

Beyond Java: dr. Rubini, Political Exile, and the Dynamics of Peripheral Nationalism in Colonial Indonesia (1920–1944)

Mohammad Rikaz Prabowo*¹

*m.rikaz.prabowo@fkip.untan.ac.id

¹Universitas Tanjungpura

Abstract

Rubini was a national movement activist in West Kalimantan who, in 1939, became the chairman of Parindra and then led the resistance against Japan from 1942 to 1944. This study aims to explain his background and role in the struggle against colonialism during the Dutch and Japanese eras. The study uses historical methods, including heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography. Based on the analysis, the following conclusions are drawn: First, Rubini was born into an educated and respected aristocratic family in Sundanese society. During his time as a STOVIA student, he interacted with national political movements such as the Paguyuban Pasundan, which developed a nationalist attitude. Second, in 1939, he became one of the heads of the West Kalimantan commissariat; through exemplary cooperation and efforts, this party became a major political force there at that time. Third, Dr. Rubini, along with other activists, founded Nissinkwai (1942), which pretended to collaborate with the Japanese. In 1943, Rubini led an underground resistance movement. Unfortunately, this action was discovered by the Japanese; he and other activists were arrested and executed on June 28, 1944. The struggle he led was one of the factors that triggered the Dayak resistance in 1945 and influenced his colleagues' efforts to maintain independence. This research contributes to the historiography of the national movement and the Japanese occupation, particularly in the context of local history in West Kalimantan. This research adds to the list of doctors who participated in the struggle for independence in the nation's history.

Received 17 October 2025
Revised 23 November 2025
Accepted 8 December 2025
pp. 99–114

Keywords

Japanese Occupation, Parindra, Pontianak, Rubini, West Kalimantan

To cite this article

Prabowo, M. R. (2025). Beyond Java: dr. Rubini, Political Exile, and the Dynamics of Peripheral Nationalism in Colonial Indonesia (1920–1944). *Diakronika* 25(2), 99–114. <http://doi.org/10.24036/diakronika/vol25-iss2/493>.



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Introduction

The rise of the nationalist movement in Indonesia, marked by the birth of the 'ethical politics' era in 1901 and the decline of the Dutch East Indies in 1942, was closely linked to the emergence of educated native Indonesians who became leaders. This group, hailing from the priyayi, or aristocratic, class, was one of the few Indonesians with access to education at the time. Through this educational process, the children of the priyayi and aristocrats developed broad insights and perspectives (Santosa & Supriatna, 2008). Gradually, a sense of national consciousness began to grow in them as they observed how their lives had deteriorated under colonial rule. This manifested in many aspects of life; poverty made it difficult for the people to fulfil basic needs, such as education (Frankema, 2013). This feeling, fueled by a shared sense of shared fate and suffering under colonial oppression, created an atmosphere of solidarity (Siri, 2022).

The emergence of educated native figures played a crucial role in the national movement, as their efforts fostered unity among individuals, which was then directed toward organisational struggle. Dr Soetomo, often cited as the father of the Indonesian national awakening, is an example. At the time, he was still a student at the School of Medicine, *School Tot Opleiding van Indische Artsen* (STOVIA) in Batavia, and he envisioned the formation of an organisation to advance public education. This idea was supported by his senior, Dr Wahidin Soedirohusodo (Tangkilsan, 2015), which led Soetomo and his fellow doctors to establish the Boedi Oetomo organisation on May 20, 1908 (Leow, 2014). Another notable figure is Dr Cipto Mangunkusumo, who, along with E.F.E. Douwes Dekker and Suwardi Suryaningrat (a STOVIA student), formed the *Indische Partij* (IP). This organisation is known as the first political party to prioritise Indonesian independence (Sulandjari, 2016).

The three figures mentioned above are among a handful of indigenous elites who succeeded in becoming leaders of the people through their struggles and the founding of movement organisations. Furthermore, both share the same educational background: medicine. The significant contribution of the STOVIA alums to the national movement stems from its status as the first higher education institution in the Dutch East Indies (Makmur et al., 1993). Furthermore, the educational atmosphere at STOVIA brought together students from all over the country. The campus served not only as a place of learning but also as a melting pot for intellectuals to interact. With these diverse backgrounds, the STOVIA was always bustling with discussions on topics such as colonialism and the future of the Indonesian nation (Wisnuwardana, 2014).

Activists from the STOVIA movement later became doctors stationed throughout Indonesia, providing humanitarian healthcare services to remote areas. Interestingly, in these placements, doctors who had previously engaged in nationalist movement activism sought to maintain their idealism while becoming the main driving force in society's response to social realities (Sarkawi, 2024). Therefore, in their new positions, they emerged as respected, important figures known for their intelligence and determination to improve society's welfare (Salsabilah et al., 2023). Another figure relevant to this discussion is Dr Soetomo, stationed in Baturaja in 1917 and appointed as secretary of the Among Bongso association (Kasenda et al., 2013). The story of Dr M. Soetopo in 1920: while serving in Kediri, he was appointed to the provincial council (raad) but instead used it to voice the interests of the people (Gayatri, 1984). Meanwhile, dr. Soemarno in Kuala Kapuas in 1939 became an essential figure in the management of the Partai Indonesia Raya (Parindra/Great Indonesia Party) there (Sosroatmodjo, 1981).

