter. These attachments are also included in the mail report number 1122 of the year 1914. The first attachment was a letter from the military commandant to the commandant of the army dated on 20 February 1914. The letter mentioned about the presence of a military branch of BO in Aceh. Apparently, since 1909, BO had already established military forces in Aceh. The members of Boedi Oetomo were placed in several districts in Aceh such as Biheu, LanMeulo, Meureudoe, Samalanga, Bireun, BlangBakal, LhoSeumawe, LoeboeRoeseb, Langsa, Keloeë, BlangKedjaran, Lokop en KoetaTjane. The second attachment was a letter from lieutenant general of the department of war in the Dutch East Indies to all military commandants in all branches. This letter covers information about how the member of the military forces should

maintain their discipline and other things that an army should have (*Verbaal* 22nd July 1914, no. 9). This *verbaal* indicates the participation of BO in military activity. BO had already members who were able to support the defense system of the Dutch East Indies. This is in line with what BO stated in “Bandung Motion” that indigenous people should participate in militia.

In conclusion, most of the report about BO during the period 1908-1910 was about the establishment, structure and the function of organization. The colonial government considered BO as a non-political organization because it implements its statute as educational organization. Furthermore, the government sees BO as a useful organization in helping government’s policies, such as fight against opium use and elevate the education for indigenous. After that there was no report about BO until 1914 in which the report about BO consists of information about the shift of Boedi Oetomo’s aims. Bandoeng motion became one of signs that BO would like to shift its aims. The colonial government began to watch BO as political organization.

2. Discussion in the Parliament of the Netherlands

During the year 1908-1909 there are three meetings held by the Parliament of the Netherlands that discuss about BO. These three meetings were held on 5th of November 1908, 6th of November 1908, and 10th of November 1908.

In the meeting of 5 November 1908, Van Deventer, one of the most influential defenders of the ethical policy, brought up the issue of BO. He considered BO as a useful force in abolishing the traditional class system, which he regarded obstructive to the modernization of the native society. Van Deventer saw that this organization was going to be a prospective organization for the indigenous people and also for the Dutch colonial government (*Handelingen Staten Generaal*, 17^{de} vergadering, 5^e November 1909).

The second meeting was held on 6th November 1908. Bogaardt, one of the parliament members, addressed the issue regarding BO on his presentation about the yearly budget for the Dutch East Indies. He added what Van Deventer had discussed the day before. Nevertheless, his opinion was different than Van Deventer. Bogaardt argued that the establishment of BO will bring impact to the stability of the Dutch East Indies. Furthermore, upon reading BO’s annual report, he doubted that the indigenous people (in BO) can make a good report and establish such a well-organized organization. He assumed that there might be Europeans who were involved in the establishment of BO. In addition, from what he read in two newspapers, *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* and *de Sumatra Post* about the first congress of Javanese Youth, he concluded that BO was more a political organization than a social organization. He also referred to news about chaos that occurred in the Indies one month after the first congress of BO, that for him,

indicated indigenous conspiracy. He quoted a statement in the newspaper, *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* dated 1 November 1908:

Er is een geheime beweging ontdekt onder de inlanders, gericht tegen de Europeanen. Het plan moet bestaan, dat zij het blanke ras willen vermoorden, enz.

(There is a secret movement discovered among the indigenous, established against the Europeans. The plan must be possible that they are eager to kill the white race).

Bogaardt gave an example of an organization that had established before BO in the East Indies. This organization failed to maintain its existence because the changing of its aims, from social organization to political organization. He added further that although he did not have enough information about this organization, and that this organization might not be connected to BO, he was worried that BO will turn into a political organization and then work against the government (*Handelingen Staten Generaal, 18^{de} vergadering, 6^e November 1909*).

In the meeting on November 10th 1909, Van Deventer again delivered his speech about BO, emphasizing BO as an educational organization, which can help indigenous people increasing their level of education. He referred to the annual report of BO and assumed that BO could cooperate with the government in improving education for the indigenous people.

