

Nasionalisme Melayu C. 1919-1941: Suatu Tatapan Semula

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Sejak Perang Dunia Kedua, 'nasionalisme Melayu' telah diberi perhatian oleh beberapa orang sarjana. Kajian yang paling terkenal ialah *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (1967) oleh W.R. Roff. Buku ini baru dicetak kembali (1994) tanpa sebarang pindaan. Di seberang laut, memang tulisan ini yang paling terkenal. Para sarjana Asia sendiri berasa lebih yakin terhadap tulisan orang Barat.

Setakat ini terdapat seolah-olah suatu konsensus bahawa nasionalisme Melayu bermula pada tahun 1906, iaitu dengan lahirnya *Al-Imam*, suara kaum muda yang banyak memberi perhatian kepada masalah kepincangan masyarakat Melayu. Kaum muda bukan hanya mengkritik pihak kolonial tetapi juga pemimpin masyarakat Melayu kerana kedua-duanya kurang mengambil berat tentang kemunduran masyarakat Melayu.

Menurut Raden Soenarno (tafsirannya masih dianggap berwibawa di peringkat sekolah)² perkembangan nasionalisme Melayu boleh dibahagikan kepada tiga tahap: (1) agama 1906-1925; (2) sosio-ekonomi 1926-1936; dan (3) politik 1937-1941. Raden Soenarno menggunakan *Al-Imam*, Kesatuan Melayu Singapura (1926) dan Kesatuan Melayu Muda (1937-ini satu kesilapan, yang tepat ialah 1938) sebagai garis pemisahan bagi setiap tahap.

W.R. Roff, pada dasarnya tidak mencabar tafsiran Raden Soenarno. Tetapi dia dapat membincangkan subjek ini dengan lebih mendalam walaupun peristiwa-peristiwa yang dibincangkan tidak jauh berbeza dengan apa yang telah diutamakan oleh Raden Soenarno. Raden Soenarno dan Roff tidak cuba memberi takrif tentang konsep 'nasionalisme Melayu'. Ini disebabkan tugasnya amat berat. 'Nasionalisme' merupakan suatu fenomena yang mulai mula-mula muncul di Barat. Ia merupakan perasaan serta sikap yang wujud setelah tertubuhnya 'nation' (negara - hanya baru-baru ini istilah ini digunakan secara konsisten dengan erti 'nation').

Oleh sebab itu amat sukarlah untuk orang Barat memahami apakah maksudnya 'nasionalisme Melayu', di manakah 'nation' Melayu? Percubaan oleh setengah pihak untuk menubuhkan 'Melayu Raya' tidak berhasil. Namun demikian 'nasionalisme Melayu' mungkin tidak dapat dilihat dari sudut itu, sebagai percubaan untuk menubuhkan sebuah 'nation' Melayu: Melayu Raya.

Tetapi tidak boleh dikatakan sebilangan besar orang Melayu memberi sokongan kepada perjuangan itu. Memang ramai orang Melayu mahu mengekalkan kerajaan-kerajaan (sembilan kesemuanya) yang telahpun wujud sejak tahun 1885.

Bagaimana tentang konsep 'bangsa Melayu' yang boleh dikatakan telahpun wujud tidak lewat daripada masa Kerajaan Melaka Tua? Hanya istilah 'bangsa', kalau dianalisis mengikut fahaman zaman sekarang, menimbulkan banyak masalah. 'Bangsa' pernah digunakan dengan makna 'nation' (Bangsa-bangsa bersatu); ia juga sekurang-kurangnya pada satu ketika dahulu, membawa erti 'ras'. Tetapi 'ras' sendiri sukar ditakrifkan; justeru itu saintis sosial lebih suka menggunakan istilah 'golongan etnik'. 'Kaum' juga suatu istilah yang popular - digunakan sebagai istilah untuk 'community'.

Mungkin kita tidak sepatutnya banyak membuang masa cuba menakrifkan suatu konsep yang memang tidak dapat ditakrifkan dengan sempurna. Ini suatu penyakit yang timbul kerana sains sosial cuba meniru sains fizikal. Maka inilah kecenderungan zaman sekarang, tingkahlaku, tindakan, pemikiran dan perasaan manusia cuba dikuantifikasikan dan dianalisis secara klinikal. Tetapi fenomena-fenomena ini memang bukan benda yang boleh dimasukkan di dalam *test tube* untuk diteliti dan dikaji.

Itu bukan bererti kita tidak perlu memberi penjelasan tentang satu-satunya fenomena itu. Kita sepatutnya berpuashati kalau terdapat penjelasan yang merupakan suatu percubaan untuk mendeskripsikan fenomena-fenomena tersebut. 'Nasionalisme' adalah di antaranya.

Banyak juga bergantung kepada sumber yang kita gunakan dalam kajian sejarah. Roff, misalnya, banyak menggunakan akhbar-akhbar Melayu tetapi tafsirannya bukan berasaskan akhbar Melayu sematamata. Sebagaimana telah disebutkan, dia telah memilih peristiwa-peristiwa tertentu untuk membolehkan dia membuat tafsiran: misalnya, penubuhan Maktab Melayu Kuala Kangsar, penetapan perkhidmatan awam (terutamanya *Malay Administrative Service*), Maktab Perguruan Sultan Idris, penubuhan kesatuan dan persatuan Melayu dan sebagainya.

