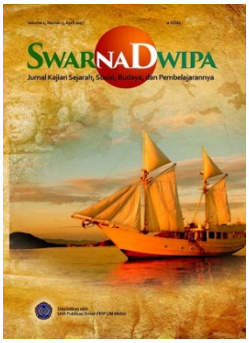
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The Role of Herman Willem Daendels in Politics in the Dutch East Indies 1808-1811

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Abstract
This research aims to describe the role of Herman Willem Daendels in the Dutch East Indies while he was governor general in politics in 1808-1811. Starting from the bankruptcy of the VOC in the Dutch East Indies, the appointment of Daendels as leader in the Dutch Indies to the policies implemented by Daendles while leading, especially in the political field. The research method uses historical or historical methods in the form of descriptive narrative through 4 stages of heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography (historical writing). Based on research results, Herman Willem Daendels' role in the political field was to carry out significant administrative reforms. Daendels changed the previously decentralized administrative system to a more centralized one, establishing a new, more efficient bureaucracy by introducing salaries for regents as colonial government employees, trying to reduce the level of corruption that was rampant during the VOC government and increasing their loyalty and performance by providing appropriate compensation and abolishing feudal structures and overhauling power relations between the Dutch East Indies government and local rulers in Java. This research provides insight into the role of Herman Willem Daendels in the Dutch East Indies while he was governor general, especially in the political field in 1808-1811.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1799, the Dutch trading company VOC (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) was dissolved, while the British-owned EIC (East India Company) survived until the mid-19th century. Many factors contributed to the downfall of the VOC, including corruption, inaccurate financial bookkeeping, and the pressures of war in Europe. One factor that significantly affected the downfall of the VOC was corruption among its employees,

especially at the higher levels. The second problem the VOC faced was in its financial bookkeeping. There were difficulties in determining the financial health of the company due to the practice of double bookkeeping in the Netherlands and Batavia. This obscured a clear picture of the company's financial condition, making it difficult to make the right decisions to manage resources and deal with the economic challenges faced by management (Poesponegoro, 2008:51). This directly affects the company's earnings and its ability to fulfil financial obligations, including dividend payments to shareholders. The deteriorating financial condition eventually resulted in the VOC going bankrupt. In 1799, the Dutch state finally took over the VOC as debt repayment, which further resulted in the dissolution of the company. Assets owned by the VOC such as forts and spice-producing areas were confiscated by the Dutch state, and formed the forerunner of the Dutch East Indies. The VOC's territories were handed over to the Dutch government.

By 1794 and early 1795, France had successfully conquered the Netherlands, and turned the Dutch government into a puppet under French control. In 1806, Napoleon appointed Louis Napoleon as ruler of the Netherlands. The realisation of British power as France's main enemy prompted Louis Napoleon to secure the Dutch East Indies, which was the centre of Dutch power in Southeast Asia. In this regard, he appointed Herman Willem Daendels, a stern man, as the leader of the Dutch East Indies (Ricklef, 2008: 242). Under his leadership, the Dutch East Indies underwent a major transformation, Daendels implemented a series of new policy programmes and replaced the old policies implemented by the VOC. These policies included a total revolution in administration, reform of the judicial system, and other policies. Daendels is even recognised as the man who laid the foundation of modern, centralised government in Indonesia.

In historiography, there are studies related to the history of the Dutch East Indies during the time of Governor-General Herman Willem Daendels. One of the studies is a thesis entitled 'Herman Willem Daendels' Policy as Governor General in the Dutch East Indies in 1808-1811' (Maarif, 2019). The research explained how policies and what was implemented by Daendels during his tenure as governor general in the Dutch East Indies, but the research still focuses on the policies implemented by Daendels in the Dutch East Indies and has not specifically discussed Daendels' role in politics and government during his tenure as governor general in the Dutch East Indies. This research aims to describe the role of Daendels in politics and government during his tenure as governor-general in the Dutch East Indies in 1808-1811.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses the historical method, which involves the process of examining and analysing historical records from the past. Gottschalk (1975) identified four stages in the historical method:1. Heuristics: This stage involves the search for and collection of historical sources relevant to the research problem. Such sources may include traces of the past, events, artefacts and written documents.2. Source criticism: This process involves assessing the authenticity and credibility of the data used in historical research.3. Interpretation: This stage involves determining the relationship of meaning between the facts obtained, with the aim of obtaining a sequence of events that has significance. 4. Historiography: Is a way of presenting or writing the results of historical research that has been carried out (Wardah, 2014).

