

# Facing Contemporary Nationalism

Yuhasnil\*

STKIP Yayasan Abdi Pendidikan Jl. Prof. M. Yamin Payskumbuh, telp ( 0752) 93650

## Abstract

Our nationalism is not a nationalism arising from merely arrogance of a nation, it is a wide nationalism ;a nationalism arising from the knowledge of the history; it is not a "jingo nationalism", or chauvinism, and not a copy or imitation of the West nationalism. Our nationalism is a nationalism, who received a taste of life as the message .Our nationalism is the nationalism that makes us become "the instruments of the Lord" and make us alive in spirit. The sort of nationalism can be created from education, namely, learning history and the teacher.

*Keywords: Nationalism, Indonesian, History*

## 1. Introduction

Recently, the nation Greatness symbol, the Red-White flag, has been neglected. Some people think that it is not necessary to raise it on the independence day. In any flag ceremonies in the school, students do not pay much attention when Indonesia Raya song is sung. If those symbols, at the beginning of independence can make people touched and shed tears, but nowadays it does not anymore, especially in some parts of the country such as Aceh, Maluku and Papua.

The above description implies a glimpse of how the fate of nationality and a sense of unity, is being threatened or madly problem. Also, Indonesia has faced the problem related to the integration. In elementary school (SD), we are very proud and bravely singing the song "Berkibarlal Banderaku" or very loving lyrics: "Dari Sabang sampai Merauke berjejer pulau pulau. Sambung menyambung menjadi satu, itu lah INDOENSIA...". Today, Students are far from what is expected. For example, it can be seen from how the participants of the flag ceremony sing Indonesia Raya once it was raised. Not only the participants of the ceremony were not paying attention, but many of them were chatting and laughing!

If the spirits of the heroes rose for a moment, what they would say when they saw the generation treated something they struggled with soul, body, and blood. The students probably still remember about the 10th of November 1945 in Surabaya. A group of young men known as "Arek Arek Suroboyo" with extraordinary courages climbed the Orange Hotel and directly ripped the blue of Netherlands flag. This happened because they did not want their freedom damaged, and they bore in mind that, "Once independence will always be independent, better die than be colonized again".

Therefore, why the spirit of nationality among the youth generation today has faded away? Why do our feelings of nationality increasingly outdated? Is this the decade pointed out by [7] that the 21st century is called the revival era of "nationalism"? or the rise of a new nationalism that tend to be primitive, intolerant and internally aggressive and even chauvinistic because it is toward on the narrow view of ethnicity and racism? If so, chauvinistic ethnicity or radical, in the view of John Naissbitt (1994) is named as a "new tribalism", a sense of national breaking up the Soviet Union or Yugoslavia.

On the other hand, [9] argues that the emergence of a new nationalism. Yet, it was no longer a significant in history, especially in the countries of the United States and Europe. This new nationalism is political primitive, and intolerant because internally it is grounded on narrow ethnicity and racism. Meanwhile, Huntington warns that contemporary nationalism tends to affect the clash in civilizations (civilization clash), especially Western civilization and Islam.

## 2. Indonesian Nationalism

Etymologically, the word nationalism is derived from the word "nation" which means a community of people living in a defined territory and organized under a single government. The term nation itself has two meanings, namely definition on the sociological-anthropological sense and on political sense. From the sociological-anthropological sense, the nation is viewed as a society which is a communion of life that stand alone and each member of the communion of life feel as one race, language, religion, history, and customs. Meanwhile, in the political sense, the nation is a community in the same

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: N/A; fax: N/A.  
E-mail address: lovinitra@gmail.com.

region and are subject to the sovereignty of the country as a supreme power of all.

According to Ernest Renan, as is so often cited by Bung Karno, nationalism is the dominant element of the social and political life of a group of people that have encouraged the formation of a nation in order to unite the need of being one (*ledesire d'entre ensamble*). [4] invites us to trace the history of the West until the 15th century in defining the meaning of nationalism, which he called as the imagined communities.

Nationhood is a series of efforts to achieve a balance between the interests of the community (society) on one side and the State authorities (state) on the other. In those efforts, according [16], the clash of the two sides is inevitable, and the clash ended the dominance of one party would likely be the threatening of the life of the state or the society. The efforts to achieve this balance extends throughout history, which in this sense, Indonesia today is the result of that history, and still "menjadi Indonesia".

Studies conducted by Cribb [8, 15, 16] give a deep explanation on how the the archipelago became a nation, the nation of Indonesia. From the story, this nation continues to seek its identity, and often faces the problem like disintegrative conflict that will break away the archipelago.