Setakat ini, mereka yang telah menulis tentang 'nasionalisme Melayu' tidak banyak membaca akhbar Inggeris. Mereka melupakan

bahawa orang Melayu bukan hanya menulis dalam akhbar Melayu bahkan dalam akhbar Inggeris juga. Akhbar Inggeris keseluruhannya (misalnya, *The Penang Gazette*, *The Straits Echo*, *The Times of Malaya*, *The Malay Mail*, *The Singapore Free Press*, *The Straits Times*, dan *The Malay Tribune*) tidak mengabaikan masyarakat Melayu.

Masalah sosio ekonomi orang Melayu sudah mulai dibincangkan dalam akhbar Inggeris sejak lewat abad ke 19 lagi. *The Straits Times* (4 Ogos 1896), misalnya memetik laporan W.W. Skeat, D.O. Kuala Langat, tentang keengganan orang Melayu menghantar anak mereka ke sekolah. Kata Skeat:

[they] are not convinced that it is to the advantage of their boys that these should be educated. They aptly complain that to be able to read and write does not enable their boys the better to cut attaps, or clear jungle, or work fishing stakes. On the contrary, the boys, when they leave school, are flung on their parents' hands, without that knowledge of woodcraft that would enable them to get a living; while the mere knowledge of the three R's is of doubtful use to them in gaining that living.

Skeat berpendapat mungkin sikap orang Melayu tidak salah kerana 'The modern idea is to educate a man in book learning' pada hal yang lebih penting ialah 'to teach him to earn a living'. Ternyata pendidikan vokasional sudah diperakukan di negara ini sebelum abad ke 20.

Beberapa tahun kemudian *The Malay Mail* (8 Mac 1901), pula menyoal: 'Have we [pihak British] as a nation acted honestly and fairly by the Malays of the Federated Malay States?' Kata lagi Lidah Pengarangnya:

We have opened up the country for them and thousands upon thousands of aliens have come in under our protection and made money here. We have secured to the riats [rakyat] a safety of life and property they did not possess in the old days under the Malay nobility. We have provided them with elementary schools, hospitals, post offices, and such like civilizing institutions. All this has been done by British officials, who, with the assistance of a small army of alien subordinates, have governed the country, in place of the Sultans and their great Chiefs, who used to govern it.

Tetapi, menurut akhbar itu, yang banyak mendapat faedah ialah pihak British dan orang Cina.

Akhbar *Evening Standard* (London), juga bimbang tentang masa depan orang Melayu. Pendapatnya telah dipetik oleh *The Malay Mail* (22 Disember 1903):

Sir Frank Swettenham has, in books of singular charm, declared his warm liking for the people he governs. But the Malay nationality is doomed. It has played a very important part in the world, conquering vast expanses in the Eastern realm, and spreading its influence from Madagascar on one side to the South Sea on the other. But under modern conditions it cannot even life, apparently.

The ugly, pushing Chinaman, like a spider, is devouring these butterflies. Everywhere the process goes on, more and more rapidly. It is safe to predict that in fifty years a Malay will be something of a curiosity in the region of the Straits.

Pendapat yang hampir sama disuarakan oleh Arnold Toynbee lebih kurang 30 tahun kemudian.

Itulah persepsi umum, kebimbangan yang sama terdapat dalam Al-Imam dan penerbitan-penerbitan Kaum Muda dari 1096 hingga lebih kurang masa menjelang Perang Dunia Pertama. Setakat yang dapat dipastikan, orang Melayu mula menulis kepada akhbar Inggeris, terutamanya *The Malay Tribune* (diasaskan di Singapura dengan modal Cina), mengenai masalah sosio-ekonomi mereka selepas Perang Dunia Pertama.

Dalam sepucuk surat yang tersiar dalam *The Malaya Tribune* (30 Oktober 1919), 'Young Malays' mengatakan bahawa 'much correspondence has appeared in several papers calling up the attention of the Malay nation [bangsa Melayu] - almost every issue of the Malay papers in Singapore contains the subjects of the same aim', iaitu 'a nation can only have a firm footing when there is unity, and that unity can only be had when there is education'.

Menurut surat itu masyarakat Melayu waktu itu lemah, disebabkan wujudnya tiga kelas:

- i. Uneducated Malays living in Kampongs
- ii. Malays of education either in Malay or English who know and see the fall of their nation, but they are unable to render any assistance except by crying out and weeping for help in the corners of newspapers.

iii. The Rajas and Datas (chiefs) who although of high standing, with the power in their possession, perhaps have no feeling for the fall of their nation and are satisfied with leaving the welfare of their nation to the mercy of others.

'Will it not be nice thing', 'Young Malays' bertanya, 'if all the Rajas and Datas speak out in the Councils asking for assistance with which to send out sons of the soil for education, at Government expense, to foreign countries: England, America, etc.?' Dan, menurut mereka, 'The education we want is of course not the education such as we have out here, which is only good for copying clerks. What we want is education of a high standard in Medicine, Electricity, Engineering, Science, Law, etc.'

Sepucuk surat lagi yang memberi suatu perspektif yang jelas tentang adanya kesedaran dan semangat baru di kalangan generasi Melayu muda disiarkan dalam akhbar yang sama pada 4 November 1919. Kata penulisnya, 'Muslim Muda'.

