

## Exploration of Literary Narrative Through the Exile Experience of Mas Marco Kartodikromo

Dinda Nasya Atin, Tegar Catur Kurniawan, Yesi Kumalasari

Email: dindanasyaatin1@gmail.com

*Abstract:* This research explores literary narratives through Mas Marco Kartodikromo's experience of exile. By analyzing the literary works he produced during his exile, this research aims to understand how the experience of exile influenced the literary narratives produced by Mas Marco Kartodikromo. Through this approach, this research provides insight into the relationship between personal experiences and literary works.

*Keywords:* Literary Narrative, Exile Experience, Mas Marco Kartodikromo

### INTRODUCTION

Mas Marco Kartodikromo was one of the leftist organizers of the early 20th century who did not agree with the Dutch colonial government. Mas Marco thought that the colonial government had failed to improve the welfare of the people of the Indies, instead causing a lot of hardship and racial discrimination, minimizing the education of the natives, limiting employment opportunities, and so on.<sup>1</sup> This is what encouraged him to take a stand and be moved to fight back. Mas Marco's resistance was expressed in the form of narrative articles, literary works, and concrete actions in joining social movement organizations.

Ki Hajar Dewantara was active in education, namely establishing a school for students so that the native people of the Indies were intelligent. So, Mas Marco carried out social movements by building narratives aimed at educating native people to be aware of the conditions that occurred in the Indies, and teaching the ideas of social movements against Dutch colonialism. According to Davis (2002), narrative can give rise to an idea in the reader and that idea can be realized in social movement action. Davis also thinks that narrative has two main possibilities, namely encouraging someone to carry out a social movement and narrative can be a moral (insight) for the reader.

The narratives created by Mas Marco contributed many ideas to social and political change in the Indies. However, this change was not desired by the colonial government because the resulting narrative could threaten the legitimacy of colonialization in the Indies, so the government minimized the narratives with the weapons of *strafweetbooks* and exile (Sulton, 2021; Sulton: 2022). This effort is a form of destroying critical and radical narratives produced by social movement groups. In this position, both symbolic social movements and

---

crowd social movements can equally endanger the government. In fact, Mas Marco was exiled to Boven Digoel.

Mas Marco's exile cannot be separated from the text narratives he produced, both in the form of articles and literary works, such as the poem *Sair Rempah-Rempah* (1918), the novel *Student Hidjo* (1918), and the novel *Matahariah* (1919), the novel *Secret of the Terboeka Palace* (1921 ). These narratives were the accumulation of considerations by the colonial government, that Mas Marco was labeled as a dangerous person. In 1926, Mas Marco also involved himself with the PKI rebellion. Mas Marco ultimately took these two issues into consideration government to exile.

The PKI rebellion discourse initially began when the congress took place in Prambanan, December 25 1925. The rebellion plan was initiated by Mas Marco, Najooan, Budisutjitro, Sardjono, Abdulmuntalib, and others. A year later, at the end of 1926, a large-scale PKI rebellion erupted in the Dutch East Indies. This took place in various cities, Batavia, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Surakarta, Semarang, Kediri, Banten, Tangerang, and several other cities. The rebellion began on 12 November 1926. In Batavia the rebellion lasted from 12-14 November 1926. In the city of Bandung the rebellion lasted from 12-18 November 1926.

The rebellion in Surakarta and its surroundings took place on 17-23 November 1926. Mas Marco was one of those who led the Surakarta branch of the PKI rebellion. Before the rebellion occurred, on September 10 1926 the PKI had launched acts of violence, including the shooting of Mr. Andree Wilken (chairman of *landraad* ). This is an act of anarchy and the disappointment of the native people has reached its peak.

Hindley (1964: 72), a large-scale rebellion in the Dutch East Indies ended in December 1926. This rebellion was a bitter momentum, and was considered a failure because it was unable to expel the Dutch from the Indies. Based on the views of Tan Malaka (2000), an armed rebellion would actually be futile because the people of the Indies were not ready, those who carried out the rebellion were people who were frustrated with the movement. Despite that, Aliarcham realized that a rebellion that was defeated was still valid and true. We accept this defeat because the enemy is stronger. We accept this banishment as a risk of a losing struggle. None of us is at fault, because we are fighting against the invaders. The colonial government was at fault. We must fight it, also in this land of exile (Boven Digoel), and we must continue to maintain unity.