Van Deventer definitely supported the establishment of BO while Bogaardt was more worried about the potential of BO that will harm the colonial government. In the *memorie van antwoord* (memory of response) from the Ministry of Colonies, he concluded that BO is a non-dangerous organization. In this memory of answer, BO was described as follow.

Bond van Javanen. Ten aanzien van den nieuw opgerichten Javaanschen Bond Boedi Oetomo, doet de ondergeteekende opmerken dat tot nog toe uit niets is gebleken dat de jonge vereeniging andere neigingen koesterde dan vermeerdering van de belangstelling in de openbare zaak en grootere ontwikkeling van de inlandsche maatschappij. Aan het hoofd van den Bond staat thans niet meer de persoon, van wie u de oorspronkelijke oproeping tot deelneming is uitgegaan, maar de regent van Karanganyar, een hoofd ambtenaar die het volle vertrouwen der Regeering geniet en wiens verkiezing door haar met volle instemming is ontvangen. Van een politiek standpunt ontmoette de oprichting van deze vereeniging bij den ondergeteekende dan ook geen bedenking.

(*Organization of Javanese*). Considering the new established Javanese organization, *Boedi Oetomo*, the undersigned observe that there is no evidence until now that the young organization nourished other tendencies than the increase of the importance in the general concern and huger development of the indigenous. The head of the organization is not a new person who participated for the

first time, but the regent of Karanganyar, a head of civil servants who enjoys full confidence from the government and whose choice is received by the government with full approval. From the political consideration of the establishment of this organization, the undersigned does not have any objections.) (*Eindverslag der commissie van rapporteurs over de ontwerpen van wet tot vaststelling der begrooting van Nederlandsch-Indie voor het dienstjaar 1909 en over het ontwerp van wet tot wijziging en verhooging dier begrooting ten behoeve van den aanleg van een spoorweg van Pariaman naar SoengeiLiema*, p. 140)

During the year 1909 and 1910, there were two documents from the States of General that discussed about BO. The first one came from the 13th meeting of second chamber about the budgeting in the Dutch East Indies for 1910. One of the parliament members, Troelstra, delivered his speech about BO. He stated that the political reformation in the Dutch East Indies was unsolvable. He was worried that when the people gained better education and welfare, they would ask for independence. The phenomenon of this tendency came into being when the parliament heard the news about the establishment of BO. The parliament members were worried that BO will educate people to the independence of East Indies. After reading the report about BO's first congress, Troeltsra concluded that this organization attempted to empower itself to develop. Nevertheless, he added that although this organization would possibly become bigger, there was no indication

implied that this organization would be a political organization (*Handelingen Staten Generaal, 13de vergadering, 10 November 1909*).

Moreover, in the memory of answer from the Ministry of Colonies in 1909, the Dutch government stated that they did not provide support to BO as it was the task of the East Indies government. Nevertheless, the Ministry was aware that BO will establish a publication in Surakarta under the guidance of a European.

Voor zooveel noodig zal de aandacht van de Indische regering gevestigd worden op de mededeeling. In het voorloopig verslag, dat Boedi Oetomo spoedig te Soerakarta een orgaan zal uitgeven, waarvan de redactie zal worden geleid door een Europeaan, die door zijn opruiende artikelen in binnenlandsche en buitenlandsche bladen blijk gegeven heeft vijandig te staan tegenover het Nederlandsche gouvernement. Den ondergeteekende is dienaangaandeniets bekend.

To extent necessary, the attention of the Indies government will be paid to the announcement. In the temporary report, that Boedi Oetomo will issue a publication in Surakarta of which the draft will be guided by a European who has demonstrated through his inflammatory articles in domestic economic and foreign newspapers hostile to stand in front of the Dutch Government. The undersigned is known nothing on

that subject.) (*Memory van Antwoord, begroting van Nederlandsch Indië voor het dienstjaar 1910, 2^e kamer*).