Since the beginning of nationalism, Soekarno longed on how nationalism can live in the heart of Indonesia thoroughly. Furthermore Bung Karno expressed:

"Our nationalism, ... is not a nationalism arising from merely arrogance of a nation, it is a wide nationalism; a nationalism arising from the knowledge of the history; it is not a "jingo nationalism", or chauvinism, and not a copy or imitation of the West nationalism. Our nationalism is a nationalism, who received a taste of life as the message ... our nationalism is the nationalism that makes us become "the instruments of the Lord" and make us alive in spirit ..."

According to David Brown [19] each nationality and ethnicity always have an identity. Identity is not something that is "taken for granted". Our nationality is as a result of the struggle of our Founding Fathers. Because nationality is the result of the struggle, it should also be measured with a certain standard. Having rediscovered, an identity is preserved and then becomes something that is considered to be proud of (proudly) to receive recognition from the outsider.

According to [19] building the national identity in politics in this context is about nationalism. There is really no word to rehash nationalism obsolete. Difficulty in explaining to the concreteness in action often makes people allergic and prejudice against nationalism. Indeed nationalism as a concept, which contains the practicality and analysis simultaneously. According to David Brown, nationalism needs to be explained by the three concepts related to ideology, emotional loyalty, and interest. The three spectrum has a strong tendency for the mutual attraction of each orientation. Brown offers an approach to explain the embodiment of nationalism tendency into three categories: primordialis, constructive, and situational.

### 3. Learning History in School

Is it possible the problem of nationality or the threat of disintegration that struck the Indonesian nation can be solved through a history lesson? This question is of course too naive. Is history merely the series of events in the past in the view of most people's, which is impossible to be excused in today's era of globalization?

In relation to the problem above, a historian, Kuntowijoyo, once said that the disintegrative conflict that plagued the country recently because of the failure in the learning history. Perhaps, obviously Kuntowijoyo said because a lot of history learning materials only emphasize on the war among king and kingdom, or at least still too stressed on the political aspects. Overcoming those problems, teaching history in schools needs to awake the awareness of history, or how a nation can subjectively interpret historical facts for the sake of national goals and provide a kind of national pride among the students.

Kuntowijoyo's explanation above reminds us on how Muhammad Yamin lifted the dimensions of this country's history (such as lifting the figure of Gadjah mada as a unifying figure of the archipelago, and historical value of "flag" that in had been used by the country since 6000 years ago as a symbol of identity-ritualistic) in realizing the unity at the end of the 19s. These event was known as the Youth Pledge October 28, 1928.

What about the learning history in schools? Learning history at school is one of the field of study that is not endless became the target of criticism. The lesson of history, among students (included the government) are considered less important than other subjects. It is seen from 1968 to 2004 curriculum (called a competency-based curriculum, CBC) and now rechange to level of unit Education Curriculum (SBC) and history lesson is still marginalized. In addition, the teaching of history (in this case the teacher of history) is considered failed to plant the values and the the spirit of struggling. This can be seen from the attitude and the personality of the youth people today that degradate regularly.

Learning history in school tend to be monotonous, dry, and boring. On one side, the teachers is not only low in motivation but also not able to serve the historical narratives of the events interestingly, while in the other side, the students tend to regard of the lessons as unbeneficial and unmeaningful for their life, especially in today era. Tragically, the teaching of history is nothing more than the exposure of historical facts of human (which their truth can not accounted) and there are some ideological hidden curriculum.

The criticism on teaching history at schools was expressed by Niels mulder (2000). By examining the textbooks used in schools, according to him, the history lesson at school is not only the thing that helps children developing a broad view, because it just gives the chronological story and interesting facts with the absence of theoretical references. Due to the disconnection of the process, the power of imaginative history - the power of imaginative history can be figured out like "the baby born

not wanting to be buried" - can not thrive; no dynamics that connects between the present and the past. Consequently, according to Mulder, the present (when the child lives) is like an orphan who is pregnant; the embodiment himself is only partial, and has been crippled since the beginning ". Worsely, because historical imagination is not in turn, it means that our children will never make a breakthrough, either through the obstacles they face or through their minds. Hence, they will be a conditioned citizens. In fact, with such conditions, according to Mulder, students become "not truly alive as analytical, responsible and inventive human ".

