

Soara Batak: The Batak People's Resistance Newspaper in the Colonial Period (1919-1932)

Ichwan Azhari

Department of Historical Education, Universitas Negeri Medan
Percut Sei Tuan, Deli Serdang, North Sumatra - Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: ichwana545@gmail.com

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Abstract

Newspapers have a very important position in the politics of the Indonesian independence movement. *Soara Batak* is the first independence movement newspaper published in Batakland. This newspaper became a medium of information and communication, for the political organization Hatopan Kristen Batak (HKB). The initial purpose of publishing this newspaper was to oppose Dutch colonialism and the threat of foreign plantation entrepreneurs who wanted to capitalize on Batakland for personal gain. This can be seen from the motto of this newspaper which is written: *Oela tanom, Oelang digomak Oelando* which means "Cultivate your land, so that the Dutch do not take it". This newspaper's courage in criticizing the colonial rulers caused *Soara Batak's* movements to be closely monitored. Tuan M. H. Manullang and A. Soetan Soemoroeng, the dual HKB and *Soara Batak* received repressive measures from the colonial government for their bold and sharp writings. The presence of *Soara Batak* had an important role in the politics of the Batak people's movement, which succeeded in igniting the people's fighting spirit to want to oppose Dutch colonialism which was very oppressive.

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Introduction

Entering the second decade of the twentieth century, the development of the press media in the Dutch East Indies was very progressive and militant as a tool for the struggle for independence from Dutch colonialism. Newspapers are the most effective media in spreading the spirit of nationalism and unity to all Indonesian people. Various information contained in newspapers, which are read by educated groups and the middle class, will be disseminated orally to all circles of society. This chain of communication from written to verbal information made the spirit of the struggle against Dutch colonialism not only owned by certain groups but also spread to all levels of the Dutch East Indies society.

The press and mass media play an important role in political communication as political publicity to society. Through political communication, the authorities can convey political messages and political agendas to the wider people. Political communication is also needed by the authorities to ask for political support from the

people so that the stability of power is maintained, and to obey or do everything the authorities want. For the people, political communication is a tool to convey their messages and wishes to the authorities. The importance of the press and mass media in the world of politics is what drives communicators or political activists to try to dominate the press and mass media (Pureklolon, 2016, p. 7).

For political organizations, the press and mass media are the voice carriers of political organizations. This factor caused indigenous political organizations in the Dutch East Indies that were established in the early twentieth century to use the press as a means of struggle. Indigenous political figures from the Dutch East Indies published their press media using regional languages so that the political messages they conveyed could be accepted and understood by the wider community. It is not surprising that the indigenous press in regional languages developed very rapidly at the beginning of the twentieth century, which was marked by the high number of newspapers or magazines published (Soejono & Leirissa 2010, p. 323).

In Batakland, relations between political organizations and the press media first emerged through the publication of the *Soara Batak* newspaper by the political organization Hatopan Kristen Batak (HKB). The head of HKB at the time of the publication of *Soara Batak* was Mangaradja Hezekiel Manullang or better known as M. H. Manullang or Tuan M. H. Manullang. *Soara Batak* is a Batak language newspaper published in Balige in 1919. *Soara Batak* not only serves as a medium for publishing HKB, but also as a tool for the struggle of the Batak people against Dutch colonialism and the capitalization of Batakland for foreign plantations. This is very clearly seen in the motto of this newspaper: *Oela tanom, Oelang digomak Oelando* which means "Cultivate your land, so that the Dutch do not take it" (Azhari, 2020, p. 32).

In the Dutch East Indies, resistance to the capitalization of indigenous land for foreign plantations only occurred in Batakland. This is based on the suffering of the Malay people in East Sumatra due to the opening of foreign plantations. So that the Batak people do not suffer the same fate, various efforts were made by HKB to cancel this land lease policy, starting from a petition to the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies and the Resident of Tapanuli, to a direct audience with the Director of the Dutch East Indies Domestic Administration, Carpentier-Alting and the Governor-General. Johan Paul van Limburg Stirum in Buitenzorg. *Soara Batak* became the next tool of struggle because this newspaper was a medium of communication and publication of HKB against the capitalization of Batak land for foreign plantations. In its development, this resistance through the press media was not only to thwart the capitulation of Batakland for foreign plantations but also the media to criticize and criticize all policies of the colonial government which were considered oppressive to the Batak people. This article aims to elaborate on the roles played by *Soara Batak* as a resistance newspaper from its inception in 1919 until the decline of this newspaper from the political world of Bataklands after 1932.

