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**COLONIAL REGULATION ON EDUCATION MANAGEMENT OF
CHRISTIANITY IN INDONESIA BEFORE ETHICAL POLICY PERIOD**

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ABSTRACT

The field of education in the colonial era is often studied in the context of the implementation of the Ethical Policy, one of which is based on the speech of Queen Wilhelmina in 1901 which emphasized that the Netherlands is a Christian country and is committed to helping the mission of that religion. This research attempts to answer the formulation of questions about political policies in Christian education management prior to the Ethical Politics period. The methodology used is a historical research type by going through literature searches, evaluating, verifying, and synthesizing evidence from the data collected. The results of this study indicate that education management policies have been pursued by the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) since the early 17th century, where due to the influence of religious wars, this trading partnership also tried to replace Portuguese domination and Catholicism in Indonesia. The form of education in that era was still simple to teach obedience and religious rituals in individual teaching without class levels. Apart from a shortage of experienced educators, Dutch language was less popular than Portuguese and Malay. After the company collapsed in 1799, the Dutch government was neutral towards religious affairs since 1808. This caused many "Zending" (Protestant Evangelism) bodies to spread religion as well as establish

a number of educational institutions as happened in Minahasa (since the 1830s) and in Batak lands (since the 1860s).

Keywords: Christian Education, Ethical Politics, Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC), Zending

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, although its territory is located far from the area where the religion originated. If it is considered as one of the uniqueness, then it does not stop there, because the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) is a sovereign political unit that upholds pluralism. Through a speech on June 1, 1945 which is known as the momentum for the birth of Pancasila, Ir. Sukarno stated:

“Not only the nation has God, but each Indonesian should have God. His own God. Christians worship God according to the guidance of Jesus, Islam according to the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W., Buddhists carry out their worship according to the books that are in them. But let us all be God. The state of Indonesia should be a country where everyone can worship their God in a free way. All people should be God culturally, that is, without 'religious-selfishness'. And the State of Indonesia should be a country with God” (Leaders of the People's Consultative Assembly and the Socialization Agency of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia for the 2014-2019, 2023 Period).

Even so, it is undeniable that the situation of inter-identity association among human beings is sometimes not always harmonious. Contemporary dynamics in the international sphere show frictions due to the actions of irresponsible individuals answer in the name of religion. James Appel, MD, an author who studies the relationship between Islam and Christianity, took the terminology "Banu Isaac" – for Christians – and "Banu Ismail" – for Muslims, lamenting the tensions that have arisen between the two parties, which are mainly caused by irresponsible terrorist attacks. Especially since September 11, 2001, it seemed as if peace and cooperation – between the Islamic and Christian worlds – had become impossible. We are not, Appel wrote, seeing suicide bombings, terrorism, security guards, burning of the Quran, attacks, raids, and hatred (Appel, 2012).

It needs to be understood, since the arrival of *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC) – sometimes referred to simply as 'company', the Dutch developed the Protestant Christian religion (Halkis, 2017). The significance of this study is that the condition of Christian education management is because the study of pre-Independence education was often emphasized during the Ethical Politics period. The era began when the Dutch intellectual, Van Deventer, criticized the colonial government's policies in his article entitled "Debt of Honor" in *De Gids* magazine in 1899. He emphasized that the profits obtained by exploiting the colony should be returned by the state treasury for the benefit of the colonists through the so-called "Trias Van Deventer": irrigation (irrigation), education (education), and immigration (movement for the equal distribution of the population). Responding to the writings and

criticism of Van Deventer's supporters, Queen Wilhelmina agreed with this idea in her 1901 speech:

“As a Christian state, the Netherlands is obliged in the Dutch East Indies islands to better regulate the legal status of the indigenous population, to provide assistance on a firm basis to the Christian mission, and to permeate the whole of government action with the awareness that the Netherlands has a moral obligation to fulfill it towards the inhabitants of the area. In this regard, the deteriorating well-being of the Javanese people requires special attention. We want to conduct research on the causes” (Nasution, 1994).