There is no further information about Parliament's discussion about BO between 1910 and 1911. Topic about BO appeared again in the meeting of November 21st 1912. In this meeting, Bogaardt delivered his speech about education in the Indies. He argued that BO correlated with the freemason and cooperated with it. It was because most members of freemason were the *priyayi* (Javanese noblemen), who, at the same time, were also members of BO. Furthermore, Bogaardt also suggested the way to lead the indigenous to the European way. One of the ways was to give support to neutral education through BO. BO at that time was considered to give neutral education. The speech indicated the cooperation between BO and the East Indies government. The East Indies government provided BO with fund to educate indigenous people. BO was mentioned again in the meeting of February 1913 by one of the parliament members, Franssen, who stated that—based on BO's statute—that BO had to be the leader and the promoter to show the right direction and to prepare the path for the unskilled Javanese (*Handelingen Staten Generaal, 19^e vergadering, 18 Februari 1913*).

In the same year, discussion about BO occurred in the parliament's meeting about the budget for the Dutch East Indies for 1914. The parliament was anxious about

the establishment of a new organization called *Indische Partij* in 1912. This organization was established by E.F.E. Douwes Dekker who has close relationship with the members of BO. *Indische Partij* was seen as more nationalist than BO (Blumberger, 1997: 22). The statute of *Indische Partij* was rejected by the colonial government because this organization was regarded as a dangerous organization. The parliament was worried that Douwes Dekker and his compatriot, Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, will influence the movement of BO. Van Deventer explained in his speech during the meeting that Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo was one of the co-founders of BO. He regarded Tjipto as an intellectual and a talented person. The relationship between Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo and Douwes Dekker was cultivated by Douwes Dekker as propaganda medium. Moreover, Tjipto was agreed to become the board of *de Express*, the newspaper in which Douwes Dekker was the leader, and he then became the member of *Indische Partij*. The acquaintance of Tjipto and Douwes Dekker made the government and also the parliament anxious (*Handelingen Staten Generaal, 9^e vergadering, 12 November 1913*). The idea of independence that Douwes Dekker brought to his local compatriots would be dangerous for the colonial government. Deventer was worried that BO, particularly through Tjipto, would be influenced by Douwes Dekker's idea about independence.

Furthermore, in the meeting of 18 November 1913, the Minister of Colonies at

that time, Thomas Bastiaan Pleyte, delivered his opinion about BO. According to him, since its establishment, BO has successfully revealed the soul of Java and developed Javanese people. Pleyte argued that BO was still in the right direction and therefore not a threat to the colonial government. BO was still focusing on education as its main aim. The result of BO's educational effort could be seen in Java. As an example, Pleyte mentioned that people at that time could write and speak Dutch (*Handelingen Staten Generaal, 13e vergadering, 18 November 1913*). This implied that the Minister was satisfied with BO because it helped the colonial government to increase the welfare of Javanese people, particularly in education.

In 1914 discussion about BO in the Dutch parliament touched upon the importance of having indigenous military personnel. One of the parliament members, De Fock, suggested that local organization such as BO and *Sarikat Islam* could be added to the military forces, and, the Dutch government could also give support.

Furthermore, the development of press in the Dutch East Indies had brought an impact to the Dutch parliament. One of the parliament members, Scheurer, who obtained much information about the development of indigenous organizations in the East Indies from the newspapers, stated his opinion in the meeting of March 11, 1915 that BO, as well as *Sarekat Islam*, was still in a developing stage. He argues:

“Ik zal over die zaak niet verder spreken, maar ik wensch hier nog bij

te voegen, dat op het oogenblik in Indië er vereenigingen zijn, zooals de Sarekat Islam en de Boedhi Oetomo, maatschappelijke lichamen, die nog verkeer en in een staat van ontwikkeling. Wanneer wij de Indische bladen nagaan en lezen de verslag en der bijeenkomsten, die gehouden worden, treft ons bovenal de noodzakelijkheid aan een goede leiding. In een laatst gehouden vergadering van de Boedhi Oetomo te Djocjacarta, is iemand gaan bepleiten het oprichten van vak vereenigingen op een wijze, die inderdaad voorbarig moet genoemd worden. Niet, dat ik de bespreking van vak vereenigingen afkeur, maar ik wil alleen zeggen, dat die lichamen als de Sarekat Islam en de Boedhi Oetomo nog verkeer en in een stadium van ontwikkeling en het niet wijs en verstandig zou zijn aan die lichamen reeds nu aan elke beïnvloeding bloot té stellen. De actie van de Indische partij heeft genoegzaam bewezen, welke moeilijkheden door een onbesuisd en onverstandig optreden in de maatschappij kunnen ontstaan, zoo zelfs, dat de Gouverneur-Generaal eenige person en uit Nederlandsch Indië heeft moeten verwijderen.”