The Emergence of Indigenous Press Media in Batakland

The publication of *Soara Batak* was inseparable from the development of the indigenous press in the Dutch East Indies in the early twentieth century. The beginning of the development of the indigenous press in Batakland was strongly influenced by the development of the indigenous press in Medan (the east coast of Sumatra) and Padang (the west coast of Sumatra) which were initiated by Europeans. The position of these two regions as centers of economic activity is a key factor in the growth of various press activities (Adam, 2003, p. 212-213). Cooperation between Europeans, Chinese, and natives in the publishing of newspapers in Malay or local languages had a major influence on the development of the indigenous press at that time. The emergence of the indigenous educated elite who became readers and then turned into writers and newspaper publishers contributed to the rapid development of the indigenous press in Batakland in the early twentieth century.

Indigenous newspapers that were published in the Batakland in the early twentieth century can be identified through the use of the Batak language written using Latin letters. *Tapian na Oeli*, published in 1900, became the first Batak language newspaper. This newspaper is published in Padang by L.J.W. Stritzko. *Tapian na Oeli* is published once a week consisting of eight pages. In addition to containing various news, this newspaper also provides an advertisement column for readers. Although published outside the Bataklands, *Tapian na Oeli* is only circulated to the Batak community in South Tapanuli (southern Batakland). The subscription price for *Tapian na Oeli* is six guilders per year. Dja Endar Moeda (an intellectual figure from Mandailing) is the editor of this newspaper. Three years after its publication, in 1903 *Tapian na Oeli* newspaper was no longer published (Adam, 2003, p. 212; 215).

In 1905 the weekly newspaper *Binsar Sinondang Batak* was published which was initiated by M. H. Manullang with Immanuel Siregar and Gaius Sihite in Padang (Castles, 2001, p. 110; Sihombing, 2008, p. 91-92). *Binsar Sinondang Batak* is a genuine Batak newspaper because all those involved in the publication of this newspaper are Bataknese. Each edition of this newspaper consists of four pages, with a subscription fee of 25 cents per month. This newspaper coverage is in the form of various types of poetry, rhymes, *gurindam*, *seloka*, and a summary of news from Europe, and government announcements (Adam, 2003, p. 220). *Binsar Sinondang Batak* is the same as *Tapian na Oeli*, where this Batak language newspaper is published in Padang, but its circulation is only for Batakland.

Five years after the publication of the first Batak language newspaper *Tapian na Oeli* in Padang, *Binsar Sinondang Batak* emerged as the first indigenous newspaper in the Toba Batak region (northern Batakland) on December 2, 1905. While *Tapian na Oeli* was published by Europeans, *Binsar Sinondang Batak* was published by Batak people themselves. The publication of *Binsar Sonandang Batak* is an achievement in itself for M. H. Manullang as an 18-year-old young man, who only studied at the *Sekolah Anak Raja Narumonda* (not graduated), was able to publish a newspaper in the city of Padang which became the administrative center of the west coast of Sumatra (Castles, 2001, p. 110).

The next Batak newspaper was *Poestaha* which was published by Mangaradja Bangoen Batari in 1914 in Padang Sidempuan. The publication of this newspaper was proposed by Soetan Casayangan Soripada, who had just returned from the Netherlands. Mangaradja Tagor Moeda is the editor-in-chief. The presence of *Poestaha* was well received by the people of Batakland, whose circulation reached 500 copies. In 1919, the newspaper *Tapian na Oeli*, which stopped publishing in 1903, was reissued by Koeriabond Sibolga in Sibolga. This newspaper is published twice a week. On the front page, it is written Achmad Amin as *Verantwoordelijk redacteur* (Responsible editor) of this newspaper. M.J. Soetan Hasoendoetan serves as editor at Pematang Siantar. The language used in *Tapian na Oeli*, published in 1919, is a mixture of Batak and Malay (Said, 1976, p. 91-92).

