

Vanishing Frontiers: A Javanese Plantation Emplacement, 1870s–2000s

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ABSTRACT

The introduction of the Agrarian Law of 1870 led hundreds of would-be Dutch planters to try their luck in the plantation business. Soon, dots of settlements where coolies from lowlands were housed emerged on the island map. Plantation emplacements were different from ordinary villages, as they were established mainly to keep the labor force ready to work. They were regimented villages. Using data collected from Jolotigo tea plantation in Central Java, this paper discusses how a plantation emplacement was established, reached its heyday, and eventually dissolved in the course of history. I will use this discussion to question the old thesis of the domination of workers by capitalistic enterprises. Is a capitalistic plantation company really powerful enough to control workers in order to guarantee its business interests?

Keywords: *socio-economic history; labor relation; plantation; Java*

INTRODUCTION

Facilitated by the recently issued Agrarian Law, in 1874 Johannes Jan Hendrik van Hall, an ex-government servant, obtained an *erfpacht*, a lease on lands in the North Serayu Range in Pekalongan Regency, Central Java. Soon this “beautiful field of reeds” in Jolotigo village was cleared and cultivated as a coffee plantation, and the never-ending plantation work required a constant and large labor force. As villagers in the surrounding area were uninterested in degrading themselves by working as plantation coolies, this labor force had to be mustered from nearby cities and the lowlands, where Java’s labor reserve lingered in the 19th century. Villages for the plantation laborers had to be built as bases for a reliable and dependable labor force recruited from elsewhere.

A plantation village is very different from an ordinary village built by people on their own initiative. In a plantation village, everything is built and organized according to a centralized plan, while in an ordinary village it grows more organically according to the inhabitants’ needs. Everyday life in a 19th

century plantation village was delicately intertwined with the plantation’s pyramidal work structure. A plantation existed in a regimented social world organized on the ideal of an efficient and effective profit machine (Versluys, 1938: 151; Isaacman, 1992: 489). Once a person entered a plantation, they became part of the pyramid, where their role, status, and life of each member of the system was clearly defined and strongly regulated based on racial, class, and gender differences.

This paper traces the development of Jolotigo plantation village from its establishment in the mid-1870s to the 2000s. How changes in the larger political-economic structure of Indonesia have contributed to the creation and dissolution of the plantation village, and what role patronage played in maintaining internal integration in the community will be discussed. I will use this discussion to question the old thesis of the domination of workers by the capitalistic enterprise. To what extent was a capitalistic plantation company with strong support from the state able to exercise

control over its laborers for the sake of its business interest?

Theorizing on the changes of Indonesian plantations from colonial to post-colonial ones, Alec Gordon (2000: 475; 480) argued:

“... that, because independent Indonesian governments could not deploy the coercion that the colonial regime had done, the plantations were actually finished after Independence ...

Following or possibly immediately preceding Independence the Asian Plantation System begins to break down. The new state although it may have had the wish has neither the power nor the capability to deploy effective coercion. It may have been that the bureaucrats wished to continue as before, or certain groups may have been eyeing the plantations for themselves or ministers might have liked the idea of the foreign exchange that they were supposed to earn. But what about the immense and impressive array of coercion that must be deployed to ensure plantation survival? In most former plantation countries a sizeable anti-plantation lobby existed and it was not powerless. The original new claimants to land encroached on the plantations or even reclaimed them. In this case cheap land disappears. The new state in the face of new trade unions or public opinion cannot mobilise indentured labour. The corporations may have retained the name of plantations but they were being reduced (or the survivor advanced) to ordinary capitalist estates without the privilege of coercion to produce their previous cheap land and cheap labour”

Gordon was correct on both counts, that Indonesia's post-colonial regime possessed no power to coerce laborers to work in plantations and that the country's independence was followed by the growth of an anti-plantation political lobby, social movement, and sway in public opinion. The thing is, coercion is not always necessary to mobilize labor. In Javanese plantations, most laborers came to work on their own initiative. Apart of it, Gordon's further claim that the post-colonial Indonesian plantations were being reduced to ordinary capitalist estates has to be checked against empirical facts.

Data for this work were collected mainly through fieldwork in Jolotigo plantation and archival

research in the National Archives in Jakarta and The Hague in 2003–2008. Fieldwork in Jolotigo produced data on everyday life in the plantation, labor structure, production activities, and productivities, as well as an oral history of the plantation's past. The National Archives of Indonesia in Jakarta maintains a good collection of general information on Pekalongan, along with details of its agricultural activities and social conditions. The National Archive in The Hague, meanwhile, keeps an archive of Jolotigo plantation from the time it was established in 1876 until the nationalization of foreign companies in 1957.

A SAFE HARBOR

Between the plantation's opening in April 1875 and 1879, some of Jolotigo's regular laborers lived in Jolotigo hamlet while others lived in Sikendil, some sixty minutes' walk uphill. Later on, in the early 1880s, Sikendil emplacement—consisting of five houses—was dismantled and the regular laborers were emplaced in Puwoko next to the plantation manager's and the overseers' houses.¹ According to van Hall's initial plan, the plantation manager's house in Puwoko was to be nice and would cost the company *f*20,000 to complete.² The house was to be a status symbol of the plantation's great master, *tuan besar*, and was accordingly called *besaran*. After Van Hall's demise in 1880 the plan was abandoned and the new manager, De Vicq de Cumptich, built a simpler wooden house with a braided bamboo wall, cement floor, and iron roof, all of which costed *f*4.500.³

In Puwoko, bachelor laborers—*budjang*—lived in a coolie barrack and foremen lived in separated quarters. The number of inhabitants in the emplacement increased in 1882, after some of the population of Pager Gunung hamlet joined. By 1883, the emplacement community consisted of the administrator, an overseer, eighteen foremen and their families, and a number of *budjang* coolies. The population lived in four large and 12 small houses plus a barrack. Over the course of a decade, more laborers, male and female, came to Puwoko, necessitating the establishment of a special barrack for female laborers in 1886. In the following years, new living quarters were built, and by 1890, there were a total of 19 in Puwoko. No data are available on the number of Jolotigo's early regular laborers, but by September 1891, the plantation employed 131 male laborers, 72 female laborers, and less than 10 foremen.⁴

Until the turn of the century, Jolotigo's laborers were recruited from the lowland area of Pekalongan,

which was marked by landlessness and unemployment (Knight, 1993a; 1993b). Most of them were dregs of society: petty criminals, thieves, and gamblers, whose choice was between staying in their home village and sooner or later getting into trouble with the law, or going to the isolated plantation up in the hills to amend their poor socio-economic condition. In the eyes of the landless and unemployed bachelors, compared with the economically difficult situation in their home villages, the lonely plantation was a safe harbor, if not a paradise. Here, life was secure. They had a dependable income and a firm roof to sleep under.