It is feared that there will be historical ignorance among the Indonesian public, who will even think that the beginning of the field of Christian education in Indonesia only began after the implementation of the Ethical Political policy above. In fact, historically, it is also known that various vocational schools have been established by Christian missions since at least 1881 in Minahasa, the Batak areas of Sumatra, besides the island of Java (Ricklefs, 2008). Although fundamentally, the basics of pioneering Christian education can be older than the efforts mentioned just now. However, this paper will emphasize more on the scope of the study before the application of Ethical Politics in the early 20th century. The formulation of the problem that will be answered in this study is, what is the political policy in the management of Christian education before the period of Ethical Politics?

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a type of historical research, so based on its usefulness, it is classified as basic research, not applied (Campus Life Normalization Project Team, 1979). The method used also considers the place where this research is carried out, so according to the place of implementation, this research is library research (Library Research) (Hasnun, 2009).

The purpose of historical research is to make a systematic and objective reconstruction of the past by means or steps, namely: collecting data, evaluating, verifying, and synthesizing evidence to establish facts and obtain strong conclusions (Suryabrata, 1983). The historical data sources used here are classified as secondary sources, or the result of the use of other sources, not directly as pure historical sources, but based on the review of the needs of investigation / research (Surakhmad, 1980).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The education pursued by the first Christians in the archipelago could not be separated from their trade efforts to this region. Even in the dynamics of their existence, trade efforts have been mixed with political interests and efforts to spread the religion they adhere. The beginning was the conquest of the capital of the Byzantine empire (Eastern Rome), Constantinople, by the Ottoman Empire in 1453, which made European nations compete to find the best route to India to get spices. Christian clerics, especially Catholics, also traveled to the Eastern countries along with European merchants and military admirals. One of them was Francis Xaverius, a member of the Jesuit Order (SJ), along with two of his Portuguese

colleagues, he was sent by the king of Portugal to Goa, India, in 1541. He then began to start his mission work by traveling through South India and Sri Lanka, until finally reaching Malacca in 1545. Then on January 1, 1546 he sailed to Ambon and succeeded in Christianizing the people there, and half a year later he sailed to Ternate (Wicaksono, 2011).

The Jesuits under Xavier were quite successful and became an important marker in the history of the development of Christianity in the archipelago, in addition to being the first evidence of the laying of the foundations of Christian education in this region. Xaverius views education as a powerful tool for the spread of religion. A "seminary" or educational institution for aspiring Roman Catholic priests was successfully opened in Ternate, then in Solor, as part of a higher religious education institution that could be reached in Goa (India), which was the center of Portuguese power in Asia at that time. Another influence is that Portuguese is almost as popular as Malay. The glory lasted at least until 1605 when Portuguese rule weakened due to wars with the kings of the archipelago and was finally eliminated by the Dutch (Nasution, 1994). The great legacy of Portuguese influence cannot be rivaled by the Dutch since the VOC in terms of language. The influence of the Portuguese language that enriches the number of Indonesian vocabulary is also not small, for example: Cannon, Sunday, Church, Butter, Miss, Sinyo, and many more. Including the art of keroncong music which was originally sung in Portuguese (Anshoriy CH, 2008).

Moving quickly to eliminate Catholic influence, in 1607 the first school in Ambon was established for indigenous children with the intention of introducing Protestant teachings, as embraced by the Dutch with the understanding of Calvinism. Then, in 1617 *Heeren Zeventien* or the highest body of the VOC with 17 members in the Netherlands ordered that the governor in Indonesia must spread Christianity. In Jakarta, a school was also opened for Dutch and Javanese children to be able to cadre competent workers for the VOC in 1630, which then in 1636 the number was 3 and in 1706 there were 34 teachers with 4873 students; This VOC school is intended for all children regardless of nationality. Accordingly, in 1632 the number of schools in Ambon increased to 16, and rose again to 33 in 1645 with 1300 students. Unfortunately, all of these developments declined in the 18th century. The educational regulations issued by the VOC in 1643 stated that the duties of teachers were: instilling fear of God, teaching the basics of Christianity, teaching children to pray, singing, going to church, obeying parents, rulers, and teachers (Nasution, 1994).