The presence of indigenous doctors who later became community leaders also occurred in West Kalimantan. dr. Agusdjam, for example, is known as the first indigenous doctor stationed in this region, supported the establishment of the Sarekat Rakyat (SR) Pontianak organisation (1924), and founded the *Societeit Medan Sepakat* (Listiana, 2019). Agusjam himself is a classmate of Dr. Soetomo (Liem, 2021) and once served near Surakarta and Kendal (Sutjiatiningsih, 1983) as a large base for Syarikat Islam (SI) and *Insulinde* (Erik, 2021). Other names, such as dr. Rubini also deserves significant attention in this research, especially in West Kalimantan, because he is known not only as a skilled doctor but also as a community leader who actively fought during two colonial eras. From his time as a student at STOVIA (1920) and Parindra (1938-1941) until the Japanese occupation (1942-1945) (Nurul & Az Zahra, 2022).

Beyond his political struggles, dr. Rubini continued to serve as a humanitarian as much as possible. He was involved in missions to eradicate outbreaks of tropical diseases that frequently afflicted the people at the time, such as malaria and tuberculosis (Paath, 1939b). Furthermore, dr. Rubini was known as a mobile doctor who was close to the people, visiting patients even in remote villages along the Kapuas River basin (Wiyogo, 2022). dr. Rubini's active participation in the national movement should

be an added value for him. Asvi Warman Adam (2022) stated that what Rubini did went beyond his primary duties as a doctor carrying out a humanitarian mission.

This is evident from his track record as a STOVIA student (1920–1930), during which he interacted with the Paguyuban Pasundan (PP). This organisation was founded on the ideas of STOVIA students and Sundanese aristocrats in Batavia, who, in 1919, included politics as one of their avenues of struggle (Irshanto, 2017). Then, when assigned to West Kalimantan, Dr Rubini joined Parindra until, in 1939, he finally became one of its leaders (Prabowo, 2024). His struggle continued despite pressure from the Japanese occupation, and a ban on associations and gatherings was issued. Parindra and other organisations were disbanded (Dai Nippon Kaigun Minsei-Bu Pontianak, 1942), and Japan later allowed the establishment of *Nissinkwai*, where Rubini served as one of its leaders (Achmad, 1996). Together with other figures, he organised an underground movement to fight the Japanese (Suwignjo & Mansur, 1972), which had to be paid dearly with the loss of his life in 1944 (Gin, 2011).

Based on the explanation above, Dr Rubini's role in the Indonesian independence struggle needs to be studied in greater depth to gain an objective view of his contributions beyond his humanitarian duties as a health worker. Furthermore, this study is expected to add new knowledge: that the course of the struggle in West Kalimantan was inseparable from the critical role of intellectual figures. Moreover, Dr. Rubini was active in the war in two different eras: during the Dutch colonial period and the Japanese occupation. His role in the struggle in both eras is pretty consistent but has not been fully conveyed. The historiography of other medical figures in West Kalimantan, such as Soedarso, is actually more prominent in post-independence Indonesia (Purba, 1993). Therefore, this study will provide a background of dr. Rubini's life, followed by his role in the political struggle during the national movement era and the Japanese occupation. Presenting an interesting finding about the national struggle at the local level, driven by intellectuals and political activists like dr. Rubini.

In the last ten years, there has been no in-depth research exploring dr. Rubini's biography, whether it be his thoughts and struggles or his role as a doctor in the pre-independence era. Rahmayani (2013) in *Pelayanan Kesehatan di Singkawang dan Pontianak Pada Awal Abad ke-20*, only mentions that dr. Rubini served as a surgeon at Sungai Jawi Hospital. Meanwhile, Yafi and Darmadi (2023), in *Pendudukan Jepang di Pontianak 1941–1943*, have presented a review of the establishment of the *Nissinkwai* organisation, but without mentioning dr. Rubini's name or role in it at all. Meanwhile, research by Listiana & Nurcahyani (2022) briefly mentions dr. Rubini's closeness to R.M. Nalaparana, the chairman of the Persatuan Anak Borneo (PAB), with whom this organisation collaborated with Parindra.

Research Methods

This research uses historical methods to reveal dr. Rubini's life journey and political struggles during the Dutch colonial era and the Japanese occupation. This method was chosen because it is considered capable of describing a person's life journey in full, covering background, environment, closeness/interests, and the events that influenced them. The historical method is implemented in four stages: source collection (heuristic), source criticism (verification), source interpretation (interpretation), and history writing (historiography) (Miftahuddin, 2020).

Source collection was conducted between 2022 and 2024, mostly in written form, including newspapers, reports of the Allied Military Tribunal hearing in Pontianak in 1946, and memoirs by historical actors or witnesses. Essentially, contemporary newspapers, such as Borneo-Barat and Borneo Sinbun, served as the primary sources. Researchers obtained them from the National Library of Indonesia (Perpusnas) and from the NIOD Institute's collection in the Netherlands. Other newspapers were obtained from Delpher (delpher.nl), for example, Bataaviasch Nieuwsblad (1919, 1920, 1928), De Locomotief (1921), and Het Nieuws Van Den Dag Voor Nederlandsch-Indie (1930, 1934). These Dutch-language newspapers contain traces of Dr Rubini's work before he was stationed in Kalimantan. Meanwhile, for secondary sources, researchers used previous research, including books, journals, and monographs. One of the most important books used is *Sebelas Perintis Kemerdekaan Indonesia Dari Kalimantan Barat* (1972), which Suwignjo also wrote as the chairman of West Kalimantan Parindra and a colleague of dr. Rubini.

The next step is to verify the source, to check its authenticity (external criticism) and credibility (internal criticism). To maintain authenticity in the face of external criticism, the newspapers were obtained only from trusted providers, such as the National Library of Indonesia (Perpusnas RI). The

authenticity of the source was also assessed based on the paper's appearance and spelling, which characterise it as from a past era (Karima et al., 2023). Meanwhile, to maintain the credibility of the source, especially secondary sources, events and dates were matched between the obtained newspapers and the source documents. The interpretation process requires sufficient insight into the research topic being worked on, so it is necessary. Interpretation is a study used by historical researchers to imagine what the situation was like at the time of the event, which is then reconstructed and presented to today's audience (Kanumuyoso, 2020). Given the political context in West Kalimantan at the time, a comprehensive interpretation is necessary to analyse Dr Rubini's actions. Due to research limitations, primary sources regarding his diaries or excerpts from his speeches have not been obtained. Therefore, it is necessary to interpret the available sources to determine which of his actions constitute political activism.

