

The Role of Sutan Sjahrir in the Jong Indonesia Organization in Support of Indonesian Independence

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas peran signifikan Sutan Sjahrir dalam organisasi Jong Indonesia sebagai bagian dari perjuangan menuju kemerdekaan Indonesia. Sutan Sjahrir, tokoh intelektual dan nasionalis muda, dikenal sebagai salah satu dari sepuluh pemuda pelopor berdirinya Jong Indonesia, yang kelak berganti nama menjadi Pemuda Indonesia. Organisasi ini menjadi motor penggerak lahirnya Sumpah Pemuda tahun 1928, tonggak penting dalam menyatukan semangat kebangsaan lintas daerah dan etnis. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode sejarah dengan tahapan heuristik, verifikasi, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Data diperoleh melalui studi kepustakaan terhadap sumber primer seperti buku karya Rudolf Mrazek dan Y.B. Mangunwijaya, serta sumber sekunder dari jurnal ilmiah dan dokumen relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Sjahrir berperan penting tidak hanya sebagai inisiator organisasi, tetapi juga sebagai penggerak ide persatuan nasional melalui pendekatan intelektual dan gerakan sosial. Melalui aktivitasnya di bidang pendidikan, jurnalistik, dan organisasi pemuda, Sjahrir mampu menyebarkan gagasan-gagasan progresif yang menantang kolonialisme dan mengilhami semangat kebangsaan di kalangan generasi muda. Perannya dalam membangun landasan pemikiran nasionalisme modern dan perjuangan non-kekerasan menjadi warisan penting bagi perjalanan kemerdekaan Indonesia.

Kata kunci: sutan sjahrir, nasionalisme, pemuda indonesia.

Abstract

This study discusses the significant role of Sutan Sjahrir in the Jong Indonesia organization as part of the struggle for Indonesian independence. Sutan Sjahrir, a young intellectual and nationalist figure, is known as one of the ten pioneering youths in the establishment of Jong Indonesia, which later changed its name to Pemuda Indonesia. This organization became the driving force behind the birth of the Youth Pledge in 1928, an important milestone in uniting the spirit of nationalism across regions and ethnicities. This study uses a historical method with the stages of heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography. Data were obtained through literature studies of primary sources such as books by Rudolf Mrazek and Y.B. Mangunwijaya, as well as secondary sources from scientific journals and relevant documents. The results of the study show that Sjahrir played an important role not only as the initiator of the organization, but also as the driver of the idea of national unity through an intellectual approach and social movements. Through his activities in education, journalism, and youth organizations, Sjahrir was able to spread progressive ideas that challenged colonialism and inspired a spirit of nationalism among the younger generation. His role in building the foundation of modern nationalist thought and non-violent struggle is an important legacy for Indonesia's journey to independence.

Keywords: sutan sjahrir, nationalism, indonesian youth.

INTRODUCTION

The independence achieved by the Indonesian people was not a gift from the colonizers, but rather the result of a long

and difficult struggle that took place over a long period of time. Physical and non-physical battles were fought to defend independence and pursue sovereignty

(Zuhroh et al., 2023). Indonesia has heroes who have made significant contributions to the establishment of the Indonesian nation.

In the long journey of a nation toward liberation, there are always individuals who influence its success. Therefore, it is impossible to ignore those who were directly involved in such significant events. One of those involved was Sutan Shahril. Shahril was the son of Mohamma Rasad, Maharaja Soetan bin Soetan Reman, Soetan Parindi, and Petit Siti Rabia from Koto Gadang, Agam, West Sumatra (H. Setiawan, 2020). His father was an advisor to the Sultan of Deli and the head of the Medan prosecutor's office (Landrad).

Shahril was born on March 5, 1909, in Padang Panjang, West Sumatra. Sutan Shahril attended the best elementary school (ELS) and junior high school (MULO) in Medan. Shahril graduated from MULO in 1926 and then attended the Bandung High School (AMS). Shahril also joined the Indonesian Student Theater Association in Bandung (Batvis) as a director, screenwriter, and occasionally an actor (Fauzi et al., 2022). The proceeds from the performance were used to fund the school he founded with Batvis members: Tjahja Volksuniversiteit (People's Light University). The MULO (Meer Uit-gebreed Lager Onderwijs) school was established in the Dutch East Indies in 1914 as a

secondary school providing education to school classes and local residents.