In Puwoko the laborers gained a stable social base to develop and nurture the plantation community. In the working hours, the foremen and regular laborers spent their time in the coffee fields, returning to the isolated emplacement in the late afternoon. To fill the evening and ease their boredom, some people played games of Chinese cards or rummy while others played *gamelan*, Javanese musical instruments. The quiet plantation life was broken by market days, which occurred three times a month. In the late afternoon prior to paydays, traders of almost any kind entered Puwoko with bundles of merchandise on their backs or hanging from a carrying pole. Along with them came gambling masters of any game; roulette dice, cards, as well as groups of *ronggeng* dancers who wanted a share of the laborers' income, too. In an instant, the dark evening was filled with the light of kerosene lamps and the noise of a night fair. Here and there, people bet their money on a gambling mat, their eyes glued to the turning roulette wheel to see whether it would stop and the dice would fall on a frog or snake (see Szekely, 1984: 321). Not far away, following the fast tempo of *gamelan* music, people danced with the *ronggeng*. When the dancing ceased sometime around midnight, interested men could take the *ronggeng* dancers to the coolie barrack for sex. The same lively scene would occur again on the evening of payday.

With around 200 inhabitants in the course of the 1880s and 1890s, Puwoko gradually grew into a "normal" community consisting of households and families, not just bachelors. One by one, the bachelor laborers got married, and having nowhere else to reside, they remained in the emplacement. Babies were born, couples got married, old community members passed away and people accepted Puwoko not merely as a place to eke out their living, but one to live and be buried in, as well. People settled

permanently in the emplacement and developed enduring social relationships and cultural values that later on distinguished them as plantation people. In front of people from outside the plantation, Puwoko inhabitants identified themselves as *wong onderneming*, plantation people who regarded themselves as special people, brave frontiersmen who dared to live an isolated plantation life in the forested hills full of tigers and other wild animals, while their friends remained stuck in their place of birth.⁵ At the same time, Puwoko inhabitants also distinguished themselves from seasonal laborers who came from and resided in nearby hamlets. Puwoko inhabitants were *wong emplasemen*, emplacement people, while seasonal laborers were *wong kampung*, villagers. From their own perspective, *wong emplasemen* were people of a modern setting, close to the Dutch—the ultimate symbol of power—working in a factory with machinery, and living on a wage. *Wong kampung*, by contrast, were just peasants. One thing, however, was still missing from Puwoko in the 1880s that would make it a "real" village. This was the community sacred ritual. For the time being, the young Puwoko plantation community was one of laborers who lacked the traditional forms of expression of their sense of belonging to the plantation on which their livelihood depended.

After 5 years in operation, Jolotigo plantation was on the verge of bankruptcy. From year to year, the plantation suffered losses, reaching three hundred thousand *gulden* in total by 1890. The losses most likely had something to do with an attack of leaf blight (*Hemileia vastatrix*) that destroyed the coffee trees (Van Schendel, 2000; 78–80). However, there was also a possibility that the loss was related to the lack of a sense of belonging within the plantation community, which came to the surface in the form of fertilizer fraud and the theft of coffee berries—most probably carried out by the plantation personnel themselves.

Regarding the issue of fertilizer, Van Hall and his successors tried to use buffalo manure bought from small-holder farmers to maintain soil fertility. Apparently, the supply of this manure was limited. In 1883, the plantation budgeted *f* 500 for manure, but could only spend *f* 105. Realizing that their manure was in high demand, the farmers seized the opportunity. They asked for a very high price of 10 cents per cubic feet of manure, and it seems they did not hesitate to tamper with their commodity, adding garbage to increase the quantity. In 1884, the plantation bought around 30,000 cubic feet of manure from the farmers,

but the quality was so poor that in the following years expenditure for manure was sharply reduced. To cover the discrepancy, the plantation experimented with blending a certain amount of manure with ash, dreg of soybeans (*bungkil*), and guano, but without any apparent result.⁶ Jolotigo's experiment with fertilizer in the 1880–1890s was a failure, and it is highly unlikely that foremen and laborers did not play an active role in this fiasco. It was the foremen who directly bought the manure from farmers, and it seems they turned a blind eye to its quality. Perhaps they took bribes from the farmers and accepted the poor quality manure, or perhaps it was the foremen who ordered the farmers to mix the manure with garbage so as to increase its quantity.

Coffee theft was quite common in colonial Java (TNI, 1873, II: 239; ALNI, No. 5, 1932; van der Kroef, 1956: 108). Long before the plantation was established, Jolotigo farmers had engaged in coffee cultivation. To them, the presence of the plantation was a heavenly gift, an extra source of harvest. In 1879, van Hall installed an eight kilometer long pipeline through which coffee berries were flushed from Puwoko to Doro town. Story among the plantation workers has it that the pipeline was built to protect the berries from theft during its transport to Doro. In another effort to prevent theft, the warehouse for coffee berries in Puwoko was double-fenced with thick bamboo plait, and for deterring thieves, a security guard was hired—at a wage of *f*2.25 per month. Among their many other tasks, the foremen were instructed to guard against theft. What took place in Jolotigo, however, was a drama of guards-turned-thieves. Often, a foreman was fired because of dishonesty. For instance, in May 5, 1891, foreman Radas was sacked after berries were found in his house during a search.⁷

