

# “De Moeljikje Middenweg”: Association Politics between the Dutch East Indie and the Netherlands through *Indische Toneel*, 1913-1933

Khairana Zata Nugroho, Singgih Tri Sulistiyono, Dhanang Respati Puguh\*

Master Program of History, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Diponegoro  
Jl. dr. Antonius Suroyo, Tembalang, Semarang - Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author: dhanang.respati@live.undip.ac.id

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## Abstract

This article discusses the endeavors to build a harmonious relationship between the colony of the Dutch East Indies and the motherland, the Netherlands, through the association politics in *Indische toneel* (Indies play) performances of Karina Adinda and Boeddhakind in 1913-1933. In the midst of the natives movement, where the natives put in motion their thoughts and ideas against the oppressive colonial government, a new cultural consciousness that desired a dialogue between East and West also appeared as the consequences of the implementation of the Dutch Ethical Policy. One of its aspects was performing art. Through historical method, this anomaly is examined through the performances of two *Indische toneel* namely Karina Adinda and Boeddhakind, *Indische toneel* that combined West dramaturgy with Javanese performances such as gamelan and traditional dances. The performances were produced in cooperation with organizations such as Vereeniging Oost en West, Het Nederlandsch-Indonesisch Verbond van Jongeren-Organisaties (NIVJO), and other Indonesian students in the Dutch East Indies and the Netherlands. The performances garnered disapproval from nationalists and praise from ethnicists

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## Introduction

This article examines the attempts to implement association politics in order to build good relations between the Dutch East Indies and the Netherlands through two *Indische toneel*; *Karina Adinda: Oost-Indisch Zedenspel in Drie Bedrijven* by Victor Ido and *Boeddhakind: Indische Spel in Vier Bedrijven* by Marie van Zeggelen, which were shown throughout 1913-1933. Previously, association politics has been studied through various paradigms, but the studies that examine association politics in the dimensions of art, especially performing arts, are still rarely conducted. This became an interesting issue to investigate because in the midst of the natives' movement against colonialism that emerged in the Dutch East Indies at the beginning of the 20th century, appeared another group who wanted good relations between the Dutch East Indies as the colony and the Dutch as the motherland through moderate efforts, one of which is through performing arts. They are known as associationist group.

Association politics is a type of political movement that carries the concept of unity between Indonesians and other foreigners in the colonies. Through this politics, it is hoped

that Indonesia can be independent without needing to depend on other nations. Nevertheless, association politics received a negative response from nationalists. This reaction arose because even though Indonesia had become a country that could run independently, fundamentally Indonesia was still under the control and part of the Dutch government (Hatta, 1933). One of the proponents of this politics was Raden Mas Noto Soeroto, a Javanese prince from Pakualaman who was educated in the Netherlands ("*Associatie – Politiek*", 1932).

Through *Het Nederlandsch-Indonesisch Verbond van Jongeren-Organisaties* or the Association of Dutch-Indonesian Youth Organizations (NIVJO), Noto Soeroto and the people who advocates association politics tried to unite Indonesians and the Dutch through a moderate way (Poeze et al, 1986, p. 196). Founded on 30 March 1926, the association has the goal of achieving better understanding and cultivating mutual respect between the two nations ("*Nederlandsch-Indonesisch Verbond van Jongeren-Organisaties*", 1926). Apart from NIVJO, *Boeatan*, a shop and gallery founded by *Vereeniging Oost en West* (East and West Association), also provides performances that showcased traditional Javanese art. The association's goal was to preserve Dutch East Indies arts and crafts by creating a market in the West for a wide variety of products produced by the natives. *Vereeniging Oost en West* also often holds art exhibitions to show Javanese art and indigenous handicrafts (Groot, 2006, p. 127; Meer, 2017, p. 508).