Discussion

As explained above, when the VOC tried to displace Portuguese domination in the Indies islands now known as Indonesia, their efforts were also realized through efforts to replace Catholic domination. It all started with a protest movement against the Roman Catholic church which was considered to be different from the ancient ecclesiastical teachings, so the purpose of the protest was to fix the church according to the original pattern. The motor of the protest or reform movement was started by Martin Luther (1483-1546) in Germany at the end of the 15th century. Not forgetting the spreaders of the movement who are known as reformers, namely Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) in Switzerland, and Johannes Calvin of France (1509-1564) who also made the city of Geneva, Switzerland, the center of his reform movement. The criticism of Luther and his friends was aimed at at least two things: rejecting the notion that it is as if man will be helped by the sacraments served by the Catholic Church, but rather because

of "grace" (*Sola Gratia*) and beliefs / faith (*Sola Fida*), and oppose that the Catholic Church and its traditions are the most correct in interpreting the Gospel/Bible, but the Gospel should be the absolute measure of the truth of faith, including in considering the truth of the Catholic Church's tradition is to pay attention to the Bible (*Sola Scriptura*) (De Jonge, 2017).

The socio-political impact of the church reform that later gave birth to Protestant Christianity was a religious conflict between Catholics in Germany and Protestants. A series of armed conflicts erupted involving political forces around Germany, beginning in 1618 until later known as the "Thirty Years' War" and ending in 1648. Destruction due to the feud is not trivial. The population of Germany has decreased by 30% in the central region. In the Brandenburg area, deaths account for half of the total population. Meanwhile, in some other areas, deaths reached 2/3 of the population. The number of German male population has decreased by 50%. Meanwhile, the conflict also has an impact on neighboring countries, such as the Czech Republic, which has reduced by one-third. The Swedish army was able to destroy 2000 forts, 18,000 villages, and 1500 cities or a third of all cities in Germany (Hakim, 2017).

The Netherlands, the country of origin of the VOC, was a Protestant bloc under Prince Maurits van Oranje. As a trading partner armed and mandated by the state, the company was also tasked with carrying out the mandate of the Calvinist Dutch Protestant Church and establishing its first branch in the 1620s, whose parent church and leadership were based in Batavia. The content of the mandate known as the "Confession of the Dutch Church of 1561" is perhaps the most important of which is "...*Bringing Down the Antichrist Kingdom...*", in which the Dutch and the VOC interpreted that the Roman Catholic Church was included in the "Kingdom of the Antichrist". According to Jan Sihar Aritonang, this is what caused after the VOC succeeded in entrenching its power, they led and often violently attacked Catholics who had succeeded in being evangelized (made Christians) by Catholic missions during the era of Portuguese influence. This happened in a number of regions such as Maluku, Minahasa, Sangir, Talaud, West Timor, and Batavia to embrace Protestant-Calvinist. Although the effort did not yield results in Flores, which was still held by the Portuguese; According to Aritonang, this feud had different levels and intensities and lasted until the early 1960s (Aritonang, 2007).

A number of records do record various events related to it. The clearest example is what happened in Maluku, where when the VOC arrived, all the Catholic work done by the Portuguese and Spanish, whether in the form of church buildings or their people – and their teachings, was destroyed (Riyanto CM., 2014). Not to mention that in 1580 the Netherlands decided to ban Catholicism in the country, which caused social destruction for its adherents. The war waged by the company was not only in the archipelago, they succeeded in defeating the Portuguese in various colonies such as Sri Lanka, Malabar, Coromandel (India), and Malacca (now Malaysia). Either the Portuguese or the Indian-Portuguese were taken as prisoners by the VOC to Batavia, then placed in Kampung Tugu which is still a bush. They are Catholics who are forced to convert to Protestantism, and are rewarded for their willingness to convert to religion with independence and are referred to as "Mardijker" (Liberated People) or *De Vrij Inlanders* (Shahab, 2002).