Sutan Syahrir was one of ten people who initiated the establishment of a national youth organization, Jong Indonesia (Nuraini, 2023). In 1927, at the age of 18, Sutan Shahrir was appointed as one of the founders of Jong Indonesia (later Pemuda Indonesia). This organization was a continuation of the Indonesian People's Party (PNI), and its mission was to unite the previously divided young generation of Indonesian nationalists.

A number of previous studies have discussed Sutan Sjahrir from various perspectives. Yohana's research (2010) examined Sjahrir's socialist thinking and his contribution to Indonesia's struggle for independence, while Rusdiana et al. (2017) highlighted the role of Indonesian student organizations in the Netherlands in the struggle for independence, and Padiatra et al. (2023) traced Sjahrir's life journey biographically. All three studies place Sjahrir as an important figure in the struggle for independence, but differ in their focus: Yohana emphasizes the ideological aspect, Rusdiana et al. the context of the student diaspora, and Padiatra et al. the historical narrative of his personal life. This study aims to fill this gap by highlighting Sutan Sjahrir's early role as the initiator of the Jong Indonesia organization, which became an important foundation in building the spirit

of national unity among pre-independence youth an aspect that has not been studied in depth in previous studies. Thus, the novelty of this research lies in its emphasis on Sjahrir's contribution in the early phase of the independence struggle through youth organizations, not just through formal political channels. Based on the above discussion, it is highly intriguing to further explore Sutan Syahrir's role in the Jong Indonesia organization under the title "The Role of Sutan Syahrir in the Jong Indonesia Organization in Supporting Indonesian Independence."

National independence was achieved through the presence of brave individuals who were willing to fight for their rights as a nation. This includes Indonesia, which was on the verge of independence thanks to the involvement of religious leaders and perseverance. He was Sutan Shahrir, a figure who dared to oppose Dutch and Japanese policies and fought for Indonesia's independence, striving to achieve and fight for justice for all Indonesian people.

In the early 20th century, specifically on March 5, 1909, the city of Padang Panjang in West Sumatra welcomed the birth of a figure who would later play a crucial role in the nation's journey: Sutan Shahrir (Redaksi, 2020). This figure not only left his mark on history in the period leading up to the proclamation of independence, but also

made a significant contribution in the early years of the formation of the Indonesian state. Shahrir paved the way that made him a pioneer in the national political landscape (Fogg, 2021). His commitment to the struggle for independence and his relentless dedication to building the foundations of the newly independent nation led him to a prestigious position. His name is recorded as the first prime minister of the parliamentary government of the Republic of Indonesia. He was an argumentative and kind person. One of Sjahrir's opponents was Dutch diplomat van Klevens, whose arguments led to Sjahrir's downfall during the first military invasion against the United Nations (UN) diplomacy (Sahasrad et al., 2020). At the age of six, Shahril was sent to the ELS (Europeesche Legere School) or European Elementary School (Setiona & Sitorus, 2023).

He then continued his education at MULO (Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs) in Medan. After completing MULO in 1926, Shahril traveled to Java and settled in Bandung. In this city, he stayed at his step-sister Radena's house on Jalan Dr. Chipaganti, Pulau Sanshu. He enrolled in the Western Classics Department at AMS (Algemene Midervalle School), which led him to become a prosecutor like his father, Mohammad Rashad. Shahril was considered the brightest son of the Rashad family. Sutan Sjahrir was among the

important figures in the establishment of Jong Indonesia.

Jong Indonesia was founded on February 20, 1927, as a unifying organization in the Dutch East Indies (Razy, 2021). In addition to uniting young people from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, Jong Indonesia also laid the foundation for the Indonesian struggle for independence. Even before Jong Indonesia was established, there were already youth organizations in Indonesia that were still regional in nature. This regional nature was due to the fact that at that time there was no organization that united the young generation of Indonesia. In this regard, Jong Indonesia was also one of the organizations that played an important role during Indonesia's independence (Mahabbah, 2023).

According to its terminology, a role is a social construct that encompasses a set of behavioral expectations attached to individuals in a society. In English, it is called a "role," which means "duties and responsibilities in a company or job." A role can be interpreted as a set of roles, while a role is an action taken by a person in an event (Chairina & Candrasa, 2022). According to the Indonesian Dictionary, a struggle is a fight to conquer something through warfare. The concept of struggle can be described as the manifestation of intense determination and effort, reflecting the unlimited dedication of individuals or groups in pursuing noble

ideals. Struggle is any effort made with sacrifice, struggle, and democracy to obtain or achieve independence (Gunawan Santoso & Nabilla, 2023:217).