The Beginning of the Publication of *Soara Batak*

The publication of the *Soara Batak* newspaper was motivated by the need for Hatopan Kristen Batak (HKB) for a medium of communication and information for the benefit of this organization's political activities. Hatopan Kristen Batak (HKB) is the first political movement organization in Batakland which was founded on September 21, 1917, in Balige. M. H. Manullang is the founder of this organization (Castles, 2001, p. 111). The urgent need for Batakland to have its press media was the next reason behind the publication of *Soara Batak*. This is because the Batak Christians are getting tired of the domination of *Immanuel*, the press media belonging to the *Rheinische Missions-Gessellschaft* (RMG Missionaries) from Germany who does not give the Batak people the freedom to express their aspirations. So, it can be concluded that politically the Batakland was controlled by the Dutch, and on the spiritual side, Germany through the RMG Missionaries controlled the Batakland. Therefore, M. H. Manullang feels the Batak people need to have their press media to voice their aspirations, criticism, and input to the RMG Missionaries priest and Dutch Colonial Government officials who made the Batak people miserable (Said, 1976, p. 100; Azhari, 2020, p. 1).

In addition to being the spearhead of its political movement, HKB also used *Soara Batak* as a tool to fight the plan to capitalize Batakland for foreign plantations which was initiated by the Dutch Colonial Government at that time. Resistance to the capitalization of the Batakland became the main agenda that HKB fought for from its inception until the organization's disbandment in the 1930s. *Soara Batak's* role as a medium of information and communication for HKB is listed on the front page of this newspaper which reads: *Pinatoepa Ni Hatopan Kristen Batak* which means "Presented by Hatopan Kristen Batak". The publication of *Soara Batak* for the political interest of HKB was also included in the *Soara Batak Statuten* (Statutes of Association) (*Soara Batak*, 27 March 1920). *Soara Batak's* role as a medium of communication and information for HKB makes the headquarters of *Soara Batak* and HKB in the same area, namely in Balige.

M. H. Manullang first published *Soara Batak* on November 18, 1919, in Balige. *Soara Batak* was printed by Philemon bin Haroen Siregar's printing press which was the only printing press in Tarutung at that time. Due to technical difficulties in the

form of a lack of typesetting, *Soara Batak*, which was scheduled to be published on November 8, 1919, had to be postponed to November 18, 1919. There are two different opinions regarding the inaugural edition of this newspaper: Castles (2001) which mentions November 19, 1919, and Said (1976) which mentions November 18, 1919. In the first edition of *Soara Batak*, M. H. Manullang stated that *Soara Batak's* funding was done independently, and the editorial team did not receive a salary at all due to the newspaper's lack of finances (Said, 1976, p. 101).

Based on the description of the 1920 *Soara Batak Statuten* or The Statutes of Association of *Soara Batak* (*Soara Batak*, 27 March 1920), the editorial team that managed the publication of *Soara Batak* consisted of four people: R. Nathanael Siahaan as *Directeur* (Director), M. H. Manullang as *Hoofdredacteur* (Chief editor) dan *Redacteur* (Editor), St. Johan L.T as *Commissarissen* (Commissioners), M. Petrus Siahaan as *Administrateur* (Administrator). The Statutes of Association of *Soara Batak* also stated that the initial capital for the publication of this newspaper was f 5000 (five thousand Dutch East Indies guilders).

At *Soara Batak* No. 44 which was published on Saturday, November 6, 1920, there was a change in the editorial team. The composition of the new editorial team consists of: M. H. Manullang as *Hoofdredacteur* (Chief editor) and *Commissarissen* (Commissioners) at Balige, A. Soetan Soemoeroeng as *Verantwoordelijk Redacteur en Administrateur* (Responsible Editor and Administrator), R. Nathanael Siahaan as *Directeur* (Director), M. Petrus Siahaan as *Ond Dir* (Deputy Director), Sint. Johan LT. as *Commissarissen* (Commissioners) in Balige, Stepanus Hoetabarat dan R. Eliab Hoetagoeng as *Commissarissen* (Commissioners) in Tarutung, as shown in Figure 1.

In early 1922, the board of directors of *Soara Batak* consisted of: Radja Nathanael Siahaan as *Directeur* (Director), M. H. Manullang as *Hoofdredacteur* (Chief editor), A. Soetan Soemoeroeng as *Redacteur* (Editor), E. Pohan as *Administrateur* (Administrator), Soul Siregar as *Administrateur* (Administrator). In 1923, the *Soara Batak* editorial team changed twice. In the first change, M. H. Manullang as *Hoofdredacteur* (Chief editor) in Balige, Soetan Dewasah as *Redacteur* (Editor) in Tarutung, R. Nathanael Siahaan as *Wd. Director* (Deputy Director) at Balige, and M. Petroes Siahaan as *Administrateur* (Administrator) at Balige. The prison sentence served by M. H. Manullang in Batavia caused the *Soara Batak* editorial team to change the editor team for the second time in 1922. The position of *hoofdredacteur* (Chief editor) previously held by M. H. Manullang was transferred to A. Soetan Soemoeroeng.