Based on the background above, this research aims to trace the life of Mas Marco Kartodikromo in exile in Boven Digoel. The failure of the 1926 rebellion was a deep sorrow for all radical movements in the Indies. At the beginning of 1927, people who were considered to be involved in the rebellion were listed by the intelligence service as being immediately sent into exile in Boven Digoel, including Mas Marco Kartodikromo.

## ARRIVAL OF MAS MARCO KARTODIKROMO

Bovel Digoel was a dumping ground *for internees* , namely people who were considered dangerous or actively involved in the communist movement. It is located at the end of the Digoel river, New Guinea, a Dutch colony. Before Boven Digoel was visited by political exiles from Indonesia, it was a wilderness with a river about 250 meters wide. The native people in Boven Digoel are called the *rich-kaya tribe, the people are completely naked, only wearing keluwak* coverings for men and *mendong* for women on their genitals. To survive, the rich tribes live by eating sago, hunting lions, elephants, rhinos, bulls, wild boars, snakes and rats.

Political prisoners were exiled to Boven Digoel in several stages, the first stage was carried out on 12 March 1927 and arrived in Boven Digoel on 3 May 1927. Sardjono, Soeprodjo (Bandung), Soekindar (Semarang), Moehammad Sanoesi, and others were among the the first batch was exiled to Boven Digoel. Then Sardjono was appointed village head as an exile by Captain Backing.

The first batch had a hard time starting life in Boven Digoel, that's why in May 1927, Sardjono and his friends founded a small *cooperatie* (cooperative) to provide food purchased from *the Gouvernementswinkelbedrijf* (government stall). The cooperative was founded to relieve fellow exiles. Apart from cooperatives, Sardjono and his friends also founded *Gemeenteraad* (city council). *Gemeenteraad* aims to establish harmony among exiles, Soeprodjo as *voorzitter* (chairman) and Soekindar as *secretary* (secretary).

The second departure was made in June 1927, and arrived in Bovel Digoel on June 21 1927. The number consisted of 64 suspects from Solo. However, this number does not include their wives and children who were taken into exile. On the way, they received a lot of unpleasant treatment from the military guarding them and when the ship stopped, they were all chained.

The third wave arrived in Boven Digoel in September 1927. There were 57 (not including children and wives) people who came from Surabaya, Banyumas and Ternate. Then the fourth wave came in October 1927, some of whom had previously been exiled for a long time in Timoer, Munting and Okaba, namely Natar Zainoeddin, Aliarcham, Datoek Batoeah, Marlan, Marjohan, Prawirodihardjo, Winanta and so on. Among them are also people from Java, including Prawirosardjono from Surabaya.

The next departure occurred in 1928. Based on *Pandji Poestaka's source* , 2 March 1928, that *the Besluit Goebnemenet* (government decision) on 25 February 1928, had exiled 28 communists to Digoel: 22 people came from Semarang, 1 person from Lampung, 1 person from Rembang, 1 person from Surabaya, 2 people from Padang. *Pandji Poestaka* edition of 6 November 1928, said that there were 7 communists who were sent to Boven Digoel on the ship Rumphius on 30 October 1928.

Furthermore, *Pelita Andalas*, 16 March 1929 explained that on the morning of 12 March 1929 as many as 22 communists were sent to Boven Digoel. As many as 20 of them came from West Sumatra. Until March 12 1929, the number of Sumatran people who had been exiled to Boven Digoel reached 1,140 people. In the same newspaper, January 8 1931, it was stated that there were still rebels who had only been sent to Boven Digoel until January 8 1931, namely 34 year old Mohammad Ali, a former leader and propagandist of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) from Betawi.