The destiny and future of the Malay people is all clouded not shrouded in doubt, mystery and uncertainty. No political prophet so far has attempted to prophesy the ultimate fate a race which seems to have lost, temporarily, the consciousness of its national existence, and its national duties and responsibilities. A few of the recent contributions in the correspondence columns of the local Malay and English newspaper, by patriotic young Malays, unmistakably show the sign of a new awakening and a new spirit in Young Malaya which has resolutely determined to courageously carry on patriotic propaganda of educating its young persons and daughters of the soil, and of uplifting them to a better, higher and freer plane of progress and national evolution and existence.

Penulis ini juga menitikberatkan peri penting mustahaknya pendidikan. Katanya lagi:

If my Malay fellow countrymen do not like to be left behind the other communities in their own country, and if they have determined not to allow themselves to be absorbed by stronger and more progressive and advanced nations of this place, they should resolutely do what they possibly can to give their children, who alone will be responsible for the future safety of their community and progress of their country, the kind of practical education and training which will help and prepare them to live the life of useful citizens in their country, and be a helpful force to Humanity.

Selain daripada tekanan yang jelas diberikan kepada pendidikan, perhatikan juga penggunaan istilah 'national' dalam surat itu. Tidaklah keterlaluan jika sekiranya ini ditafsirkan sebagai bukti bahawa penulis-penulis surat itu memperlihatkan perasaan 'nationalist' dalam pengertian yang tertentu, iaitu dalam keperihalan masyarakat atau bangsa Melayu - dalam fahaman orang Melayu waktu itu 'bangsa' adalah 'nation' sama ada orang Barat bersetuju dengan fahaman itu atau tidak.

Akhbar *The Malay Tribune* dalam Lidah Pengarangnya (6 November 1919), mengesahkan bahawa,

There have been several letters of late from the younger generation of Malays which show that there is a feeling of disappointment that the Malays have not done better all these years, and a desire to encourage a new spirit, one which will tend to uplift the race and make it take its place side by side with the other races who are progressing in the Malayan Peninsula

Surat-surat yang awal ini seterusnya mendapat sambutan daripada pembaca-pembaca lain yang telah digalakkan untuk selanjutnya menyumbangkan idea. Menurut 'A Muslim' dalam akhbar yang sama (7 November 1919):

The local Malay papers, I understand, are mostly read by 'ancient' Malays. I have no more faith in these 'ancient' people who seem not to progress with the times. I think the key to self-improvement in matters educational is in the keeping of young English-educated Muhamedans themselves

Kebanyakan yang menulis kepada *The Malaya Tribune* itu adalah orang Melayu/orang Islam Singapura. Mereka nampak kemajuan yang telah dicapai oleh orang Cina dalam pendidikan Inggeris. Menurut 'A Malay Muslim' (*The Malaya Tribune* 18 November 1919), pada tahun 1916, terdapat 979 murid Melayu di sekolah Inggeris daripada 300,000 penduduk Melayu di Negeri-Negeri Selat. Satu tahun kemudian bilangannya telah merosot kepada 898. Pada tahun 1916, ada sejumlah 360,000 orang Cina di Negeri-Negeri Selat 10,605 orang murid Cina belajar di sekolah Inggeris. Pada tahun 1917, bilangan ini telah meningkat sedikit kepada 10,782. Ramalan penulis ini ialah:

...in ten years hence, none of the English schools in the Colony will show on its rolls any Malay pupils while the number of Chinese pupils will have

multiplied to about 30,000.

Sebenarnya, berasaskan surat-surat dalam *The Malaya Tribune*, masalah pendidikan itu dianggap sebagai bukan hanya masalah orang Melayu bahkan masalah orang Islam kerana dari semasa ke semasa surat-surat itu disiarkan di bawah judul 'Muslim Education' maka surat yang tersiar dalam akhbar itu pada 18 November 1919, ditulis oleh 'A Young Muslim of India'. Menurut pemerhatiannya, '... the Malays have realised the immense and intense importance of education as an indispensable force in the making of a community or a country.'

'A Young Muslim of India' mempunyai wawasan yang waktu itu memang dianggap progresif; dia menjelaskan:

I am one of those who believe and have full faith in the theory which has been repeatedly proved by history, that industrial and economic freedom must always precede progress in any other direction or field of effort. Japan is the irrefutable and inspiring recognised and considered to be one of the greatest nations of this Modern Age, and the only strong, progressive and dominating power of the East. One of the secrets of her national success is her intense interest in the industrial progress of her people. The sooner we learn the value and benefit of sending a large number of our Malay students to progressive foreign countries like America, Europe, England and even Japan for industrial education and technical training, the greater will be our gain, and happier, better and more hopeful will be the life and future of the New Malays [Italic saya].

Istilah 'Melayu Baru' telah digunakan pada tahun 1919.

Yang menariknya beberapa hari kemudian (24 November 1919) *Malaya Tribune* menyiarkan sepucuk surat yang ditulis oleh 'Kemudi Bahru' pula dari Kuala Lumpur. Menyentuh tentang kurangnya kemajuan di kalangan orang Melayu, beliau berkata:

From a careful study made, it has so far been revealed that the chief cause of the [lack of progress among the Malays] is the absence of technical, industrial and scientific training among the Malays, while the standard of education they have received is very poor.

Beliau mencadangkan agar suatu jawatankuasa pendidikan 'of our own' ditubuhkan dengan tujuan memujuk orang Melayu memberi sumbangan untuk sama ada mengasaskan sebuah Institusi Tinggi bagi pelajar Melayu atau menghantar mereka ke universiti-universiti progresif

di negara-negara asing.

