

The 1927 Silungkang Rebellion in a Historiographical Review

Monika Aprila Sari^{1*}, Phil Gusti Asnan², Nopriyasman³

^{1,2,3}Historical Studies, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Univesitas Andalas, Indonesia

*correspondence email : monikaaprilasari6@gmail.com

Received 3 November 2025; Received in revised form 5 November 2025; Accepted 18 November 2025

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji tentang Pemberontakan Silungkang 1927 dalam Tinjauan Historiografi. Tinjauan historiografi dilakukan pada tiga karya yang khusus membahas pemberontakan Silungkang ditulis oleh orang Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode analisis konten. Metode ini digunakan untuk mengidentifikasi isi dari sebuah peristiwa. Hasil dari penelitian ini dari ketiga karya yang dikaji terdapat perbedaan latar belakang dan pendidikan penulis. Ada yang dari penulis akademis dan penulis amatir, sedangkan dari pendidikannya ada yang dari lulusan SD, Doktor (S3), dan SMA. Berdasarkan perbedaan tersebut berpengaruh terhadap karya yang dihasilkan. Terutama dalam penulisan dan bagaimana penulis memberikan pandangan serta interperitasnya terhadap karya tersebut. Selain itu, dalam karya tersebut terdapat dua zaman yaitu zaman penulis (zaman Orde baru dan Reformasi) dan zaman perang yaitu saat peristiwa tersebut terjadi, dimana saat itu merupakan zaman kolonial.

Kata kunci: pemberontakan silungkang, sumatera barat, historiografi.

Abstract

This study examines the 1927 Silungkang Rebellion in a Historiographical Review. The historiographical review was conducted on three works specifically discussing the Silungkang Rebellion written by Indonesians. This study uses a content analysis method. This method is used to identify the content of an event. The results of this study from the three works studied show differences in the background and education of the authors. Some are academic writers and amateur writers, while in terms of education, some are elementary school graduates, Doctorates (S3), and high school. Based on these differences, they influence the resulting works, especially in writing and how the authors provide their views and interpretations of the work. In addition, in the work there are two eras: the author's era (the New Order and Reformation eras) and the war era, when the event occurred, which was the colonial era.

Keywords: rebellion silungkang, west sumatra, historiography.

INTRODUCTION

Historiography is constantly changing over time, including the styles, versions, perceptions, and interpretations used by authors. Therefore, future generations may view the past differently, perhaps disagreeing with, questioning, or rejecting the assumptions of previous historians. However, it may be considered outdated because it is no longer relevant to the times. However, it can be emphasized that the new nature of historiography does

not diminish the scientific value and scholarship of history (Zed, 1984).

The study of Indonesian historiography is currently underdeveloped, as evidenced by the limited number of articles discussing historical writing within historiographical studies, particularly the Silungkang rebellion. To date, there has been no work specifically examining the Silungkang rebellion within historiographical studies. However, numerous works, both books and

articles, have addressed this rebellion. This historiographical study is interesting to examine because, through the works of several authors, we can discern many of the authors' ideas and perspectives on how they narrate historical events.

Studies on the Silungkang rebellion have been reviewed by both foreign and Indonesian authors. Foreign authors include Blumberger, J.Th Petrus, Harry J. Benda and Ruth McVey, and Audrey Kahin. Meanwhile, Indonesian authors include MD. Mansoer, the Ministry of Information book, Abdul Muluk Nasution, Mestika Zed, and Nawir Said. This study focuses on examining three works that specifically discuss the Silungkang rebellion. These three works include a book written by Abdul Muluk Nasution, a perpetrator of the rebellion; Mestika Zed, a historian and academic; and finally, the work of Nawir Said, a native of Silungkang. The differences in the authors' backgrounds influence the resulting works.

In this study, the author focuses on books written about the Silungkang rebellion written by Indonesians, the books include the first work by Abdul Muluk Nasution entitled *Experience of the Struggle in Pioneering Independence, Silungkang People's Rebellion, West Sumatra 1926-1927* published in 1981, the second work by Mestika Zed entitled *Silungkang Communist Rebellion 1927, Study of Social Movements in West Sumatra* published in 2004, and the third

book written by Nawir Said entitled *Silungkang People's Resistance Against Dutch Colonialism 1927 in West Sumatra* published in 2005.