History tells about the past event. Although the facts were given as completely as occurrence in the real life, the historians (in their studies ) and teacher ( in the narrative of the teaching ) may not be able to bring or to reconstruct the events as they actually happened. From history, we can only take the wisdom, knowledge, and learning as a consideration toward the present and the future life. History is not only convey the fact - though the fact is important - but at the highest level history , the fact is to interpret, to analyze, and to make a conclusion from it

Historian, [1] explains that the history lesson is not a series of dry and particularistic events, which stop on it, as if the particles are located in each vacuum. History can not be shown as a series of events that is followed by others. As a lesson, according to Taufik, historical knowledge is intellectual set that must present themselves as art in order the knowledge can provide an intellectual pleasure . In this case, as a mode of discourse, the knowledge is reflected in the systematic presentation of the story and style of language and rationality in showing the events.

Related to the explanation above, according to Taufik, there are at least three stages or three levels which must be striven in making the teaching of history becomes reflective and inspirational, as well as a branch of science that is always relevance with the times development. First, history should be taught as a means of building the awareness of the social environment, so that the students understand and realize that they are part of the community and that will make them responsible of their social environment. Secondly, the teaching of history should introduce the meaning of the time dimension life by using sense of actuality. Knowledge and awareness that they (the students) are part of a community. If in the first stage is focused on buliding sense of intimacy with their social environment, then in the second phase is focused on increasing their sense of history. The third stage, history as an academic activity that possibly gives rational comprehension on the pattern the dynamics of change.

Regarding to what strategy and how to teach the hystory and map out the future in teaching hystory can be seen from the work of Sam Wineburg [18], historical thinking: Mapping the future, teaching the past (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2006). According to [18] "history is just more than just knowledge of the past. History cannot be holded by hand and can not be stored in the bookcase. The feeling of history resides in someone's

mind. The true hystory is the description that describes a set of motivations, actions, and outcomes "(p. 228).

#### 4. History Teacher

The success on teaching history in schools, as in many curriculum demanded, is determined by the teacher itself. The notion that the teaching of history is an easy task and anyone (from any discipline) who may teach history is actually a matter which is made-up; and this becomes a common things that in the practice of education in Indonesia. In the 1994 curriculum described that the purpose of teaching history is: "to plant the public understanding about the development of the past to the present, to create the sense of nationalism and to be proud as Indonesian citizens, and expand the relationship among the nations in the world ".

In achieving the demands of the curriculum ,The history teacher does not just explain the facts or merey chronological events of hystory. The teacher should give their interpretation and explanation about the story. For example, the history teachers can draw "red thread" and critically interpret the disaster that struck the Indonesian republic after the Dutch destroyed the Military Aggression II on December 19, 1948. At the time, the Netherlands considers that the Indonesian history has been finished. Never have the Dutch been crossed in mind that prior to President Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta and a number of top officials of Indonesia were captured ,the cabinet meeting was still done. The meeting decided that Mr. Sjafruddin Prawiranegara (Minister of Welfare), who was in New York City, would establish the "emergency government". In this case, a critical history teacher required in interpreting that the establishment of the Emergency Government could serve as the "savior of the republic".

History is the collective memory of the community. As a collective memory in every human activity. Human understood, thought, and captured all the experience that they had been through. A history teacher is required to understand what the nature of the teaching history is, namely how to build the moral value like solidarity, a spirit of cooperation, a sense of nationhood, self-sacrificing, more priority on public interests instead of personal interests, fostering a sense of belonging, as well as being a good citizen. Because of its affective, the goal and the outcome of the course in teaching history can not be learned in a relatively short time. The results of teaching history is a long-term investment, and it can only be felt in the next generations. As Barzun's opinion, at this stage, according to Sartono Kartodirdjo (1993) the hystory lesson can create human spirit to be strong and survive in facing the problem and chaos in their lives. In addition, Langlois & Seignobos (Kartodirdjo, 1993) state that teaching history gives hygienic effect on the human soul because it can free them from believability.

To realize the idealism for the future, a new paradigm in the development of history teaching methodology should be created as following :

1. Develop the strategies that familiarize students in learning history (especially for the higher education), make a critical analysis of projective (including in the value of education development).
2. Develop the strategy that emphasizes the passion of history that will affect to all aspects of culture (cultural sense / soul and material culture / science).
3. Develop strategies that are directly or indirectly capable of uploading the productive potential of the students thinking such as the attitude of critical thinking in receiving the descriptions of teachers, capable of thinking concept, creative in finding the information from the first hand, democratic and responsible.

In achieving the goal of teaching history, it needs to be optimally developed the high professionalism of teachers (educators) as developing the profesional work of the teacher, mastery the broad knowledge of the history, and mastery the skills and strategies of teaching history, innovative -Creative, and adaptable to the development and the demands of the times.

