

# Ethical Politics: Education of The Native Population and Strengthening the Indonesian National Movement in The Early 20th Century

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## Abstract:

Ethical policy was a term widely used in the first decade of the twentieth century for the policies of the Dutch East Indies colonial government that were supposed to benefit the interests of the indigenous population. The content given to the term depended on how one saw its significance. For the former, it meant primarily a clear path for Christian missions, for others, it meant strengthening the economic position of the indigenous population, for the latter, it meant greater access for the indigenous population to education, and for the latter, it meant a greater role for the indigenous population in government. Another difference was that some believed that it was in the interests of the indigenous population to adopt Western culture and civilization as quickly as possible, while others believed that the unique character of the indigenous culture should be preserved as much as possible. Various emancipation movements then emerged in the early twentieth century even though they did not yet have a nationalist basis. The ethnic basis of the Boedi Oetomo association and the religious basis of the Sarekat Islam association, however, did not become an obstacle to also putting forward political desires, such as the participation of the indigenous population in the colonial government. Moreover, in early 1912 a political party, the Indische Partij, had explicitly declared its support for independence.

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**Keywords:** ethical politics, Dutch East Indies, debt of honor, native education, nationalism.

## 1. Introduction

Conservative colonial politics were reintroduced in the Dutch East Indies by Governor General Van den Bosch in 1830. The basic idea of this policy was to return to the VOC era, namely so that the colonies could contribute as much financial income as possible to the mother country. According to him, this reason was because it was felt to be more appropriate to the situation and conditions in the Dutch East Indies in general. This actually contradicted the liberal ideology that had developed in the Dutch Parliament at that time where the colonies were seen not only as areas for economic exploitation purposes (Kartodirdjo, 1972: 1–9; Day, 1904: 250-255).

In such a situation, there was actually no discourse whatsoever on education in general, let alone education for the native population (Inlandsche Onderwijs). Indeed, since the reign of Governor General Daendels in 1808, formal education for the native population had been thought about, but it was only education to comply with the customs and habits of the population itself. Likewise, in 1820, Governor General Van der Capellen had also established several *Europeesche Lagere Schools* (ELS) or European Elementary Schools for the Dutch and European population in big cities such as Batavia, Cirebon, Semarang, Surakarta, Surabaya and Gresik and had also recommended that the native population learn to read and write as well as good character (Poerbakawatja, 1970:22-23). This fact is what will later in the next development provide a big difference between the education given to the children of the Dutch and other European residents with the education given to the native population. Education for the Dutch and other European residents known as *Europeesche Onderwijs* refers entirely to similar education conducted in the Netherlands, while education for the native population is unclear in the concept and model that will be applied.

The Dutch East Indies colonial government as the party responsible for the education of the indigenous population had been doing so since the 19th century. Although the government regulation of 1818 still placed the responsibility for education on the indigenous population, the task of organizing indigenous education was not entrusted to the governor-general until 1854. The turning point in this shift in responsibility came in 1848. Under the liberal Thorbecke government, a budget of 25,000 guilders was set aside from 1848 onwards for the establishment of an indigenous education system. In 1851, the first state school for indigenous people was established, namely the training for native teachers (training school) in Soerakarta, followed by the establishment of a second training school in Bandung in 1866 (Goovaarts-Tjia, 1999, :49-50).

The colonial government left the establishment of indigenous primary schools mainly to local regents. They established their own district schools for indigenous children from wealthy backgrounds. By 1865 Java already had 58 district schools with 3,017 students (Goovaarts-Tjia, 1999:50). Primary education in the government was in a very rudimentary state during the nineteenth century and was mainly accessible to children of Europeans. It was an extraordinary thing for an indigenous child from wealthy backgrounds to attend a European school because of the high entry requirements, including proficiency in Dutch, which in this case created an additional barrier. Although the entry of indigenous children to European education was limited, it was theoretically possible (Iswahyudi, 2021:11)

The liberal Minister of Colonial Affairs I.D. Fransen played a major role in this, where in 1864 he allowed European elementary

schools to be opened for native children. Under the liberal ideology, native education grew gradually in the second half of the nineteenth century (Groeneboer, 1993:236-237). However, this growth was limited because the improvement was more focused on European schools. Not only for liberal ideological reasons, the colonial state expanded native education during the second half of the nineteenth century. Native education also received the attention of Governor General Van den Bosch. He ruled the Dutch East Indies from 1830 to 1834 and tried to start developing native education. However, he met resistance from the Dutch and his plan to establish a native school was rejected by King Willem I (Brugmans, 1938:83).