In the final stage, namely historiography, this study uses a political history approach. Abbas (2014) himself stated that conventional history is essentially synonymous with politics, that political events, wars, diplomacy, and the actions of political figures determine the course of history. According to the author, a political history approach is appropriate for uncovering the life and struggles of Dr Rubini. It is because he is better known as a people's leader, which adds value to his humanitarian work as a doctor. Sporadically across various local historiographies, from the era of the national movement to the Japanese occupation, Rubini is often portrayed as an essential political activist (Nurul & Az Zahra, 2022).

It is evident from his track record. Since the 1920s, while still a student, he has been familiar with national political movements. He came into contact with the Paguyuban Pasundan (PP) organisation and his colleagues at STOVIA, who became political activists, including Sarwono (LIPI, 2009) and S.M. Amin (Tim Museum Sumpah Pemuda, 2020). This was followed by his activism with Parindra in 1938 (Paath, 1938b) and Medan Sepakat (Paath, 1938a) and led to his underground action against the Japanese in 1942–1944 (Effendy, 1982).

Result

Life and educational background of dr. Rubini



Figure 1. Portrait of Rubini while studying at STOVIA

Source(s): (Keluarga Ahli Waris dr. Rubini, 2022)

dr Rubini's early life can be traced to her background; she was born and raised in the Priangan region, a region steeped in Sundanese culture. She was born Raden Rubini Natawisastra on August 31, 1906, in Bandung (Akcaya, 1987). Both of Rubini's parents were of the Menak Sundanese ethnic group, a large family whose predecessors had held prominent positions among the people. Her father, Raden Natawisastra, was a teacher at the Normal School in Bandung. At the same time, her mother, Ni Raden Endung Lengkamirah, was a descendant of King Galuh (Wretikandayun), who continued the Sumedang Palace dynasty. From her mother's line, several relatives or predecessors became regents, prosecutors, and religious leaders. From her family background, it is clear that dr. Rubini grew up in a noble family that valued education and was respected in society from the traditional to the colonial era (Woerjaningsih, 2022).

The author believes that his family environment also influenced Rubini's emergence in political awareness. Furthermore, at that time, Bandung was a significant city and a centre of the nationalist movement. The first political party in the Indies, the Indische Partij (IP), centred its activities in Bandung in 1912, with nationalist press publications that fostered public awareness (Herlina, 2017). Bandung was also known as a stronghold of the Syarikat Islam (SI) and the site of its first congress in July 1916, attended by 80 of its branches (Suhartono, 2001). This activism in Bandung was driven by educated native Indonesians, which the author believes also inspired him to pursue higher education (Wiyogo, 2022). The Bataaviasch Nieuwsblad newspaper dated May 27, 1919, recorded Rubini as one of the participants in the STOVIA entrance selection along with hundreds of other young people from across the country (De Jonge, 1919). Based on satisfactory selection results, Rubini was accepted and attended education from 1920 (Zaalberg, 1920) until 1929, after completing lectures (Van Beem, 1929). The 10-year medical education Rubini had to complete was due to the curriculum established at STOVIA at that time. Students who graduated from the Hollandsch Indische School (HIS) had to take preparatory classes for 3 years first before continuing to the main education for 7 years (Radiopoetro, 1976).

Rubini's daily life on campus wasn't just about studying; it was also about being active in sports. He excelled in gymnastics (Lievegoed, 1921) and football, which led his university to victory in the intercollegiate competition in 1928 (Zaalberg, 1928). It is not surprising, as Rubini himself had played for the professional club 'Oliveo', which competed in the premier class, as a forward in 1927 (NIVB, 1934). In addition to sports activities, Rubini can also come into contact with national movements on campus. The study process at STOVIA indirectly strengthened his national spirit. Rubini not only studied medicine but also received political education through lectures and books, as well as national newspapers and discussions frequently held by the Studieclub. Later, after graduating, STOVIA alumni were not only present in society as experts but also as political leaders who fought for the progress of the people. Brugmans (1976) stated that STOVIA graduates produced the first wave of indigenous intellectuals. Several alumni have become political leaders since 1908, including Dr Soetomo (founder of Boedi Oetomo), Dr Wahidin Soedirohusodo, and Dr Cipto Mangunkusumo (founder of the Indische Partij).

STOVIA students like Rubini were accustomed to interacting with the life around their campus, in the Salemba and Sawah Besar (Weltevreden) areas. This area became a gathering place for intellectuals in Batavia. This interaction fostered the emergence of a sense of national consciousness, also supported by the presence of the house of Douwes Dekker. A journalist and figure of the *Indische Partij*. It was located near STOVIA and became a centre for student discussion, teaching them to write ideas and critiques that were widely published in the campus bulletin and mass media (Wisnuwardana, 2014). This process further strengthened students' spirit and their views on nationalism and other values. Several of Rubini's colleagues emerged as movement activists. For example, Sarwono Prawirohardjo was active as an administrator of Jong Java and became its chairman in 1928 (Rahman et al., 2015). Others, such as Kroeng Raba Nasoetion, later better known as Sutan Mohammad Amin, were known to have been involved in several organisations, Jong Sumateranen Bond, Jong Islamieten Bond (JIB), Perhimpunan-Perhimpunan Pelajar Indonesia, and were actively engaged in the Kongres Pemoeda II on October 27-28, 1928 (Tim Museum Sumpah Pemuda, 2020).