Coffee theft in Jolotigo was probably linked to the decline of the plantation's regular laborers—the foremen and *kuli budjang*—wages in the 1890s. In 1883, the plantation employed 13 foremen for various field jobs, from land clearing, planting, soil and plant maintenance, harvesting, to processing. Their monthly wages differed. Two of them, the chief foreman apparently, each received *f*30; one foreman received *f*22.5; two foremen each received *f*20; three foremen each received *f*17.5; and 5 foremen each received *f*15 per month. Meanwhile, the standard wage for foremen in Central Javanese plantations at that time was around *f*8 (Proefstation voor Thee, 1924: 196–7). The high wages paid to Jolotigo foremen was probably related either to a scarcity of able hands in the area,

or a monopoly on foremen positions held by certain social groups, or both. Whatever the reason, Jolotigo foremen's wages were very high. In the 1880s, the plantation company spent on average of *f* 2,238 annually on this post. Upon discovering this, P.H. Soeter, an NHM inspector who was sent to check on Jolotigo and its ailing condition in November 1890, angrily wrote that “Jolotigo personnel were outrageously overpaid.” It's not clear whether the foremen's salary, in response to the report, was reduced but the company cut the wages of bachelor laborers down to *f* 1.25 per month or five cents per day.⁸ Considering that the price of coffee beans was between *f* 30 and *f* 50 per *pikul* (approx. 60 kg)—or perhaps half of that rate in local markets—laborers' low wages was certainly a strong driver of coffee theft.

Whether the harsh measures undertaken by foremen against coffee theft effectively stopped the practice in Jolotigo is difficult to tell. Yet the memory of coffee theft lingered long in Jolotigo plantation's administrator's mind. When the government planned to develop small-holder farmer tea cultivation in villages neighboring Jolotigo, Leon Nagel in 1910 simply said no: “Because it would certainly lead to theft of the plantation tea leaves, just like in the case of coffee.”⁹

AN ISLAND ON AN ISLAND

In the early 1890s, Jolotigo was converted from a coffee into a cinchona and tea plantation, and this changed the structure of plantation labor. A more differentiated set of tasks and bigger labor force were needed (Plomp, 1993: 24–30). To increase the number of regular laborers, recruitment was intensified. The plantation sent *werek*—labor scouts—and foremen to acquire laborers in the neighboring districts and the regencies of Wonosobo, Temanggung, and Kendal.¹⁰ The effort was successful. From 1900 onward, Jolotigo's labor force kept increasing, and by end of the 1910s, there were 400 laborers and foremen. The daily wage lay between *f*0.20 and *f*0.80 for a foreman and *f*0.18 to *f*0.35 for a casual laborer (KV, 1910, Bijl. ZZ). However, apparently not all of the laborers took on permanent residence in Puwoko. A good number of them, especially those from the nearby sub-districts of Karanganyar and Kajen, commuted between the plantation and their home village on a weekly basis. In August 1910, a cholera outbreak struck the two sub-districts, and in order to prevent a further spread the government forbade commuting from both sub-districts. This closure of several months curtailed

Jolotigo's labor supply. It also pushed Leon Nagel, the manager (1900–1925), to include the improvement of the laborers' living quarters in the plantation in his 1916 modernization project. When the project was completed, Puwoko had twenty-one living quarters for foremen and laborers, one assistant overseer's house, two overseer houses, and one administrator's house. Establishing good living quarters for workers cost the company a lot, but under the threat of labor shortages and uncertainties of labor supply, it was the only rational choice. Better housing would attract laborers to stay in the plantation and ensure stability in the production process.

To make the laborers feel at home in Puwoko, Nagel also built a market hall, a metal-structured and roofed stall that was eight meters wide and twenty meters long, located in the heart of the laborers' living quarters. In no time, this became the center of the emplacement's social life.¹¹ Some traders opened food stalls and a Chinese trader opened a grocery store, and the plantation laborers could eat and shop on credit (ALNI, No. 31, 1932). Early in the morning, the food stalls opened to serve hot drinks to the laborers before they set out for work at six o'clock. Those who worked in fields far from the emplacement took a packed breakfast. At nine o'clock, the laborers took a thirty-minute break for breakfast, and those who worked in the factory flocked to the food stalls again. At one in the afternoon, the work day officially ended. To make use of their vacant time and obtain extra food, the workers took to cultivating small plots of unused fields next to their quarters or along the Puwoko creek, growing vegetables, bananas, and other tropical fruits. In the evenings, having nowhere else to go, most of the laborers spent their time at the food stalls. Often, they would hang around until the following morning. Every payday, visiting gamblers from town staged gambling rounds at the market hall, and here too visiting *ronggeng* dancers eked out their living.

In 1920, Paul Doorman replaced Leon Nagel as Jolotigo's manager. In Puwoko, Paul was like a lesser king. This was not only because he was the co-owner and administrator of the plantation, but also because the number of laborers subjected to his power had increased. By then, a population of around 400 lived in Puwoko. In an effort to augment his status and power, in the mid-1920s Paul renovated the old manager's house and turned it into a charming, Indies-style *besaran*, the house of *Tuan Besar*. Sitting on the veranda of this house, one could see a blue stretch of the Java Sea some thirty kilometers away. To the

left of the house, separated by a narrow yard, stood a row of rooms for house servants, cooks, and horse minders. To the right, the family garden of flowers, fruit trees, and cages of wild animal spread to the base of the Puwoko cleft. Another eye-catching residence, of West Sumatran style—a reminder that Doorman's family also owned a plantation over there—was built in Sinanas, a kilometer away from Puwoko, to house Jolotigo's chief overseer, F.J. Broekhals. Three simpler houses were built in Puwoko for overseers and assistants.

Everyday life in Puwoko was segregated and regulated according to a strict social hierarchy. The Dutch administrator, overseers, and their families hardly socialized with the Javanese workers. Their houses were off-limits to the Javanese. To entertain themselves and their guests, they played tennis in a court that the Javanese plantation laborers were forbidden to enter. The laborers stepped onto the court only as sweepers before and after a tennis match, or when the court was used to dry cinchona bark. A gazebo a few hundred meters north of the *besaran*, where Paul Doorman and his family liked to enjoy the view of the lowland Pekalongan area and the Java Sea, was off-limits to the Javanese, as well. So was the water reservoir above the factory, whose main function was to collect water for the electric turbine, but which also served as a swimming pool for the Dutch.