Mas Marco Kartodikromo was one of the second wave of exiles to Boven Digoel. Mas Marco Kartodikromo, was exiled to Boven Digoel because he was active in various movements in Java and carried out propaganda in several communist newspapers. When Marco arrived at Boven Digoel, 14 barracks had been prepared, each 30 meters long and 4 meters wide, with thatched roofs <sup>2</sup>and walls made of perlak. <sup>3</sup>During the boat trip, Mas Marco Kartodikromo's hands were still chained, even being transferred to a small canoe along the river in Digoel. After walking along the Digoel River for a long time, Marco began to see people crowding around waving their hands and wanting to pick up his family. However, Marco was not dropped off there, but somewhere far from them. Arriving at the dock, Marco walked along the distant plains until he arrived at a place, then was put in a small room for seven days and guarded by *Rust en Orde Bewaarder* (order and security guard).

---

<sup>2</sup>Information in *the Deli Pewarta* , 12 October 1931, explained that rumbia leaves were specifically imported from Ambon, but when the stock in Ambon ran out, the exiles were forced to look for reed leaves from the west bank of the Digoel River.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

After being confined for one week in a small room, the detainees were asked to leave and check themselves at the hospital to be examined by a doctor. Then he continued to *Hoofd van Plaatselijk Bestuur* (head of the local government) whose office was at Johan Soenarjo's house for an interview. The interview process is a complicated issue that can land someone in prison. People who have just arrived in Boven Digoel should at least understand information about things in exile. Information can be asked from journalists or anyone who is deemed to understand before departure. Because when interviewed they said they were not willing to work, the person concerned will serve and be sentenced to prison for two months.

Mas Marco Kartodikromo first came to Boven Digoel and lived in the village barracks D. The barracks also provided a small hospital. Each person gets a 2x2 meter residence for sleeping and 2x2 meters for a dining room, as well as household items. If the exile brings more than one child, they can get a 4x4 meter residence. As many people were exiled to Boven Digoel, the people who came were forced to give 4 children and wives a space of 2x2 meters.

Each person gets *onderstand* (allowance) f.15,-/month. This amount of allowance only lasted two months. Marco and his friends protested, meeting Wedono to convey the complaints and problems experienced by the exiled residents. Finally, Wedono granted Marco's request regarding *onderstand*, and determined that *onderstand* would be extended for the next six months. After this policy, each person received a ration (loan) from the government in the form of one mat, one blanket, one new axe, one blunt machete, one hoe with a handle, and one spade without a handle. These items are intended for people's activities while in exile. Meanwhile, every half month one person receives 9 kg of rice, rancid beef jerky, dried fish, palm sugar, salt, green beans and tea. If all equipment and food needs are calculated, the price is f. 6.30,-. Children under 16 years of age will be given half as much food as adults and children under 6 years of age will be given a quarter of the adult ration.

According to Bondan (2011: 44-45), the people living in Boven Digoel are known by two terms, namely the *naturalists* and the *werkwilligers*. Naturalists were people *who* did not want to work for the colonial government and only received rations of raw goods, such as 18 kg of rice, 2.2 kg of salted fish, 180 grams of tea, 600 grams of green beans, 480 grams of salt and 600 grams of brown sugar. <sup>4</sup>This requirement is for one month's allowance, if the goods are valued at around f.2.65,-. Meanwhile, the *werkwilligers* were people who wanted to

---

<sup>4</sup>*Oetosan Indonesia* newspaper, July 12 1935 entitled " *Conditions and Life in Digoel* ."

work for the colonial government with a salary of 40 cents/day from 08.00-12.00. People in this group had many opportunities to be returned to their homeland because they were seen as loyal and submissive to colonialism. For Mohamad Bondan (ex-Digoelis), a bachelor, the above ration is just rice which is enough for one month. You have to look for the shortcomings yourself, whether by raising small livestock, gardening or fishing in the Digoel river. For those who have a lot of energy, gardening regularly makes it possible to get a decent increase in life too.

Bondan's opinion above is based on the grouping carried out by government authorities to facilitate the distribution of benefits. However, according to Mas Marco Kartodikromo, the exiles in Boven Digoel were divided into three parts:

1. People who still have the ideals of communism and Indonesian independence;
2. People who are looking for money without sucking up to Bestuur. They can do trading business, or something similar;
3. People who became colonial sycophants, by becoming *politie*, employees, and so on.<sup>5</sup> Not a few exiles deliberately joined in, licked, begged for forgiveness, betrayed their friends, and obeyed all the rules given to the government in Boven Digoel. This was done because they believed they could be sent home from Digoel.