Figure 1. The front page of *Soara Batak* edition November 6, 1920.

Source: Azhari (2020, 125).

Soara Batak is a weekly newspaper published every Saturday. This newspaper already has a legal entity namely *N.V. Soara-Batak* located in Tarutung. What's interesting about *Soara Batak* is that the editorial team gives writers the freedom to use Malay or Batak or combine the two languages in one script. For the author's background, the editorial team does not limit. Everyone is allowed to send writings to *Soara Batak*, and if the writing is worthy of publication, it will be published by the editorial team. The themes of the writings contained in *Soara Batak* are very diverse, ranging from HKB activities, HKB information, various things about Batakland (natural and socio-cultural conditions), news about independence movement figures and political organizations outside the Batakland, poetry, and opinions that contain criticism of the colonial government and product advertisements.

The publication of *Soara Batak* received a positive response from the Batak people. This can be seen from the number of circulation reaching a thousand copies in a short time (Perret, 2010, p. 352). *Soara Batak* is the most famous newspaper in Batakland and the Batak people always look forward to the publication of the latest edition (Azhari & Sinaga, 2022, p. 258). For movement figures in the Batakland, *Soara Batak* is mandatory reading. Their way of thinking was greatly influenced by the writings published in *Soara Batak*. MULO students (*Meer Uitgebreid Lagere Onderwijs/ More Advanced Primary Education*) in Tarutung even made *Soara Batak* the material for weekly discussions (Bangun, 2012, p. 13).

***Soara Batak* as a Tool for the Political Struggle of the Batak People**

The publication of *Soara Batak* brought about a very substantial change in the politics of the independence movement in Batakland. The presence of this newspaper encouraged the emergence of a spirit of the movement against the practice of Dutch colonialism which so oppressed the Batak people. Through various tax burdens and forced labor, the Batak people were forced to exert all their economic capabilities only for the interests of the colonial government. All the misery due to the very oppressive policies of the colonial government was voiced to the general public in the publication of *Soara Batak*. That's why the content of the writings in *Soara Batak* is very critical and agitative, with the aim that the Batak people realize that they have been oppressed and must unite to stop the practice of Dutch colonialism.

Newspapers are the most effective media in raising awareness and the spirit of the collective struggle of the community. Through *Soara Batak*, M. H. Manullang wants the Batak people to be actively involved in the national political movement (Said, 1976, p. 101). On a national scale, Batak movement figures could establish relationships with movement figures from other regions which would further strengthen their spirit of struggle against Dutch colonialism. Apart from the colonial government, the threat from European and American foreign businessmen who make customary land of *marga* (clan) as plantations threaten the social, political, and economic stability of the Batak people.

As mentioned in the introduction, *Soara Batak* has been a tool for the struggle of the Batak people against Dutch colonialism since its inception through the motto: *Oela*

tanom, *Oelang digomak Oelando* which means “Cultivate your land, so that the Dutch do not take it”. Bangun (2012, p. 14) states that the *Soara Batak* motto is known as the “Three O” doctrine, O (*ela*), O (*elang*), and O (*elando*). The “Three O” doctrine has a meaning: if the Batak people want to be successful and improve their quality of life, they must have a strong determination to work hard to cultivate the land they have so that it will not be taken by the Dutch. The doctrine of “Three O” became a momentum to remind the Batak people that their ancestral land was being threatened by foreign plantation capitalization plans that greatly benefited the Dutch, but made the Batak people miserable.

Soara Batak’s courage in protesting against the Dutch colonial government was shown in the inaugural edition which contained news about the arrest of the editor-in-chief of *Sinar Merdeka*, Parada Harahap in Padang Sidempuan with charges *persdelict* (press crime). The author strongly condemns the actions of the colonial government because it was so easy for the authorities to arrest and imprison journalists. The author also states that the stables belonging to the Assistant Resident of Tapanuli are much better than prisons for indigenous people (Said, 1976, p. 101).