Lebih baik lagi, menurut 'Kemudi Bahru', kalau Cukai Pendidikan diperkenalkan di kalangan orang Melayu sahaja atau semua penduduk. Seruan kepada orang Melayu untuk memberi keutamaan kepada pendidikan memang timbul daripada hasrat mahu melihat masyarakat Melayu maju dan, justeru itu, dapat memainkan peranan yang berkesan dalam semua aspek kehidupan di Tanah Melayu supaya orang bukan-Melayu tidak semakin dominan. Ini tidak boleh dianggap sebagai concern hanya untuk aspek sosio-ekonomi orang Melayu. Ini seolah-olah disahkan oleh Pesuruhjaya Tinggi baru, Sir Laurence Guillemard. Berapa bulan selepas dia mula bertugas, dia menulis kepada Pejabat Kolonial bahawa:

The Malay, too, has advanced greatly of recent years. He is far better educated; he has gained a comparative nation of Malay politics, he is more sophisticated and has acquired ambitions which have been emphasized occasionally in the vernacular press with asperity towards British protection. It will be regrettable if unconscious neglect due to changed circumstances and the mass of routine work ever alienates the sympathies of Moslem Rulers so loyal as the Malay Sultans showed themselves during the War. Moreover, the wide-spread social and economic unrest of the present time is affecting also the Mohamedan world, and waves of unrest are apparent in the Dutch East Indies, where various societies exist which are suspected of revolutionary tendencies.³

Guillemard memahami bahawa masalah sosio-ekonomi boleh membawa kepada masalah politik. Dasar British waktu itu berasaskan kepercayaan bahawa jika tiada *disaffection* (perkataan yang sering kali digunakan dahulu) di kalangan Raja-Raja Melayu terhadap British, keadaan di Tanah Melayu akan seterusnya stabil. Tetapi ketidakpuasan hati orang Melayu, mereka ini pula umumnya bukan dari golongan bangsawan, timbul kerana pada hal ekonomi Tanah Melayu maju, orang Melayu pula tidak dapat menikmati kemakmurannya seperti penduduk-penduduk imigran.

Dalam *The Malay Mail* (15 Disember 1922), 'A Malay Youth' memberi penjelasan panjang lebar mengenai masalah itu:

The Chief Secretary [Sir George Maxwell] in his address at the opening of the [Sultan Idris Training College, Tanjung Malim pada 1922], said 'we want to give the best possible education to the Malays of the villages and that will be the principal aim of this College, namely, to give the best education to the Malays of the agricultural class and fisher folk.

It is the sons of this class of Malays who are in need of English education, but, I regret to say, they are to be given the best education in Malay which will not help them so much as if they are given the least education in English, which is the language of the Government. The very, very best education in Malay will not qualify them for the posts of Malay Writers in the Government service. With the very best education in Malay they will be no better fishermen or agriculturalists than their fathers, because they will find as their fathers have found, all the books on agricultural, etc', written in a language which is Greek to them.

Pendapat ini disokong oleh 'A Malay Father' dari Seremban yang telah juga menulis kepada *The Malay Mail* (19 Disember 1922). Fokasnya adalah S.I.T.C. Kata penulis itu:

Every one agrees that the stepping stone to progress and enlightenment is education, and, I am sure, the natives (especially the agriculturalists) are glad to hear that the principal aim of the Tanjong Malim College is to give the best education to their sons, and they hope that the best education is not education in Malay which debars them from the honour of taking an active part in the administration of their country. They want an important education, and the English education is the most important for several reasons. A native without a knowledge of English cannot appreciate fully the beautiful and righteous aims of the British Government that stand and will stand for equality, liberty and justice

We now see there are many sons of Rajas and Chiefs holding high and responsible appointments in the Government service and that is the result of the establishment of the Malay College Kuala Kangsar, where they got and are getting free education in English at the expense of the Government.

The new College at Tanjong Malim, I understand, is for the sons of the agriculturalists and fishermen folks, and if English, instead of Malay, is taught there, the results will be that in a few years we will see many natives of the non-aristocratic class in the services as clerks, who will not require privileges now granted to foreigners such as leave on full pay, leave on half pay, etc.

'A Malay Father' pula disokong oleh 'ABDUL' dari Kuala Lumpur. Dalam suratnya (*The Malay Mail*, 23 Disember 1922), dia berkata:

Where mere Malay education is capable of giving any help towards progress and enlightenment can easily be judged by giving a look to the position of the Malay nation of the present generation who have been enjoying the benefit of perhaps the best vernacular education for the spread of which the Government have so generously built and upkept hundreds of vernacular schools scattered all over Malaya, nearly in every Kampong.

At a glance one will notice that Malays of the present days are not only backward but are in the dark as well, in fact they are not better than their ancestors, though, I think, thousands of them have passed the fifth standard in vernacular education during the half century past.

Under the above circumstances, I think, I can safely draw my conclusion that it is not the vernacular education nor even the best education merely in Malay that will give any help towards progress and enlightenment, and I presume it is not unreasonable if I, as a son of the soil, take this opportunity to appeal to the quarters for a re-organisation of their present system regarding education for Malays if it is meant that Malays are to play their part in the fields of modern progress, enlightenment and civilisation.

Dalam beberapa surat yang tersiar dalam akhbar Inggeris semakin jelas terdapat suara sungutan perihal kurangnya peluang untuk anak-anak orang kebanyakan mempelajari bahasa Inggeris. Maka rayuan mereka kepada pihak pentadbiran British tidak bersabit dengan golongan bangsawan yang sememangnya, sejak tahun 1905, dapat belajar Inggeris, jika sekiranya mereka mempunyai kebolehan, di Maktab Melayu Kuala Kangsar.