For Rubini himself, researchers suspect that during his studies at STOVIA, he interacted with the Paguyuban Pasundan (PP), which was founded on September 22, 1914. PP's personnel were primarily comprised of Sundanese aristocrats, some of whom were STOVIA members. Its first chairman was Daeng Kanduruan Ardiwinata, and his deputy was Dayat Hidayat. Meanwhile, the commissioners were Raden Jungjunan and Mas Iskandar (Lubis, 1998). All four critical figures in PP were STOVIA students. PP was an organisation initially oriented towards social and cultural matters, as well as education, particularly to advance the Sundanese people and the land of Pasundan. However, with the formation of the People's Council (Volksraad), PP changed its basic charter and included political activities as a form of struggle (Irshanto, 2017). After obtaining legal status in 1919, PP declared itself a political party open to all groups, including non-Sundanese (Lubis, 1998). PP's political struggle employed parliamentary methods through the votes entrusted to Sundanese figures in the Volksraad and regional raads (councils) (Ramelan, 1983). Beyond that, PP also published several newspapers, such as Sipatahoenan, which became the organisation's official media outlet and had an ethno-nationalist character, aimed at building political awareness among the people (Juliansah, 2023).

PP also joined the 1927 Permufakatan Perhimpunan-perhimpunan Politik Kebangsaan Indonesia (PPPKI), along with PSI, PNI, Boedi Oetomo, Indonesische Studie Club, Serikat Sumatera, and Kaoem

Betawi (Maulidan, 2024). By joining PPPKI, the scope of PP's struggle was freed from ethnic and regional barriers, elevating it to the level of a national struggle. In 1929, one of PP's mainstay cadres in the Volksraad was Otto Iskandardinata, who strongly spoke out on the interests and rights of the Indonesian people to be free from colonialism (Irshanto, 2017). From the facts above, it is difficult to deny that Rubini had some contact with PP and at least became a sympathiser of PP. Considering that the personnel of this organisation were quite dominated and influenced by the presence of the STOVIA community and the Sundanese nobility in Jakarta. PP became a place for Rubini's political education, further maturing his thoughts on future independence.

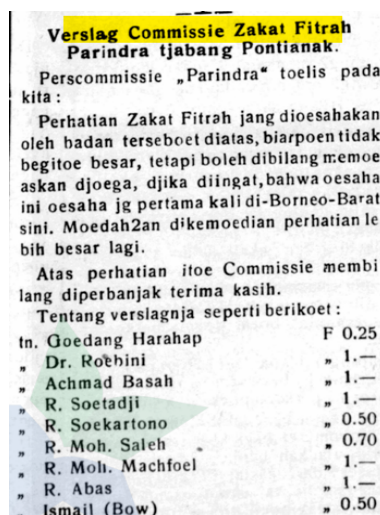
Rubini officially completed his medical education in 1930 and earned the title of Indische Arts, or native doctor (Mulder, 1930). At that time, STOVIA had changed its name to Geneeskundige Hooge School (GHS, Medicine College). No definitive records of his political affiliations were found until he completed his studies, aside from what the author suspects were his PP sympathies. His professional career began at the Grogol Mental Hospital (RSJ), where Rubini studied neurological diseases (Paath, 1939b).

Around 1932, Rubini was assigned by the Indies Department of Health to study the malaria outbreak in Pontianak for six months. It was during this time that Rubini likely met dr. Soesilo, head of the malaria research centre at Geeneskundige Laboratorium (Chabibah, 2021). Soesilo was a malaria specialist and dr. Soetomo's younger brother. So it's likely that the two often discussed the nationalist movement, which, at that time, Dr Soetomo had founded and had become chairman of the Indonesian National Party (PBI) (Tim Muskitnas, 2011). His findings led to his placement at the Centrale Burgerlijk Ziekenhuis (CBZ/Central Hospital). In addition to serving at the CBZ, Rubini also deepened his knowledge of pulmonary diseases (Paath, 1939b). He sought to gain valuable lessons to bolster his expertise alongside senior doctors, both indigenous and European.

dr. Rubini's Struggle in the National Movement Era

The vast geographical conditions of Kalimantan, with its inadequate infrastructure and health facilities, prompted the Dutch East Indies Department of Health to attempt to relocate doctors who had been concentrated on Java. One of the doctors relocated was dr. Rubini, who was transferred to Pontianak in September 1934 (Mulder, 1934), along with his wife, Mrs Amalia. In the capital of the West Borneo Residency, dr. Rubini was assigned to serve at the Military Ziekenhuis (Army Hospital) and the Sungai Jawi Hospital, a Catholic mission hospital (Nurul & Az Zahra, 2022). Outside of his regular duties, he also provided scheduled medical care in villages (Wiyogo, 2022) and opened a clinic at his residence that also provided midwifery deliveries (Gouvernements Bedrijf der Telefonie, 1939). In addition to carrying out his humanitarian duties as a health worker, dr. Rubini participated in the national political movement through Parindra. This party was formed through the fusion of the Persatoean Bangsa Indonesia (PBI) organisation, led by Dr Soetomo, with Boedi Oetomo (BO), led by R.M.T. Koesoemo Oetoyo (Prabowo, 2024). Parindra itself aimed to achieve Indonesian independence, moving cooperatively and cautiously (Sudiyo et al., 1997). However, Parindra also took an incidental cooperative stance (Kasenda et al., 2013), meaning that if there were a disappointing incident, it would temporarily withdraw its representatives from the Volksraad.