Lebaran, the end *Ramadhan*, was an important event for Puwoko's inhabitants. It was always celebrated with grandeur, and for three consecutive days, work in the plantation ceased.¹² Immediately after the *Lebaran* prayer in the emplacement's small mosque, sometime around seven to eight on the morning of *Lebaran*, children put on their best dress and fell in line for a walk to the *besaran* to receive gifts from the administrator. In the front yard, Paul Doorman, in his white formal dress, was seated serenely on his big rattan chair. This was the most anxiously awaited moment of the year for the plantation kids. One by one, they approached Paul Doorman to say; "*Selamat Hari Raya Tuan Besar*"—"Merry Holy Day Great Master." In return Paul replied, "*Ja...*" or simply nodded his head and grunted. His left hand reached to a table next to him and took a pack of small firecrackers and a five cents coin and handed it to the child, who happily received it and said; "*Terima kasih Tuan Besar*." Meanwhile in the movie house, a puppeteer and his crew would be busy preparing a show. At nine o'clock sharp, the opening song of the

puppet show was played. The show lasted until five in the evening. After a roughly three-hour break, the show would resume, lasting until dawn.

The Dutch in Puwoko spent most of their everyday life among each other. Manager, overseers, and their families hardly set foot in Puwoko's market. They also did not enter the laborers' housing compounds except for crucial matters. A story among the plantation workers clearly reflects the situation. One day, the emplacement was in a tumult. Salpan, a worker in the tea factory and Puwoko's Koran teacher, was brawling with his neighbor Jamil, who was enraged after discovering that Salpan had been sleeping with his ex-*ronggeng* wife every time he, Jamil, went to work. Having extramarital sex was not an uncommon practice in the emplacement, but in this case, both sides refused to settle the matter peacefully. Some foremen tried to stop the fight, but to no avail. Blinded by rage, Salpan used a rice mortar as a weapon. Seeing his opponent holding a weapon, Jamil reached for a machete. People were terrified and, thus the story goes, the matter was reported to the Great Master. Carrying his double-barreled hunting gun, Paul immediately came to the laborers' living quarters. Upon seeing him, the brawlers were subdued, and Paul said to them: "You two come with me." Escorted by some foremen, Paul marched Salpan and Jamil to a tea leaf collecting hut outside the emplacement. Once there, Paul said "You both want to settle your problem with a fight. Now you fight with your fists. I'll watch..." Salpan and Jamil resumed their fight and Paul sat on a tree stump watching them. Eventually, Salpan and Jamil collapsed with exhaustion. "Now you go home and do not make noise anymore," Paul said to conclude the fighting session. From then on, no more fights took place in the emplacement—although extramarital sexual activities continued.

By the 1920s, Puwoko was a self-contained community with its own productive activities, rites, market, sub-village administration and social hierarchy. Sometime in the 1900s or 1910s, the plantation company sponsored the renovation of the graveyard of Kiai Panderesan, the ancestor of Pager Gunung villagers.¹³ The burial mound was cemented. A small burial house, *cungkup*, was built to roof the grave, and a piece of white linen was hung from a beam to shroud the burial mound. In addition, from 1922 to 1939, the plantation company spent *f*583 per year on average for rituals and slametans.¹⁴ It was probably around this time that the commemoration of Kiai Panderesan acquired its important role in

Jolotigo plantation. Through commemorative events, the migrant laborers were integrated into a compact plantation community, accepting the plantation as a legitimate and inseparable part of their cultural world.

Puwoko community was an island of spoiled and self-indulgent people, if I may. Rather than preparing their own meals, most laborers had their meals at the food stalls. Spending money on *ronggeng* was a rule among the men. Gambling was adopted by both men and women. Unsatisfied with whoring and gambling, some men consumed and got addicted to opium. Copying the lifestyle of the administrator and the overseers who certainly never washed their own clothes, Puwoko inhabitants sent their dirty clothes to washers, *penatu*, who made their living in the emplacement by specializing in doing laundry.

The most significant factor among several in this development was certainly the availability of money that made such self-indulgence possible. Thanks to a good market situation, the wages of Jolotigo plantation laborers in the early decades of the 20th century were quite good. In the late 1890s, a regular laborer's wage was between *f*2 and *f*3 per month, equivalent to 50 to 75 kilograms of low quality rice. Over the next three decades, wages increased, and by the second half of the 1920s, a female tea picker earned *f*8.45 per month on average, which was equivalent to 121 kilograms of low quality rice. The average wage for a male laborer was somewhat higher. Even children from ten years onward were involved in wage labor, as moss cleaners, tea seed collectors, and cinchona worm pickers, at a wage of five cents per day. With this amount of income, a labor family with four children could live quite pleasantly. Their subsistence needs were well-covered, and they had leftovers for other expenditures. Moreover, housing was provided for free. To the unemployed youth in other districts, Jolotigo was like a candlelight to a moth, and they were welcome as they helped the plantation form a stable and dependable labor force. Every year, new laborers entered Puwoko and the emplacement's population increased steadily—partly also due to internal reproduction. In 1922, the emplacement's population was still around 400. It increased to 588 in 1929, to 660 in 1932, and by 1937, Paul Doorman claimed that Puwoko was overpopulated with its 40 laborer housing complexes.¹⁵

Life in the emplacement was cozy, but people realized that the place did not really belong to them. The living quarters where their babies were born were not really their houses. The plots where they

planted vegetables and fruit trees were not really their gardens. They longed to enjoy the freedom of people who lived in their own homestead. Yet only a few of the emplacement's inhabitants, with rank of foreman, were able to reach this ideal.