Opposition to the plan to capitalize Batakland for foreign plantations is the main agenda voiced in *Soara Batak*. Head of HKB, M. H. Manullang in the inaugural edition of *Soara Batak* wrote that the governor-general had leased the land of the Batak people to capitalists because the Batak people did not want to cultivate the land. The land of the Batak people yielded multiple benefits to European and American entrepreneurs. Batak people will only be slaves for life-like buffalo, physically hurt and abused (Castles, 2001, p. 131).



Figure 2. The “Three O” Doctrine in *Soara Batak*
Source: Azhari (2020, p. 32).

The motto of this newspaper, *Oela tanom, Oelang digomak Oelando* which means “Cultivate your land, so that the Dutch do not take it” that was deliberately created to raise awareness and spark the spirit of the Batak people against foreign plantation capitalism was repeatedly published in *Soara Batak*. Based on the findings of the *Soara Batak* archive collection, in 1920, the “Three O” Doctrine was published in the following editions: February 21, August 7, November 6, November 7, November 27, December 4, December 11, December 18. Meanwhile, in 1921, the “Three O” Doctrine was published in the following editions: March 12, June 4, June 9, July 16, August 20, August 27, and November 15 (Azhari, 2021, p. 22).

A. Soetan Soemoeroeng or St. Soemoeroeng in the April 3, 1920 edition of *Soara Batak* with the title “Evolutie” appealed to the Batak people to protect their property,

namely the customary land belonging to the *marga* (clan). In this paper, St. Soemoeroeng reminded Batak people that guarding one's property is the same as protecting one's honor from the threat of being taken by other nations. In this paper, St. Soemoeroeng wrote a message to Mr. Ypes, Assistant Resident of Tapanuli to be fair, honest, and not use violence against the weak Batak people, especially the Pansurbatu people who are fighting for their land. For the Batak people, the land is an inheritance passed down from generation to generation by their ancestors. This factor causes them to be very persistent in defending their property rights to their land.

In the April 10, 1920 edition of *Soara Batak*, H. Simamora is known as H.D.R. adja wrote a poem entitled *Oela tanom oenang digomak Oelando; molo so dieola ho, saoet ma ho mago* which means "Cultivate your land so that the Dutch do not take it; If you don't cultivate it, you will lose." In this paper, H. Simamora also reminds the Batak people to be willing to work hard to cultivate their land every day, so that they can avoid the threat of foreign plantation capitalists. Implicitly, H. Simamora in his writings wants to mobilize the unity of the Batak people to jointly fight the threat of foreign capitalists who want to seize the land of the Batak people for plantations.

Soara Batak's criticism of capitalizing on foreign plantations in Batakland is getting bolder. In the July 31, 1920 edition of *Soara Batak*, M. H. Manullang called European plantation entrepreneurs and colonial government employees who seized hundreds of hectares of people's land in Pansurbatu as blood-suckers (white-eyed capitalists). In this paper, M. H. Manullang boldly said that the Tapanuli government was deliberately playing a comedy by not responding to all the protests raised by the people. In addition to writing sharp criticisms of Europeans, M. H. Manullang also encouraged the Batak people to be actively involved in the struggle against foreign plantation capitalization. In the August 7, 1920 edition of *Soara Batak*, M. H. Manullang wrote: "The Batak people should show it with actions, not just talk".

Sentences of resistance always appear in every edition of *Soara Batak*, one of which is the October 30, 1920, edition in an article entitled "again offense?" In this paper, the author expresses the readiness of the Batak people against anyone who oppresses this nation, even if they have to fight with weapons and risk their lives. In the July 31, 1920 edition of *Soara Batak*, *Het Hoofdbestuur HKB* asked the people of the Indies to work together to fight against attacks by foreign enemies that threaten the homeland. This paper also requests that movement organizations in the Dutch East Indies send envoys to attend the HKB large meeting which will be held in Sibolga on August 29, 1920.

Apart from being a tool for the struggle against colonialism, *Soara Batak* is also a medium for political education and the unity of the Batak people. The contents of this newspaper coverage greatly influenced the public's perspective on the political activities of the figures of the indigenous independence movement at that time. In the inaugural issue of November 15, 1919, M. H. Manullang in his writings stated that independence is a human right that must be fought for. To achieve this, the unity of all Batak people is needed. In the May 29, 1920 edition of *Soara Batak*, M. H. Manullang invites the Batak people to love their nation and fight for the nation's independence

from invaders. *Soara Batak* October 30, 1920 edition, M. H. Manullang called on the Batak people to love their homeland and defend the natural wealth of the Batakland which is in danger of being seized by foreign capitalists. The role of *Soara Batak* in providing political education and the formation of Batak people's nationalism lasted until 1929 (Said, 1976, p. 163).