Sebagaimana disebutkan oleh 'A Malay Commerce' dari Kuala Kangsar (dalam *The Malay Mail*, 6 Januari 1923), setelah pelajar Maktab itu lulus 'seventh standard examinations they are eligible for Malay cadetships' (suatu rancangan - *Malay Administrative Service* atau MAS - yang diperkenalkan pada 1910). Pada penghujung 1922, seramai 75 orang pegawai Melayu telah diserap ke dalam rancangan itu.⁴ 'Let us turn to the educational facilities for the commoners', kata 'A Malay Commoner'.

A commoner's son can only get a free place in an English school if he is of suitable age and is considered sufficiently promising by the Inspector of Schools, and the most he can get is a scholarship of \$10 a month if he is a specially promising boy, and on passing the Junior local examination

he is told to leave school and join the Government he is told to leave school and join the Government as a clerk or other low position, no matter how promising he is or how well he passes at the examination.

It appears that the present educational policy is that sons of people other than the aristocratic are debarred from proving their intellectual worth by which they can rise to high administrative appointments.

England has no statute which entitles only the aristocrats to hold high administrative appointments. If she had, English History would be quite different from what it is. Students of History notice that England's greatness is due in a great measure to the services of persons of the middle class. It is illogical to put forward the defence that in Malaya only aristocrats can turn out successful in the administrative appointments.

Oleh sebab itu, beliau bersetuju dengan 'A Malay Father' bahawa masyarakat Melayu memang tidak akan maju selagi belia dari golongan bawahan tidak diberi kesempatan untuk memegang jawatan-jawatan yang tinggi dalam perkhidmatan pentadbiran. Kata 'A Malay Commoner' lagi:

Unfortunately the commoners have no representative at the Federal Council [waktu itu hanya Raja-raja Melayu yang duduk di dalam Majlis itu itu], to suggest that English education be introduced in the Tanjong Malim College, in order that the sons of the commoners can be educated and fitted for high appointments. Even if the commoners are given a seat at the coming reformed Federal Council, I doubt very much if the Government can nominate one who can speak the language of the Council [pada 1924, Raja Chulan dilantik sebagai wakil Melayu], and I believe I am expressing the sentiments of many an educated commoner when I say that they would rather have no representative at all than one who goes to the Council Chambers to say Pulang pada Tuan punya fikiranlah.

Pada penghujung tahun 1923, dua tulisan Za'ba (yang sudah terkenal sekarang) disiarkan sebagai Lidah Pengarang *The Malay Mail* (21 dan 22 Disember) di bawah judul 'The Salvation of the Malays'. Hujah-hujah dan ulasan Za'ba tidak jauh berbeza dengan surat-surat yang lebih awal disiarkan dalam *The Malaya Tribune* dan *The Malay Mail*. Sebenarnya, ada kemungkinan Za'ba sendiri merupakan pengarang satu atau dua surat itu. Za'ba telah merumuskan pendapatnya (22 Disember 1922) sedemikian:

Education is most necessary to rectify the defects of our national character, and to change or improve our 'nature'. For, it must never be forgotten, above all, we can change our nature by education. Unlike other peoples who are industrious and enterprising, we have to struggle against the force of formidable habits'. Hence the necessity that our people, especially our rising generation, should first have a good general education before they can be expected to open their eyes and stir themselves up to activity. Without education they are, and will always continue to be from generation to generation, the veritable 'frogs under the coconut shell', having no idea even of the meaning of 'progress'. A certain number among us must be given high education, some on the scholastic and literary side, some professional. Not all, however, should flock to become lawyers, doctors, engineers, mechanics, and civil servants. According to aptitude some must be made to learn business, trades, crafts, agriculture, poultry-keeping, dairy-farming, planting, so forth.

Tulisan Za'ba telah diluluskan oleh *The Straits Echo*.⁵ Pulau Pinang (juga akhbar yang diasaskan oleh modal Cina). Pada dasarnya akhbar itu bersetuju dengan Za'ba.

'Symposium' dalam akhbar-akhbar Inggeris di antara 1919-1923 kemudian membawa kepada suatu usaha untuk mengasaskan dana guna membantu orang Melayu melanjutkan pendidikan ke seberang laut. Pada masa itu, memang tidak ramai orang Melayu yang belajar di seberang laut, di antaranya ialah Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra (Cambridge), Tunku Yaacob (Cambridge), dan Mohd. Zain Ariffin (Oxford), kesemuanya dari Kedah.

Pada 1 Mac 1924, beberapa orang Melayu dengan kerjasama *The Victoria Institution Old Boys Association* (VIOBA), telah mengadakan suatu perjumpaan di dewan VIOBA. Perjumpaan itu dipengerusikan oleh Sze Kiong dan Sir Lionel Woodward, Chief Judicial Commissioner, Negeri Melayu Bersekutu, telah dijemput untuk memberi ceramah yang berkaitan dengan usaha untuk memberi pendidikan tinggi kepada orang Melayu.