*Indische toneel* or Indies play is a performing art that was popular from 1900 to 1925 in the Dutch East Indies and the Netherlands. By focused on the life in the colonial world and combined it with Western dramaturgy, *Indische toneel* has distinct characteristics that makes it an aberration from conventional Western drama because it incorporates Eastern elements in its performances (Cohen, 2014, p. 233; Baay, 1998, p. 52). Two *Indische toneel* entitled *Karina Adinda* and *Boeddhakind* are *Indische toneel* that focused on the life of Javanese priyayi; both plays showed Javanese art as integral part of the show and involved Indonesian students in its productions. In this regard, art was presented as a justification for a paragon of colonial relationship between the culture of the natives and the culture of the Dutch people as something related, rather than a unified or assimilated (Cohen, 2014, p. 232). Through the performing arts, association politics can be realized through mutual understanding of each other's motives and culture. However, in reality association politics is a form of indirect rule of the Dutch government over the Dutch East Indies (Bloembergen, 2004, p. 48).

Within colonial context, there have been several studies that put emphasis on performing arts and its relation to the hegemony of the colonial government. Cohen (2014) examines the development of Indonesian performing arts in the Netherlands, such as various types of Javanese dance performances and music groups, *Indische toneel*, and kroncong ensemble. In several performances, the integrity of Javanese art is valued as a form of respect and tolerance between races, and related to this context, the progress of the political plane was placed on cultural exchanges that are on even stipulations. In other performances, the existing performances are intended to strengthen Dutch influence on traditional culture. Meanwhile, Van der Meer (2017) stated that various exhibition activities such as night markets held by the Dutch colonial government were an attempt to legitimize colonial power in the Dutch East Indies. These various exhibitions show Western modernity and present the colonial government as a good government. In its development, these exhibitions contributed to the birth of the middle class in Indonesian society which later became a significant part of the colonial government in maintaining its hegemony. Although both studies discussed performing arts and its relation to colonial government power, the discussion that centered on association politics in arts dimension, especially performing arts, have not yet been discussed

further.

In that regard, this study examines the development of attempts to implement association politics through *Indische toneel* and the reactions of various groups regarding these endeavors. There are several things that become subject matters of discussion in this article. The first part of this article illustrates the socio-political conditions of the Dutch East Indies and the association politics to provide context. The second part discusses *Karina Adinda's* early productions as hybrid performances that combined the aspects of the Western and Eastern elements. The third part describes the development of the performances of *Karina Adinda* and *Boeddhakind* in the Netherlands. The fifth section focuses on reactions to the association politics in *Indische toneel Karina Adinda* and *Boeddhakind*.

## Method

This article uses the historical research method. The historical method is a research method which comprises heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography to achieve historical truth (Wasino & Hartatik, 2018, p. 11). A variety of reviews regarding the play performances published in contemporary newspapers in the Dutch East Indies and the Netherlands were used in this study, including the *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, *Haagsche Courant*, *De Express*, *De Avondpost*, and other contemporary newspapers obtained through online sources such as Delpher.nl. To support the existing primary sources, secondary sources such as books, magazine articles, and journal articles are used as corroboration materials to provide context and various other information that is not available in contemporary primary sources.

The next step is to conduct source criticism to test the truth or accuracy of these sources. However, external criticism in regard to the material of sources are not carried out on most of the existing sources because the majority of the sources were obtained in digital form, while for internal criticism, existing sources are selected in advance to sort out which sources are relevant to this study and which sources are irrelevant. The sources that have passed the selection process are then compared with each other and arranged in such a way in the interpretation process to compose a comprehensive historical narration (Sjamsuddin, 2020, p. 99).

## The State of Sociopolitics in the Dutch East Indies and Association Politics

In September 1901, on the advice of Abraham Kuyper who came from the Christian Anti-Revolutionary Party as prime minister of the Netherlands at the time, Queen Wilhelmina announced a new policy known as the Ethical Policy when conducted *troonrede* or speeches from the throne. The policy was created in order to advance the condition of the natives in the Dutch East Indies through irrigation, migration, and education (Sumarno et al., 2019, p. 369). The *Ethici* or supporters of Ethical Policy encouraged the existence of association politics for the colony, with J. H. Abendanon as *Directeur voor Onderwijs* as one of the main supporters of the association's political idea. Abendanon argued that the Netherlands could become a patron for the Dutch East Indies so that the colony could develop and be independent. The development of the Dutch East Indies were based on the Western model and even though the Dutch East Indies were already independent, in principle the Dutch East Indies were still part of the Netherlands (Touwen, 2000, p. 78).