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Governor-General Daendels, who ruled the Dutch East Indies from 1808 to 1811, was a controversial yet highly influential figure in Dutch colonial history in Southeast Asia. His strong mandate to implement a series of reforms in order to advance Dutch interests in the region saw him endeavour to address the problems that had arisen from the previous administration, particularly under the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC). When Herman Willem Daendels reigned as Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, he brought with him a strong wind of reform, influenced by French administrative experience and principles. Daendels quickly implemented these new ideas to transform the Dutch East Indies. One of the main aspects of Daendels' reforms was the introduction of modern administrative principles. He introduced the concept of administrative centralisation, which shifted power to the centre of the colonial administration in Batavia. This centralisation aimed to strengthen the government's control over its colonial territories, improve administrative efficiency, and facilitate quick and consistent decision-making. In addition, Daendels also encouraged the establishment of an effective bureaucracy. Daendels conducted a major reorganisation of the administrative structure of the Dutch East Indies, establishing new departments and placing competent officials to manage them (Ricklef, 2008: 243).

Government Bureaucracy Reform

The administrative reform measures implemented by Herman Willem Daendels in the Dutch East Indies in the early 19th century not only affected the administrative structure, but also had a significant impact on Javanese society and economy. One of the most prominent policies undertaken by Daendels was to appoint all regents in Java as officials of the Dutch East Indies colonial administration. This move was aimed at updating their status so that they were on par with European government officials, and in anticipation of the frequent abuse of power by Javanese regents for personal gain. This action reflected Daendels' attempt to create a fairer and more centralised administrative system. Prior to these reforms, the administrative system in the Dutch East Indies was decentralised and influenced by feudal structures. Regents and local nobles had great power in managing their respective territories, which was often utilised for personal gain (Khusyairi, 2011:120). By appointing regents as employees of the Dutch East Indies government, Daendels intended to reduce abuses of power and increase control over local government. This move was also part of his attempt to reduce the influence of the Javanese kings by demoting them to the equivalent of regents. Although controversial because it involved lowering the status of traditional rulers who had authority over their territories, the move was in line with Daendels' vision of creating a more centralised and efficient administrative system under Dutch colonial rule.

According to (Marihandono, 2005) Upon his arrival in Java, Daendels was faced with the reality of a colony that was still in chaos due to the bad legacy of the VOC era. Although the VOC was a trading company, its officials proved incompetent in managing the colony into a modern state. As a new figure in the colonial government of the Dutch East Indies, Daendels himself did not have the experience to manage the colony. Unlike the VOC-era tradition where the governor-general was an official who had a long career in the East Indies, Daendels brought a wind of change by introducing new innovations in the government system. The main step he took was to consolidate power in the hands of

the central government, under the control of the governor-general and supported by officials in Batavia. As the supreme leader of the colony, the governor-general was equipped with broad authority to organise the bureaucratic structure down to the lowest level. This power allowed him to dismiss incompetent officials and take decisive steps to improve government efficiency. One of Daendels' main focuses was to eradicate the corruption that had been rampant for years in the VOC's legacy bureaucracy. Utilising his authority, Daendels sacked corrupt officials and took preventive measures to prevent the recurrence of abuses by former VOC employees. One of the most conspicuous hotbeds of corruption in the Dutch East Indies era was the North-East Coast Province of Java. Under the VOC, the governor of this province wielded tremendous power, even over the central government in Batavia. This was made possible by the huge profits earned from the VOC's trade monopoly in the region (Carey, 2013:10). This system opened a loophole for the rampant practice of bribery between low- and high-level officials to smooth out corrupt actions. Realising these conditions, Daendels did not hesitate to take firm and uncompromising steps. He dissolved the government of the Northeast Coast Province of Java and established a new government unit equivalent to a prefecture (later known as a keresidenan). With this move, Daendels sought to limit the power of governors and create a more centralised and transparent government structure.