The groupings described by Mas Marco Kartodikromo are clearly based on a person's idealism and consistency between his former homeland and exile in Boven Digoel. Thus, the opinions of Bondan and Mas Marco both complement each other.

## **MAS MARCO KARTODIKROMO'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE ORGANIZATION**

The population of Boven Digoel continues to increase, causing *the Gemeenteraad* (city council) to take a decision at a meeting. The meeting specifically discussed the broader benefits of cooperatives and *gemeente* (municipalities or communities), as well as the capital budget for cooperatives borrowed by people who have quite a lot of money, namely Sardjono. In this regard, Sardjono was also appointed as *voorzitter* (chairman) as well as director of trade matters. Meanwhile, the election of the chairman of *Gemeenteraad* is based on the ballots of all participants present at the meeting. Mas Marco Kartodikromo got the

---

<sup>5</sup> *Deli Reporter*, 16 November 1931.

most votes, followed by Soekindar, finally the chairman of the meeting decided Marco to be chairman and Soekindar to be secretary.

After a month as chairman of *Gemeenteraad*, Mas Marco Kartodikromo decided to resign, so *Gemeenteraad* disbanded. Marco's resignation was triggered by the condition of the people in Boven Digoel whose level of harmony was starting to fade. In fact, to create harmony, Thomas Najooan (Manado) in July 1927 took the initiative to establish a *bibliotheek* (library) and hold *lezing-lezing* (lectures) with the hope that the mission and vision of fellow exiles could be harmonious and have the same ideas.

On November 1 1927, Captain Backing was replaced by Controleur Monsou and Wedono Sastranegara from Banten. In the same month, Wedana Sastranegara went around the villages recommending that village heads be formed in each village where the population was increasing. This is intended so that the government no longer takes part in taking care of the security of the population. The position of village head also helps the work of the Village Council.

Mas Marco Kartodikromo is very active in Village Council affairs, both during *vergadering* and work with village people (community service). Even when the council's *voorstel* (proposal) meeting was not approved by the residents, Mas Marco Kartodikromo appeared to chair a meeting regarding village security, as well as the formation of a new structure within the Village Council.

A new village assembly was formed, namely *the Comite van Actie* (action committee). This committee was initially established to respond to the Governor of Ambon's policy regarding allowances for exiles. This policy was not conveyed directly to the exiled residents, but through an extension of the Controleur on December 16 1927. *The Comite van Actie* was a collective organization of Boven Digoel residents for negotiations and firmly rejected the Ambon Governor's policy. Said Ali (*geïnterneerde* from Sumatra) as chairman, Soemantri (*geïnterneerde* from Semarang) as secretary, and Abdul Karim (*geïnterneerde* from Sumatra) as treasurer. Negotiations were carried out by *the Committee van Actie* to request that *the Volksraad* (People's Council) and *Tweede Kamer* (Lower House) request that *onderstand* (allowances) be covered.

The first time *the Comite van Actie* held a congress was on 24-27 January 1928. The agenda discussed was the formation of a union of all *kawedanan* (*onderafdeeling*) in Boven

Digoel or better known as *Centrale Raad Digoel* (Digoel Central Council). During the congress, participants elected 21 main members (management), and Mas Marco Kartodikromo was one of the members elected by getting 305 ballots, while Aliarcham had the most votes, namely 515 ballots.

The Congress *Committee van Actie* 24-27 January 1928, established several principle programs, including:

1. Revolutionary spirit and democratic spirit;
2. Demand democratic political regulations and oppose imperialist government policies;
3. Economic prosperity for exiled people and anti-capitalism;
4. Democratic socialism in economic terms *verdeeling van arbeid* is based on the socio-economic contract of the entire exiled population of Boven Digoel;
5. Prevent political or economic dangers that threaten the democracy of the exiled population in Boven Digoel, while upholding democratic independence and socialism;
6. Prevent capitalism and dissolve the priyayi class or working class.