Even in the historical phase where the Portuguese had to lose their important colonial base in Asia, namely Malacca which they had conquered since 1511, the VOC carried out a systematic expulsion of 40 Catholic priests and 20,000 of its adherents, of which 3000 people and some priests chose to flee and move to Makassar in 1649 (Pramasto et al., 2022). Even so,

an irony and paradox is that the company from the "land of windmills" is not appropriate to be used as a representation of Christianity. The VOC is not a religious company, but a pragmatic company of traders who seek to make maximum profits in various ways (Riyanto CM., 2014), including by waging war and political intrigue. The company's hostility towards the Catholics continued even when they were in conflict and invaded Palembang in 1659, where not only the Kuto Gawang Palace was burned but also foreign settlements in the Kuto area, one of which was a Portuguese settlement (Pramasto et al., 2022). Therefore, the timeline of Christian education management before the era of Ethical Politics can be divided into two eras, namely the era of VOC influence and the beginning of the Dutch East Indies colonial period.

A. The VOC and Christian Education in the Colony until Its Collapse

The two religions mentioned above, Catholic and Protestant Christianity, both have an effort to spread their respective religions. It would be more appropriate to refer to both in general as "Christianity" or "Christianity". Most of the origins of the existence of churches and Christians in Indonesia are the result of the work of "Zending" by Protestants and "Mission" by Catholics. The Catholic Mission is directly under and regulated by the highest authority of the Roman Catholic Church in the Vatican, although there are a number of Orders in it, but it does not affect the form and structure of the church that has been successfully established by the "Missionaries", as the Missionaries are called. Zending itself is more complicated because its institutions were founded by members of various church denominations in large Protestant groups with different traditions, worship systems, and structures (Aritonang & Jonge, 2009).

To the naked eye, the role of the Protestant Christian Church, or known as the Dutch Reform Church, was so thick in the aspects of religion and education in Indonesia during the VOC period. One example is that in Batavia in the 17th century, the company once erected a building called '*Spinhuisor* "The House of Spinning" whose purpose is to "tame" wild women. Two schepenen or Spinhuis guards were placed to supervise the performance of the wild women in weaving cloth whose results could meet the needs of the residents of Batavia. Every Sunday a special service was held led by two guards so that the female prisoners could correct their evil nature and behavior so that they could return to the way of the Lord (Pramasto & Deriza, 2022). The classical education system at that time was not known, where teaching was more individual, namely students came one after another to the teacher's desk and received learning assistance, and there was no class promotion / unknown (Afifuddin & Sutikno, 2007).

Even so, there are still a number of other problems that are obstacles in the implementation of education by the company. First, teachers sent to the colony were simply tested in reading and writing and singing ecclesiastical songs, not on the basis of teaching experience. Second, less professional personnel become teachers, some of whom are former criminals, carpenters, soldiers, even former Catholic priests and former rabbis (religious people) of Jews. Third, the failure to introduce the Dutch language in education even though it has been regulated in the Education Regulation of 1643, ironically until the middle of the 18th century many church sermons were given in Malay and Portuguese, including reports that the two daughters of the governor of Ternate, Valckenier, did not understand a word of the Dutch Gospel; Moreover, in 1733 the Bible was translated into Malay. Although in 1780 the importance of the Dutch language was re-emphasized, the 1786 decree repealed the decree and placed the dominance of Malay and Portuguese languages: the Dutch language became as rare

as the "White Crow" in the colony. Fourth, the field of education declined along with the collapse of the VOC, one of the reports in the middle of the 18th century was known that Batavia with a population of 16,000 people only had 270 students, while Surabaya only had 24 people, the rest were spread throughout Java which totaled no more than 350 students (Nasution, 1994).