The attempt to implement ethical principles in the colonial politics revealed a paradigm shift of the colonialists, from on how to expand and consolidate their hegemony in the colony through military means to focus on how to develop the colony in its various aspects. Related to these changes, there was a fundamental perspective from colonialism that is also assumed

by Westerners in other nations, namely the "civilization mission" of a "higher" civilization towards a "lower" civilization. Colonial exploitation was the impact of racial supremacy believed by Westerners. This view later became the basis for determining the political policies that needed to be applied in the colony that were starting to become independent, even though the state of the politics in the colony had changed (Niwandhono, 2011, pp. 85-86).

The education program on Ethical Policy ultimately became a counterproductive stratagem for the Dutch colonial government. This Western-style education started the emergence of native intellectuals who became proponents of the development of nationalism. These intellectuals had the objective to strive for welfare and provide education to the people to oppose colonialism; in other words, native intellectuals wanted progress in the form of modernity for colonial society (Sumarno et al., 2019, p. 371). Indirectly, the colonizers have paved the way for the birth of nationalism among the natives through various Western thoughts taught through the Western-style education (Touwen, 2000, p. 68).

Even so, among native intellectuals there were also people who were open to association politics, one of whom was Raden Mas Noto Soeroto. Through his illustrated monthly magazine called *Oedaya*, Noto Soeroto anonymously wrote down his various thoughts. In its first year of publication, *Oedaya* published various articles concerning Indonesia, especially issues related to cultural matters. *Oedaya* stated that they are a magazine that is not under the influence of political parties. Though political problems are not presented explicitly in the magazine, Noto Soeroto's ideas regarding harmonious cooperation between the East and West can be found in it (Poeze et al, 1986, p. 180; Karels, 2008, p. 68).

In his view, Noto Soeroto argues that the combination of the Eastern and Western elements can create harmony in life. In order to achieve this harmonization, the natives need to become "enlightened" through contact with Western culture. Westerners, particularly in this case the Dutch, also need to familiarize themselves with the "East", which in this case is Javanese culture in particular. Noto Soeroto hopes that through this osmosis process, the two cultures can produce a harmonious synthesis (Djadjadingrat-Nieuwenhuis, 1993, p. 46). In connection with the spirit of the association, on 30 March 1926 *Het Nederlandsch-Indonesisch Verbond van Jongeren-Organisaties* (NIVJO) was established as a new way to unite Indonesians and the Dutch who wanted coalescence between the two through various activities such as seminars, watching films, exhibitions art, as well as creating opportunities for the Dutch and Indonesian to discussed in order to have better understanding in each other to create a better appreciation between each other (Karels, 2008, p. 80).

The organizational structure of NIVJO consisted of D. J. W. J. Kluiver as chairman, Raden Mas Soeripto as deputy chairman, Hein von Essen as first secretary, Raden Mas Jodjana as second secretary, A. F. Pasanea as first treasurer, and A. Doeve as second treasurer. Noto Soeroto became the honorary chairman of the NIVJO. The membership was open to both individuals and organizations, making it an umbrella organization for various other organizations related to the Dutch East Indies. Organizations and associations that are members of the NIVJO include *Leidse Indologen Vereeniging* (Leiden Indolog Association), *Boeatan*, *Bond van a.s. Zendelingen* (Association of Candidates for Missionary), as well as the *Indische Club* student association (Poeze et al, 1986, p. 200; Cohen, 2014, p. 247).