In February 1928, Aliarcham (village D) as chairman of the *Committee van Actie* was accused of sexually assaulting Noerhati, Hermawan's wife. So the chairman of the village assembly met to hold a trial between both parties on February 16 1928. In the trial, Mas Marco Kartodikromo, Winanta, Koesno Goenoko, Najoan, Soenarjo, were the *leaders* (members) of the trial. Mas Marco Kartodikromo asked Aliarcham many questions and defenses, according to him Noerhati's accusations were not true.

At the conference, Aliarcham did not answer and objected to Noerhati's accusations, but Aliarcham only said: "Now spies, liars, termites prefer to shelter under the three colors (red, white and blue) than under the flag of the hammer, or a flag with a picture of a bull's head. If they don't protect themselves under the tricolor flag (the Dutch flag), they are worried about torture, at least getting a beating like Moeh. Sanoesi.

Mas Marco Kartodikromo and Sardjono as members of the trial, responded to Aliarcham's statement as something that really happened. The exiles in Boven Digoel began to have divisions between people who were pro-government, such as becoming spies or actively involved in government activities. This was done so that they could quickly be



returned to their place of origin. People who used to shout criticism of the government, are now traitors to their friends in exile.

The government deliberately created village heads with a salary of f.30/month as government employees in Boven Digoel to control security, so that people don't gather to discuss politics and government regulations. The village heads and colonial spies also propagandized so that people would become coolies in the barracks, work for the government's needs, and throw away the ideas of communism. These people include Prapto (Semarang), former Sarekat Rakyat Salatiga, Soekandoro (Semarang), Dasoeki (Solo), Daroedjiman (Rembang), Soegeng (Surabaya), Kariaatmaja (Bandung), Moch. Sanoesi, Gondhojoewono (Betawi), Mardjohan (Semarang), Koesno (Semarang), Hermawan, Soedibio, Ngadiran (Kediri), and so on. They also often spread propaganda, that Indonesia will not be able to become independent, it is better to submit to *the Bestuur* (leader, government) so that they are immediately returned to their place of origin and ask forgiveness from the GG (*gouverneur general*).

On December 22 1928, a *vergadering* took place in village A led by Gondhojoewono as village head of village A. The meeting was attended by 50 people, also present were Controleur Monsou and Assistant Controleur. <sup>6</sup>During the meeting, Mas Marco Kartodikromo talked a lot about *onderstand* (allowances) which he planned to revoke, as well as censorship of letters that Mas Marco Kartodikromo had sent to Java to his family and to Ir. Sukarno. Marco questioned these two things and criticized Controleur Monsou and the audience who came. Instead of a solution that Controleur Monsou answered, Marco instead received insults and anger from Controleur. Marco was considered seditious, and was called Controleur Monsou as an insolent person. At that time, Mas Marco Kartodikromo left *the vergadering* (*walkout*), followed by Kadarisman who agreed with Marco.

## THE DIFFERENCE OF THE EXILES IN BOVEN DIGOEL

The government deliberately created a political strategy of pitting the residents of the Boven Digoel camp against each other, for the reasons: (a) trying to destroy the mentality of struggle so that the spirit of independence would weaken further; (b) create hostility between friends who in their home area used to be ideological friends; (c) stressing out the residents of

---

<sup>6</sup> *Deli Reporter*, November 13, 1931.

Boven Digoel because of the chaos occurring in their environment. According to Mas Marco Kartodikromo's confession, among the people who were exiled to Boven Digoel there were those who were spies for the government to create trouble for people with *communist beliefs*. The commotion was then broadcast in several newspapers.<sup>7</sup> The government deliberately released news about the chaos in Boven Digoel so that readers of the Dutch East Indies would understand that they (the movement) could not set an example, could not organize their organization, had no resistance power, and showed the weakness of groups of people who did not obey their wishes. government. Matanasi (2013: 4) is of the view that the camp residents certainly did not see that in Boven Digoel being divided and putting each other down, some even currying favor with the colonial government, was a moral corruption of the freedom fighters.

According to Mas Marco, and his friends who still maintain their idealism, many people in Boven Digoel who were defenders of the people in their home area, claimed to be proletarians, understood that capital government was evil, but when these people arrived in exile in Boven Digoel they changed their direction to become sycophants of what they previously criticized. There are many reasons why they become government spies, traitors, or sycophants.<sup>8</sup> Moeh. Sanoesi initially campaigned not to work on kintal and build a house for himself, but eventually he turned pro with the colonial government. This condition became one of the causes of chaos among friends fighting for independence.