History teaches us the importance of independence. Independence is often spoken of without understanding its meaning. Independence means that a nation gains complete sovereignty, free from oppression by foreign powers. Previous generations risked everything for the future independence of the country and to free the country from the shackles of colonialism.

METHODS

This study uses historical methods to examine the role of Sutan Sjahrir in the Jong Indonesia organization. Historical methods were chosen because the object of study relates to past events that require accurate and contextual historical data. Fajar Nugroho in Agustian et al. (2021) states that the stages of the historical method used include: heuristics (source collection), verification (source criticism), interpretation (interpretation), and historiography (historical writing).

In the heuristic stage, researchers collect data from various sources relevant to the research topic, including books, journals, scientific articles, and historical documents. The verification stage is carried out to ensure the authenticity and credibility of sources through internal (content) and external (physical)

criticism. This is important so that the data used is valid and scientifically accountable.

Interpretation is carried out by interpreting verified data using a logical approach and historical principles to piece together facts into a coherent and meaningful narrative. This stage allows researchers to see the connections between events and figures in greater depth. Next, in the historiography stage, the results of the interpretation are presented in the form of scientific writing as the final product of the research.

The data sources in this study are divided into two categories: primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the book *Sjahrir: Politics and Exile in Indonesia* by Rudolf Mrazek and *Perjuangan Kita* by Y.B. Mangunwijaya. Meanwhile, secondary sources are obtained from scientific journals and other relevant written works, such as the research by Rusdiana et al (2017), Rusiana et al (2022), Aditia Muara et al. (2023), Maulana (2014), Basit (2004), and previous theses that discuss similar topics.

Data collection techniques were carried out through literature studies, interviews, and observations. Literature studies were carried out by examining various written references, while interviews were conducted with resource persons from the Surakarta Press Monument Museum who understood the history of Sutan Sjahrir. Observations were

carried out by visiting places that are related to the research subject to obtain additional data and strengthen the historical narrative that was prepared.

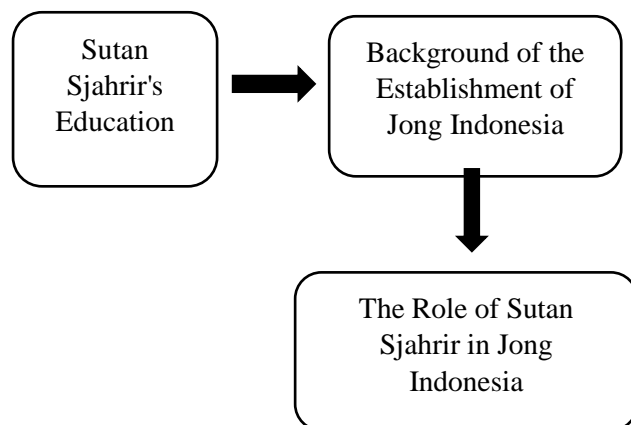


Figure 1. Frame of Mind

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sutan Sjahrir's Education

Sjahrir had a friend when he was still a student, both in Indonesia and in the Netherlands. He was Muhammad Hatta, who later became the first vice president of the Republic of Indonesia. He was seven years older than Sjahrir. They first met while studying at the Rotterdam College of Economics in the Netherlands. According to Mandalaram in Setiawan (2020), Sutan Sjahrir is famous for his original works that come out of his thoughts. There is no need to doubt the works he published, because they certainly have a value whose weight is unquestionable through the books he made.

Sutan Sjahrir is involved in a school debate club, so he is not the type of kid who only focuses on his homework and

textbooks. Sutan Sjahrir also participates in Tjahja Volksuniversiteit's free literacy education program for children from low-income households (Adryamarthanino & Ningsih, 2022). Then, Sjahrir's altruism turned political. Sjahrir was one of the ten organizers who launched the nationalist youth organization Jong Indonesia on February 20, 1927, when the youth were still affiliated with provincial groups. Sjahrir was well known by the Bandung police during his high school years as the editor-in-chief of the magazine of the Nationalist Youth Association (Setiona & Sitorus, 2023).

Sjahrir continued his education at the University of Amsterdam's Faculty of Law in the Netherlands. There, Sjahrir learned about socialism. He took the theories of socialism quite seriously. Salomon Tas, the chairman of the Social Democratic Student Association, and his wife Maria Duchateau, whom Sutan Sjahrir later married, although only briefly, were close to him (Bijl, 2017).