B. Management of Christian Education in the Early Colonial Period

The massive acts of corruption in the company have brought results in weakening the VOC. Initially, in 1795, the trade partnership was nationalized by the Dutch government and in 1799 it was dissolved altogether. This phase is considered the end of the first half of the history of the Protestant church in Indonesia. As a result of the ideals of the French Revolution, in 1808 the Netherlands declared freedom of religion and affirmed that the kingdom took a neutral stance on religion. There is no specific position for the Dutch Reformed Church (*Gereformeerd Kerk*) of the Calvinists, where in fact before that in Batavia at the end of the 18th century, there was a church for the Lutheran congregation in Batavia for German VOC officers (De Jonge, 1998). The relatively loose policy in the religious article by the Dutch kingdom also had an impact on religion and Catholics. Although it had been persecuted and fought everywhere by the VOC, in the end in 1853 the hierarchy of the Catholic church was re-established in the Netherlands (Seward & Lal, 2006). The dynamics that occur in the mother country certainly have an impact on the colony.

Given that the intervention of the royal government is decreasing, although it is not completely gone, various parties can take a role in the religious field, mainly to spread Christianity in the Dutch East Indies. Evangelism among the people of Minahasa was marked by the arrival of two evangelists on June 12, 1831, they were referred to by the locals as "Pandita". There are two Pandita messengers "*Nederlandsche Zendeling Genootschap (NZG)*"



Figure 1. Photo of Friederich Riedel Relief in the GMIM Riedel Tondano Church Hall **Source : Wikipedia**

Based in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The two people are from Germany, namely Johann Gotlieb Schwarz and Johann Friederich Riedel. In Germany, they live by the Lutheran tradition. But attracted to the "Pietism" school that emphasized spreading the message of salvation to those who did not yet believe in Christianity, they were moved to look for Zending institutions that could send them. Apparently, it is in NZG that they are willing to work even though the content is dominated by Calvinists (Pinontoan, 2019).

The two Zending figures had previously received guidance from Pastor Kam for a month in Ambon (Maluku). Riedel chose his place of duty and residence in Tondano, while Schwarz chose a place of service in Kakas and lived in Langowan. The results of this evangelistic effort can be seen in a span of about 21 years (1831-1852), namely when Zending established a formal educational institution in the form of a Teacher School (Kweekschool) by N. Graafland in Sonder. Due to the outbreak of malaria, this school was then moved to Tanawangko. In the new place, a learning process took place that lasted for 33 years. The purpose of this school is to educate prospective Zending teachers who can teach at Zending schools or serve the congregation as teachers. The educational curriculum consists of reading, arithmetic, singing, history, Bible, Malay language, earth science, natural science, plant science, animal science and handicrafts. In 1867, the "Gospel Helper" Course was also established in Tomohon to cadre evangelists. At the same time, the School of Auxiliary Education for the Evangelists (*Kweekschool voor Hulpzendingen*), it was recorded in 1871 that it had produced 10 graduates, but in 1879 this school was closed (Lapian et al., 2012).



Figure 2. Photograph of a Protestant church in Menado circa 1930
Tropenmuseum (KITLV) collection
Source : Wikipedia

In a slightly later period of time than in the Minahasa area (North Sulawesi), evangelism also occurred in the land of Batak, North Sumatra. A key figure in the effort was a man named Ludwig Ingwer Nommensen. As an adult, he applied to join Zending's Seminary's business *Rheinische Missions Gesellschaft* (RMG) based in Wupertal-Barmen, Germany. After that in 1861 he left for Sumatra by traveling for 142 days and arrived in Padang and worked in Dutch territory. He disapproved of his colleagues' strategy of complying with the government's ban on entering the interior. His determination was strong to broadcast Christianity not from the suburbs, but directly from the center of Tapanuli. With that intention in mind, at the beginning of 1864 he chose to move to Silindung. The first difficulty he experienced was when the indigenous people thought Nommensen was a Dutch spy who wanted to conquer the independence of the Batak nation (Den End, 2008).