In playing politics with the exiles in Boven Digoel, at the end of 1928 Bestuur, Tuan Onderdeming, and Controleur often held crowds or musical entertainment events, night markets, and *jaarmarkt*. The aims of holding the crowd include:

1. Exiled residents who don't have money, but want to join the crowd, are forced to sign *the contract* again with Mr. Onderdeming, so that they don't have to go to the trouble of looking for *contract workers* again;
2. So that exiles want to earn money from programs provided by the government;
3. So that the ideas of independence and communism can disappear from their dreams.

While occupying Tanah Merah, people from groups such as Mas Marco Kartodikromo, Najohan, Aliarcham, Sardjono, Dachlan, Boedisoejtiro, Winanta, Idris, and Soenario remained very tough in fighting the Dutch colonial government. Finally, in 1928,

---

<sup>7</sup> *Deli Reporter*, October 10, 1931.

<sup>8</sup> *Pewarta Delhi*, 31 October

they were exiled to the Gunung Arang camp, a swamp not far from Tanah Merah. In the Gunung Arang camp, Marco and his friends remained consistent with their idealism, even when colonial officials arrived, Marco and his friends did not hesitate to welcome the arrival of the officials on the river bank by nakedly observing the officials who were about to lean over. dock.

It doesn't just stop there, the captain who leads the Gunung Arang camp often gets spit fire from Marco's group, namely Thomas Naj Joan. Once the Governor of Maluku visited the Gunung Arang camp to inspect the camp that had just been built for hardened people like Thomas Naj Joan, Marco, and friends. The arrival of the Governor of Maluku did not go unnoticed by the camp residents. The harsh attitude of the prisoners made the Dutch government even more angry and afraid. Finally, not long after, the government created a new camp, namely the Tanah Tinggi camp, which was located about 40 km from the Tanah Merah camp. This camp was established to move Marco and his friends, including a group of dissidents in the Tanah Merah camp who did not want to cooperate with the government. According to Mohamad Bondan's testimony (2011: 46), Tanah Tinggi is a more remote location than Tanah Merah. Those who were exiled there were considered radicals against the colonial government. At first Tanah Tinggi was inhabited by more than 100 exiles but then it gradually decreased until it dropped to just a dozen people.

However, Mas Marco Kartodikromo's harshness is considered normative, which is different from Thomas Naj Joan's character. When Naj Joan tried to escape with Idris and his friends, they encountered a government ship, and were finally taken back to Digoel with their hands and feet chained. Arriving in Boven Digoel, Naj Joan, Idris, his friends were questioned by *Hoofd van Plaatselijk Bestuur* (head of the local government). When Naj Joan was asked: "Will Sir run away again?" Naj Joan answered, "Indeed, if necessary.

In this case, Mas Marco Kartodikromo's normative attitude is different from Naj Joan. Mas Marco Kartodikromo's idealism is to keep working just enough to make a living while in Boven Digoel, living his life according to his personal wishes, and not easily insulting people he hates. Marco also took the time to write about events in Boven Digoel, especially people who were considered traitors to the Indonesian nation, as in the quote:

Actually, this matter could be good material for composing a romance. But even though this is not the place for that, let us tell you about the problem at some length.

The quote above shows that Mas Marco had a brilliant idea about the events in Boven Digoel, but because conditions made it impossible to write a novel, he was only able to write a few articles, some of which were published in *Pewartar Deli*. The impossibility of Mas Marco's reason for not writing this novel is due to the unfavorable conditions in Boven Digoel. While in Java they used to be a friend of a movement that was intensely anti-colonial, in Boven Digoel had a big chance of becoming an opponent. Mas Marco's alternative is to choose the form of an article to convey the event, possibly a short article, one sitting could be an event that freely brings out various character roles, and emphasizes the building of reality in a complete event. Meanwhile, novels are still tied to the intertwining of cause and effect of an event whose fictional level is needed as a means of supporting the events, such as in the novels *Student Hidjo*, *Matahariah*, and *Mata Gelap*.