Integration was also carried out by regional organisations such as the Serikat Celebes, Serikat Sumatra, Serikat Ambon, the Kaoem Betawi, and Tirtayasa (Banten), which later unified as Parindra (Suhartono, 2001). In Kalimantan, Parindra first opened a branch in Banjarmasin (Southeast Borneo Residency). It was because a branch of the Persatoean Bangsa Indonesia (PBI) had been established in South Borneo since 1930. By the end of 1935, all PBI branches throughout Indonesia had adopted the new name (Wajidi, 2015). In Pontianak, the existence of this party began as a branch in 1936, which was pioneered by Raden Koempoel (Head of the Post Office), Hadjarati (HIS Teacher), Mustamir (Adjunct Agricultural Consul), A. Harahap (Head of the Harbour), and several community leaders such as Raden Wariban and Doelhadji (Soedarto et al., 1978). In July 1938, Parindra in Pontianak finally obtained official branch status with 36 members, chaired by A.N. Hadjarati (Prabowo, 2024). Rubini was identified as part of this official branch, referring to those party members who participated in the 'zakat fitrah' in December 1938 (Paath, 1938d).



Verslag Commissie Zakat Fitrah Parindra tjabang Pontianak.	
Perscommissie „Parindra“ toelis pada kita :	
Perhatian Zakat Fitrah jang dioesahkan oleh badan terseboet diatas, biarpontidak begitoe besar, tetapi boleh dibilang memoe askan djoega, djika diingat, bahwa oesaha ini oesaha jg pertama kali di-Borneo-Barat sini. Moedah2an dikemoedian perhatian le bih besar lagi.	
Atas perhatian itoe Commissie membi lang diperbanjak terima kasih.	
Tentang verslagnja seperti berikoet :	
tn. Goedang Harahap	F 0.25
„ Dr. Roethini	„ 1.—
„ Achmad Basah	„ 1.—
„ R. Soetadji	„ 1.—
„ R. Soekartono	„ 0.50
„ R. Moh. Saleh	„ 0.70
„ R. Moh. Machfoel	„ 1.—
„ R. Abas	„ 1.—
„ Ismail (Bow)	„ 0.50

Figure 2. Report on the collection of zakat fitrah among members of Parindra Pontianak in the Borneo-Barat, December 10, 1938
Source(s): (Paath, 1938d)

In a relatively short time, Parindra in West Kalimantan successfully established branches in various cities outside Pontianak. At the 1939 Parindra regional conference in Singkawang, Raden Mahmud Susilo Suwignyo was elected chairman of the Parindra regional commissariat. The regional commissariat's management included dr. Rubini, dr. Agusjam, dr. R. Sunaryo, dr. R.M. Abdurrachman Diponegoro, dr. Ismail, and Uray Amir Saifuddin as chairman (Suwignjo & Mansur, 1972). Under the leadership of Suwignyo, dr. Rubini and other colleagues, Parindra grew rapidly. The number of Parindra branches has increased not only in coastal cities such as Singkawang and Sambas, but also in the upper Kapuas area, such as Sintang (Soedarto, 1989). Assisted by Haji Rais, a former Sarekat Rakyat (SR) member, Parindra focused on consolidation efforts through cadre development and educational initiatives. Regular political cadre courses were held, covering the history of the national movement, the party's principles, and its objectives. This effort fueled the militancy of Parindra activists and cadres in West Kalimantan, who participated in public rallies supporting the demand for an "Indonesia Berparlemen" around December 1939 (Prabowo, 2024).

In addition, the Parindra regional commissariat also agreed to collaborate with the Persatuan Anak Borneo (PAB) organisation, founded in May 1939. PAB's members were traditional elites from the sultanate's nobility and government officials. This organisation was fully supported by the colonial government, which hoped to stem Parindra's growing influence. However, both Parindra and PAB administrators secretly collaborated politically (Listiana, 2019). Several former Parindra activists, such as Gusti Sulung Lelanang and H. Rais, joined PAB and subsequently redirected its efforts toward cultural and social matters. Parindra also appeared to support the candidacy of R.M. Nalaparana (PAB chairman) for a seat in the Volksraad representing West Borneo. Several Parindra figures were also invited to the reception celebrating Nalaparana's election, including dr. Rubini, who came to congratulate and give his support for the tasks that Nalaparana would carry out as a member of the Volksraad (Paath, 1939c).

Parindra of West Kalimantan also pursued other activities outside of politics. Five public schools were established in education before the Japanese arrived (Nurchayani, 2019). Regional Parindra branches, such as those in Ngabang, successfully organised various activities, including a debating club, music and arts, cooperatives, and a football club (Suwignjo & Mansur, 1972).

dr. Rubini's Struggle During the Japanese Occupation

The security situation in Kalimantan was quite tense in the lead-up to the outbreak of the Pacific War. The colonial government evacuated Dutch citizens and their employees, including Dutch doctors (Purba, 1993). As a result, health facilities experienced a shortage of medical personnel, including at the Military Hospital, where dr. Rubini served. Therefore, it was decided that several doctors would be appointed to the military service to fill the vacant positions. On December 23, 1941, dr. Rubini, along with dr. Soedarso and dr. Lie Giok Tjoan was appointed as a reserve medical officer with the rank of

second lieutenant (Booy, 1941). The appointment was intended to allow the three to focus on treating victims of the Japanese bombings that had overwhelmed hospitals. The bombings of the city of Pontianak occurred on December 19, 22, and 27, 1941, with a death toll of over one hundred (Tony, 1996). This appointment was not dr. Rubini's intention. Being part of the Dutch colonial army that suppressed the people and the movement contradicted the spirit of independence. This appointment was accepted out of consideration for humanity towards the victims of Japanese aircraft bombings and to assist in the operation of the military hospital abandoned by Dutch doctors. According to his heirs, Rubini was not active in the KNIL army but instead focused on medical duties (Wiyogo, 2022).