During his tenure as Minister of the Colonies from 1834 to 1848, the expansion of native education remained in the planning stage. A possible explanation for his interest in native education is the introduction of the culture system in 1830. The economic intensification of the Dutch East Indies created a greater demand for native workers and administrators who could speak Dutch, and as a result the colonial state had a particularly economic interest in it as an extension of native education. However, it was not until 1848 that funds were actually made available for native education and until the end of the nineteenth century until plans for native education were actually implemented.

Therefore, colonial education was largely an exception for the indigenous population in the nineteenth century. However, the simple and limited state of education for the indigenous population was especially true for government education. The nineteenth century can be characterized in the field of education for the indigenous population as a strong development of missionary education and the expansion of Islamic religious education. However, the government was critical of these forms of private education (Colijn, 1963: 150-151). Due to their religious emphasis, these schools would not be able to provide an objective picture of society, so this education could have a "confusing" effect on their students. The educational importance of these schools cannot be denied. Especially in combating illiteracy, many successes were achieved in these schools in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the colonial administration maintained a critical attitude towards these private schools until the twentieth century. The religious red line that crossed the knowledge imparted in these religious schools would not improve the quality of education.

In the late 19th century in the Netherlands, voices arose calling for the Netherlands to pay its "debt of honor" (*de eereschuld*) to the Dutch East Indies, because the Netherlands had earned a lot of money from the colony during the implementation of the Cultivation System (1830-1870). This gave birth to the Ethical Policy which aimed to advance the welfare and prosperity of the Indonesian people, without harming the interests of the colonizers. Meanwhile, a group of Indonesians wondered why their own country was being ruled by the "mother country", why they themselves did not form a fully sovereign state and why the mother country demanded all kinds of income. Several movements were founded that fought for the independence of the colony. The rise of the Indonesian nationalist movement was of course a nuisance in the eyes of the Dutch.

They argued that their presence was justified by the fact that they were better able to govern and manage the economy of the territories they already controlled. Some argued that instead of independence, an "association" should eventually emerge, the colonies left to fend for themselves under Dutch supervision to develop into independent units within the empire and, when they had acquired a truly Western outlook, under Dutch control. Although the nationalists initially welcomed the ideal of association with enthusiasm, since it implied equal political rights for Indonesians and Dutch, it soon did not go far enough for them.

Indirectly, the colonial government itself promoted the rise of nationalism. In addition, the people of the Dutch East Indies came into contact with Western ideas about government and economics, partly through the intensification of government, which was of course part of imperialist policy. The colonial government improved education in the Dutch East Indies, so that more and more Indonesians, for example, who read newspapers, became acquainted with nationalist ideology at home and abroad. Especially the small group who received education in the mother country developed their own critical ideas against the patronizing colonialists.

However, it was not the intention of the colonial government that the native population, even if they were allowed to think about the future of the country, would take over their own leadership in the short term. The guardianship system, as it was called at the time, served to improve conditions in the colonies, but was not intended to make the colonies independent. The explanation for this apparently contradictory attitude, in which imperialism was accompanied by a kind of development work, lies in the paternalism that characterized the attitude of Western countries in the late colonial period, that is, between about 1870 and 1942. Not only was it considered that the task of the West was to abolish the colonies, there was also a realization that the gap between the modern West and the traditional East was unbridgeable. That is why Western countries had to help the colonies by teaching them to achieve economic progress. Progress was of course also important to the colonizers, because the more prosperous a colony was, the greater the profits that could be obtained from it (Arnout, 2021).

This paper focuses on the Ethical Policy in the Dutch East Indies and the educational conditions of the native population and the birth of the nationalist movement. Why in the early 20th century did the Ethical Policy simultaneously lead to rapprochement and increased tension between the colonial government of the Dutch East Indies and the Dutch East Indies? Nationalism can be described as the rise of the desire to break away from the colonial government. In that case, it was the native population of the Ethical Policy who ultimately wanted to prepare the country for self-government under Dutch leadership and according to the Western model. During the implementation of the Ethical Policy, the Indonesian struggle for independence became stronger, partly because the Ethical Policy was very much at odds with the wishes and desires of the native population. The emphasis was on improving conditions under the leadership of the colonial government, while the ideals of the nationalist movement went further.

## 2. Dynamics of indigenous education

In the late nineteenth century, the European Elementary School (Europese Lagere School = ELS) was the main route for indigenous people to Western education. Although the demand for indigenous civil servants and company workers increased in the 1800s, the number of indigenous people attending ELS schools was still very small. In 1900, there were around 1955 non-European students attending ELS schools and this number was only 10 percent of the total number of students. Of these non-Europeans, about one-sixth were "foreign Orientals". That is, in the eyes of the West they were "Oriental", but not from the Dutch East Indies. The majority of foreign Orientals consisted of Chinese, but also some Arabs and Japanese were part of this population group. With a population of around thirty-five million, of which only 75,833 are European, this is a very small proportion of the indigenous population (Groeneboer, 1993: 237, 474).