METHODS

This research is a type of library research using the content analysis method. Content Analysis is a research method used to identify the content of an event (Zuchdi & Afifah, 2019). In this content analysis method there are several steps, namely: First, the data procurement stage, in content analysis it must be clear which data will be analyzed, as well as how this is defined (given limitations) and from which population the data is taken (Zuchdi & Afifah, 2019). The data must be in the form of accurate information, the following stages are carried out in the data procurement activity, namely: In the initial activity, it is necessary to determine the unit, this is the activity of grouping data into parts to be analyzed.

In determining this unit, the researcher will examine three books specifically written about the 1927 Silungkang rebellion, written by Indonesians. Next, the sample determination, in this sample determination, the researcher wants to examine books on the 1927 Silungkang rebellion written by Indonesians, examined in a historiographical review. Then, in recording, the researcher identifies and analyzes data that must be

in accordance with the books being studied.

Second, data reduction. At this stage, researchers organize the collected data into a form that aligns with the research objectives and research problems. The third stage, inference (drawing conclusions), is the most crucial part of content analysis. Knowledge of the data content significantly influences the success or failure of inferences. At this stage, the collected data is then interpreted based on the research content, specifically through a historiographical review. Finally, in the analysis stage, the data we have concluded is then identified according to the research objectives we are seeking, and the results are described.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE SOUL OF THE AGE WHEN THE WRITING WAS DONE

In a written work, the level of writing and the era in which it was written can illustrate a historiographical study. The historiographical approach can be influenced by two main factors: first, the cultural environment of the author and the work in which it was created, and second, the spirit and spirit of the era that developed at that time (Helma, 2001). Both of these factors can serve as a reference in writing a historiographical study.

The three works differ in their backgrounds and education. Some are academics and some are amateur writers. Academic historians, or professional historians, are those who can interpret every development in history, not only understanding historical theory and methods but also mastering other disciplines. They not only study archives, documents, and other historical sources, but also understand sources from outside their field (Azra, 2002).

According to Kuntowijoyo, a professional historian is a graduate of a history school who is equipped with the methodology and scientific theories of history. Meanwhile, an amateur historian is someone who does not have a history degree but writes about history (Kuntowijoyo, 2003). History can be written by anyone, even if they are not history graduates. Many historical works written by amateur writers produce good and quality works, for example, Rusli Amran's work entitled *West Sumatra to Pelakat Panjang* and also Luckman Sinar who wrote several historical works. Luckman Sinar is a busy businessman, but still managed to write quality historical works (Kuntowijoyo, 2003).

Likewise, Abdul Muluk Nasution and Nawir Said did not have history degrees, but they wrote about historical events. This contrasts with Mestika Zed, who is an academic historian. An academic historian adheres to strict,

detailed, and valid historical writing principles. In their writing, they have a purpose and explain what happened and how it came to be (Yakub, 2013). They provide their thoughts and interpretations of the events. Meanwhile, the works of Abdul Muluk and Nawir Said only explain and describe what happened without providing their perspectives. The following will explain the background and perspectives of the authors of the three works studied.

First, Abdul Muluk Nasution was a historical figure, directly participating in the rebellion. In his works, he chronicles his experiences during the rebellion. His only education was elementary school, as his parents could not afford to continue his education. Abdul Muluk decided to migrate to Silungkang and work there.

Abdul Muluk enjoyed reading, and his favorite books were about struggle. One of his books, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, chronicled the sale of black slaves by white settlers in Africa. He likened this to the suffering experienced by the Ombilin mine workers. While working in Silungkang, Abdul Muluk began to socialize and participate in all activities there. He joined several movement organizations in the area, including the People's Union (Sarekat Rakyat), and participated in the Silungkang rebellion of 1926-1927.

Several years later, as Abdul Muluk entered his twilight years, he was moved

to write about his experiences during the rebellion. His reasoning was to enable the younger generation to learn about his experiences and the ups and downs he experienced during the rebellion. This book reflects Abdul Muluk's life experiences and the struggles he endured during the rebellion. It can also serve as a valuable resource for readers regarding the Silungkang rebellion.

In addition to his experience, Abdul Muluk also used other sources as a guide in writing, including Dutch archives and books, which were used to assist in writing his work on the Silungkang rebellion. Abdul Muluk, in writing his work, is classified as an amateur writer because his background and education are not those of a historian or academic. In writing his work does not comply with the correct writing system. In his work, the author only tells and describes what was experienced during the rebellion, and explains the events that occurred during the rebellion without providing his analysis and interpretation of the rebellion.