Meanwhile, dr. Salekan (1980) stated that Rubini acted more as the head of the health department before the Japanese invasion. On January 24, 1942, Japan launched an operation to capture key cities in West Kalimantan. The main target was to capture Pontianak, which, on February 1, 1942, was the capital of the residency under Japanese Army administration (Remmelink (ed.), 2015). Japan then issued a policy of tightening community activities and banning the press. Thirteen organisations and political parties, including Parindra, were frozen (Staf Semdam XII, 1970) through a regulation issued on April 1, 1942 (Gin, 2011). All press publications were strictly controlled, and radio stations were confiscated. Meanwhile, newspapers were replaced with news material desired by Japan, including propaganda (Heidhues, 2005). The only newspaper published during this era, controlled by the Japanese occupation government, was the Borneo Barat Shinbun. Finally, in 1943, it was renamed the Seibu Borneo Shinbun (Yafi et al., 2024). In addition to propaganda through the media, Japan also used arts and culture to honour the Emperor and glorify Japan, the Japanese spirit, and anti-Western sentiment (Budiarto et al., 2024).



Figure 3. Rubini was entrusted as the chairman of the committee for the celebration of Emperor Hirohito's birthday, *Borneo Barat Shinbun*, April 8, 1943
 Source(s): (Paath, 1943)

Parindra in West Kalimantan was not completely disbanded; it still maintained a covert personnel structure. Unfortunately, several key activists, including Raden Mahmud Susilo Suwignyo, were later taken by the Japanese as interpreters to serve in North Kalimantan. Therefore, Parindra's leadership in West Kalimantan was definitely carried out by figures still in Pontianak. One of them was dr. Rubini, who was then assigned as Head of Sungai Jawi Hospital (Suwignjo & Mansur, 1972). The desire to resist arose among movement activists. The perception of Japan as an "older brother" had changed markedly from its initial arrival. Socio-economic conditions also worsened due to the mobilisation of people to work for the Japanese military. Famine and malnutrition occurred due to the scarcity of necessities. It was certainly very worrying, as it made them susceptible to disease (Achmad, 1996). The Japanese also forcibly confiscated property, especially from the upper middle class, claiming it would be used to fund the war. Furthermore, the Japanese established brothels, where soldiers forcibly took women. There were seven brothels in Pontianak, each with at least five women (Extract From Interrogation Report No. 4/W.B Jap, February 1946, Informant Okajima Riki, Commander of The Keibitai and The Tokeitai, 1946).

These realities prompted activists to seek ways to remain active. This was done by feigning cooperation through an organisation sanctioned by the Japanese. This initiative began in May 1942 with the formation of the "Nissinkwai," chaired by R.P.M. Zubair Noto Soedjono and represented by dr. Rubini (both Parindra figures), J.E. Pattiasina, and Prince Adipati of the Pontianak Sultanate. The formation of Nissinkwai received the Japanese commander's permission and was inaugurated on May 22, 1942 (Rivai, 1978). Japan hoped that Nissinkwai would become an organisation that supported its efforts to win the Pacific War. (Machrus Effendy, 1982), a Parindra cadre, stated that Japan used Nissinkwai to gain support from community leaders. On the other hand, Nissinkwai cadres also used this opportunity for a different purpose. Nissinkwai's secret goal was to continue cultivating and maintaining the spirit of the independence struggle (Ahok et al., 1992). To avoid suspicion, activists pretended to maintain good relations and support Japanese programs. It included organising youth for military training, which was actually an effort to prepare for resistance against the Japanese (Soedarto, 1989).

In July 1942, Noto Soedjono, as the leader of Nissinkwai, requested official recognition from Japan. However, the Japanese military government, which had by then shifted to the Navy (Kaigun), became suspicious of Nissinkwai's activities. The Nissinkwai administrators were deemed to have shown insufficient loyalty to the war effort. The Japanese began to suspect Nissinkwai's ulterior motives, which were feigning cooperation. Therefore, in October 1942, Japan disbanded the organisation (Suwignjo & Mansur, 1972). Its activists then sought a new organisational platform to maintain their secret coordination. Its activists then sought a new organisational platform to maintain their secret coordination. Most eventually joined the Pemuda Muhammadiyah, employing the same strategy (Staf Semdam XII, 1970).. These ex-Nissinkwai meetings were often held under the guise of religious activities. Muhammadiyah generally cooperated with the Japanese and did not prohibit religious activities (Gin, 2011). This move was intended to avoid unnecessary harm to the Muslim community. Therefore, although Muhammadiyah in West Kalimantan was suspended, religious activities such as religious study groups could still be held.

Amidst the intense Japanese occupation, envoys from Banjarmasin arrived in January 1943, namely dr. Susilo and Makaliwey. The two met secretly, attempting to persuade activists in Pontianak to launch a resistance movement, as was being prepared in Banjarmasin. This meeting was influential among activists who aspired to be free of Japanese rule. Therefore, it was time for more concrete action (Soedarto, 1989). Rubini, who had received the envoys, took the initiative to convey the meeting's outcomes and coordinate the action (Djamhari et al., 1987). Thus, dr. Rubini was considered the leader of the resistance plan (Juniardi, 2009).