TROUBLED TIMES

The effect of the 1930s' economic depression was felt in Jolotigo, as well. After reaching a peak in 1928, when a tea picker could earn *f*9.68 per month, laborers' wages fell into a constant decline. By 1936, the average wage of a tea picker was as low as *f*1.55 per month. As the depression years continued, industrial enterprises and small-scale industries in lowland Pekalongan went bankrupt, forcing thousands of laborers into unemployment (Semedi, 2003: 112). In this context, the low wages offered by Jolotigo plantation remained attractive, if they were not becoming ever more attractive. As the economic depression of the 1930s was basically marked by cash shortage, not inflation (Boeke, 1934: 37), a low wage was better than none. A job that ten years ago would have provided a laborer with an income of *f*9 per month now only produced *f*1.50; nevertheless, considering that the price of rice in the 1930s was less than half that of the 1920s (Mansvelt and Creutzberg, 1978: 58), the economic condition of Jolotigo laborers cannot be considered extremely bad.

As the years drew closer to 1942, economic life among Jolotigo laborers stagnated. In April 1942, in the wake of the Japanese army's invasion, social unrest erupted in Java. Plunders, riots, and robberies spun out of control all over the island. Jolotigo emplacement was ransacked by a group of robbers. Enraged by the robbery, Paul Doorman chased the robbers, caught and dragged them to Jolotigo, and summarily executed all seven of them with his hunting gun. Several months later, when the situation returned to normal, police took Paul to Bandung prison, where he died in 1943—either by execution or due to maltreatment.

During the period of Japanese occupation, the plantation's production activities slowed down. Around 200 hectares of the plantation fields were converted into plots for food crops, and the laborers spent most of their time living in field huts next to their plots rather than in Puwoko emplacement. In return for permission to plant food crops, the occupation authority obliged the laborers to submit a quarter of the harvest (Nishijima and Kishi, 1960: 283). Dutifully, the laborers complied with this order, but they always reduced the amount of their harvest when asked by

the authority. "Thus in practice we gave up less than a quarter of our harvest to the Japanese. Our food crop harvest was mainly maize. The maize for the Japanese was piled up in the movie house and rarely shipped out. Part of the maize rotted away, the other part was eaten by rats and moths..." recalled Grandpa Amin. The poor transportation system had apparently hindered the distribution of food (Thompson, 1946: 203). Compared with living conditions elsewhere, which were generally marked by deep economic difficulties and, in the last two years of the occupation period, by severe food shortages, Jolotigo laborers were doing well. Food was available for every household. "Only clothes were hard to get", Grandpa Amin continued.

In the months following the surrender of the Japanese in August 1945, Puwoko fell into chaos. Pressed by economic difficulties and the absence of authority, the plantation laborers plundered housing facilities in the emplacement. They scrapped the metal roofs of the houses and sold them to ironsmiths for making cooking utensils. Of the almost sixty laborer houses in the emplacement, only five were left in a more or less complete form. Within months, Puwoko had turned into a ghost hamlet with skeletons of houses standing here and there amidst wild shrub, while the laborers continued their life in huts scattered in the plantation fields. Some of the laborers harvested tea leaves, manually processed the leaves into green tea in their huts, and sold the coarse green tea in village markets for Rp 1/kati.¹⁶

The last shreds of Puwoko community's social fabric were severed when the Indonesian Army set the tea factory and Puwoko emplacement on fire in late August or early September 1947, following a scorched earth policy to prevent the plantation from becoming operational again for the returning Dutch. The laborers were deeply shocked. The processing plant was the ultimate symbol of plantation life, their life. To them, the burning of the tea processing plant was the end of everything. In the previous two years or so, they had been living on the cultivation of food crops rather than on labor wage, but they had remained under the umbrella of the plantation. What would their life become without the plantation? For people who had been depending on the plantation for most of their life, this question was hard to answer.

In this uncertain situation, August Doorman Jr., nephew of Paul Doorman, came to Jolotigo in early 1948 to assume the management of the plantation. Soon, the emplacement was busy with work for rebuilding the tea factory and living quarters.¹⁷ After

almost five years of being abandoned by most of the inhabitants, in early 1948 Puwoko started to become lively again. Life was not really back to normal. Armed conflicts between the Indonesian and Dutch armies, incidents of brutal treatment of civilians by both armies, and violent robberies by militiamen and bandits occurred everywhere.¹⁸ On June 11, 1949, on his way back to Doro from Puwoko, August Doorman Jr. was ambushed by an Indonesian Army squad and died on the spot.

UNDER THE POST-COLONIAL REGIME

The return of Dutch administrators had reconsolidated the social fabric of Puwoko community, and the end of the Second World War had allowed production activities to return to their normal pace, but economic life remained subdued. By 1948, a casual laborer earned *f*0.50 per day, and a tea picker received less than that. In the meantime, the price of low quality rice was close to *f*1 per kilogram. In the following years, wages were continuously increased, but apparently too slowly to stay far ahead of rice prices. In the meantime, a drastic change occurred in the political sphere of Indonesia, a change from a colonial country into a sovereign one.

August Doorman Jr.'s position was filled by C.C. Veenstra, a heavy drinker and womanizer, who treated foremen and laborers in the ways of the powerful administrators in the colonial days. On the morning of August 25, 1952, before the eyes of many other workers, he reprimanded Tan Swie Nit, a member of the plantation guard, for his negligence while on duty. Swie Nit lost his face and felt humiliated. In the small hours of the following night, Swie Nit ran amok. He shot Veenstra twice in the chest and then shot himself in the head.¹⁹ This tragedy alerted the company's board of directors to the fact that a different type of administrator was needed to run Jolotigo. J.G.J. Dibbets, who had made his career in an East Javanese plantation, was appointed. Among the several reasons for his appointment was Dibbets' fluency in Javanese.²⁰ People in Jolotigo remember him as an administrator who treated workers with respect and care. He addressed senior foremen and workers with *Pak*—mister—before their names and talked to them in fine Javanese. Dibbets' niceties notwithstanding, the economic condition of the laborers remained poor in the 1950s. In 1952, the average daily wage of a laborer was Rp 1.90. In the following year, the rate increased to Rp 3, and the market price for a kilogram of low quality rice was Rp