Dutch Colonial Government Repressive Actions Against *Soara Batak* Leaders

The press media has a great influence on people's social life, especially news that can lead to "public opinion" which can disrupt the stability of the existing power. In addition to preventing resistance from the indigenous people, the Dutch colonial government also used the press as a tool to serve and fulfill the interests of the rulers, as has been the case in Europe since the Middle Ages. The importance of the position of the press caused the Dutch Colonial Government to stipulate press regulations that were only intended for the stability of their power in the Dutch East Indies, including in the Batakland. Sanctions of imprisonment and monetary fines are imposed for anyone who criticizes, spreads negative opinions, spreads hatred, and insults the Dutch-Hindi Government in the newspapers. In addition, the colonial government also required printers and publishers to submit one copy within 24 hours after the print was circulated (Juliati & Asnan, 2012, p. 304).

The writings in *Soara Batak* were critical and sharp against the Dutch colonial government since the first edition, causing the movement of this newspaper and its editorial team to be constantly monitored. M. H. Manullang became the first *Soara Batak* editorial team to be caught in a trap *persdelict* (lawsuits for press crimes) by the Dutch colonial government. He was charged *persdelict* with accusations of writing that created seeds of hostility and incited the Batak people to fight against the colonial government (*Soara Batak*, 7 August 1920). Without elaborating on the articles of the *Persdelict* Law that were violated, the judge declared M. H. Manullang guilty of all charges and sentenced him to fifteen months in prison, and was obliged to pay court fees. The sentence that M. H. This manullang is clear evidence that the law in the Dutch East Indies belongs to the rulers, not to the indigenous people. During the trial, the judge did not listen to M. H. Manullang and rejected all witnesses presented by M. H. Manullang. False witnesses were deliberately presented to silence M. H. Manullang in proving his innocence (*Soara Batak*, 7 August 1920).



Figure 3. M. H. Manullang or Tuan M. H. Manullang publisher of *Soara Batak*
Source: tuanmanullang.com

St. Soemoeroeng became the second *Soara Batak* editorial team to be prosecuted for the *persdelict* (press crime) case on February 7, 1924. He was found guilty of violating articles 207 and 145 of the Dutch East Indies Criminal Code. His writings in *Soara Batak* regarding the Siuban-uban and Pansur Batu concessions were considered intentionally to embarrass the government and foster hatred between the people and the colonial government. On 27 October 1924, Soetan Soemoeroeng served his prison sentence in Sibolga.

St. Soemoeroeng and M. H. Manullang are a duumvirate, like the right foot and left foot that complements each other. When M. H. Manullang actively leads *Soara Batak*, St. Soemoeroeng led the HKB. When M. H. Manullang served his prison sentence in Batavia in 1922, HKB and *Soara Batak* were led by St. Soemoeroeng. The activities of the two of them are very compact and mutually support each other. Although M. H. Manullang was given a prison sentence to stop the HKB and *Soara Batak* movements, not to dampen the political movement of St. Soemoeroeng. He was even more daring to criticize the colonial government in *Soara Batak*. From within the prison, M. H. Manullang continues to support St. Soemoeroeng so that the resistance of HKB and *Soara Batak* does not weaken, even if it needs to be further increased. He also said that if Soetan Soemoeroeng went to prison, M. H. Manullang would be willing to continue publishing *Soara Batak* without a salary. All profits from *Soara Batak*'s printing costs and stamps will be handed over to Soetan Soemoeroeng's wife and children (*Soara Batak*, No. 39, 25 October 1924). The persistence of these two leaders of HKB and *Soara Batak* greatly confused colonial officials in the Tapanuli Residency (Said, 1976, p. 102).

As expected, on February 7, 1924, Soetan Soemoeroeng was tried in a large meeting in Tarutung on charges of *persdelict* like M. H. Manullang. He was found guilty of violating articles 207 and 145 of the Dutch East Indies Criminal Code, namely embarrassing and publishing the seeds of hatred between the people and the colonial government. For this *persdelict* charge, Soetan Soemoeroeng was sentenced to 1.5 years

in Sibolga prison. The prison sentence began to be served by St. Soemoeroeng on October 27, 1924 (Said, 1976, p. 104).