### **Karina Adinda: The Embryo of Indische Toneel Hybrid**

*Karina Adinda: Oost-Indisch Zedenspel in Drie Bedrijven* by playwright Hans van de Wall, or famously known through his pen name Victor Ido, became one of *Indische toneel* and the first Dutch performing arts to incorporate Javanese art into its performances. The play was set in

Java in 1913, and told the story of forbidden love between a Regent's daughter named Raden Adjeng Karina Adinda and a *controleur* named Willem Rennenberg. Both were involved in a romantic relationship without the knowledge of Karina's father, Raden Mas Adipati Prawiro Di Ningrat as the Regent of Wiriosari. Rennenberg was treated as a nuisance by the Regent, due to Rennenberg's efforts to shine light on the gambling problem growing in Wiriosari, involving also the Regent and most of Wiriosari's government officials. This caused the Regent and a *magang* or intern he sent to Rennenberg, Boesono, to concoct a plan to remove Rennenberg from the equation. This plan was successfully done when Rennenberg, in the end, died when trying to shut the sluice gate of the Brantas River to prevent flooding caused by Boesono's meddling (Ido, 1913). This play was inspired by several figures and true stories that occurred at the beginning of the 20th century, such as the life of Raden Adjeng Kartini as a young woman from among the priyayi who tries to realize her idealism by going against customs and conservatism in her society, the love story between a *controleur* and the daughter of a district head in East Java (*Oosthoek*), and a *controleur* named Cohen who was killed trying to shut a sluice gate to prevent flooding in Rembang (Wall, 1927).

*Karina Adinda* premiered at the *Stadsschouwburg Batavia* on 20 April 1913. The play was directed by Victor Ido and performed by the dilettante theater group he had formed. The newspaper *De Expres*, in its review of the premiere of *Karina Adinda*'s performance in Batavia, stated that Victor Ido had succeeded in presenting the lives of Javanese nobles on the stage, something that had not been successfully done by other Dutch playwrights. The use of language that feels archaic is one of the weaknesses of this play. Nevertheless, the gamelan music that accompanied the play received high praise from the audience ("De Opvoering van Karina Adinda", 1913).

The usage of gamelan throughout the play shows Van de Wall's tendency to combine various elements from other cultures with Western dramaturgy. The gamelan is a loan from the Javanese arts association *Langen Siswo*, whose members are STOVIA students. The *Java Bode* newspaper, as quoted by the *De Expres* newspaper, said that there was a possibility that the staged of the play was the first performance to combine "civilized" Eastern cultural elements with the European ones in Dutch art ("De Opvoering van Karina Adinda toegestaan, 1913).

The actors who appeared also received appreciation for their performances. Saoedin, a STOVIA student who played Koesoemo, was showered with praise for his acting skills, along with several other STOVIA students involved as extras. The play extended for three more performances at the *Stadsschouwburg Batavia*, namely on 27 April 1913, 29 April 1913, and 15 May 1913. Each show proved successful, especially at *Karina Adinda*'s last performance, although not many spectators attended the show due to a rainstorm, the last performance of *Karina Adinda* still got a standing ovation from the audience ("Karina Adinda", 1913).

After its premiere in Batavia, a production of *Karina Adinda* was held for the first time in Bandung at the *Schouwburg Concordia* on 7 June 1913. The dilettante group that performed the play in Batavia reprised their respective roles in that production (K., 1913). *Karina Adinda*'s next performance was held in Surabaya on 23 July 1913, with two additional performances held at the end of July 1913. Similar to the performance in Batavia, the Surabaya production was well received by the crowd, as evidenced by the *schouwburg* which was filled with spectators. Other cities such as Yogyakarta and Malang have requested permission to show *Karina Adinda* after the performance in Surabaya, but the difficulty to move the scenography or landscape paintings that serve as the backdrop for the play making it impossible for *Karina Adinda* to be shown in these two cities ("Karina Adinda te Soerabaja", 1913).