### **THE RETURN OF THE BOVEN DIGOEL PRISONERS**

Based on the Governor General's decision no. 23 dated January 5 1932, determined the names of prisoners exiled in Boven Digoel to be returned to their areas of origin. Their return to their original areas was the first wave. Their status continues to be monitored by government security forces. In addition, they must enter into a contractual agreement with the government not to repeat or be involved with the movement.<sup>9</sup> People who can be sent back to their areas of origin are special people. They usually become traitors to their friends, traitors to their homeland, become spies for the rulers of Boven Digoel, and work well according to the authorities' procedures.

The return of the prisoners did not mean that the colonial government continued to reduce new residents in Boven Digoel. The government continued to aggressively arrest dangerous people in the Indies, for example Hatta and Sjahrir. The two of them were sent to Boven Digoel exile on the morning of January 29 1935 aboard a ship from the Koninklijk Pakketvaart Maatschappij company (Dutch merchant shipping company). In one group of ships there were several people who had been involved in political movements, namely Mohamad Bondan, Si San (a Medan Chinese from the Red Wave, China); from Bandung

---

<sup>9</sup> *Soeara Oemoem*, 12 January

there were Maskun with his wife's children, Burhanuddin, Suka Sumitro, and Murwoto with his wife (Bodan, 2011: 32-34).

During the trip to Boven Digoel, Bung Hatta, Sjahrir and their friends first boarded the large Melchior Treib ship, then stopped in Makasar and were put in prison in this city for 3 days. After that, they were taken to the port on the Van der Weyck ship (a third of the size of the Melchior Treib ship), along Southeast Sulawesi, and stopped in Kendari in the middle of the night, just to pick up postal goods, then headed to Banda Naira and finally stopped in Ambon. The journey from Ambon to the mouth of the Boven Digoel River took two days, aboard the white ship Albatros (government ship) which was a third smaller than Van der Weyck's ship. The next day he arrived at the Boven Digoel (Tanah Merah) camp on February 22 1935.

The government in Boven Digoel often makes regulations to destroy the mentality of exiles. One of those who can be sent back to their place of origin must have a good report card. This report card is made by the government with a certain assessment as to whether the people still hold a permanent opinion or not (Bodan, 2011: 53). The government can assess an exile based on data submitted by his own friends who have become traitors. Even if one person has good behavior and submits to the Boven Digoel government, if there is a personal problem with a government spy, then the person concerned will be reported badly.

While some of the Boven Digoel exiles were breathing parole, Mas Marco Kartodikromo was chronically ill due to suffering from tuberculosis and coughing up blood for almost a year. He is physically very thin, every day he only spends time lying in the bedroom. The government does not want to provide special treatment, this is a result of its actions which are considered consistent with resistance and anti-government. So, on March 19 1932, Mas Marco Kartodikromo died in Tanah Tinggi.

Eleven years after Mas Marco Kartodikromo died, the Boven Digoel exile was completely closed. The exiled population remained only 600 people. This closure occurred as a result of the Asia Pacific War that hit the Indies. Boven Digoel became one of the targets for bombing by the Japanese army. Exactly every morning at nine o'clock, the plane is always over Boven Digoel, sometimes when a ship is seen leaning in the harbor, the bombs are dropped from the plane. As a result, exile residents feel afraid. Not a few exiles ran into the forest before nine o'clock to escape the bombs from the Japanese army. According to Mohamad Bondan (2011: 54-55), in 1943 the ruler of Boven Digoel transported exiles every

5 pm using a motorboat with a capacity of 40 people. Travel along the Digoel river, following the current south towards Omba which can take up to two hours. To wait for the queue of ships, residents who previously came from Tanah Tinggi were detained in Tanah Merah.

The transportation takes about two weeks. After the motorboat arrived in Omba, the following afternoon the people were transported using a Catalina plane (seaplane) to be flown to Horn Island, north of the Cape York peninsula, Queensland, Australia. This flight took place from 29 May to 10 June 1943. However, in carrying out the evacuation, the people who previously occupied Tanah Tinggi were separated from the Tanah Merah people. Those people from the Highlands had to take a ship to Australia, and when they arrived at their destination they were put in prison.