The Batavian central government made a structural shift by taking over control of the Resident of the Kingdom of Java, which had previously been under the supervision of the Governor. Outside the royal territories of Surakarta and Yogyakarta, Java was divided into nine new administrative regions called Prefectures. This policy of regional expansion aimed to improve the efficiency and centralisation of the bureaucracy. Under Daendels' leadership, nine prefectures were established in Java, namely Tegal, Semarang, Pekalongan, Jepara, Rembang, Gresik, Surabaya, Pasuruan and Sumenep. Each prefecture was headed by a Dutch official who was directly responsible to the central government in Batavia. At a lower level, there were several districts (kabupaten) ruled by indigenous people (Carey, 2013:13). This was an innovation in Daendels' new bureaucratic system. By dividing the government into prefectures, the efficiency of centralisation of power could be improved as the central government was better able to manage and supervise the regions and this government structure reflected Daendels' efforts to strengthen colonial control. After achieving stability and economic growth in the Dutch East Indies, the establishment of prefectures and regencies initiated by Daendels was a key pillar in exploiting the natural resources of the colony for Dutch benefit. In running the government, Daendels adopted a Napoleonic-style bureaucratic model, using military ranks for civilian officials. This decision was based on the belief that a military command structure could facilitate a more effective flow of orders from the central government to the regions, thus allowing the centralisation of government to be carried out efficiently. According to (Daliman, 2012) Salary increases and the application of strict punishment were the two main pillars of Daendels' policy in building a professional and corruption-free bureaucracy. This policy was expected to bring positive changes to the Dutch East Indies government and the performance of professional government employees and was followed by the application of strict sanctions if there was fraud. Instructions from the central government were communicated clearly and firmly, accompanied by an explanation of the rights and obligations mandated to each official. In appointing regents, the Governor-General had full authority to choose without consulting the king. Upon taking office, regents were required to take an oath of

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allegiance to the Governor-General, the King of the Netherlands, and Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte.

Abolition of the Feudal System

In the past, throughout Java, the tradition of giving tribute, gifts or money as a token of loyalty to the ruler was common. However, Daendels' reforms changed the entire political and social landscape of the region. One of the changes made was the abolition of these practices that were previously considered as a way to show loyalty to the ruler. The prohibition and abolition of these traditional practices were enforced with harsh sanctions. Violation of these prohibitions was considered unlawful and could lead to dismissal without honour. The aim was to reduce the strong dependence and attachment between traditional rulers and the colonial government. The reforms not only affected traditional practices, but also changed the dynamics of the relationship between the colonial government and the traditional kingdoms. The first step taken was the placement of a resident in the royal territory. The resident was directly responsible to the governor-general, no longer the king, so that the colonial government's authority became more centralised and direct in managing Java (Daliman, 2012). This had a major impact, where previously the relationship between the colonial government and the traditional kingdoms had tended to be parallel, with the traditional rulers playing an important role in the local hierarchy. However, with the arrival of Daendels and the implementation of this new policy, the relationship between the governor-general and the king became more like that of superior and subordinate. This change had profound consequences, with the Javanese kings losing much of their autonomy and power over their own territories, creating gaps and tensions between them and the colonial government. Daendels' reforms fundamentally changed the political and social dynamics in Java. Although the aim was to strengthen the control of the colonial government, these changes also generated tensions and discontent among traditional rulers, creating new problems where traditional practices were abolished and the relationship between the colonial government and Javanese kings was further strained.

Under the leadership of Daendels, the Dutch East Indies government followed with firmness in eradicating the feudal system that had been deeply rooted due to the previous VOC policies. One of the strategic steps taken was the restriction of the Regent's rights. This aimed to prevent abuse of power, especially in terms of land control and the use of people's power. In addition, Daendels also downgraded the status of the King in Java, who was previously considered an ally of the VOC. In his actions, Daendels abolished the traditional honours of the Kings. Prior to Daendels' reign, the Dutch Residents, who were the representatives of the Dutch government in the Javanese territories, treated themselves with respect for the Javanese King. They sat on the floor and gave betel nut as a sign of respect to the King (Safitri, 2019:47). However, Daendels thought that this was excessive and not in line with his spirit of rationality. Therefore, Daendels made a series of regulations that confirmed that the supreme power was in Batavia, the administrative centre of the Dutch East Indies and not in the hands of the local Kings. According to (Marihandono, 2008:30) Under Daendels' leadership, the relationship between the Dutch colonial government and the Javanese kings underwent a significant transformation. Daendels modelled this relationship on the interaction between the Dutch government in Batavia and the Dutch king. This approach marked a shift from the

