

## Lesson Learned from General Soedirman's Leadership Pattern in Guerrilla Warfare

Kadek Deddy Tara<sup>1\*</sup>, I Gede Sumertha KY<sup>2</sup>, Djayeng Tirto<sup>3</sup>, Achmed Sukendro<sup>4</sup>, Pujo Widodo<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>Universitas Pertahanan Republik Indonesia, Indonesia  
\*correspondence email: tarachopper@gmail.com

*Received 19 April 2024; Received in revised form 14 May 2024; Accepted 19 May 2024*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui latar belakang Jenderal Soedirman yang merupakan Pejuang Kemerdekaan pada Masa Revolusi dalam kedudukannya sebagai Panglima Jenderal pertama Indonesia. Dalam perjuangannya memperoleh Kemerdekaan Indonesia, ia melalui serangkaian perjuangan yang panjang melalui Perang Gerilya. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan tahapan heuristik, kritik sumber, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan biografi Jenderal Soedirman dan perjuangannya mencapai kemerdekaan Indonesia melalui metode Perang Gerilya yang digunakan melawan Belanda untuk memperjuangkan kemerdekaan Indonesia. Menekankan tindakan heroik dan patriotiknya. Proklamasi kemerdekaan Indonesia yang dikumandangkan pada tanggal 17 Agustus 1945, menggugah para pemimpin dan seluruh bangsa Indonesia untuk mulai berjuang keras mempertahankan kemerdekaan tersebut. Jenderal Besar Soedirman adalah seorang pahlawan yang berjuang untuk merebut kemerdekaan NKRI dari tangan penjajahan. Jenderal Soedirman memperjuangkan kemerdekaan Indonesia meskipun pasukannya kekurangan dan kesehatannya melemah, namun kecintaannya terhadap bangsa Indonesia yang merdeka semakin mengobarkan semangatnya untuk terus berjuang dalam keadaan apapun. Kepribadiannya teguh pada prinsip dan keyakinannya, selalu mengutamakan kepentingan masyarakat dan bangsa di atas kepentingannya. Dalam sejarah perjuangan Republik Indonesia, beliau tercatat sebagai Panglima dan Jenderal Republik Indonesia yang pertama dan termuda.

**Kata kunci:** kepemimpinan, soedirman, gerilya, peperangan.

### Abstract

*This research aims to find out the background of General Soedirman, who was an Independence Fighter during the Revolutionary Period in his position as the first Commander-in-Chief General of Indonesia. In his struggle to obtain Indonesian Independence, he went through a long series of struggles through the Guerrilla War. This research method uses heuristical stages, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The results of this research show the biography of General Soedirman and his struggle to achieve Indonesian independence through the Guerrilla War method used against the Dutch to fight for Indonesian independence. Emphasized his heroic and patriotic actions. The proclamation of Indonesian independence which was announced on August 17, 1945, inspired the leaders and the entire Indonesian nation to start fighting hard to maintain that independence. Great General Soedirman was a hero who fought to win the independence of the Republic of Indonesia from the hands of colonialism. General Soedirman fought for Indonesia's independence despite the shortcomings of his troops and weakening health, but his love for the independent Indonesian nation fueled his enthusiasm to continue fighting under any circumstances. His personality is firm in his principles and beliefs, always prioritizing the interests of the community and the nation above his interests. In the history of the struggle of the Republic of Indonesia, he is recorded as the first and youngest Commander and General of the Republic of Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** leadership, soedirman, guerilla, warfare.

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a country born from a long history of national struggle (Setiawan et

al., 2020), has many of the best leaders, one of whom is General Sudirman. General Soedirman's journey of struggle began at a young age when he decided to leave his profession as a teacher and become a soldier to take part in liberating Indonesia at the forefront of the war against the Dutch. General Soedirman was not just a commander, but also a symbol of resistance to colonialism, even using his guerrilla warfare strategy to become a strategy that succeeded in expelling the Dutch from Indonesia.