(I will not speak further about this thing, but I want to add something that there are organizations in the Indies, such as *Sarekat Islam* and

Boedi Oetomo, social organizations, that are still developing. When we investigate the newspaper and read the report of the congress that have been conducted, we encountered that there must be the necessity to guide to the good way. In the last congress of Boedi Oetomo in Jogjakarta, someone plead the establishment of union that was indeed premature. Not that I disallow the discussion about the union, but I am eager to deliver that the organizations both Boedi Oetomo and Sarekat Islam, is still in the stadium of developing. It is not wise and prudent to expose the influence of these organizations. The action of *Indische Partij* has proved enough, which appears the difficulties due to its rash in the society, that the governor general himself from the Dutch East Indies had to dissolve) (*40e vergadering, 11 Maart 1915*).

This abovementioned statement indicated that BO is considered as a developing organization and need further guidance from the government. This guidance is needed because in this period the other organizations which are more radical than BO emerged to develop.

Discussion about BO at the Dutch parliament occurred during the early years of its establishment. In line with the reports that received by the Minister of colonies in the Netherlands, the discussions of BO were mostly about how the colonial government

could take benefit from the existence of this organization. The debate about the fear whether BO would swift its aims from social education to political organization also happened. The position of the colonial government was also discussed at the parliament. The Minister of Colonies considered BO as a non-dangerous organization and according to him, the colonial government should let this organization developed.

The Decline of Boedi Oetomo (1930-1935)

1. Colonial Report

After BO was established, more indigenous organizations appeared in the East Indies. Nevertheless, most of the members of these other organizations were also members of BO. The rise of other organizations such as *Sarekat Islam*, *Moehammadiyah*, and *Indische Partij* influenced the decline of BO. These organizations accommodate people's aspirations not only socially but also politically and religiously. BO was mainly targeted for the social and cultural development, and, the education of the people of Java and Madura while *Indische Partij*, for example, was open to any indigenous people. Moreover, *Indische Partij* offered an idea of national independence and thus attracted more people to join although the statute of this organization was rejected by the colonial government. Slowly, BO lost its position as the leader of modern movement (Blumberger, 1987: 23). BO entered the period of stagnancy and decline.

Nevertheless, between 1930 and 1935, topics about BO in the colonial archive can still be found in the mail reports (*mailrapporten*). During this period, I found only three mail reports that mention about BO (see Table 3).

The mail report number 57 year 1930 includes a letter dated 11 January 1930, from the acting adviser of indigenous affairs, E. Gobee, to the Governor General Andries Cornelis Dirk de Graeff about the 20th congress of BO by attaching a report dated 28 December 1929 from Van der Plas, a Dutch officer, who attended the congress. The report indicates that BO, as an organization of Javanese aristocrats and intellectuals, would participate in the national movement (*Mailrapporten no. 57 geheim, 1930*). The report also mentions that BO was involved in an organization union called PPPKI (Confederation of Indonesian Political Organizations).

In a letter dated 16 July 1931, E. Gobee reported again to the Governor General about the meeting of BO chapter Batavia. The meeting was mainly to inform public about the decision of BO congress that was held in April 1931. The decision was that BO allowed all Indonesian, thus not

only Javanese, to become its members (*Mailrapporten, no. 730 geheim, 1931*). This can be seen as BO's effort to recruit more members into their organization.