Although ELS schools were the main route to higher education around 1900, the entry qualifications to ELS schools were very high in the early years of the twentieth century. The language of instruction was Dutch, so some knowledge of this language was a requirement for entry. The government was also skeptical about the large number of native students in ELS schools. Because of their inadequate knowledge of Dutch, the government was concerned that they would lower the educational level of other European students (Hazeu, 1963: 156-157). Therefore, education for the native population had to be carried out in separate institutions.

The desire to separate education had already been formed in 1892 with the establishment of first-class schools (*eerste klasse school*) and second-class schools (*tweede klasse school*) (Abendanon, 1963: 5-7). These schools were established by the government for indigenous children from the upper class of the indigenous population. First-class schools were intended for children of indigenous nobles, while second-class schools were in principle open to the entire indigenous population. However, due to the high cost of second-class schools, these schools were still accessible to indigenous children from wealthy parents. As a result, these first-class and second-class schools were respectively nicknamed "leading population schools" and "ordinary population schools".

Basically, the education department actually paid little attention to these native schools. Their existence was neglected and the quality of education was low, so that native students who wanted to continue to secondary education still had to attend ELS schools. Thus, education policy in the Dutch East Indies reached a crossroads. On the one hand, the colonial government could make ELS schools more accessible to native children, on the other hand, the colonial government could improve the quality of schools and native schools developed quantitatively. With the emergence of ethical politics, the colonial government seemed to prefer the latter (Iswahyudi, 2021:12).

This in Queen Wilhelmina's speech was more considered as an embodiment of Christian power so that the Dutch kingdom was obliged to inspire its government policies with the awareness that the Netherlands had a moral calling to the people in the region (Groeneboer, 1993: 237). With this sentence, Queen Wilhelmina officially opened a new path for the Dutch colonial ethical policy in the Dutch East Indies in 1901. Under the keywords irrigation, emigration and education, the colonial government had to raise the native population to a higher level bringing the level of economic and spiritual civilization. In the field of education, ethical politics took place in two directions: first, through the expansion of basic education for the native population and second through the expansion of native education to make secondary education accessible to native children.

Governor General Van Heutsz expanded the basic education of the native population in 1907 with the establishment of village schools, also known as people's schools. Village schools were fairly simple village schools established with one important goal: to combat illiteracy at the local level. Basic education was handed over to the village community, so that a larger indigenous community could be reached at a cheaper cost, because the financing of village schools and the recruitment of teachers would also be regulated from the village community (Brugmans, 1938: 305-306). This was a profitable action for the colonial government, because second-class schools were too expensive for general expansion in the indigenous community.

The establishment of village schools contributed primarily in a quantitative sense to the primary goal of educating the native population. Except for some craft lessons and the principles of arithmetic, village schools were limited to teaching reading and writing in the local language. The colonial government wanted a simple curriculum because it left education to the native villagers, because a more in-depth curriculum required a European teacher (Brugmans, 1938: 306-307). Although primary education was free for the indigenous population, the education department had a long list of requirements and guidelines for the establishment of village schools, including long school desks. The villagers financed and managed the village schools, but had to organize the schools according to the education department's regulations. In addition to the existing village schools and second-class schools, first-class schools were also able to change in the first twenty years of the twentieth century. The colonial administration recognized the importance of these schools and wanted to equate their educational value with ELS schools. This happened in 1914 when the first-class schools were renamed the *Hollands-Inlandsche School* (HIS) (Pott and D.F.W. van Rees, 1963: 69-77).

The primary purpose of these elementary schools was to teach Dutch, which is why talented HIS students could more easily continue on to secondary education. A new challenge for the colonial government was to expand secondary education to natives. By the early 20th century, four *Hogere Burgerscholen* (HBS), including a gymnasium in Batavia, had been opened in the Dutch East Indies. However, these schools were direct copies of the Dutch ones. These four schools were sufficient for the young Europeans who attended school, but new solutions had to be devised for the growing influx of native students. Brugmans also described the westernization of education under the wing of ethical policy. On the contrary, he emphasized the ideals of the new ethical course:

nothing was clearer than the idea that the provision of Western culture was the best and quickest way to raise the population of the Dutch East Indies to the high level that Western civilization had long since achieved. According to Brugmans, since the introduction of the ethical policy, educational officials, with all their zeal to bring native civilization to a higher level, had lost sight of the "specificity of the population of the Dutch East Indies", making the westernization of colonial education a natural outcome). Moreover, the design of educational institutions, curricula, textbooks and even the teachers in some cases were imported directly from the Netherlands (Brugmans, 1938: 290).