Sir Lionel telah memberi ulasan umum tentang masyarakat Melayu, juga hujah-hujah pro dan kontra cadangan menghantar pelajar Melayu ke England. Menurut liputan akhbar *The Malay Mail* (4 Mac 1924), Sir Lionel membuat kesimpulan bahawa:

...he was in favour of such a fund being raised. He would not be in favour of it if he was of the opinion that the Malays were not capable of absorbing education and making good use of it. He was quite confident that the

Malays were capable of doing excellent work and of taking the place to which they were rightly entitled in the general community. With regard to the starting of this fund, he would say, speaking generally, that it would start under favourable conditions. There was no person of influence here who had been brought in constant touch with the Malays who would not wish them well. With regard to contributions to the fund, he was not authorised to make any statement at all as to the Government's attitude. He was perhaps right in believing that the Malays who organised the meeting generally felt that they should do without Government aid as far as possible. The starting of a fund was a question which they should decide by themselves. There were others to whom they could appeal. There was no section of this community which took more interest in education and had contributed more generously towards it than the well-to-do Chinese of the town.

He supposed that in the time past, other nationalities being more rich and prosperous, the tendency had been to push the Malays aside. Now that the Malays had begun to assert themselves, the other nationalities should realise that they owed the Malays a debt which they should repay.

Sir Lionel menyokong cadangan Za'ba (dalam 'The Salvation of the Malays') bahawa 'The Young Malays of this country should form themselves into a general committee, which should, elect a small working committee which should set itself the working out of a scheme to be approved by the general committee'.

Za'ba, yang hadir pada hari itu, menyatakan kesedihannya 'to see that among the audience here there are very few Malays'. Beliau menambah:

I do not say that my views are the views of my compatriots. The first lesson we Malays have to learn is self-help and co-operation. We have not done much in the past, although we are beginning to realise the lack of our position from a few who have tried to express their feelings. I think it is a great shame to us that we should have left it to foreigners to share this movement. We have done nothing on our part. It has been proposed to raise a fund, but there are only a few of us who have begun to realise our position. Let us hope that we shall do more in the future. I should like to impress on my Malay brethren the desirability and necessity for co-operation with the gentlemen who have voluntarily held out their hands to help us. We must not allow the suggestion to fail, but we must show some keenness on our side.

Ceramah Sir Lionel mendapat perhatian *The Straits Echo* yang berpendapat bahawa:

The Government should not lag behind in affording the younger generation opportunities to improve their chances. The Malays' easy philosophy served them in the past, but they will not be able to go poling down-stream interminably; and they are realising this in increasing numbers. Sir Lionel Woodward preaches the divine discontent which incites people to try to do better, and we hope his example will be followed. All interested in the Malay want to see the right kind of ambition driving out the old apathy. There are signs in some quarters of a new spirit of an awakening to the situation, and it should be fostered.⁶

Dasar British terhadap orang Melayu, menurut akhbar itu, jelas tidak memuaskan dan hanya melalui pendidikan sahaja masalah itu dapat diatasi.

...education, and the inculcation of principles essential, if there is to be economic salvation for those who cannot be 'absorbed' in the rice-growing industry, must receive proper attention, otherwise there may be very grave difficulties ahead for them.

Perjumpaan di Kuala Lumpur itu juga telah dilaporkan dalam *The Singapore Free Press* (6 Mac 1924), dan diulaskan dalam Lidah Pengarangnya (8 Mac 1924); pendapatnya begitu *reactionary*. Kata akhbar itu:

If there is one subject on which we have written frequently it is that of the desirability, nay the simple justice, of trying to find for the Malay occupation in his own land suited to his particular character, and that implies of course the need for providing proper education. It has been a source of the greatest gratification to see the increasing numbers of well-educated Malays of good family occupying posts in the civil service. But we do not believe that the best way of training the Malays for service for their country is, as a general proposition, to send them to England. We have always felt that the indiscriminate procession of Indian students to England has been one of the greatest follies we have allowed to be committed, and we earnestly hope Government will not perpetuate it here. To send Eastern students at an impressionable age with all their inbred Eastern traditions and only Western book learning to the West where beliefs, conduct, surroundings, tradition are in most cases the exact opposite of their own natural inclinations, is a piece of folly.

Akhbar itu menyambung lagi:

...to hurl them into the vortex of a sordid, industrial civilization, where they cannot possibly be expected to separate the tares from the wheat, is deliberately trying to spoil a great amount of very good material. Modern Western education is one of the greatest curses of the world, not because of its inherent wrongness but because of the inability of so many who swallow it either to digest or assimilate it.

Cadangan untuk mengadakan tabung bagi membantu pelajar-pelajar Melayu walau bagaimanapun mendapat sokongan daripada Persekutuan Guru-Guru Melayu Selangor. Di Mesyuarat Tahunannya yang berlangsung pada 4 Mac 1924 di Sekolah Melayu, Gombak Lane, Kuala Lumpur, di antara usul-usul yang diluluskan ialah:⁷

to provide free books for about 20 poor and deserving Malay boys studying in English schools in Selangor; to give \$1,000 to the Malay Educational Fund proposed by Sir Lionel Woodward, if the fund is organised and started.

Perbincangan mengenai pendidikan di peringkat tinggi untuk pelajar Melayu dibangkitkan lagi pada 11 Mei 1924 bila komuniti Melayu di Kuala Lumpur mengadakan jamuan untuk menyambut Dr. Husin (nama lengkapnya belum diketahui) yang merupakan doktor Melayu pertama dilantik untuk berkhidmat di Selangor. Beliau adalah kelulusan Maktab Perubatan King Edward VII, Singapura. Menurut Dr. Husin (dalam ucapannya):

Since the opening of the Medical College, which was then called the School of Medicine, on September 28, 1905, only three Malays from the F.M.S. had passed, out of a total of 170 qualified assistant surgeons from the same College⁸

Selanjutnya beliau mengatakan bahawa:

This was a Malay country, and they should see more Malay assistant surgeons in the Government hospitals, but at present it was the contrary. The Government wanted Malay assistant surgeons in the hospitals in order to win the confidence of Malay patients. He hoped that Mr. [Richard] Sidney [Pengetua Victoria Institution] would see to a supply being forthcoming from his [Dr. Husin's] old school.