2. In the next five years, inflation could be contained, but the laborers' wages were still very poor. By the early months of 1958, a tea picker received a wage of Rp 3.17 per day on average, and rice cost Rp 2.84 per kilogram.²¹

The security situation was not good, either. In 1954, around 40 troops belonging to the remnants of the rebellious army of Darul Islam nested in the forest next to the plantation of Salakan and Muncar blocks. The hunger-stricken rebels robbed hamlets in their vicinity, including Puwoko. After harassing the hill population for almost two years, in 1956 the rebels received heavy blows from the army and police.²² Many were killed in skirmishes, while the rest were taken prisoner and were summarily executed in the corner of Jolotigo hamlet. Their bodies were buried in a corner of Kaliurang tea field. To the tea pickers' horror, the bodies were buried in a shallow grave, and in the night following their burial, wolves or wild pigs dug them up. When the tea pickers came to pick leaves the next morning, they went hysterical as they saw broken corpses half-exposed on the ground.

Either from the everyday economic situation or from the spread of political consciousness, some laborers became critical of their life in the plantation. Inspired by Vice President Hatta's (1957) policy of setting up cooperatives as one of the main pillars of Indonesian economic development, sometime in 1953, office clerk Tirto Prawiro and foremen Tajib, Djunaidi, Imran, and Kasturi initiated a worker cooperative. The cooperative opened a shop in the market building to serve the laborers' everyday needs and provide credit. The cooperative was short-lived, however. The plantation's management was suspicious that the cooperative would develop into a dangerous labor movement. Tirto Pawiro and his friends were fired and ousted from Puwoko. In the same period, the Communist Party sent a cadre to establish a labor union, the radical Sarbupri. Just like Tirto Pawiro, Yatin, the communist cadre at Jolotigo was fired from his job and evicted from the emplacement. He moved to Jolotigo hamlet and staged the labor movement outside the plantation premises. Here, Yatin established a branch office of Sarbupri and managed to recruit a few followers. Yatin was not a capable leader. When a laborer encountered problems with the management, Yatin's Sarbupri did not do anything to defend him.²³ In 1956, Sardojo, a more radical cadre replaced Yatin. He managed to recruit many members, albeit ones who were not so militant. At any rate, the plantation laborers were pragmatic

rather than ideological. They did not really care what the labor union's ideology was. They cared a little bit about the union's official goal of improving the laborers' welfare and defending their rights. But if they attended the labor union's meetings, it was mostly because their friends were there.

In December 1957, based on an argument that foreign companies were colonialism in disguise, the Indonesian government nationalized all foreign companies. Dibbets and his family had to leave Indonesia, and Jolotigo lost its last Dutch patron. Upon its nationalization, Jolotigo was transformed into a state plantation company, under the control of the Ministry of Agriculture. The change of ownership, however, was not immediately followed by economic improvement on the part of the laborers. To the contrary, toward the beginning of the 1960s—or *Jaman Ganepo*, the era of Games of the New Emerging Forces of President Soekarno—rice became more difficult to obtain. In 1961, the price of rice doubled from Rp 7 to Rp 15 per kilogram, while a tea picker's daily wage remained around Rp 5 to 7.50 per day.

To help the laborers, the plantation increased rice rations to 10 kilograms per month for each tea picker and seasonal laborer—while regular workers received extra rations for their family members, five kilograms per child. This increase certainly reduced the laborers' burden, but it did not cover their subsistence needs. Salted or fermented sea fish, the laborers' traditional side dish and source of protein, were hard to buy, as most of their income was used up for the main staple. When rice became more difficult to get, maize was taken as a substitute and when maize became more expensive, people in the hamlets cut down their sugar palm trees to obtain sago. After their daily tea harvesting work, the tea pickers would spend some time wandering in the forest and collecting wild vegetables that normally were regarded as animal fodder (*ramban*). In the dry season, the wild vegetables became scarce, so the laborers picked rubber tree seeds and boiled them over and over to drive out the seeds' bitter-tasting toxin. During the rainy season, the laborers set up simple traps to catch protein-rich crickets and termites as a side dish. This poor economic situation had made Sarbupri look more attractive in the laborers' eyes. More and more people joined the union meetings held in Konyol's house in Jolotigo hamlet.

The plantation administrators and overseers deeply hated Sarbupri. To their eyes, Sarbupri was just a mongrel nipping at their heels. An opportunity

to deter Sarbupri actions came in the late 1950s with the formation of the army-sponsored *Wajib Bela Perkebunan* (WBP), Plantation Defense Corp, a paramilitary unit that consisted mainly of foremen and laborers. In 1962–1964, WBP membership was increased to support President Soekarno's "Crushing Malaysia" campaign. Even the wives of workers were recruited as WBP members to fight for the President's political ambition. Once a week, the volunteers were sent to Doro for military training. Meanwhile, the administrator was sent to a one and a half month long military course in the army officer candidate school in Purwokerto.²⁴

The history of the radical labor union in Jolotigo—as everywhere else in Indonesia—ended in 1966 with the communist cleansing campaign waged by the Indonesian army right after the 1965 affair.²⁵ From Jolotigo, the army took three trucks' worth of Sarbupri "members", while the prominent cadres, Sardojo, Karso, Warno, and Konyol were loaded in jeeps, with their hands tied behind their backs. Through rumours, the plantation laborers learned what had happened to the members of the Communist Party and Sarbupri; that many of them were tortured and summarily executed. Jolotigo hamlet was flooded with tears and drowned in fears. Nobody dared to say anything. Nobody knew what kind of fate would befall them next. Meanwhile, those who, for one reason or another, were saved from the scooping could only regret their foolishness in ever getting close to Sarbupri and silently nurtured their fear.