Despite the role of ethical ideals in the formation of a functioning educational system in the Dutch East Indies, Brugmans does not see a socio-economic reason for the westernization of education, namely the expanding colonial state and the resulting demand for indigenous civil servants. Therefore, not only educational policy makers were responsible for the transformation of colonial education, but the changing nature of indigenous society itself also played a major role in this. The colonial government did not monopolize education in the Dutch East Indies and could not follow its own chosen path without receiving criticism from the population.

The Javanese Medical School, which was established through cooperation between the Department of Education, Religion & Crafts (*Departement Onderwijs, Eeredienst & Nijverheid*) and the Department of Health in 1851, was a continuation of discussions about the need for native workers as vaccinators. In its development, the Javanese Medical School was a vital institution because of the increasingly complex health problems handled by the government. Further cooperation between the Javanese Medical School and the Military Health Service (*Militair Geneeskundige Dienst*) would influence the government's attitude in its further development. A very important change occurred in 1898 with the upgrading of the Javanese Medical School to STOVIA (*School tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Artsen*).

The interesting thing about this institution is that later, as written by Savitri Prastiti Scherer, it will produce many professional priyayi groups to be opposed to bureaucratic priyayi •supported by established priyayi groups (Scherer, 1985: 225-226). This fact can be understood because as a free middle class they are not bound by the government and can move outside the government bureaucracy. The interests in the painting are also descriptively told about the education systems from time to time theoretically. Likewise with the relationship between it and the culture and philosophy that underlie human life at that time. From this perspective, it is hoped that a writing will be obtained that can reach the zeitgeist or soul of the era, so that the existence of social phenomena can be better understood.

This review that emphasizes educational policy focuses more on the original objective, namely emphasizing bureaucratization and mass recruitment policies, not educational policies in the context of forming an elite of indigenous intellectuals. As is known, education in the formal sense has long been a central issue in discussions about the dynamics of society, especially in the context of its social mobility. In relation to that, it is natural that the educational process is always placed in a determining position, some even place it as a liberating factor for that group to play an important role in society. This is also added to by the supportive social, political, and economic situations. This will clearly further clarify the direction it wants to achieve.

It was indeed a difficult choice for the government at that time in implementing its education policy. On the one hand, the government wanted to stick with the policy that had been implemented, but on the other hand, there was pressure from several groups to increase the portion that had existed so far. As is known, in the Dutch Parliament itself, there were two opposing camps in their efforts to ensure that the ideas of their group were adopted by the government. In line with the political waves that existed at that time, groups influenced by ethical ideals gained opportunities and eventually gained votes in the Dutch parliament (Kartodirdjo, 1975: 25).

Western education that offers many opportunities for society is a dimension in itself that has many sides. From there also arises a basic assumption about a small group of people who are fortunate to receive Western education, namely that they are the ones who will later play an important role by offering progressive ideas. It is undeniable that many places are provided for native people who are graduates of colleges that are not in accordance with their fields. One clear example is the case of R.M.A.Koesoemo Joedo, as the son of Paku Alam V who successfully graduated from Leiden University with a specialization in Indology, it turned out that he could not get a job that was in accordance with his field for trivial reasons (Sutherland, 1983: 50-51). In addition, the school atmosphere that still views Europeans as having superiority is still very much felt, especially when listening to Achmad Djajadiningrat's account of his experience when he first entered a Western school (Djajadiningrat, 1936: 67).

Another aspect that is interesting to examine further is related to the emergence of the urban middle class as a direct result of the increasing quality and quantity of education. Wahidin Sudirohusodo, Tjipto Mangunkusumo Soetomo, Gunawan Mangunkusumo, and Suwardi Suryaningrat are figures who can be said to represent their time in putting forward ideas of progress (Surjomohardjo, 1980: 19). As representatives of their time, of course, certain qualifications are required, which in this case are often not enough to rely on educational background alone. Actually, it is quite difficult to put forward the above premise because until now there has never been a study that specifically discusses the problem according to its period. However, from the vague signal, it is hoped that an analytical description will be drawn, in accordance with the purpose of this writing.