General Sudirman is one of the many national heroes of the Republic of Indonesia who has made great contributions to the Republic of Indonesia. Great General Soedirman was a hero who fought to win the independence of the Republic of Indonesia from the hands of colonialism (A. Susilo, 2018). General Soedirman was a persistent fighter, he was a fighter who never gave up and was willing to sacrifice personal and family interests for the integrity of the Armed Forces, the glory of the nation, and the Republic of Indonesia (Munawar, 2016). General Soedirman's leadership and charisma inspired the troops he led so that they were able to survive and win several resistances against Dutch colonialism at that time. Even when he was sick, he still led his troops to fight Dutch colonialism. He is known as a wise, open-minded leader who can always find a solution to every problem he faces (Susilo, 2016).

General Soedirman was not just a commander, but also a symbol of resistance to colonialism, even using his guerrilla warfare strategy as a strategy that succeeded in expelling the Dutch from Indonesia.

Leadership is also interpreted as a process of influence not only from the leader to the followers or in one direction but also reciprocally or in two directions. Good followers can also generate leadership by following existing leadership and to some degree providing feedback to the leader. Influence is the process of a leader communicating ideas, gaining acceptance of the ideas, and motivating followers to support and implement those ideas through change (Lussier & Achua, 2010).

Leadership is a person's ability to influence and motivate other people to do something according to a common goal. Leadership includes the process of influencing in determining organizational goals, motivating follower behavior to achieve goals, and influencing to improve the group and its culture (Chaniago, 2017). In historical studies, General Soedirman's leadership in leading the TKR struggle had a positive impact on the development and growth of the national army in the early days. It was in conditions like this that General Sudirman's leadership talents appeared effective. Facing the task of organizing an army that is still far from professionalism,

flexible non-professionalism can fill Oerip Soemohardjo's strong professionalism. Apart from that, Sudirman's relatively young age (29 years) when he was elected Commander-in-Chief was an asset in dealing with his subordinate commanders, who were generally young and emotional. Sudirman was a figure who could calm and stabilize them (Saleh, 2007).

Understanding General Soedirman's form of leadership in guerrilla warfare is an important thing for the nation's future generations so that they can use learning so that his spirit and spirit of patriotism can become a spirit in leading an organization today.

As with previous research by Susilo, A. (2018), The charismatic leadership shown by General Soedirman shows that his position and General Sudirman's position has an important role in guerrilla warfare operations against Dutch colonial. Departing from charismatic leadership can also be drawn red thread that without Sudirman, not necessarily a war strategy guerrilla. Guerrilla warfare strategy Soedirman is very important, in where this strategy has proven effective against the Netherlands. Lots losses suffered by the Netherlands as a result of these tactics. Battle and resistance occurs in various area thus forcing the Dutch and his allies returned to the table negotiations.

Commander-in-Chief General Sudirman is a true warrior who never gives up and continues to fight against foreign

powers who are trying to regain control of our motherland. When the Dutch troops carried out their aggression again or what is better known as the Second Dutch Military Aggression, the capital of the Republic of Indonesia was in Yogyakarta because the city of Jakarta had previously been controlled. Even though he was in a sickly condition due to suffering from a very severe lung disease, he still led the guerrilla troops against the Second Dutch Military Aggression in Yogyakarta with great enthusiasm and dedication. Bung Karno and Bung Hatta as well as several cabinet members had also been taken prisoner because during the Second Dutch Military Aggression, Yogyakarta was then controlled by the Dutch. President Soekarno had previously advised him to stay in the city for treatment. However, he could not fulfill this recommendation because of his urge to fight against the Dutch and remember his responsibilities as an army leader. The sacrifice of Commander-in-Chief General Sudirman in the history of the struggle of the Indonesian nation was so great, that it is only natural that the figure who led this nation to achieve independence and sovereignty is made a figure of national heroism who should be emulated and imitated by all levels of society. Through this study of the Leadership of Commander-in-Chief General Sudirman, it is hoped that the nation's leaders, the young generation of the TNI in particular

and the young generation of the Indonesian nation in general can emulate and develop the spirit of struggle of Commander-in-Chief General Sudirman in building a better and more advanced national and state life order (Kementerian Pertahanan Republik Indonesia, 2015).