*Karina Adinda* finally had its revival production at the *Stadsschouwburg Batavia* on 18 September 1913. STOVIA students once again lent their gamelan collections for the play ("Karina Adinda", 1913). The popularity of *Karina Adinda* made it one of the plays shown at the *Koloniale Tentoonstelling te Semarang* (Colonial Exhibition in Semarang) which was held from 20 August to 22 November 1914 (Hoofdbestuur der Vereeniging Koloniale Tentoonstelling Semarang, 1916, p. 71). The play was held on 24 September 1914 and became a popular performance in the exhibition even though the preparation time allotted for the performance of the play was limited ("Karina Adinda", 1914).

### **The Development of *Karina Adinda* and *Boeddhakind's* Performances in the Netherlands**

Since its appearance at the beginning of the 20th century, *Indische toneel* has been held in many *schouwburg* or theaters in various cities in the Dutch East Indies. Gradually, *Indische toneel* had consolidated its place among the varying entertainments for the Europeans living in the Dutch East Indies. The ease of transportation due to the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 has brought about the practice of touring around different continents for professional theater groups in Europe (Sugiyama, 2019, pp. 250-251). The popularity of *Indische toneel* in the Dutch East Indies made many professional theater groups start performing *Indische toneel* in the Netherlands. Through this practice, *Indische toneel* can be performed in the Dutch East Indies and the Netherlands. Entering 1926, another *Indische toneel* with priyayi as its center of attention emerged in the form of *Boeddhakind: Indische Spel in Vier Bedrijven* by Marie van Zeggelen.

The play told the story of Siti Mira-Inten, a regent's daughter in Central Java. Mira-Inten is known as *Boeddhakind* or the Budhha's Child through her feat in caring for flood-stricken people in the Salam Village. An epidemic that has infected several villages has resulted in the doctor who is responsible for the outbreak requiring assistance from Mira-Inten, who is trusted by the local community. Frank Hamel, the local *controleur* who is also the fiancé of Tilly van Heemsbergen, daughter of the local resident, decides to solve the plague problem. Mira-Inten then carried out her marriage to a regent named Raden Adipati Ario Hasmono. In the middle of the wedding, which was celebrated with a dance performance from the groom, Mira-Inten then left her wedding party when she heard the news that Hamel was suffering from an epidemic to care for Hamel. At the end of the play, it is known that Hamel and Mira-Inten love each other even though each has a partner and is hindered by existing social status (Zeggelen, 1927).

*Boeddhakind* demonstrated a Western-style progressive view of Javanese culture. This can be seen in the conversation between Mira-Inten and Tilly when Mira-Inten's wedding was to be held. Tilly said that doing *mlaku ndhodhok* or squat walking that Mira-Inten needed to do when getting married was a form of submission to men that Mira-Inten did not need to do as the daughter of a regent (Zeggelen, 1927, p. 28). The first reading of its script was carried out by Marie van Zeggelen at the *Esher Surrey* art gallery in Den Haag on 9 December 1926. The reading was held for *Bond van Nederlandsche Tooneelschrijvers* or the Association of Dutch Playwrights ("Bond van Nederlandsche Tooneelschrijvers", 1926). It was greeted with great enthusiasm from the audience. Their appreciation at that time was aimed at Van Zeggelen's beautiful presentation of the play's script and the selection of topics regarding the lives of Javanese nobles. Van Zeggelen managed to depict the inevitable conflict between culture and racial differences very well (L. M., 1926).

*Boeddhakind* then premiered on 25 and 26 April 1927, held by *Boeatan* and collaborated with NIVJO. The performance of Raden Mas Soebanto, a member of NIVJO who played Raden

Adipati Ario Hasmono, when performing a dance at his wedding ceremony and accompanied by the melody of *Boeatan's* gamelan played by other NIVJO members under the direction of Raden Ajoe Jodjana, wife of Raden Mas Jodjana, became the main highlight in the show. Soebanto was a member of NIVJO besides Soeripto and Jodjana who regularly performed as a dancer with gamelan music for *Vereeniging Oost en West and Boeatan* (Poeze et al, 1986, p. 225). Even though most of the actors present were amateur actors, the performances were very well received by the audience. Extracted by *Het Koloniaal Weekblad*, the *Algemeene Handelsblad* newspaper said that Van Zeggelen had triumphantly gave a new color to Indies drama by depicting the conflict between Javanese customs which contradicted the development of the modern world through *Siti Mira-Inten* ("Nabetrachting over "Boeddhakind", 1927).