### **3. The Launching of Ethical Politics**

Ethical Politics was announced in the Netherlands in 1901 in Queen Wilhelmina's Speech. This ethical policy originated from ethical

ideas that had existed for some time. As is known, the ethical direction in politics emerged in the Netherlands at the end of the 19th century, which essentially wanted to improve the welfare and education of the people of the Dutch East Indies. Many employees in the Dutch East Indies were impressed by Multatuli's book entitled *Max Havelaar*, which contained criticism of the abuses in the Lebak assistant resident's house. Multatuli's characteristic was not to weaken the dominance of colonial power, but argued that colonial administrative employees had a calling to protect local residents from exploitation by native kings and to fight colonial policies.

The idea of an ethical calling also permeated Dutch politics. The main program of the Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP) in 1879 advocated a policy of "moral obligation." Anti-revolutionary leader Abraham Kuyper stated that the Netherlands had an obligation to educate Indonesians morally like children so that they could take a more independent position in the world in the future. As Prime Minister, he was responsible for Queen Wilhelmina's speech. According to legal scholar Van Deventer, the main reason for this obligation was the large profits obtained during the Cultivation System in the Dutch East Indies that had been transferred to the Netherlands. Just as historian Robert Fruin has stated that money earned in the Dutch East Indies should be used for the welfare of the colony, Van Deventer also wrote in 1899 that the Netherlands had a "debt of honor" to the Dutch East Indies (Burgers, 2011: 115).

The revelation of this ethical calling as stated by A. Alberts is that while European plantation companies were growing in the Dutch East Indies, criticism of the Cultivation System, which had subsided, was again increasing in The Hague. This is actually quite surprising because up to now a fair and proper explanation for this has never been given. There is a feeling of shame about the policies implemented in the Dutch East Indies and now it is time to atone for it. Over the years the Dutch have managed to collect large sums of money in the state treasury and it has not been used to improve the welfare of the indigenous population.

The correct thinking is that with the assumption that the money collected was originally the result of tax collection, then the results should be used for the benefit of the region itself and not used to cover the shortfall in the Dutch treasury. The person who made it very clear was C.Th. Van Deventer, who published an article in the magazine *de Gids* in 1899 entitled "Debt of Honor" (Colenbrander and J.E. Stokvis, 1917: 1-47). The debt was the total amount of positive balances, transferred to the Dutch treasury for more than forty years. Van Deventer felt that the Dutch in turn were obliged to do something in return. Something for the people in the Dutch East Indies by spending the millions of guilders that were withdrawn for the land and the people who raised it.

In this case it is subtly shown that there is something paradoxical in the sincere attempt to return something to the colony, while at the same time the business community is given free rein to achieve results. In addition to Van Deventer, there was another important propagandist of ethical politics, namely the journalist P. Brooshooft. He was the editor-in-chief of the widely read magazine *De Locomotief*, where he published a copy of Van Deventer's article. He published his own ideas under the title "De Ethische koers in de Belandae politiek" and thus also gave the name to ethical politics. Brooshooft cited the following as the rationale for the ethical school:

"We must also not be sentimental, not chase after effects with "beautiful Insulinde", "emerald of the equator", or "warmth for our good brown-skinned brothers", which is certainly no better than most boys – and that does not mean much. What we must force devotion to duty towards the Dutch East Indies is the best of them human tendencies: the sense of justice, the feeling that dedicates, against his will, to the best of us Javanese to give what we have for him, the generous impulse of the stronger to deal fairly with the weaker. Only when our colonial policy breathes in this atmosphere will we be good masters of the Indies". (Brooshooft, 1901).

Here we can also read that no question was raised about colonialism, but that the Javanese people had to be protected as a weaker group, from exploitation by local leaders or by the Dutch. This is also called "patronage". As will be seen the Ethical Policy included a number of concrete measures, which although their results were limited, were quite adapted to the economic situation on Java in particular. These included irrigation projects, the provision of agricultural credit and agricultural extension, the construction of ports and the establishment of schools (Touwen, 2000:70-73).

In 1901, the ethical idea was transformed into official government policy. The Ethical Policy consisted of a series of policy measures that can be grouped under three headings: (1) welfare policies for the indigenous population of the Dutch East Indies; (2) more education for the indigenous population; (3) limited participation of the indigenous population in the administration of government. It can be said that the Ethical Policy also had imperialist aims, or that the ethical policy was related to the expansion of Dutch power in the Dutch East Indies between 1894 and 1918. This relationship requires some explanation (Touwen, 2000:70).