There is no report about BO in 1932. In June 19th 1933, E. Gobee wrote to the Governor General De Jonge about another congress of BO. Gobee wrote that this congress was special because it was held at the commemoration of the 25th years of BO. Gobee pointed out that BO has become a role model for other indigenous organizations like *Sarekat Islam*. The emphasize of BO's aims were also discussed in this congress. Gobee reported that BO was trying to reach farmers in the villages by giving financial support to farmers organization (*Mailrapporten, no. 788 geheim, 1933*). I assume that this is related to the rise of communist ideology that started to grow since 1920s. BO focused on gaining mass from the farmer group which was associated with the leftist ideology among the national movement. This can also be seen as another BO's effort to maintain its existence and recruit more members.

During the year 1930-1935, the attitude of the colonial government towards BO did not really change much. The

Table 3. Mail Reports about Boedi Oetomo (1930-1935)

| No. | Year | Mail Reports | Subject | Attachment |
|------------|------|---|--------------------|------------|
| 57 geheim | 1930 | Verslag betreffende het 20ste congres van Boedi Oetomo 23-24 Desember 1929 | Politieke Situatie | 4 bijlagen |
| 730 geheim | 1931 | Aanbieding vergadering-verslag Boedi Oetomo, afdeeling Batavia | Politieke Situatie | 1 bijlage |
| 788 geheim | 1933 | Verslag van het 23ste congres van Boedi Oetomo gehouden te Semarang van 3 tot 5 Juni 1933 | Politieke Situatie | 1 bijlage |

government still regarded BO as a non-dangerous organization until it merged with other organizations and formed PARINDRA (Greater Indonesia Party) in 1935. The colonial government still followed BO's development because they still considered that BO could influence other organizations which were more radical than BO.

2. Discussion in the Parliament of the Netherlands

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During the year 1930-1935, the attitude of the colonial government towards BO did not really change much. The government still regarded BO as a non-dangerous organization until it merged with other organizations and formed PARINDRA (Greater Indonesia Party) in 1935. The colonial government still followed BO's development because they still considered that BO could influence other organizations which were more radical than BO.

CONCLUSION

As the first modern indigenous organization, the existence of Boedi Oetomo (BO) is significant in the Dutch East Indies, and even in official Indonesian history, it is seen as the first sign of an Indonesian 'awakening'. Certainly BO obtained much attention from both the colonial government in the East Indies and the Dutch government in the Netherlands. The government supported the ideas of this organization (to elevate the level of local people's education). Dominated by the *priyayi* (Javanese noblemen) of the colonial civil service, BO was viewed with approval by the colonial government as a positive result of the Ethical Policy. Concerning BO's aim to educate people, the colonial government even cooperated with BO in the struggle against opium use.

Reports about BO within the Dutch East Indies occurred between the local officers and the Governor General. The Governor General sent these reports to the Minister of Colonies in the Netherlands. At its early years, reports about BO from the East Indies were sent two to three times a year. From 1911 until 1913, there were no reports discovered about BO. This is because BO experienced the stagnancy, the period where it began to lose its influence in the Dutch East Indies, due to the appearance of other local organizations, which were seen as more radical, more political and thus gained more attention from the government.

In the context of "information panic" the number of reports sent to the Netherlands from the Indies indicates that BO was indeed monitored but it was not regarded as a dangerous organization, although in the Netherlands, some parliament members were worried about its potential to be radical. The subjects of the reports were not very diverse as they were mostly about BO itself and also about the cooperation between BO and the government such as about opium and militia. Moreover, besides the report of the Minister of Colonies, based on the reports sent by the Governor General, member of parliaments in the Netherlands also obtained information about BO from the newspapers.

In the period of the decline of BO, the reports that were sent to the Minister of Colonies, compared to the early years, were decreasing. In total, there were only three reports during 1930-1935. The regularity was not so frequent because the Ministry of Colonies did not really demand information about BO as they wanted to know more about other more extreme organizations. The subjects of reports in this period were similar. All were about the congress or meeting of BO. Nevertheless, BO was still considered significant as it was considered as a cooperative organization for the government.

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