## **CONCLUSION**

The events of radicalization in the Dutch East Indies at the beginning of the 20th century received many perspectives from several groups. Harry J. Benda (1960) and Takashi Shiraisi (1990) for example, radicalization in the Indies occurred due to rising prices of basic necessities, worsening conditions for farmers, capitalism, and hopes for improvements in living standards. In fact, John Ingleson (1986) drew a conclusion that the rebellion in Java was caused by poverty. In fact, if we investigate further, the factors above are the smallest part of society that is inspired to carry out rebellion. Based on the thoughts of Mas Marco and the social movement organizations that accompanied him, the rebellion in the Indies was caused by two factors, namely government policies that did not side with the people and the maintenance of colonial elitist culture.

The two factors above are one of the reasons Mas Marco and the organizers are demanding justice. In the writings that Mas Marco has produced, the colonial government is considered to have always failed to provide a balance of rights for indigenous people. The struggle for rights will be achieved if society is aware of the political situation surrounding it. Therefore, Mas Marco creates narrative texts that are not far from the context of events around the reader. This strategy is deliberately used to strengthen readers' social capital, which in time can foster an empathetic attitude to take part in the resistance movement.

Mas Marco's idealism continued to be strong until he was in exile. Various social, psychological and physical pressures did not make him relax. He even had time to involve

various social organizations in Boven Digoel to influence the exiles so that they remained consistent in their stance on upholding the land of the Indies (Indonesia) so that it would quickly become independent. As a result of the unfavorable situation, people who were considered radical were then moved to a fairly quiet area, namely Tanah Merah, including Mas Marco. While in Tanah Merah, Mas Marco still did not want to compromise and worked with the colonial authorities, until finally Mas Marco was exiled again to a very quiet place, namely Tanah Tinggi. Here Mas Marco suffered from tuberculosis and coughed up blood for almost a year, finally dying on March 19 1932.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Benda, Harry J. and Ruth T. McVey. 1960. *The Communist Uprisings of 1926-1927 in Indonesia* . New York: Cornell University Press.
- Bondan, Muhammad. 2011. *Memoirs of an Ex-Digulis, The Totality of a Struggle* . Jakarta: Kompas.
- Davis, Joseph. E. 2002. *Narrative and Social Movement: The Power of Stories* . In the book *Stories of Change: Narrative and Social Movements* . New York: State University of New York Press.
- Hindley, Donald. 1964. *The Communist Party of Indonesia 1951-1963* . Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ingleson, John. 1986. *In Search of Justice: Workers and Unionism in Colonial Java 1908-1926* . Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Kartodikromo, Mas Marco. 1914. *Dark Eyes* . Bandung: Drunkkerij Insulinde.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1918. *Spice Poetry* . Semarang: Drunk NV Sinar Djawa.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1919. *Student Hidjo* . Semarang: Drunkkerij Masman & Stroink.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2008. *Matahariah* , in *the Complete Works of Mas Marco Kartodikromo* editor Agung Dwi Hartanto. Central Jakarta: I:BOEKOE.
- Malaka, Tan. 2000. *Mass Action* . Jakarta: Bamboo Community.
- Methanation, Petrik. 2013. *Thomas Najooan The Runaway King in Exile* . Bandung: Ultimus.
- Shiraishi, Takashi. 1990. *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java 1912-1926*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Sulton, Agus. 2021. *Indonesian Wild Literature: Political Strategies of Social Movements in Indonesia* . *Journal of Indonesian Literature*, 10 (2): 85-92.
- Sulton, Agus. (2021). *Mas Marco Kartodikromo's Identity Convergence: The Process of Framing Literary Narratives in Social Movements* . *CODE: Journal of Language*, 10(3): 1-20.
- Sulton, Agus. 2022. *Media of Literary Works and Symbolic Social Movements of Mas Marco Kartodikromo* . *PHILOSOPHICA Journal of Language, Literature and Culture*, 5 (1): 37-45.
- Sulton, Agus. 2022. *Literary Narratives, Women's Images, and the Pre-Independence Feminist Movement* . *Sasando: Journal of Indonesian Language, Literature and Teaching*, 5 (1): 1-12.
- PKI History Institute Team. 1964. *Aliarcham: A Little About His History and Struggle* . Jakarta: Academic Social Sciences.