Both the policy of prosperity and other forms of ethical policy, as well as the pacification of areas outside Java that were not yet controlled, were expressions of increasing government intervention and pressure from Western organizations. The improvement of the welfare of the indigenous population was sometimes used only as an argument for military action. Important thinkers in the ethical field, such as Brooshooft, Van Deventer and Multatuli, did not oppose the expansion of Dutch power in the Indonesian archipelago. Criticism of the abuses committed by indigenous governments, and the belief that Dutch input would bring about improvement and justice, make it clear that 'ethical' thinking should not be equated with anti-colonialism, but on the contrary often intensified colonial relations. The idea that the goal of bringing the entire Indonesian archipelago under Dutch control was part of the Ethical policy and should therefore be included literally in its definition (Locher-Scholten, 1996).

Things like the expansion of Dutch power (*Pax Neerlandica*), efforts to achieve a more independent Dutch East Indies, administrative decentralization and improvements in education and health services also benefited the European group. The same

thing also happened in the expansion of infrastructure: the construction of highways, railways, ports and irrigation. Therefore, he firmly stated that the Ethical Policy was not only aimed at the Indonesian people, but also benefited the European people. In this way, the two definitions of the concept of Ethical Policy are policies aimed at bringing the entire Indonesian archipelago under actual Dutch rule and at developing the land and society in this region towards self-government under the leadership of the Dutch government and towards the Western model (Locher-Scholten, 1996; Arnout, 2021).

Attention is paid to the fact that state and community development efforts must be carried out according to the blueprint imposed by the colonial government and leave little room for autonomous development or non-Western traditions, which clearly show paternalism, supervision and a sense of superiority. Although the expansion of authority does have an important relationship with ethical thinking, I still argue that the two are two different things, however closely related. The expansion of authority not only had ethical motives, but also had other reasons that were less noble or less paternalistic. At the same time, the Ethical Policy has strengthened the expansion of authority by trying to bring development. The Ethical Policy focused on the development of the state and society towards self-government under Dutch leadership and according to the Western model and aimed to improve the welfare of the indigenous population (Touwen, 2000:75).

In 1902, a committee headed by H.E. Steinmetz was tasked with investigating the economic situation of the indigenous population. The so-called "research into the low welfare of the indigenous population in Java and Madoera" was carried out with great care and resulted in the publication of no less than 32 volumes in the period between 1905 and 1914. Such extensive reporting was of course difficult to translate into concrete policy measures. Over time, various initiatives emerged. The most important were irrigation projects, the development of infrastructure such as roads and ports, the provision of credit, health services, education and agricultural extension.

The officials responsible for the initiatives taken by many government officials and government services were D. Fock, who first as a member of the House of Representatives and then as Minister of Colonies (1905-1908) was involved in the Ethical Policy, and A.W.F. Idenburg, Fock's predecessor and successor as minister and governor-general from 1909 to 1916 (Locher-Scholten, 1996: 202). The various measures taken by the colonial government were not completely summarized as "irrigation, emigration and education", the so-called 'trio van Deventer'. The impact of irrigation projects and agricultural extension included in this case education did not ultimately lead to an increase in the welfare of the population in Java, because this was offset by high population growth, which put great pressure on per capita income (Touwen, 2000: 75-76).

It is surprising that the Ethical Policy focused mainly on Java, where the "debts of honor" were mostly incurred, while the financial resources of the colony, which financed the Ethical Policy, were increasingly obtained in areas outside Java. After all, it was here that the great economic expansion of Western and indigenous plantation companies took place, producing for export and generating important tax revenues. However, Java alone was still too large to implement an effective development policy. Initiatives such as the People's Credit System and the establishment of village schools were not enough for a densely populated island, several times the size of the Netherlands.

In the vast area covered by the Outer Islands, the efforts made are often no more than a drop in the ocean. This does not change the fact that little progress has been made in building roads and ports, deploying agricultural consultants and restructuring the debts of domestic producers. Another criticism might be that the efforts have focused so strongly on food agriculture that relatively little attention has been paid to the structure of the economy. If this were the case, the development of domestic export agriculture would be an important concern, but this is currently treated as a stepchild, especially since in some sectors (e.g. rubber) it is a competitor to European plantation companies. (Touwen, 2000:76).

This is compared to post-war development aid. It shows that the efforts were made with good intentions and contributed to the further economic development of the Dutch East Indies. However, the mother country did not invest its money in it: the Ethical Policy had to support itself from tax revenues in the colony. Only in 1905, at the suggestion of the Minister of Colonies Idenburg, was 40 million guilders allocated in the Dutch national budget for various projects within the Ethical Policy. Furthermore, development aid was limited to the existing Dutch patronage efforts. As already mentioned, the Netherlands could not afford to provide schools, health services and infrastructure in an area as large as the Indonesian archipelago. On the other hand, the Dutch economy did receive income from the colonies and it is surprising that there were no government subsidies from the mother country that could be used for the Ethical Policy.