According to Touwe et al. (2024) Dr. Wahidin Sudirohusodo originated the concept of establishing a student fund, or Studiefonds, in Yogyakarta in 1906. The aim is to raise funds to support intelligent but poor indigenous youth so that they can pursue higher education. He explored Java to realize his idea. Dr. Wahidin Sudirohusodo met with STOVIA students when he arrived in Jakarta. STOVIA is a medical school for indigenous people.

The Beginning of the Formation of Jong Indonesia

Jong Indonesia was born on February 20, 1927 as a unifying organization in the Dutch East Indies. In addition to uniting youth from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, Jong Indonesia also forms the foundation for Indonesia's struggle. Before the formation of Jong Indonesia, in Indonesia, there were youth groups that were still very regional; This is because at that time there was no organization that gathered Indonesian youth (Sari & Rizqi, 2018:97).

The people who attended before Jong Indonesia were Mr. Sartono, Mr. Soenario, and Mr. Boediono. The three previously served as administrators of the Indonesian Association (PI). The Jong Indonesia organization was formed to fight for the idea of Indonesian togetherness. Soegiono (Chairman), Semawi (Vice Chairman), Meljadi (Secretary), and Soepangkat (Treasurer) led Jong Indonesia. They were students from Bandung who had discussions with members of the Algemene Study Club, including Mr. Satono, Mr. Soenari, Mr. Boediono. Likewise with Sutan Sjahrir, the social action owned by Sutan Sjahrir then led to politics.

Sutan Sjahrir was one of the ten founders of the nationalist youth movement, Jong Indonesia, when the youth were still affiliated with regional organizations (Maulana, 2014: 31). A

meeting of the youth organization was held on November 15, 1925. Representatives from the Jong Java group, as well as Jong Sumatran Bond, Jong Ambon, Jong Celebes, Minahasa Students, and Sekar Rukun, were present at the conference. The plan is one of the topics discussed in this discussion.

Youth Congress. After going through various preparations, a large youth meeting known as the First Youth Congress was held in Jakarta from April 30-May 2, 1926. The Youth Congress aims to form a united youth organization by forming a central body that will strengthen the relationship between national youth associations and enhance the sense of national unity (Sari & Rizqi, 2018:105).

Gerakan Pemuda movement experienced a tremendous increase in 1927. The support of the leaders and students of the Indonesian Association increased the energy and fighting spirit of the youth to build the battle line in the East Indies. In the inaugural congress of Jong Indonesia held in Bandung on December 20, 1927, it was decided to change the name of the organization to Indonesian Youth.

Role and Struggle

Norms associated with an individual's position in society are examples of roles. Therefore, roles can refer to the guidelines that direct individuals in

society. A role is something that a person does in society. Roles are also important for the social structure of society. Another way to understand roles is as structurally imposed demands in the form of obligations, expectations, and conventions (Gusianova, 2023:10).

According to Setiawan (2024), Struggle is all efforts made to achieve or uphold independence through sacrifice, war, and democracy. On the other hand, the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian language defines struggle as a struggle carried out by means of war to control something. The effort to achieve something that is demanded for good and glory is called a struggle.

From some of the definitions above, the author concludes that the definition of role and struggle is an attitude, behavior, and effort that a person makes with full seriousness to achieve goals that have been planned for the common good.

Independence

Independence has the meaning of being free from colonialism, independent of demands from certain parties, so that independence has the meaning of a state that is able to stand alone, be free, and no longer be colonized (Andri, 2017). In celebrating independence, we also need to reflect on how kita can continue to strengthen the intuition of democracy and

ensure equal access to education, health, and employment.

Independence in a country gains full control over the territory of its country. Or independence when a person gets the right to control himself without the help of others. Independence always has an important meaning for the life of a nation, including the Indonesian nation.

In this case, independence for Indonesia has several important implications, such as: 1). The peak of the country's struggle was marked by the Proclamation of Independence on August 17, 1945. 2). Gaining independence means liberating the Indonesian people. Free from foreign colonization and oppression in all its forms. 3). Independence functions as a link or gateway to a prosperous and just society. Thus, independence does not mean the end of the country's struggle. However, to continue and fill it with various development activities, various new difficulties have arisen.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show how great Sjahrir's efforts were, and that today's national leaders should be inspired by his ability to liberate his people. To achieve true freedom, one must be freed from economic and mental incompetence. Although this has been practiced, it is still not applied evenly in some situations. The findings of this study show to future

academics that Sutan Sjahrir is very important in achieving Indonesia's independence in the political field. It is hoped that other fields of Sutan Sjahrir's research can be expanded in an effort to uphold Indonesia's freedom.

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927

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