Discussion

Discussing Rubini's involvement in national political movements like Parindra cannot be separated from the national movement's context at the time, which was indeed organised by indigenous intellectuals. Doctors, as educated individuals, were among the first in Indonesian society to develop a national consciousness. Figures like dr. Soetomo viewed their status as intellectuals as a responsibility to consider the fate of the people actively and to participate in improving their lives (Samidi, 2023). Doctors were expected to be preoccupied not only with medical issues but also with active involvement in political movements. As exemplified by Dr. Cipto Mangunkusumo, in the midst of his humanitarian duties, he joined Boedi Oetomo (1908) and founded the R.A. Kartini Club when he was assigned to eradicate the plague in Malang (1910), as well as co-founding the Indische Partij in 1912 (Pramesti & Yuliati, 2024). For this reason, Dr. Rubini's struggle through her involvement in Parindra became a means to express her political thinking and support for the Indonesian nationalist camp. In addition to being founded by a fellow STOVIA alumnus (Dr. Soetomo), Parindra's programs are considered to align with her thinking. These programs include 1) strengthening the spirit of national unity, 2) implementing political action to obtain full rights in politics and government based on democracy and nationalism, and 3) advancing the people's lives economically and socially (Prabowo, 2024).

Parindra was quite influential within the Volksraad. Adopting the principle of a soft and dynamic struggle, adopting a non-cooperative or cooperative attitude depending on which was more beneficial and did not endanger the battle. Rubini often attended public meetings held by the colonial government in Pontianak, for example, in March 1940, demanding greater attention to health care access for the people (Besnard, 1940). In addition, the appeal of figures from various backgrounds to join Parindra

stemmed from this party's rejection of all forms of exclusivism. So anyone could join Parindra as long as they shared the same vision (Suwignjo & Mansur, 1972).

The existence of Parindra's sports development program, such as the football club, is thought to have emerged in part thanks to the suggestion and influence of Dr. Rubini. Given his experience in this sport and his important position within the Sportvereinigung 'Excelsior', he served as an advisor in 1937 (Paath, 1937) and was appointed chairman two years later (Paath, 1939a). According to the researcher, Rubini realised that sports had great potential to build or support the national movement. Through sports, national unity and nationalism could be fostered among youth and the wider community (Hariyoko, 2019). Rubini learned from his experience playing football in Batavia, where he saw discrimination against clubs and competitions by the Dutch East Indies Football Association (NIVB) based on population classification. A rarely discussed aspect of dr. Rubini's national political activities is his membership in the Medan Sepakat (Soos/Societet), or social group. This group became a second home for its administrators and members, who also belong to other socio-political organizations and are non-partisan. Medan Sepakat accepts dual membership due to its nature as a social club. Although not a political association like a party, the organisation's background and intent were inspired by a sense of unity among indigenous people. Dr. Agusjam, as the first chairman of Medan Sepakat, emphasised that Pontianak's diverse population lacked adequate entertainment to relieve fatigue.

Furthermore, they often grouped themselves based on ethnicity. Here, dr. Agusjam urged workers to eliminate tribalism and promote interaction, as they all hail from the same region: Indonesia. For this reason, Medan Sepakat was established not only as a place of entertainment but also as a necessity for a modern lifestyle at the time (Rahmayani, 2019).

Medan Sepakat also helped popularise the term "Indonesier" as a pronoun for indigenous people across Indonesia, replacing more regional terms such as "Javanese," "Malay," and so on. The term "Indonesier" has been used by Medan Sepakat since its inception in 1928. According to its statutes, it accepts only Indonesians because this association was designed with a sense of nationalism (Mandey, 1928). These ethnic groups from outside West Kalimantan began arriving in the 18th century to work or serve as civil servants in the colonial government (Firmansyah & Mirzachaerulsyah, 2023). In addition to serving as a place for interaction between educated native Indonesians from various ethnic groups, Medan Sepakat also frequently held lectures on multiple issues (Prabowo, 2025). At the celebration commemorating the 10th anniversary of Medan Sepakat in March 1938, dr. Rubini was elected chairman of the association. Medan Sepakat proved to be a neutral organisation and was accepted by all groups, including the ruling elite of the Pontianak Sultanate. Prince Kesuma Yudha, for example, praised Medan Sepakat's ten-year success, making it a model for others (Paath, 1938a). This demonstrated that Medan Sepakat was an Indonesian organisation capable of transcending ethnic boundaries, at least within Pontianak society and intellectual circles, through its various activities. At the Eid al-Fitr celebration in 1938, dr. Rubini, as the chairman of Medan Sepakat, said that this momentum could be a shared hope for strengthening the bonds of brotherhood (Paath, 1938c).

During the Japanese occupation (1943), dr. Rubini coordinated with other activists to develop the underground resistance movement. It was done because Nissinkwai, established initially as a pretence of cooperation, had been disbanded by the Japanese in October 1942. Some activists then gathered at the Pemuda Muhammadiyah, using religious meetings to discuss resistance plans (Suwignjo & Mansur, 1972). Other tactics are also carried out through meetings, took place at dr. Rubini's home with his fellow fighters, under the pretence of visiting or seeking medical treatment (Wiyogo, 2022). Amid the buildup of forces, news reached that Japan had begun crushing resistance in Banjarmasin, involving dr. Susilo since May 1943. Japan stated that the resistance in Banjarmasin was led by the former governor of Borneo, B.J. Haga, and several former colonial officials who would be assisted by Allied troops (Hamidhan, 1943). This news triggered activists in Pontianak to increase their alertness. In June 1943, the secret organisation 'Soeka Rela' was formed. To maintain the secrecy of the movement, members communicated with each other through code words (Rivai, 1978). Meanwhile, Soeka Rela members were asked to continue their normal activities to avoid arousing Japanese suspicion. The Japanese even entrusted Rubini himself to lead the committee for the Emperor's birthday celebrations (Paath, 1943).