From 1966 onward, there was no labor union in Jolotigo. President Soeharto's regime officially disbanded all labor unions affiliated with political parties. The term "laborer", or *buruh*, was euphemized into "worker", *pekerja* or *karyawan*, because in the regime's opinion, a "laborer" was closely associated with Communism (Farid, 2005: 169). In the early part of 1970, the government ordered that all employees of the State Plantation Company, from casual laborers to the board of directors, had to support the government party, *Golongan Karya* (Golkar).²⁶ In 1971, in spite of the fact that they were neither civil servants nor government employees at all, the government ordered that all employees of the State Plantation Companies become members of the Indonesian Civil Servant Corp, *Korps Pegawai Republik Indonesia*, *Korpri* (see Tambun, 1996; Korpri, 1973). At the same time, the social atmosphere of Jolotigo was becoming more militaristic. From time to time, officers from the district and regional commands visited Jolotigo with

their entourage, just to check this or that. In the early 1970s, the government dissolved WBP and replaced it with the militaristic Special Constabulary (*Polisi Chusus, Polsus*).

The presence of Golkar and Korpri were welcomed heartily by the administrator and the company's board of directors because Golkar and Korpri provided them with total control over the laborers, and nobody dared to question this control as it was sanctioned by the state. All plantation workers and laborers were obliged to vote for Golkar in the general election, and the plantation manager was given a mandate to ensure that it happened. Nevertheless, during the New Order era, a number of government regulations to improve laborers' wages and welfare were issued. In accordance with Worker Law No. 3/1992 (see Odang, 1992), the plantation company in January 1993 introduced a retirement wage and bonus for regular laborers. Prior to this date, a retirement wage was granted only to the overseers and the manager.²⁷ A regular laborer who had been working for 35 years would receive a gratification at the rate of forty-five times his last wage. The new retirement wage was between sixty and seventy percent of a worker's last basic wage. "It is not much," retired foreman Domo said, "But it helps us to live our retirement with dignity."

In the early 1980s, the Indonesian government bowed to the international community's, or more precisely, to donor countries' pressure to reduce the ever-growing military intervention in political and public affairs. The plantation's special constabulary was disbanded and replaced with a civilian security guard. With the civilian security guard in charge, everyday life in Jolotigo became less militaristic. At least people did not see guards in military uniform walking around the plantation premises anymore. From that time onward, too, people saw the Jolotigo visits of army and police officers with their entourages become increasingly rarer.

A HOME FOR OLD FOREMEN

After nationalization, the management of the plantation was in the hands of Indonesian managers and overseers. After a year of transition in 1959, Soebandi the Goatee was appointed as Jolotigo's manager. Soebandi claimed his status by playing patron. He revived Paul Doorman's tradition of giving *Lebaran* gifts. Right after the *Lebaran* prayer, and accompanied by his children and the plantation overseers, the administrator visited the workers' living quarters. The

entourage stopped at every house, chatted a while with the inhabitants, and Soebandi took bank notes from a canvas sack carried by Wienarto, the finance overseer. He counted the bank notes, called the kids by their names, and graciously handed the bank notes to them. Babies and toddlers got Rp 2.5, older children Rp 5, and teenagers Rp 7.5. Apart from playing the generous patron, Soebandi augmented his position by deploying mysticism. Among his first actions upon settling in Jolotigo was to begin paying regular visits to the grave of Kiai Panderesan and other "sacred" places within the plantation premises. He renovated Kiai Panderesan's burial house, the *cungkup*, by surrounding it with wooden walls and a door.

Soebandi's patronage approach was well-received by the laborers and in effect strengthened the plantation community's social bonds, making the laborers feel more at home in the emplacement. Until the early 1970s, most of Puwoko's inhabitants regarded the emplacement as a hamlet, a place to live, rather than merely a place to work. People were born, grew up, worked, and became parents and grandparents in Puwoko. Officially, housing was provided only to active employees of the plantation, and officially, too, upon reaching the age of retirement, a laborer would not work anymore. In practice, however, many retirees remained in Puwoko until they died, simply because they had nowhere else to go. They shared the living quarters of an offspring still holding an active employment status. To cover their livelihood, the majority of these supposedly retired laborers kept working in the plantation as seasonal laborers in the tea fields until they could not work anymore. Some others tried to earn a living by offering services to the emplacement inhabitants as masseurs, barbers, midwives, herb makers, snack makers, or chicken and goat raisers.

Life in the emplacement was not entirely pleasant. The plantation company's rules intruded deeply into the workers' social lives (cf. Moody-Stuart, 1987: 22). Apart from that, privacy was a luxury if not totally absent. Everybody knew what everybody else owned and was up to. Even if they did not want to know, the news—whether false or true—would come to them sooner rather than later. Social relations were thick with envy of other people's achievements, and the inhabitants went to great lengths to avoid being outpaced by a neighbor. If a child was given a new model of plastic sandals by their parents, all the other children in the emplacement would soon be asking their parents for the same sandals, crying until their

demands were granted. When a housewife bought a new set of plates, other housewives would follow suit. If they could not, there would be talk of how certain people could afford certain things. “You needed thick ears to live in the emplacement, otherwise you would turn crazy by the neighbors’ talks...” Grandma Kini recalled. Quarrels between neighbors were common, to the extent that it was said that every time a deer passed after the afternoon rains in the nearby tea fields, a quarrel would follow.

Another complaint people often openly expressed about life in the emplacement was that it corrupted their initiative (Clerkx and Wertheim, 1991: 64). “Life in the emplacement was just like the life of buffaloes. We were housed, fed, clothed, and ordered to work day in day out. Life in the emplacement robbed people of their initiative. There was no alternative view here...” ex-mechanic Hardi grumbled. When there was a problem with their living quarters, people were reluctant to repair them on their own. Unless it posed an immediate threat to their convenience, such as a broken roof tile, people tended to neglect the problem. “Why bother, this is the company’s house, not ours and it is the company’s responsibility to repair it,” was a common expression among the emplacement inhabitants.

In spite of the complaints and problems, people were reluctant to leave Puwoko. They had been living there for generations and were accustomed to the emplacement life. Besides that, since the factory was renovated in the mid-1960s and the tea fields continued to produce more and more leaves, the working hours had been expanded. Tea processing now started at four in the morning, while other work started at six. At two in the afternoon, the official working day ended, except for those who were in the afternoon shift of tea processing and grading. For those who worked in the withering chamber, work began at twelve in the afternoon, when fresh leaves came in from the fields, and ended the following morning with the transfer of leaves from the withering chambers to the crushing machines. With such a work schedule, it was convenient for the workers and laborers to reside in the emplacement.