It is possible that the character of *Siti Mira-Inten* was based on Raden Adjeng Kartini, as reported in several reviews of *Boeddhakind's* that appeared in 1927. Henri Borel, a Dutch playwright and critic, commented that the character of *Siti Mira-Inten* has something in common with the figure of *Kartini*; both were women who were fully influenced by Dutch culture and the West school of thought (Borel, 1927). In addition, Van Zeggelen's admiration for *Kartini* can be seen in one of her novels entitled *Kartini: een baanbreekster voor haar volk*. Throughout the novel, Van Zeggelen consistently mentioned *Kartini* as a *Boeddhakind* (Zeggelen, 1947, p. 88 & 236).

On the other hand, *Karina Adinda* still became one of the *Indische toneel* which was still frequently performed by various theater groups in the Dutch East Indies since its first performance. Its high popularity among the natives and Chinese people meant that many illegal and informal performances took place, both in the form of adaptations into Javanese as well as in Malay language ("*Karina Adinda*. Stamboel-voorstelling verboden", 1928). Twenty years after its first performance at the *Stadsschouwburg te Batavia*, *Karina Adinda* finally premiered in the Netherlands with a new professional theater troupe *Het Vaderlandsch Tooneel*. The theater group was formed to create close ties between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies by presenting various *Indische toneel*, with the majority of which are works by Victor Ido (Cohen, 2016, p. 72).

The newspaper *Het Vaderland* stated that Victor Ido eventually gave the *opvoeringsrecht* or the rights to perform of his 'beloved' play to actress Cecile Spoor-Carelsen, of whom he had known for many years ("*Cecile Spor-Carelsen over Karina Adinda*", 1933). On 26 October 1933, *Karina Adinda* was shown for the first time in the Netherlands at *Het Gebouw voor Kunsten en Wetenschappen* in Den Haag under the direction of Spoor-Carelsen and Cor Pare. *Het Vaderlandsch Tooneel* also invited several guest stars to play a number of native characters, including Raden S. Hardjodirenggo who played Kosesoemo and Pah Sadin the village elder of Tupang, Margopati as Boesono, Raden Mas Waloejo as Patih Bintarang, P. Waworoentoe and Soemardi who respectively played the characters Darmo and Pak Kromo ("*Karina Adinda*", 1933). Hardjodirenggo was a member of the NIVJO and leader of the *Ardjoeno* Javanese art group who was active as an actor and *dalang* (puppeteer) in the Netherlands (Cohen, 2014, p. 252).

The preponderance of the reviews regarding *Karina Adinda's* performance stated that the play was more suited as a retrospective play and more appropriate to be watched by people who miss the Dutch East Indies in the past. The problems that became the main focus were considered to be irrelevant, with several elements typical of the Dutch East Indies such as supernatural powers and divine forgiveness which combined melodramatic elements that were not suited with the audience's taste (Veth, 1933). Even though the reviews were not favorable towards the play, the acting skills of the Indonesians in the play received quite high

praise, especially Hardjodirenggo who managed to play the characters of Raden Koesoemo and Pah Sadin very well ("Hans van de Wall op het Haagsch tooneel", 1933).

### **The Reaction Towards Association Politics in *Indische Toneel***

Throughout its productions, *Karina Adinda* and *Boeddhakind* received a variety of reactions from various groups. At the beginning of its performance in the Dutch East Indies, Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo questioned the playwright's aim in creating *Karina Adinda*. In his article entitled *Kritiek op een Indische Tooneelstuk. Indische toestanden? (I)*, Tjipto wrote that behind Karina and Rennenberg's romance problems, the playwright's intention concerning the harmonious relations between the West and East were shown through this play. The problem regarding the unity of the two is illustrated through the feud between Rennenberg and the Regent of Wiriosari. Rennenberg's love for Karina, which was depicted as the personification of the West's view of the East, is nothing more than an abhorrent "form of mercy" because essentially, Rennenberg still looks down on Karina. Furthermore, Tjipto also criticized the portrayal of the East as the party that should be grateful to the West for bringing modernization in the form of Western knowledge and ideas (Mk., 1913). This condescending view, as long as the West still viewed the East in a degrading position, will be the main problem that will not allow the existence of association politics.