Dalam ucapannya serta ucapan saudaranya [Maidin], 'the F.M.S. Malay Educational Fund' yang telah dicadangkan di Dewan VIOBA itu disebutkan, dan mereka menyeru kepada orang Melayu supaya menyokong tabung itu.

Di Singapura, Eunus Abdullah, sejak perlantikannya sebagai orang Melayu pertama Majlis Perundangan Negeri-Negeri Selat pada 1924, berulang kali membangkitkan soal pendidikan orang Melayu. Ini mendapat pujian daripada 'A Son of the Soil' yang menulis dalam *The Singapore Free Press* (15 Julai 1924) bahawa:

It is really gratifying to see that the Malays, represented by the Hon. Mr. Unos, have been able to voice their feelings in regard to the education and the future of the Malays. The Government always has a sort of dictum to answer to all these questions.

Pada penghujung 1920an, *The Malay Tribune* telah memulakan suatu ruangan khas yang diberi judul 'Muslim Affairs'. Pendidikan orang Melayu/Islam adalah perkara yang kerap kali dibincangkan.

Terdapat bukti bahawa usaha-usaha untuk mengadakan Tabung Pendidikan pada tahun 1924 tidak berhasil dan rayuan daripada Eunus Abdullah tidak dapat menggerakkan pihak British untuk mengubah dasarnya. Maka dalam ruangan 'Muslim Affairs' (2 November 1929), penulis khususnya mengatakan bahawa:

Unless Government sees its way to reverse its 'considered policy' with reference to the English education of Malay boys, it is possible that the people of Singapore interested in educational matters will be treated to annual orations on the subject on Budget Days by the two champions of Malay education on the Legislative Council. To the Hon. Dr. Noel Clarke [wakil kaum Serani] the Malays, and incidentally the Muslims, owe a debt of gratitude for his interest in the education of their children. The speech of the Hon. Inche Mohamed Eunus bin Abdullah, fully reported in this paper on [29 Oktober 1929], was bold and outspoken. His speech clearly proves that the present educational policy of Government with regard to the English education of Malay boys is not a suitable one and ought to be amended. He is in a position to know the educational needs of his community better than others, and when he finds that the present 'considered policy' of Government retards the educational progress of the Malays it is not surprising that he loses his patience and speaks his mind plainly.

Isu pendidikan orang Melayu telah juga dibangkitkan di Persidangan Tahunan 'Malayan Teachers Association' yang berlangsung di Kuala Lumpur pada 14 Ogos 1929. Dalam ucapannya, Presiden Persatuan itu, Syed Shaidali, memberi suatu gambaran tentang kedudukan malang murid-murid Melayu:

At the age of 6 he must attend a Malay school, and if before the age of 11 he passes Standard IV in a Malay school, he is allowed free education in an English school, he is allowed free education in an English school. Very often there are too many applications and only the required number are selected. I do not know what happens to the rest.

At the age of 11 he comes to us and after two years of concentrated instruction in English, he is supposed to be able to take his place alongside children who have been studying English for perhaps six years, i.e. Standard V, so that a Malay boy ought to be able to take up his Cambridge Junior at the age of 17.

Experience goes to prove that very few Malay boys take the Cambridge Junior at that age. More often they are 18 or even 19.⁹

Ulasan beliau selanjutnya sangat menarik, kata beliau;

Why are there very few Malay students at the Medical College, very few Malay teachers in English schools, and not one Malay Queen's Scholar? [Queen's Scholar Melayu Pertama ialah Ahmad Ibrahim pada tahun 1936]. The Malay lad when he comes to us can hold his own with the best of any other nationality, is often much brighter and cleverer than his classmates and frequently tops the list at examinations, yet as he goes higher up in his school career his progress decreases in arithmetical progression.

Tetapi beliau tidak memberi penjelasan mengapa prestasi pelajar Melayu merosot bila mereka semakin tua.

Pendidikan orang Melayu juga banyak dibincangkan di Pulau Pinang dan Johor terutamanya. Di Johor dasar 'Universal English Education' telah dibatalkan oleh H.R. Cheeseman bila beliau dilantik sebagai *Superintendent of Education* pada tahun 1928, dan ini mengakibatkan protes daripada pemimpin-pemimpin Johor termasuk Sultan Ibrahim yang telah membawa perkara itu kepada Pejabat Kolonial.