As mentioned above, the Ethical Policy aimed not only to improve welfare, but also to improve education and the development of the Dutch East Indies towards self-government under Dutch leadership and according to the Western model. Education for the native population was of course a prerequisite for greater administrative participation and welfare. However, improvements in the school system were slow. The Director of Education, J.H. Abendanon, who was appointed in 1900, focused mainly on the education of the Javanese elite. He was a supporter of the idea of association, meaning that the Dutch East Indies should remain strongly connected to the Netherlands and should develop into an independent unit within the kingdom, where guardianship would gradually give way to emancipation when spiritual values had been sufficiently transferred (Miert, 1991:13-15). The native elite were the ones most able to adopt Western ideas. The idea of association was actually an interpretation of how self-government would be implemented under Dutch leadership. Under Governor General Van Heutsz (1904-1909), since 1907 also began the establishment of "village schools, small and cheap schools in villages in Java. Ethical policies in particular were very lacking in training indigenous elites

who could carry out administrative functions.

Although Snouck Hurgronje, Abendanon and Governor-General Idenburg remained supporters of the association idea, in the years around the First World War various policy makers became advocates of a more far-reaching assimilation in which the native population should adopt Dutch culture and civilization and even absorb it completely. The ideas of assimilation and association, both of which were heavily dependent on the colonial policies implemented by France in its colonies, were closely related to each other. In the Dutch East Indies during the Ethical Policy, the association idea initially dominated, which in short emphasized the self-government of the colonies within the larger Dutch empire, and at some point even allowed for “emancipation”, so that less and less cultural commonality was sought. The People's Council (Volksraad) was the most important example of gradual participation in national government, but it ultimately served only an advisory role. Although only a small number of Indonesians served on the Volksraad, it was the first official consultative body through which the nationalist movement could interact with the colonial government (Touwen, 2000:80).

#### **4. The rise and strengthening of nationalism**

The rise of nationalism is usually described in the form of a number of organizations and associations, some of which have a certain political character and others are religious movements that represent the interests of certain groups in society. The first Dutch East Indies emancipation movement was Budi Utomo, or “high ideals”, which was founded in 1908. This group was a fairly elite interest group and oriented towards Java with a strong socio-cultural character. Budi Utomo sought to expand Western education and increase access to education for the Indonesian people. Although this organization supported the Ethical Policy, it also wanted the restoration of Javanese culture as it had existed, for example during the Javanese kingdoms of Majapahit and Mataram (in the 14th - 16th centuries). The palaces in Central Java (Yogyakarta and Surakarta) which still symbolized the traditional noble power of Java, played a major role in Budi Utomo (Ricklefs, 1994)

Budi Utomo was not a radical group. Two members of Budi Utomo, Tjipto Mangunkusumo and Soewardi Suryaningrat, considered Budi Utomo too moderate. They were impressed by the views of journalist E.F.E. Douwes Dekker. Ernest Douwes Dekker (he was the grandson of Multatuli's brother, a second cousin) had strong views on the political emancipation of the Dutch East Indies. He formulated the idea of an Indonesian national state that would encompass the entire Dutch East Indies and that would not be based on Javanese domination. This controversial idealist also sought to bridge the social and racial gaps in Indian society. Because his grandmother was Javanese, he was officially Indo-European. This was reflected in his ambivalent attitude between loyalty to the Dutch colonialists and solidarity with the Dutch East Indies. In his lecture at the Indische Bond in 1911 entitled "The Relationship between White and Brown Skin", he called on Indo-Europeans to connect with Indonesians and fight against colonial injustice. Together with Tjipto Mangunkusumo and Suwardi Suryaningrat, Douwes Dekker founded the Indische Partij in 1912 (Touwen, 2000:83). The Indische Partij, whose supporters were mostly Indo-European, explicitly fought for Indonesian independence. Governor General Idenburg, who was pleased with the Ethical Policy, considered this to be excessive and declared the party unconstitutional. To prevent the Islamic movement Sarekat Islam, which was rapidly gaining many members, from radicalizing the Indische Partij through its influence, the three founders of the Indische Partij were exiled to the Netherlands in 1913. In 1918 they returned to the Dutch East Indies.

The Sarekat Islam, founded in Bandung in 1911 under the name of the Sarekat Dagang Islam, was a trade organization that aimed to help Muslim traders compete with their Chinese counterparts. This Islamic association experienced rapid growth and gained a large number of members. A branch of this association was soon established in Surakarta, which grew under the influence of batik traders who wanted to rebel against the local Javanese nobility. In 1912, the Articles of Association of this department were changed and its name was changed to the Sarekat Islam. One of the important leaders of the Islamic Union in those early years was Raden Umar Saïd Tjokroaminoto, a merchant from the lower nobility.