Meanwhile, *Karina Adinda*'s performance at *Koloniale Tentoonstelling te Semarang* which was greeted with great enthusiasm by the public, can be seen in the same light as the *Koloniale Tentoonstelling te Parijs*, which showcased various arts from the colonies. The exhibition was part of the colonial agenda to gain high profits without the need for resistance and violence, but through a peaceful and legal way through organizing exhibitions that displayed the supremacy of the colonialists (Bloembergen, 2004, p. 91). The same thing can also be seen in the *Boeddhakind* performance, which received various reactions regarding its showing. Ben van Eysselstejn, a well-known journalist and writer in the Netherlands, commented that the conflict in the play was too weak and melodramatic in nature. The inaccurate depiction of some manners in the interaction between the Europeans and the natives called for some revision. Nevertheless, Van Eysselstejn appreciated the play's aim of trying to unite the West and East (Eysselstejn, 1927).

*Karina Adinda* and *Boeddhakind* illustrated that even though it has a sympathetic tone towards the natives, its construction was still based on how the West perceives the East in the sense of orientalism as said by Edward Said. Orientalism is a Western way to dominate and reconstruct Eastern culture in order to have authority over the East (Said, 2003, p. 3). Based on the spirit of association and ethics, Indonesians do not need to completely give up their culture, but need to adapt it to suit European culture. This process could be achieved under the guidance of the Dutch in order to reach a common understanding for the sake of creating unity between the two (Poeze et al, 1986, p. 25).

On the other hand, the attempt of the native students who sought association politics also got mixed rejoinders. Praise and appreciation came from the *Ethici* who supported the association's political efforts, but the attempts were opposed by the other natives students organization *Perhimpunan Indonesia*, which were radical and anti-colonial in nature. NIVJO's accentuation of Javanese art, especially in various Javanese dances and gamelan, was also not fully welcomed by other Indonesian members. In reality, the performance of the arts was seen as evidence of the development of the association. However, the prioritization of Javanese elements resulted in non-Javanese being reluctant to participate (Poeze et al, 2008, p. 199).

Regarding the attempts to realize association politics, Noto Soeroto in his article

denominated *De Moeilijke Middenweg* said that this form of politics is a middle ground which is difficult to effectuate. The implementation of this politics led to him being denounced as "a Javanese turned to the West, which he allowed to control (him), so that he was against his own people and has become blind to the clear distinction between his people and the whites who colonized them." Association politics, as stated by Noto Soeroto, can be seen as a "golden path" when there are similar intentions between the two parties; as long as this has not happened, then the political association that they supported was still seen as a "thorny path" (Noto Soeroto, 1925, p. 33).

### Conclusion

Amidst the movement of the natives who began to express their thoughts through varying media against the colonial government, the association politics which influenced several native intellectuals gave rise to the desire to establish congenial relations between nations through moderate means. To achieve this, various organizations and associations were formed, such as *Vereeniging Oost en West* and *Het Nederlandsch-Indonesisch Verbond van Jongeren-Organisaties* which routinely hold art exhibitions and Javanese art performances in order to create further understanding of Javanese culture. Through two *Indische toneel* entitled *Karina Adinda* by Hans van de Wall or Victor Ido and *Boeddhakind* by Marie van Zeggelen, the pursuit of association politics is manifested through the performances of Javanese art in both plays. The attempt to realize association politics through the *Indische toneel* received mixed reactions, with the *Ethici* who supported and praised the plot of the two *Indische toneel*, and the nationalists who questioned the purpose behind their creation and its showing which was nothing more than an attempt to achieve a colonial agenda like *Koloniale Tentoonstelling*.

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