## **METHOD**

This research uses a historical method using four steps, heuristics, source criticism, interpretation and historiography (Gottschalk, 1986). Using the Historical Method is a research method to seek clarity about events in the past, with a critical and scientific source search process. With this, the search for sources uses library research techniques or literature studies, so that the data is taken from literature books related to the research title. In this research, the author searched for relevant articles about the role and leadership of General Soedirman in the Guerrilla War against the Dutch.

Heuristics are related to the process of searching for and collecting researched sources. Then there is source criticism, which is an assessment of historical data and facts that are made into historical evidence. Where this evidence is in the form of a collection of facts or information that have been validated and are trusted to be a good source for testing and interpreting a problem, for this stage, the author carried out a triangulation process and confirmed

the truth from several sources and previous research.

Interpretation is an effort to interpret historical facts or evidence. So interpretation is an analysis activity obtained from verified sources. The data and facts that have been obtained are then interpreted according to the categories of constituent variables such as interpretation of leadership models, interpretation of the course of the war and interpretation of General Soedirman's biography.

Finally, historiography is the final step in the historical method which contains how to write, apply and report the results of research that has been carried out. So historiography is the process of compiling historical facts from various sources that have been selected in the form of historical writing.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **A Short History of General Soedirman**

Soedirman himself was born in Dukuh Rembang, namely Bantar Barang Village, Rembang District, Purbalingga Regency, Central Java, on January 24, 1916. He was born into a simple family, namely where his father worked at a Kalibagor sugar factory and his mother was a descendant of Wedana Rembang (Ayuningtyas et al., 2016).

Soedirman lived in a simple family and grew up in a limited environment, but that didn't make him give up easily,

because of these limitations he grew into a figure who could be relied on in the era of independence. Soedirman attended school in Yogyakarta, precisely at Taman Siswa School. Then after graduating from Taman Siswa School, Soedirman continued his studies at a teacher training school, namely at Hollandsche Indische Kweekschool (HIK) Muhammadiyah, but did not finish (Wijaya et al., 2012). Apart from that, Soedirman was also active in the Hizbul Wathan Scout Organization (Soedirman, 2008).

Then not long after that, Soedirman became a Guide for the Hizbul Wathan Scout organization and he also dedicated himself to becoming a teacher at HIS Muhammadiyah Cilacap. Soedirman started his career by joining PETA (Defenders of the Fatherland) (Islami et al., 2020). After attending PETA training in Bogor, West Java. Soedirman was appointed Daidancho or Daidan Commander, which is equivalent to Battalion Commander, in Kroya, Banyumas.

After Indonesia achieved independence, at that time there was still a war against Japanese troops. At that time, General Soedirman and his troops made plans to seize Japanese weapons in Banyumas district, Central Java. In the end, the plan was successful and it was General Soedirman's first service to the Indonesian nation after Indonesia's independence.

On 5 October 1945, when the People's Security Army (TKR) was formed, General Soedirman was chosen as commander in chief of the People's security army in the Banyumas area (Adi, 2011). Then on 29 January 1950, General Soedirman died due to his pulmonary tuberculosis which was getting worse. General Soedirman was buried in the Yogyakarta State Kusuma Heroes' Cemetery, precisely in Semaki.

General Soedirman's work in the military field had such a big influence in Indonesia that he was nicknamed and given the title Father of the Indonesian Army. This is proven by the Guerrilla war initiated and waged by Soedirman which succeeded in making Indonesia independent. Apart from that, he is a true patriot.

He was the first and youngest general in Indonesian military history. His quiet figure has the gentle qualities of a knight, honest, fair, patient, polite, and religious. Where everything cannot be separated from his courageous, consistent, hard-hearted, and steadfast nature. Soedirman received various awards from the central government after his death, including Bintang Shakti, Guerilla, Mahaputra Adipurna, Mahaputra Pratama, RI Adipurna, and Bintang RI Adipradana. On December 10, 1964, based on Presidential Decree No. 314 in 1964, he was declared a national hero and in 1997 he was promoted to general. In 1950

Sudirman died in Magelang, a figure who never stopped fighting for Indonesian independence.