The End of the *Soara Batak* Struggle

For the struggle and persistence in fighting against Dutch colonialism in Batakland, *Soara Batak* emerged as the leading newspaper and became the only movement newspaper in northern Batakland from 1919 to 1929. The presence of this newspaper encouraged the emergence of other indigenous newspapers published in Batakland. In May 1929, *Soeara Sini* was published by *Bataksche Electriche Drukkerij Mij. Terotoeng* (BEDMIJ) is owned by M. H. Manullang, founder of *Soara Batak*. *Soeara Sini* is a village newspaper headed by Sarohoem which is published once a month. June 1, 1929, published in Tarutung *Persatoean* newspaper. This newspaper is part of *Soara Batak* published by BEDMIJ which also publishes *Soara Batak*. The two newspapers have different functions, where *Soara Batak* is for the benefit of HKB, while *Persatoean* is to carry the general vote. The head of *Persatoean* is S.M. Simandjoentak and Soetan Soemoeroeng (editor of *Soara Batak*) served as directors (Said, 1976, p. 162-163).

But unfortunately, the existence of *Soara Batak* is slowly declining. The first setback appeared when M. H. Manullang served his prison sentence in Batavia in August 1922. The leadership of *Soara Batak*, which was taken over by Soetan Soemoeroeng, experienced financial problems in terms of paying the issuance fee to *Drukkerij Philemon*. To overcome this, Soetan Soemoeroeng even asked M. H. Manullang who is in prison. M. H. Manullang then advised Soetan Soemoeroeng to look for another printing press that suited *Soara Batak's* financial condition. M. H. Manullang then sent a letter to the leadership of *Drukkerij Philemon* asking him to give a discount on *Soara Batak's* printing costs. After going through various efforts, Soetan Soemoeroeng finally succeeded in making an agreement with *Drukkerij Philemon* for the publication of *Soara Batak* until 1924 (*Soara Batak*, No. 39, 25 October 1924).

When Soetan Soemoeroeng served his sentence on October 27, 1924, Jesajas Siahaan was listed in *Soara Batak* as *Verantwoordelijk Redakteur* and *Administrateur* (Responsible Editor and Administrator). There is also an edition, HKB is listed as a *Directeur* (director). But what often appears is the name Soetan Soemoeroeng, and sometimes with M. H. Manullang as the Director/Director Editor-in-Chief/Responsible Redactor (Said, 1976, p. 105).

Although two *Soara Batak* leaders received political pressure in the form of prison sentences from the colonial government, this did not stop the publishing activities of *Soara Batak* at all. In the December 28, 1929, edition of *Soara Batak* (year XI), Soetan Soemoeroeng was written as responsible redactor and S.M. Simandjoentak as editor (Said, 1976, p. 102). *Soara Batak's* press activities continued until 1932, together with 18 other newspapers published in the area of Simalungun en Karolanden *afdeeling* and the northern part of Batakland (Perret, 2010, p. 353). This fact places *Soara Batak* as the indigenous Batak newspaper with the longest existence, which is for thirteen years. A period that was not short in the struggle for the independence movement against colonialists and European capitalists.

Conclusions

The press and mass media play an important role in political communication as political publicity to society. For political organizations, the press and mass media are the voice carriers of political organizations. The ideology, direction, goals, and political activities of political organizations are disseminated through the media press. *Soara Batak* is a newspaper belonging to the political organization Hatopan Kristen Batak (HKB), which was first established in Batak Land on 18 or 19 November 1919. This newspaper was founded because of the insistence on the need for the Batak people to have their press media and a means of resistance against Dutch colonialism and foreign capitalism. Through the motto *Oela tanom, Oelang digomak Oelando*, which means "Cultivate your land, so that the Dutch don't take it", this newspaper was at the forefront of the struggle for independence of the Batak people at that time. In the end, the courage of this newspaper in criticizing the Dutch colonial government brought its two leaders, M. H. Manullang and A. Soetan Soemoeroeng to serve prison sentences. However, this did not succeed in shutting down *Soara Batak's* press activities. Until 1932, *Soara Batak* remained active as a means of struggle and political education for the Batak people.

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