Despite the cooperative cover tactics, several secret meetings were held to discuss preparations for the action until it was decided to take place on December 8, 1943 (Gin, 2011). Unfortunately, this plan was discovered by spies whom Japan had successfully infiltrated. According to S. Yamamoto, commander of the Tokkeitai (Japanese Navy secret police), the existence of this plan was successfully

detected in early October 1943 (Official Records Containing Signed Statements of Yamamoto Soichi, Lieutenant Japanese Navy, 1st and 4th February, 3rd and 19th March, 1946, 1946). As a result, on October 23, 1943, the Japanese began arresting individuals suspected of involvement in the movement. Those who remained uncaptured attempted to escape or gathered at the Sultan of Pontianak's palace and dr. Rubini's residence to plan their next move. The Japanese continued their investigation, and the activists were accused of planning resistance and listening to foreign radio broadcasts, which were strictly prohibited at the time (Foong, 2011). Foreign radio broadcasts, particularly those from the Allies, frequently reported Japan's defeat in battle, contradicting their propaganda.

Doctors, like Rubini, were also accused of attempting to spread the plague or poison to Japanese soldiers (Purba, 1993). This Japanese accusation stemmed from doctors' important position, which conferred status and influence within the community (Salekan, 1980). Meanwhile, Dr. Soemarno, who was stationed around Kandangan during that era, stated that the Japanese were actually jealous of doctors, who were more popular with the people and considered their helpers and protectors. The Japanese also feared that these doctors would report their crimes to the Allies upon landing (Sosroatmodjo, 1981). The Japanese were only able to detain dr. Rubini and other figures were arrested on January 24, 1944. No fewer than 100 community leaders, including dr. Rubini and the Sultanate's leaders were arrested, and some weapons were confiscated (Gin, 2011).

The Borneo Sinbun newspaper reported on July 1, 1944, that the Japanese had executed 48 resistance leaders, including dr. Rubini and his wife (Koakimoto, 1944). The Japanese acknowledged that the resistance in Pontianak was intended to foster general unity, organised by Parindra members like dr. Rubini. Furthermore, the resistance involved Chinese and civil servants, as well as twelve sultans/princes (Hamidhan, 1944). Rubini's surviving colleague, dr. Soemarno (stationed in Kandangan), revealed that the Japanese were more suspicious of politically active doctors. Because of their close relationship with the people, they feared that the people would strike back if the Allies landed (Sosroatmodjo, 1981). The failure of the underground resistance led by dr. Rubini also contributed to other forms of resistance. Between May and June 1945, armed resistance erupted among the Dayak community in Meliau, led by Pangsuma. This event marked the culmination of Dayak protests, which began in August 1944 due to forced labour and violence by the Japanese military (Soedarto, 1989). Another contributing factor was Dayak anger over the killing of respected Dayak figures, such as the sultanate and intellectuals (Tanasaldy, 2014). This included doctors who were highly trusted by the Dayak community (Purba, 1999) for their kindness and generosity and who frequently visited villages to provide medical assistance (Sutjiatiningsih, 1983). Furthermore, dr. Rubini was known for his close relationships and ability to communicate well with the indigenous population (Paath, 1939b).

After the proclamation of August 17, 1945, dr. Rubini's colleagues (and also members of Parindra) who survived the Japanese assassination were known to have contributed to the struggle to maintain Indonesian independence between 1945 and 1949. dr. Soedarso was known as a republican leader who organised resistance against the Dutch in Pontianak (Darmadi, 2017), as did dr. Salekan in Singkawang (Minhad & Amin, 2000). Meanwhile, dr. Suharso, who managed to return to Surakarta, was known as the founder of an emergency hospital to treat republican soldiers injured and disabled in the war (Poliman, 1983), continuing the noble ideals of their colleagues who had fallen as martyrs in the struggle. The people of West Kalimantan remember dr. Rubini's struggle through historiography, oral tradition, and other monumental means. His heroic story is often told to young people and in schools (Juniardi, 2022), and he is considered an exemplary figure and role model (Santoso, 2022). In recognition of his services and struggle, the local government designated the site of dr. Rubini and most of the activists executed by the Japanese as a monument and memorial for the fighters (Makam Juang Mandor). A regional day of mourning was declared every June 28 (Peraturan Daerah Prov. Kalimantan Barat Nomor 5 Tahun 2007, 2007). dr. Rubini's name is also commemorated in the names of streets in Bandung, Pontianak, and Mempawah, as well as in the name of a regional hospital. He is also honoured by the Scout Vanguard (gugus depan pramuka) at SMAN 1 Sungai Kunyit and SMAN 12 Pontianak. Furthermore, in 2022, Dr. Rubini was awarded the title of National Hero by the President of the Republic of Indonesia.

Conclusion

Rubini's political and national awareness was fostered from a young age while studying at STOVIA and in his early years as a doctor, when he is thought to have interacted with activists and

movement organisations. In addition to his medical duties, he expressed his nationalism through Soos Medan Sepakat and Parindra in Pontianak (1938). Trust was placed in him in 1939, and he became one of the leaders of Parindra in West Kalimantan, which successfully brought progress. It included making this party the largest political force in the residency, with organisational wings and branches extending to the upper Kapuas region. During the Japanese occupation, Rubini emerged as a leader of an underground resistance action that cost him his life in June 1944. This resistance later became one of the driving factors in the Dayak resistance led by Pangsuma in 1945. This spirit of freedom was even continued by Parindra cadre doctors who survived after August 17, 1945, and played a crucial role in the effort to maintain independence. This study examines the role of intellectuals, such as dr Rubini, in the national political movement during both the Dutch and Japanese colonial eras in West Kalimantan. This finding adds to the historiography of the pre-independence era, particularly in regions like Kalimantan. It also adds to the list of doctors' roles in the struggle for Indonesian independence.

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