### **General Soedirman's Leadership in the Guerrilla War**

After the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence, Central Java became the center of the Indonesian government. One of the strategic cities in Central Java is Yogyakarta. Thus, various political, military, government, and economic activities carried out by both government and non-government are carried out in the city of Yogyakarta (Sekolah Staf dan Komando Angkatan Darat, 1993). Apart from that, the city of Yogyakarta is also a very strategic Indonesian military power. At that time Yogyakarta became the main target of Dutch military operations because the city of Yogyakarta became the Top Headquarters of the People's Security Army (Sekolah Staf dan Komando Angkatan Darat, 1991). It is from the city of Yogyakarta that all military and security decisions and regulations are regulated and issued. This was done to organize an armed force that could guarantee threats from the Netherlands.

The city of Yogyakarta is one of the concentration areas prepared by Indonesian National Army troops (Heijboer, 1998). Where the soldiers were ready to take up their weapons to start the long journey to avoid the Dutch troops

by breaking through hills, rivers, and forests.

The great power of the Dutch over Indonesia, both in terms of the lives of Indonesian groups, but also over the lives of the Dutch and Indonesians themselves, all areas of life in Indonesia show a weakness that is not seen in countries of its age. It is not surprising that with the situation depicted, the Indonesian people are not at all calm. Everyone knows that the key to real improvement, to make all fields, lies in the position in government, in the power to govern the country, in "political power". Therefore, for Indonesians, it is always about government, and political matters that take priority (Pringgodigdo, A.K, 1991).

Starting in November 1948, relations between Indonesia and the Netherlands worsened, because in 1948 the Dutch carried out a large-scale troop concentration on the demarcation line to prepare for another attack against Indonesia (Sardiman, 2008). Hearing this news, even though he was sick, Soedirman did not stay quiet to read the conditions at that time and was also able to provide a good war strategy and could provide motivation to his troops to fight to the last drop of blood. Apart from that, Soedirman continued to coordinate with the commanders to be prepared.

When the Dutch began to make preparations for another attack on Indonesia, General Soedirman immediately

ordered the deputy Commander-in-Chief who was also the Commander of the Javanese Territorial Army, namely Colonel AH Nasution, to draw up a concept for the Universal People's War with the TNI. Nasution, who was the former Commander of the Siliwangi Division, since 1948 was assigned as deputy Commander-in-Chief and played a role at the TNI Supreme Headquarters and also became one of General Soedirman's confidants. Before forming a guerrilla warfare strategy, General Soedirman had already thought about how to deal with the Dutch colonialists.

On December 19 1948 Dutch troops launched an attack on Maguwo Airport (now Lanuma Adisucipto), approximately six kilometers east of the Indonesian capital Yogyakarta. With that attack began the Second Military Aggression. Commander-in-Chief Soedirman immediately issued a Flash Administration for all Armed Forces to carry out plans to face the Dutch.

Before forming a guerrilla warfare strategy, General Soedirman had already thought about how to deal with the Dutch colonialists. On 19 December 1948, the concept handwritten by Commander-in-Chief Soedirman himself was then immediately read out at the Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) Yogyakarta (Tjondronegoro, 1982). The concept was referred to as "Soedirman's Quick Order". After reading the Lightning Order above,

Commander-in-Chief General Soedirman immediately moved to form his guerrilla warfare strategy. General Soedirman said: "(1). Relinquish defenses in major cities and road networks; building Guerrilla pockets. (2). Carrying out Guerrilla Warfare. (3). Wingate (return to the area of origin) for units that moved to Yogyakarta after the Renville Agreement, such as the Siliwangi Division (Wijaya et al., 2012). The formation of this guerrilla warfare strategy by Soedirman and his troops was able to overwhelm the Dutch in facing General Soedirman's troops and finally the Dutch withdrew their troops in this war. General Soedirman's guerrilla warfare strategy can be linked to the charismatic leadership theory, which shows the figure of a leader who has a good soul and a high fighting spirit in leading his troops by utilizing the natural surroundings in Central Java as a stronghold. to fight and expel the Dutch colonialists from the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia.