Harus diperhatikan bahawa mereka yang mendesak agar pelajar-pelajar Melayu diberi pendidikan Inggeris bukan sebenarnya pengampu

British. Hujah-hujah mereka amat jelas dalam alam sekitar yang diwujudkan oleh pentadbiran British, dasar pendidikan rasmi seolah-olah mengamalkan diskrimiansi terhadap pelajar Melayu. Onn Bin Jaafar menjelaskan perkara ini dalam suratnya yang telah disiarkan dalam *The Malaya Tribune* (11 November 1929):

... while compelling its subjects to learn their mother tongue, the Government in no way encourage them to do so in the way they should. Theirs is a hypocritical policy. Even in the Government Service Malay is given a back seat. Clerks knowing Malay only are treated in a very much inferior way to those knowing English and their pay and prospects are smaller. If it is intended to revive the [Malay] language and keep it as 'language' of the State, surely the Government should be the first to recognise its value and enhance it accordingly. [Emphasis saya]

Ternyata, yang diperjuangkan bukan bahasa Inggeris per se tetapi kepentingan sosio ekonomi orang Melayu, sebilangan besarnya tertinggal kerana mereka tiada peluang mempelajari bahasa Inggeris, yang ketara diutamakan oleh pihak British bagi mengisi jawatan-jawatan yang lebih penting dalam perkhidmatan pentadbirannya. Segala rayuan dan protes orang Melayu, walau bagaimanapun, tidak dapat mengoncang pihak British.

Walaupun orang Melayu tetap memperjuangkan isu pendidikan (termasuk pengajian tinggi) pada 1930an, fokus orang Melayu mula tertumpu kepada isu politik pada tahun 1931. Perjuangan politik mereka jelas bukan dipelopori oleh Kesatuan Melayu Muda.

Peristiwa yang menyalakan api politik di negara ini ialah pengumuman Dasar Desentralisasi oleh Sir Cecil Clementi (Pesuruhjaya Tinggi Negeri Melayu Bersekutu merangkap Gabenor Negeri-Negeri Selat 1930-1934) pada Ogos 1931 di Durbar Sri Menanti. Ucapan Sir Cecil bukan hanya tertumpu kepada soal perlembagaan sahaja. Tidak kurang pentingnya ialah titikberat yang beliau berikan kepada dasar pro orang Melayu yang diamalkan oleh pihak British. Timbul daripada itu maka mula kedengaran cogan kata 'Malaya for the Malays'. Sir Cecil juga mengumumkan keutamaan yang akan diberikan kepada pendidikan aliran Melayu.

Mulai masa itu perbahasan hebat berlaku di antara orang Melayu dengan orang bukan Melayu, bukan hanya dalam Majlis Persekutuan dan Majlis Perundangan Selat bahkan, lebih penting lagi, dalam akhbar-akhbar tempatan, terutamanya antara akhbar Inggeris yang secara umum anti-dasar Clementi dengan akhbar Melayu yang pro dasar Clementi.

Selama beberapa tahun *The Malay Mail* menyiarkan terjemahan ulasan-ulasan daripada akhbar Melayu untuk makluman pembacanya.

Dan akibat daripada itulah orang Melayu mula membincangkan tentang perlunya diadakan persatuan-persatuan bagi menyuarakan dan memperjuangkan kepentingan dan kedudukan politik orang Melayu. Ini kemudian melahirkan persatuan-persatuan negeri Melayu (yang pertamanya di Perak pada tahun 1936) yang memang mengambil berat tentang isu politik.

Pada zaman itulah hubungan orang Melayu dengan orang bukan Melayu menjadi agak renggang, walaupun sebahagian besar orang Cina dan India tidak terbabit dalam konfrontasi itu kerana mereka lebih memberi tumpuan kepada pergolakan di negara asal masing-masing. Yang terbabit ialah orang Cina dan India yang berpendidikan Inggeris.

Peristiwa ini tidak pernah dibincangkan dalam buku-buku sejarah mengenai politik Tanah Melayu ataupun nasionalisme Melayu. Durbar Sri Menanti sama sekali tidak disebutkan dalam buku Roff. Tetapi ini bukanlah tempatnya untuk membincangkan peristiwa itu dengan panjang lebar. Memadailah kalau diulangi bahawa 'nasionalisme Melayu' bukan 'dead issue' dalam historiografi Malaysia. Sebaliknya ia merupakan suatu perkara yang sepatutnya dikaji dengan lebih teliti dengan menggunakan apa sahaja sumber yang relevan supaya suatu tafsiran yang lebih tepat dapat diwujudkan.

Sejarah memang suatu disiplin yang sentiasa hidup, bukan kerana sejarah boleh diubah, tetapi pengertian sejarah boleh didalami dari semasa ke semasa berasaskan penyelidikan yang lebih teliti. Bukan hanya 'nasionalisme Melayu' yang boleh dikupas kembali bahkan 'British intervention' juga, suatu subjek yang begitu popular di kalangan sejarawan yang berminat dalam sejarah Malaysia 30 tahun, tetapi sekarang jarang dibincangkan lagi.

1. Lihat Virginia Thompson, *Postmortem on Malaya*, New York 1943. Virginia Thompson & R. Adloff, *The left wing in southeast Asia*, New York, 1950; dan T.H. Silcock & Ungku Abdul Aziz, 'Malayan nationalism' dlm. W.L. Holland (ed.), *Asian nationalism and the west*, New York, 1953.

2. Radin Soenarno, 'Malay Nationalism 1900-1945', *Journal of South-East Asian history*, 1 Mac, 1960.

3. Colonial Office Records 717/5, Sir Laurence Guillemard kepada Viscount Milner, 8 November 1920.

4. *The Malay Mail*, 2 January 1923.

5. *Ibid.*, 29 Disember 1923.

6. *Ibid.*, 6 Mac 1924.

7. *Ibid.*, 11 Mac 1924.

8. *Ibid.*, 16 Mac 1924.

9. *The Malaya Tribune*, 15 Ogos 1929.