In explaining the facts and historical events, Kartodirdjo offers two issues, namely: (1) How the history teacher is able to connect to one fact to another within a variety of disciplines; (2) how the history teacher can link between the various things and events which are interconnected. This needs to be done, according to Sartono Kartodirdjo because as for illustrative purposes of casual explanation is to give the meaning of the events that occurred critically and objectively.

In terms of delivery techniques, Kartodirdjo reminds the importance of narrative elements. There are several factors that affect the elements of a good narrative:

- a. Logical way of thinking so that there is an adequate discourse
- b. Grammar is neat, orderly, clear in words, the formulation of sentences and how to connect them
- c. The use of language by following the rules, also takes good rhetoric, such as: style, rhythm, and innotation.

## 5. Conclusion

By running all the rules that are required in the teaching of history above , it can be sure what the expectation from the learning process of hystory can be achieved well. To achieve the above objectives, the history teacher should think critically and keep "an ear to the ground", instead of daydreaming, so that what is being experienced by the students can be understood by the teacher.

## References

- [1] Abdullah, Taufik (1999). "Nasionalisme Indonesia, dari asal usul ke prospek ke masa depan", Jurnal Sejarah, No. 8 Tahun 1999.
- [2] ----- (1996). "Disekitar pengajaran sejarah yang reflrktif dan inspiratif", Jurnal Sejarah No. 6, Februari (hal. 1-16).

- [3] -----(2001). Nasionalisme & Sejarah. Bandung: Satya Historika.
- [4] Anderson, Benedict (2002). Hantu Komparasi: Nasionalisme, Asia Tenggara dan Dunia. (Terjemahan dari *The Spectre of Comparions: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and World*). Yogyakarta: Qalam.
- [5] -----(1999). *Komunitas-komunitas Imajiner*, Renungan tentang Asal-usul dan Penyebaran nasionalisme. (Terjemahan dari *Imagined Communities, reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*). Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar dan Insist Press.
- [6] Amal, Ichlasul & Armaidly Armawi, *Regionalisme, Nasionalisme, dan Ketahanan Nasional*. Yogyakarta: UGM Press.
- [7] Dhakidae, Daniel (2001). "Memahami rasa kebangsaan dan menyimak bangsa sebagai komunitas-komunitas terbayang", Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- [8] Emerson, Donald K., ed. (2001). *Indonesia Beyond Soeharto: Negara, Ekonomi, Masyarakat, Transisi*. Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- [9] Fukuyama, Francis, (2001). *Kemenangan Kapitalisme Demokrasi Liberal*, Yogyakarta: Qalam.
- [10] Geertz, Clifford (1992). "Setelah Revolusi: Nasib Nasionalisme dalam Negara-negara Baru", dalam Clifford Geertz, *Politik Kebudayaan*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.
- [11] Huntington, Samuel (2000). *Benturan Antarperadaban dan Masa Depan Polotik Dunia*, Yogyakarta: Qalam.
- [12] Lan, Thung Ju. (2006). "Pelajaran sejarah di Indonesia: Anak yatim piatu yang beruntung", dalam A.B Lapien (ed.), "Sejarah dan dialog peradaban: persembahan 70 tahun prof. dr. taufik Abdullah", Jakarta – Indonesia: LIPI Press.
- [13] Lapien, A.B. ed. (2006). *Sejarah dan Dialog Peradaban: Persembahan 70 Tahun Prof. Dr. Taufik Abdullah*, Jakarta-Indonesia: LIPI Press.
- [14] Niels Mulder, (2000). *Individu, Masyarakat, dan Sejarah: Kajian Kritis Buku-buku Pelajaran Sekolah di Indonesia*, Yogyakarta: Kanisius.
- [15] Ricklefs, M.C. (2001). *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 12000 (Third Edition)*. Hampshire: Palgrave.
- [16] Simbolon, Parakritri T. (1995). *Menjadi Indonesia (Buku ke I): Akar-akar Kebangsaan Indonesia*. Jakarta: Kompas.
- [17] Smith, Anthony D. (2003). *Nasionalisme: Teori, Ideologi, Sejarah*. (Terjemahan dari *Nationalism: Teory, Ideology, History*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
- [18] Wineburg, Sam (2006). *Berpikir Historis: Memetakan Masa Depan, Mengajarkan Masa Lalu*, Jakarta: Yayasan obor Indonesia.
- [19] Zuhdi, Susanto. (2006). "Ke-Indonesiaan dalam perspektif Sejarah", dalam A.B. Lapien (ed.), *Sejarah dan Dialog Peradaban: Persembahan 70 Tahun Prof. Dr. Taufik Abdullah*, Jakarta-Indonesia: LIPI Perss.