The movement of Dutch troops towards Yogyakarta only started at around 12.00. Therefore, the cabinet still had time to meet, at that meeting a decision was made that the President and Vice President would not leave the capital. There are two reasons put forward. Firstly, there were no troops to escort them out of the city. Second, if you remain in the city, relations with KTN can still be maintained and through KTN

intermediaries negotiations with the Dutch can be reopened. Another decision is to give a mandate to the Minister Prosperity Sjafruddin Prawiranegara who was then in Bukittinggi to form an emergency government in Sumatra. The mandate was also given to Dr. Sudarsono, A.A. Maramis, and L.N Palar to form an exile government abroad if Sjafruddin's efforts fail. On December 19, Yogyakarta fell into Dutch hands.

The President, Vice President, and several high-ranking state officials were taken prisoner and three days later exiled outside Java. Commander Soedirman left the city to lead the guerrilla movement. On December 22 1948 PTTD Colonel Nasution announced the establishment of a military government in Java. By the plan, the War Army withdrew outside the city to carry out guerrilla warfare. The troops who had previously emigrated as a result of Renville's agreement, winged their way back to their home area. Siliwangi troops made a long march from Central Java to West Java. Outside the city, the TNI established defense areas (wehrkreise).

After successfully consolidating, the TNI began to deliver blows to the Dutch. The first targets were the Dutch troops' communication lines. Telephone wires were cut, railway lines were damaged, and Dutch convoys were intercepted and attacked. Therefore, the Dutch were forced to increase the number of posts

along the roads connecting the cities they had occupied (Poesponegoro, M.D. dan Notosusanto, 2011). Thus, his strength was confined to thousands of small posts spread across the Republic of Indonesia which had now become a vast guerrilla field.

The war situation began to reverse. The TNI, which was initially defensive, began to switch to offensive. Attacks against the Dutch were no longer limited to intercepting convoys or remote Dutch outposts, but also to cities occupied by the Dutch. With the formation of this guerrilla strategy, Soedirman and his troops overwhelmed the Dutch in facing General Soedirman's troops and finally the Dutch withdrew their troops in this war. General Soedirman's guerrilla warfare strategy shows that General Soedirman was a charismatic leader who had a good soul and a high fighting spirit in leading his troops by utilizing the natural environment in Central Java as a stronghold to fight and expel Dutch colonialism from the unitary state. Republic of Indonesia.

The military situation developed after the Netherlands launching Operation Kraai ended with military impasse stalemate military. The Dutch army could not destroy armed forces Republic of Indonesia. On the contrary, The Indonesian National Army can expel Dutch troops from Indonesia. That, from a military standpoint despite its

shortcomings TNI troops, Indonesia could become a counteroffensive conventional to attack Dutch military forces (Soetanto, 2006). Here it can be explained The main differences between attacks guerrilla and conventional attacks. Guerrilla attacks are aimless dominate and occupy something position in the long term. That matter caused principally by attack Guerrilla is to destroy enemy strength in battle determined by guerrilla forces. Meanwhile military strategy (conventional) and is as movement to improve conditions for decisive action. Action what is decisive is the attack conventional because that's what destroy the enemy, capture, and occupy territory permanent.

Strategically, to ending the war, the TNI saw that determination is beyond military field, namely diplomacy. diplomacy is expected to be possible forced the Dutch to left Indonesia, however such diplomacy is only possible when accompanied by support or leverage military who cornered the Dutch. Through guerrilla resistance, position The Netherlands will make things even more difficult militarily and politically (Soetanto, 2006).

## CONCLUSION

Great General Soedirman was a hero who fought to win the independence of the Republic of Indonesia from colonialism. General Soedirman fought for Indonesia's independence despite the shortcomings of

his troops and weakening health, but his love for the independent Indonesian nation fueled his enthusiasm to continue fighting under any circumstances. Apart from being a reliable struggle figure, he is also an Islamic figure from Muhammadiyah and is also a good and trustworthy exemplary teacher. In the military environment, General Soedirman was a figure who was able to act as a coolant and encourager in the crisis for his troops from threats from the West.