Next is Mestika Zed's work. Previously, Mestika Zed had written about the Silungkang rebellion in her thesis while studying at G Adjah Mada University in 1980. Mestika Zed wrote about this rebellion because she was inspired by the dissertation work of Sartono Kartodirdjo, who was her supervisor. The dissertation was written while completing her doctoral studies at the University of Amsterdam,

the Netherlands in 1966, the dissertation was entitled *The 1988 Banten Peasant Rebellion*.

The difference is that Sartono Kartodirdjo's work was written for his doctoral dissertation in the Netherlands. Mestika Zed, on the other hand, used it for her thesis while studying at Gadjah Mada University (UGM). Therefore, the text differs significantly from the text studied. Mestika Zed's thesis used only sources from Dutch archives and newspapers available at the time. It was then rewritten and turned into a book in 2004. The content of Mestika Zed's thesis and book is not significantly different. However, the book included several sources that served as guidelines for her writing, improving her work.

In writing about the Silungkang rebellion, he viewed it as a social movement. Social movements stem from situations faced by communities experiencing injustice and arbitrary treatment. These movements emerge as a reaction to undesirable events and a demand for change in policies implemented by those in power. These movements can take the form of protests or demonstrations (Sufyan, 2017).

According to Sartono Kartodirdjo, a social movement is a collective activity that aims to bring about changes in community resilience (Kartodirdjo, 1971). Social movements have four criteria, namely, first, group movements, second,

organized (structure, personnel, and networks), third, have plans, targets, and methods. Fourth, have an ideology, change or maintain (Sufyan, 2017). According to Mestika Zed, the Silungkang rebellion was a series of organized activities and acts of violence involving the masses at large in achieving certain goals (Zed, 2004).

Mestika Zed is a historian and academic. She has written extensively on history, both local and national. She also wrote a book on the Silungkang rebellion. One of the reasons she wrote this book was the limited number of works discussing the rebellion. Therefore, Mestika Zed wrote this book to increase readers' knowledge of the Silungkang rebellion.

The difference with the other two works, namely Abdul Muluk and Nawir Said, in Mestika Zed's work, he wrote using a correct scientific writing system. In writing this book, Mestika Zed uses a critical historical method and historical thinking. In historical thinking, there are five basic components (Zed, 2018):

(1) Change over time

History is always connected to changes that occur over time. Therefore, history is often referred to as the science of change. Therefore, history is said to be unique because no two events or occurrences are the same.

(2) Causality

This is the law of cause and effect. The understanding of cause in history refers to the actions or events that lead to a particular event. The results of those actions or events are the consequences. In history, if the causal relationship is lost, the hallmark of historical scholarship is also lost. Historical causality always occurs over time.

(3) Context

History is a collection of events that are often interconnected. History can be viewed and understood in terms of one event relative to another, with time or era, people, places, and other specific conditions. The difference between context and causality is that context relates to perspective, viewpoint, or interpretation of an event. Causality, on the other hand, relates to the unit of the historical event itself.

(4) Complexity

History is complex, complicated and the human brain cannot capture all events and is limited to certain aspects.

(5) Contingency

History has many possibilities, sometimes called assumptions. In statistics, this is called probability, which is a measure of the likelihood or uncertainty of an event occurring. Based on this, history is inherently probable, with elements of the unexpected.

In writing her book, Mestika Zed gathers facts from several sources and then provides analysis. She then explains

causality, explaining why the rebellion occurred, the reasons for it, and the aftermath. This is what distinguishes amateur writers from academic writers.

Nawir Said's final work is about a native of Silungkang. Nawir Said was born in 1937, exactly 10 years after the rebellion. He had heard stories about the Silungkang rebellion many times, both from the perpetrators and from those who witnessed and heard about the event. Furthermore, his village boasts a monument to the Silungkang people's resistance struggle. Every January 1st is commemorated as the day of the Silungkang people's resistance against the Dutch government. This ensures that the people of Silungkang, especially subsequent generations, will remember the struggle of the Silungkang people that took place on January 1, 1927.

Nawir Said is considered an amateur writer, as his background and education are not historians. In this book, the author merely recounts and explains what happened, without providing his own thoughts or interpretations. Furthermore, his writing style does not use proper writing conventions.

The writing of these three works reveals a distinct era. First, the era in which the works were written is divided into two periods: the New Order and the Reformation era. Second, the war era, when the events occurred, was the colonial era. During the New Order era,

very few works were published, especially those discussing communism. This was because the ruling regime was very sensitive to the term "communist." This contrasts with the Reformation era, where many works discussed communism.