By 1916, the membership of the Sarekat Islam was estimated at one million. The movement gradually became more radical, but not very clear. There were groups that were under the influence of the palace in Surakarta and wanted to reduce the power of the colonial government and the regents. There was also a social emancipation movement among Indonesian intellectuals in the cities. Some rural Muslim members were less progressive and wanted to return to traditional values there were many members in areas with great socio-economic change such as in Sumatra (Jambi and West Sumatra) and in Southeast Kalimantan.

The indigenous Indonesian population was very politically active around the time of World War I. As a result of World War I, relations with the Netherlands became more difficult to establish in 1914-1917 and overseas shipping traffic stagnated. This not only made the Dutch East Indies more economically autonomous, the turnover of civil servants was slower, and contacts with countries other than the mother country were stronger.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Ethical policy became a term widely used in the first decades of the twentieth century for colonial policies that were supposed to benefit the interests of the indigenous population. The content given to the term depended on how one saw its significance. For the first, it meant primarily a clear path for the Christian mission, for others, it meant strengthening the economic position of the indigenous population, for the third, it meant greater access for the indigenous population to education, and for the fourth, it meant

a greater role for the indigenous population in government. Another difference was that some believed that it was in the interests of the indigenous population to adopt Western culture and civilization as quickly as possible, while others believed that the unique character of the indigenous culture should be preserved as much as possible.

Furthermore, the label “ethical policy” was attached to all kinds of measures that served the same or even primarily the interests of the European population, the Western plantation companies and the colonial government. This applied, for example, to the construction of roads and irrigation works and to the control of infectious diseases, but also to the education of the native population, since colonial society in the twentieth century could no longer function without native personnel who had knowledge of reading, writing, arithmetic and Dutch. The concepts of “guardians” and “ethical policy” thus also acquired the function of legitimizing the ongoing colonial domination. Although the concept of trusteeship actually implied that this domination was temporary, this idea was not strongly held by the Dutch at the turn of the century. Van Kol also believed that the end of Dutch rule would only be a temporary disadvantage to the native population. There was talk of promoting independence for the Dutch East Indies as a long-term goal, but even then maintaining ties with the Netherlands seemed self-evident.

However, it was not the intention of the colonial government that the native population, even if they were allowed to think about the future of the country, would take over their own leadership in the short term. The trusteeship system served to improve conditions in the colonies, but was not intended to make the colonies independent. The explanation for this apparently contradictory attitude, in which imperialism was accompanied by a kind of development work, lies in the paternalism that characterized the attitude of Western countries in the late colonial period, that is, between about 1870 and 1942. Not only was it considered that the task of the West was to abolish the colonies, there was also a realization that the gap between the modern West and the traditional East was unbridgeable. That is why Western countries had to help the colonies by means of patronage in order to bring about economic progress. Progress was of course also important to the colonizers, because the more prosperous a colony was, the greater the profits that could be derived from it.

Was there a rise of the nationalist movement that occurred roughly at the same time as the Ethical Policy? Was there any interaction between the two? There was almost no direct interaction, in the sense that the colonial government did not consult with the nationalists to give substance to the idea of administrative participation of the government. In this respect, nationalism owes a lot to the colonial government. Initially, the ethical politicians and the nationalists were both on the path of “association” and it seems that the Dutch colonial government sensed Indonesia’s desire for administrative intervention.

Over time, nationalist aspirations reached much higher. During the 1920s there was a change in trend. The increasing optimism about the development of the indigenous population was replaced by a more gloomy atmosphere of rebellion and oppression. Although the Ethical Policy was never officially ended, it can be said that around 1920 it lost its momentum. The government's intransigence and lack of understanding of nationalist ideals is also evident in the legendary statement of Governor General De Jonge: "We have ruled here with cleavers and clubs for three hundred years, and in another three hundred years we will still be in power and will be able to do so." Because of the more hardline political direction, the wishes of the indigenous population were increasingly ignored, even though this was basically justified. This is what caused the nationalist movement to become radical.

Perhaps a more flexible attitude towards nationalism would have changed the violent process that Indonesia experienced in fighting for its independence. But it was precisely because the government increasingly suppressed the nationalist movement that it became radical. The conservative approach seems to be a sign of the rigidity of the Dutch during the decolonization process of 1945-1949. While the Ethical Policy initially promoted compromise ideals such as 'association' and some influence over the national government, in the end the colonial government had little understanding of the desire of indigenous peoples for self-government.

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