Sudirman was not just a commander, but also a symbol of resistance to colonialism. This was demonstrated by General Soedirman's intelligence in forming a guerrilla warfare strategy. Guerrilla warfare strategies include; (1) Releasing defenses in major cities and road networks and building guerrilla pockets, (2) Carrying out guerrilla warfare and (3) Wingate for units moving to Yogyakarta after the Renville Agreement such as the Siliwangi Division. General Sudirman is one of the national heroes who fought for the independence of the Republic of Indonesia. The spirit of heroism that is manifested is a deed of struggle that is offered to the nation and homeland with the soul and spirit of being willing to sacrifice for the nation. Having a high fighting spirit, courage, willingness to sacrifice, never giving up and love of the country are heroic values that are still relevant and deserve to be used as role models for the younger generation. The

introduction of heroic values needs to be carried out.

## REFERENCES

- Adi, A. K. (2011). *Soedirman: Bapak Tentara Indonesia*. Mata Padi Pressindo.
- Ayuningtyas, D. R., Suharso, R., & Sodiq, I. (2016). Perjuangan Panglima Besar Jenderal Soedirman pada Masa Revolusi Fisik Tahun 1945-1950. *Journal of Indonesian History*, 5(1), 10-17.
- Chaniago, A. (2017). *Pemimpin dan Kepemimpinan*. Lentera Ilmu Cendekia.
- Gottschalk, L. (1986). *Mengerti Sejarah*. Univesitas Indonesia.
- Heijboer, P. (1998). *Agresi Militer Belanda: Memperebutkan Pending Zamrud Sepanjang Khatulistiwa 1945-1959*. Grasindo.
- Islami, A. N., Ratnasari, S. D., & Martini. (2020). *Rute Perang Gerilya Jenderal Soedirman di Pacitan Tahun 1948-1949*. STKIP PGRI PACITAN.
- Kementerian Pertahanan Republik Indonesia. (2015). *Kepemimpinan Panglima Besar Jenderal Sudirman Saat Serangan Umum 1 Maret 1949 di Yogyakarta Dalam Mempertahankan Kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia*. Kementerian Pertahanan Republik Indonesia.
- Lussier, R. N., & Achua, C. F. (2010). *Leadership : Theory, Application, and Skill Development* (4th ed.). South-Western Cengage Learning.
- Munawar, R. S. (2016). *Perancangan Media Informasi Kisah Keteladan Pahlawan Jenderal Soedirman*. Universitas Komputer Indonesia.
- Poesponegoro, M.D. dan Notosusanto, N. (2011). *Sejarah Indonesia VI*. Balai Pustaka.
- Pringgodigdo, A.K. (1991). *Sejarah Pergerakan Rakyat Indonesia*. Dian Rakyat.
- Saleh, B. . (2007). *Panglima Besar Jenderal Soedirman*. CV Citra Praya.
- Sardiman. (2008). *Guru Bangsa: Sebuah Biografi Panglima Besar Jenderal Soedirman*. Ombak.
- Sekolah Staf dan Komando Angkatan Darat. (1991). *Serangan Umum 1 Maret 1949 di Yogyakarta; Latar Belakang Pengaruhnya*. PT. Citra Lamtoro Gung Persada.
- Sekolah Staf dan Komando Angkatan Darat. (1993). *Serangan Umum 1 Maret 1949 di Yogyakarta : Latar Belakang dan Pengaruhnya*. Citra Lamtoro Gung Persada.
- Setiawan, J., Aman, & Wulandari, T. (2020). Understanding Indonesian history, interest in learning history and national insight with nationalism attitude. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 9(2), 364-373. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v9i2.20474>
- Soetanto, H. (2006). *Yogyakarta 19 Desember 1948: Jenderal Spoor (Operatatie Kraai Versus Jenderal Sudirman (Perintah Siasat No. 1)*. PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Susilo, A. (2018). Sejarah Perjuangan Jenderal Soedirman Dalam Mempertahankan Indonesia (1945 - 1950). *HISTORIA Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah PTKIP Lubuklinggau*, 6(1), 57-68. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.24127/hj.v6i1.1149>
- Susilo, T. A. (2016). *Soedirman: Biografi Singkat 1916-1950*. Garasi House of Book.
- Tjondronegoro, P. (1982). *Merdeka Tanahku, Merdeka Negeriku 2*. C.V Nugraha.
- Wijaya, Zulkifli, A., & Seriw, A. (2012). *Soedirman Seorang Panglima, Seorang Martir*. Gramedia.