Figure 3. Nommensen self-portrait

Source : Wikipedia

Arriving in Sibolga in 1862, Nommensen and his friends worked hard and tirelessly in explaining Christianity to the population. They do not hesitate to walk tens of kilometers through jungles, cross rivers, and visit remote villages. In addition to broadcasting religion and teaching about worship, the Zending member also provides lessons that teach reading, writing, arithmetic, health and general knowledge. They also gave instructions to the people about farming, including building health services such as hospitals in Balige and Tarutung and some in many areas of Tapanuli (Nurliana, 1980). Armed with a cultural approach, Nommensen is easily accepted by the Batak people. In a relatively short time they received the proclamation of the Gospel and embraced Christianity. An important work of Nommensen was the establishment of the school in 1864 in Huta Dame-Tarutung which was subsequently transferred to the Monarchy. Later it became the administrative center of the church which was then named Huria Kristen Batak Protestant / HKBP, a Protestant synod with the largest number of congregations in Southeast Asia today. Nommensen's role continued in evangelism to the Batak Toba people until the end of his life in Sigumpar in 1918 (Siboro & Manik, 2021).

In contrast to the two regions, the pattern of education management in colonial policies before Ethical Politics in the early 20th century was not very visible in Java as the center of government in the colonial country. So in this context, the policy aspect of education management before Ethical Politics is more appropriate to be reviewed from two regions that have been relatively successful in the process of spreading Christianity, namely North Sulawesi and North Sumatra. However, in the context of historical knowledge, this is so important, because it is not uncommon for religious differences to limit a person's ability to understand the relationship between identities in history. This can even be seen in the context of regional history between nations. Due to the difference in religious composition in the demographics arising from colonialism, Indonesia, which is the majority of Muslims do not quite understand that its neighboring country, the Philippines – predominantly converts to Catholicism – despite having a number of civilizational relationships. Tan Malaka, the Father of the Nation and a fighter for Indonesian independence, went so far as to refer to the Philippines as "Northern Indonesia" because of a number of similarities, namely similarities in linguistic aspects (Tagalog-Indonesia), similarities in the physical shape of the population, and historical relations that were possible due to the expansion of hegemony by the Majapahit Kingdom (Pramasto, 2019). Apart from religious differences, the differences of former colonizers in the two countries caused a "disconnection" in understanding the historical relationship, where

Indonesia was colonized by the Dutch while the Philippines was colonized by Spain, which made its people the majority of Catholics.

CLOSING

The policy in the management of Christian education in the colonial era cannot be separated from the role of the Dutch-based trade conglomerate, namely the VOC. The "Company" - another name for the VOC - through the spirit of religious reform in Europe which later gave birth to Protestant Christianity, also brought about the policy outlined by the Dutch government. The management of education in that era was very full of efforts to eliminate the dominance of evangelistic work by Catholics in a number of regions such as Maluku, Minahasa, Sangir, Talaud, West Timor, and Batavia. In addition to being known for its relatively prioritizing the conversion of Catholics to Protestants, the VOC, which is basically not a religious company, has tried to establish a simple educational curriculum such as cultivating the fear of God, teaching the basics of Christianity, teaching children to pray, singing, going to church, obeying parents, rulers, and teachers, but the education system is still individual and does not recognize class promotion for students.

Various problems experienced by the management of Christian education during the VOC include the lack of teachers who have teaching experience, but most of them come from diverse backgrounds and their inability to remove the dominance of Malay and Portuguese in the educational process. The good achievement in the management of Christian education before the period of ethical politics occurred when the Dutch government announced a neutral stance based on the 1808 rule, which allowed various parties to be involved in the field of Christian education. The impact in the colony, the Dutch East Indies, a number of Zending's efforts also gave birth to many Christian schools that not only teach the field of religion, but also exact sciences, humanities, and farming skills. An example is in Minahasa through the role of two evangelists, namely Johann Gotlieb Schwarz and Johann Friederich Riedel under NZG, and the most famous is in the land of Batak when L.I. Nommensen under RMG participated in building schools and health service centers for the community.

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