The works that were born during the reform era that discuss communism include I am proud to be a child of the PKI written by Ribka Tjiptaning published in 2002, then the book From Rebellion to Integration of West Sumatra and Indonesian Politics 1926-1998 written by Audrey Kahin published in 2008. Then the book written by Fikrul Hanif Sufyan entitled Towards the Red Lantern of the Communist Propaganda Movement in the Veranda of Mecca 1923-1949, the book was published in 2017 which tells about the development of communism in Padang

for writing the book	Silungkang Rebellion event does not disappear over time and is lost in the ages	increase readers' literacy about the Silungkang Rebellion	the younger generation in particular and society in general can know about the Silungkang Rebellion
The perpetrators of the rebellion	People's Union	Communist	People's Union but communist
Sources used	His experiences, Dutch archives, books	Dutch archives, newspapers, books	Dutch archives, books, and interviews with both perpetrators and people who saw and heard about the rebellion.
Background to the rebellion	Because of the injustice they felt regarding the policies issued by the Dutch government which tortured and oppressed them and were not in accordance with prevailing values and norms.	Because of the misery felt by the people regarding the policies made by the Dutch government which were considered cruel and inhumane.	Because they wanted to expel the invaders from their homeland
Year of publication of the book	1981	2004	2005
Reasons	So that the	In order to	So that

Table 1. Comparison of Three Works in a Historiographical Review

Aspect	Abdul Muluk Nasution	Zed's Gem	Nawir Said
Author's background	Historian and amateur writer	Academics	Amateur writer
Author's education	Elementary school graduate	Doctor	High school graduate, and studied at National University (until the second semester)
Year of publication of the book	1981	2004	2005
Reasons	So that the	In order to	So that

Contents of the Work

In the book by Nawir Said and Mestika Zed, several factors that caused the rebellion in Silungkang are explained, namely, firstly, because the thoughts of the Silungkang people were more advanced, this was because many of the Silungkang people worked as traders, they traded outside the area so they interacted with many people which made their minds open and more advanced than other areas (Nawir, 2005). Secondly, because of the lack of security personnel owned by the Dutch government so that the movement could develop in the area (Zed, 2004).

These three books describe the aftermath of the Sarekat Islam's train-blocking campaign to address the rice shortage that was causing famine in Silungkang. This action roused the people of Silungkang to sympathize with Sarekat Islam. They flocked to join Sarekat Islam (Nasution, 1981).

Abdul Muluk's book explains that the movement was also carried out by young people known as the Padvinder Silungkang. They formed an organization called the Indonesische Padvinder Organisatie (IPO), chaired by Buyung Enek. They were motivated by seeing young Dutch people, or Padvinder Belanda, who came to Silungkang on the occasion of the Queen's birthday. They came to Silungkang to observe the weaving process carried out by the Silungkang women. They walked with a sturdy, military-like gait,

wearing full uniforms, which amazed and motivated the Silungkang children. The young Dutch looked arrogant and proud when they saw the Silungkang children who were watching, crowding around them. Therefore, the young Silungkang people were motivated and wanted to form Padvinder Silungkang, the goal of which was none other than to oppose the Dutch government. (Nasution, 1981).

The Dutch government has issued a regulation prohibiting the holding of meetings without a permit (*vergader verbod*). Those wishing to hold a meeting must first apply for a permit from the local supervisory body (Nasution, 1981). This did not dampen the spirit of the fighters in preparing for resistance against the Dutch government. The propaganda carried out by the People's Union after the issuance of regulations prohibiting holding meetings without permission was carried out by using a tactic known as "kurusu lima menit". They increased their membership to remote villages and formed small groups called "groups of ten" (Nasution, 1981). They formed these groups into ranks that were trained secretly and armed.

They then escalated their movement by forming the Dubble Organisatie (DO) or Sarekat Hitam (Black Union), whose task was to assassinate blacklisted reactionaries. Furthermore, they were tasked with raising funds for the struggle, which they collected from

wealthy sympathizers (Nasution, 1981) On May 8, 1926, a month after the formation of the Djin Union in Padang, news circulated from newspapers and radio stations reporting that the organization had been established in the cities of Tengah and Pauh, Padang. The organization consisted of 40 members, led by a man named Si Patai. Shortly thereafter, the group carried out a series of actions, killing several local officials (Zed, 2004).