previous system that was more accommodating and full of diplomacy. To achieve this goal, Daendels issued new regulations that had a major impact. His first step was to replace the resident, who had been the colonial liaison, with a minister. The term minister implied an increase in status and authority. No longer just an ordinary colonial employee, the minister acted as a direct representative of the Dutch King in Batavia as well as an overseer in each Javanese palace. This shows Daendels' attempt to shorten the bureaucratic chain and ensure direct control of the central government in Batavia. Secondly, Daendels implemented new regulations regarding the reception of ministers. Ministers were required to be treated as equal to the Javanese king in official ceremonies, complete with the use of regalia. This was part of an attempt to balance the power of the Javanese king. On the one hand, Daendels recognised status and tradition, but on the other hand, the establishment of equal privileges for Dutch ministers confirmed the intention to gradually reduce the influence and authority of the Javanese king.

Daendels' anti-feudalism spirit, inspired by the French Revolution, encouraged him to interfere in the internal affairs of the kingdoms in Java. The leadership of Governor-General Daendels (1808-1811) marked a new era in the history of Dutch colonialism in Java. One of them was the policy of reforming the procedure for receiving ministers at the palaces of Surakarta and Yogyakarta. The new rules required the highest respect for ministers, equating them with the king (Marihandono, 2008:31). This directly dehumanised the king and emphasised the dominance of the Dutch East Indies. In Surakarta, Daendels' rule was accepted without resistance. However, in Yogyakarta Sultan Hamengku Buwono II strongly opposed this policy. Daendels' measures in abolishing the feudal system and reorganising the power relations between the Dutch East Indies government and local rulers in Java were significant in the process of administrative modernisation and the establishment of a central authority in the region.

In May 1811, Daendels' term as governor-general of the Dutch East Indies came to an end, replaced by Jan Willem Janssens. Unlike Daendels, who was known for his ambitious reforms, Janssens had a narrower focus: defending Java from the threat of British invasion. However, Janssens' defensive strategy was unable to withstand the onslaught of British troops who landed on 4 August 1811. Batavia, the capital of the Dutch East Indies, fell to the British on 26 August 1811. Janssens' defeat was further compounded by the signing of the Treaty of Tuntang on 18 September 1811. This treaty officially ceded the island of Java to the British and marked the end of the Dutch East Indies era. Thomas Stamford Raffles, a British colonial administrator, was appointed lieutenant governor-general and began a new era of British colonialism in Java (Ricklefs, 2008:247).

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion that has been described, the historical conclusion is that Herman Willem Daendels' role in the political field was to significantly reconstruct the administrative system. Daendels changed the previously decentralised administrative system to a more centralised one, with the aim of increasing the control and efficiency of the colonial administration. This included the creation of a new, more efficient bureaucracy by introducing salaries for regents as employees of the colonial government. Previously, regents used to hold office for generations without receiving a salary, but with this reform, Daendels sought to reduce the level of corruption that was rampant during VOC rule and increase their loyalty and performance by compensating them

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accordingly. Daendels also sought to abolish the feudal system of government and replace it with a colonial system of government, Daendels' actions in abolishing the feudal structure and overhauling the power relationship between the Dutch East Indies government and local rulers in Java had a major impact on administrative modernisation and the establishment of central power in the region.

Although Daendels brought about a number of significant changes, his reign was short-lived. In May 1811, Daendels was replaced by Jan Willem Janssens, who then faced an attack from the British. In September 1811, Janssens finally surrendered to the British attack, marking the end of Dutch rule in the Dutch East Indies and the start of a new period under British rule. The author suggests that further research be conducted on the role of the Dutch governor-general in Indonesia during the colonial period whose impact is still present today so that it will enrich the repertoire of Indonesian national history.

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