Meanwhile, other branches spread throughout West Sumatra. In April, attempted murders were reported in Lubuk Basung, Maninjau, and in May, similar incidents occurred in Bukit Batabuh, Biaro Gadang, and Gadut, Agam. Furthermore, on September 9, the so-called "Kamang Affair" was a series of actions that culminated in the assassination of Datuk Tanang Sati, the head of the Kamang village. This latter incident was caused, in part, by the movement's knowledge that the village head had been attempting to collect and record the names and residences of suspected communists. Another "Sarekat Djin" was established in Koto Anau, where the first assassination attempt began a few days after its founding on October 31, 1926. In August and November, "Sarekat Itam" was also formed in a housing complex (Kamang) and in Gunung, Padang Panjang (Zed, 2004).

As time went by, the terrifying communist terror spread everywhere, and the government seemed powerless to contain it, leading to a state of uncertainty. The morale of these events was profound. The population was utterly frustrated. While these illegal acts continued, the government took no concrete action to address them. Security forces consistently treated them as ordinary riots and handled them according to their standard operating procedures. If a report was received, they would go to the scene and examine the victims while identifying the perpetrators. Afterward, they would return to the city (Zed, 2004).

Because there was no definitive resolution, people were constantly haunted by the possibility of threats coming at any time. Ironically, individuals or families accused of being communists were effectively denied legal protection. In other places, the wives of communists were rounded up and subjected to various tortures to induce them to reveal their husbands' hiding places. Furthermore, measures were taken to impose higher taxes on families accused of being "communists." As a result, society was threatened from both sides: from "illegal" activities and from government security forces. Thus, the communists temporarily achieved their goal of creating social unrest. All of this sharpened the stakes for igniting resentment and, in many cases,

contributed to the worsening conditions for later rebellion (Zed, 2004).

CONCLUSION

After study third book mentioned, there are difference from background behind The authors and their education include academic writers and historians, as well as amateur writers. Furthermore, the authors' education is also varied, with some having elementary school degrees, doctorates (S3), and high school degrees. background behind the Of course very influential to The work produced, especially in writing the work, how the author provides his views and interpretations of the event. In the work there are also two eras, namely the author's era (the New Order and reform era) and the war era, namely when the event occurred, which was the colonial era. The difference in eras influences the work produced. Like the author's era in Abdul Muluk's work which was created during the New Order era, in his work the author only explains and tells the role of the People's Union and does not explain anything about communism. This is because the regime in power at that time was very sensitive to the word communist. In contrast to the works of Mestika Zed and Nawir Said which were created during the reform era, in Mestika Zed's work, he discusses the role of communists in the rebellion, as well as Nawir Said's work which discusses the role of the

communist-leaning People's Union in his work.

REFERENCES

- Azra, A. (2002). *Historiografi Islam Kontemporer: Wacana, Aktualitas, Dan Aktor Sejarah*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Helma. (2001). *Pengembangan Alat Ukur Kecerdasan Emosi Siswa Sekolah Menengah*. Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia.
- Kartodirdjo, S. (1971). *Messianisme Dan Millenarisme Dalam Sedjarah Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Kuntowijoyo. (2003). *Metodologi Sejarah*. Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana.
- Nasution, A. M. (1981). *Pemberontakan Sarikat Rakyat Silungkang, Sumatera Barat, 1926-1927: Pengalaman Perjuangan Dalam Merintis Kemerdekaan*. Jakarta: Mutiara.
- Said, N. (1963). *Pemberontakan Silungkang 1927, Sumatra Barat*. Jakarta: Pentja.
- Sufyan, F. H. (2017). *Menuju Lentera Merah Gerakan Propaganda Komunis di Serambi Mekah 1923-1949*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Yakub, M. (2013). Historiografi Islam Indonesia: Perspektif Sejarawan Informal. *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 37(1), 159-177.
- Zed, M. (1984). *Pengantar Studi Historiografi*. Padang: Andalas University Press.
- Zed, M. (2004). *Pemberontakan Komunis Silungkang 1927: Studi Gerakan Sosial di Sumatera Barat*. Yogyakarta: Syarikat Indonesia.
- Zed, M. (2018). Tentang Konsep Berfikir Sejarah. *Lensa Budaya*, 13(1), 54-60.
- Zuchdi, D., & Afifah, W. (2019). *Analisis Konten Etnografi & Grounded Theory, dan Hermeneutika Dalam Penelitian*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.