The situation started to change in the 1970s, spurred by changes at a higher level of the plantation hierarchy. In the early 1970s, Ir. Soerjo Diporo, a holder of a bachelor degree in agricultural engineering, was appointed as the plantation’s manager. Upon seeing the hardships of the jobless and homeless retirees, Ir. Soerjo offered a credit scheme enabling

the plantation laborers to buy housing lands in the nearby hamlets. However, the laborers were not generally eager to leave the emplacement. Life in the hamlets was quiet, far from neighbors, without electricity, lacking in entertainment, lonely, and so on. In short, it was everything the emplacement was not. However, after the northern side of the housing complex was destroyed by gradual landslides in 1975–1977, one by one the emplacement residents moved out to reside in their own house in the nearby hamlets. The tremendous mudslide of February 1991 that took the lives of overseer Muslimin and his wife further increased people’s willingness to leave the emplacement. They were terrified that a similar catastrophe would occur again. Those who already had land in the nearby hamlets hurriedly built a house and moved there as soon as the roof was in place. Meanwhile, those without land would try to buy their own plot. From then on, it became a standard goal for every laborer to have a small plot of land, preferably close to the plantation, for building a house of their own as soon as they could afford it.

A further semi-official effort to improve the laborers’ welfare was taken in 1972, when the plantation company initiated the worker cooperative named *Giri Makmur*, Prosperous Hill, in Jolotigo.²⁸ In the beginning, the cooperative simply had opened a credit service and retail shop selling rice and personal working equipment such as plastic boots, raincoats, and pruning machetes. Later on, it secured contracts on Jolotigo’s cargo transport, as the company focused its efforts on production activities. The *Giri Makmur* cooperative was very useful to Jolotigo personnel, staff, and laborers alike. In times of need, they could obtain credit from the cooperative without undergoing a complicated procedure. They also received an annual share of the cooperative’s profits.

In the 1970s, as well, Indonesia experienced an economic boom because of increasing oil prices and foreign aid (Hill, 1994: 61). Businesses and the private sector expanded greatly in cities and attracted a good number of Jolotigo laborers, mainly those who were skilled in technical matters. Many were lured to leave the plantation and try their luck in the lively cities. At the same time, a trickle of Jolotigo children started to attend high school in the town of Pekalongan. Upon completing school, some of them returned to the plantation as educated youth, while some went to the cities. From then on, the decades-old tradition of the children of Jolotigo laborers eventually becoming what their parents had been started to erode. Women

also began to exit the labor force during this period. Faced with an unpromising future in the plantation, some laborers' daughters went to Pekalongan and other cities to work as domestic servants, and once in the city, their network expanded and spread to other cities. By the early 1980s, this network had reached Jakarta and soon expanded to Batam Island on the country's border with Singapore. In the early 1990s, Jolotigo women ventured to foreign lands—Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Middle Eastern countries (Killias, 2012). To many women, single and married alike, this was the opportunity of which they had been dreaming their entire lives, to work in *Saudi* and return home with a large amount of money. Working abroad was not carried out as a temporary means of accumulating capital, but as regular work, just like work in the tea plantation. As Wati, the wife of security guard Togog, put it, "*Kebone inyong saiki nang luar*"—"My tea field is abroad now."

An early effect of women's emigration was a reduction in the everyday economic burden of the laborers' households, but it only began to make a significant contribution to the improvement of living standards when international migration began. Two years after their departure abroad, the first batch of women returned to the village with a lot of cash and many gifts for their kin, friends, and neighbors. Most of the money they brought from abroad was spent on renovating their houses. Almost in unison, a number of shiny houses, made of bricks and ceramic tiles and decorated with Arabic calligraphy sprung up in the village. Besides remittances, the workers' ability to build houses is partly explicable with reference to rotational saving and labor exchange. When a worker's family succeeded in securing a housing lot, they would save money for building materials—cement, sand, bricks, stones, and roof tiles. Wood for beams and other structures was usually obtained from the plantation. To reduce costs, most of the house-building work was carried out through labor exchange with neighbors and kin.

By the mid-1990s, Puwoko had lost a large proportion of its population, and with less than a hundred and fifty inhabitants, the emplacement was just a quiet hamlet under the constant hum of a 300 megawatt electric generator and the factory machinery. The availability of motorcycles allowed laborers to commute from their own homes to the plantation easily. Witnessing Puwoko's present condition, the plantation's old-timers simply commented, "There is no fun anymore in the emplacement. People only

work there." Since the early 1990s, Puwoko no longer serves as a center of social life in the plantation community. People come to the Puwoko graveyard just to clean their parents' or grandparents' burial sites and send prayers for their souls, but not to bury their new dead. It is only the annual earth-giving and Kiai Panderesan commemoration rituals that retain the tell-tale that sometime in the past Puwoko was the nerve of the Jolotigo plantation community.

CONCLUSION

The discussion above shows that the transformation of an Indonesian plantation from a colonial into a post-colonial one does not necessarily dismantle the plantation's ability to coerce laborers, as Gordon argued, because labor coercion was not practiced in every colonial plantation. Coercion to obtain cheap labor was infamously deployed in East Sumatran plantations, and it should not be generalized for all Indonesian plantations. Jolotigo did not resort to coercion to obtain and retain laborers working in the plantation. Plantations in both colonial and post-colonial Indonesia have mainly depended on the free labor market and have to obtain labor through a market mechanism. Control over labor during the colonial era, ensuring that laborers continued to work in the plantation, was exercised through the social mechanism of patronage rather than through a harsh state policy. On the other side, laborers were willing to take plantation jobs mainly because of a lack of economic alternatives in their homes. Once alternatives became available, the company's control over labor dissolved and laborers could choose a way of life to their own liking. The plantation company's ability to exercise control over labor was conditioned by global market dynamics. The late 19th century market forces gave the company both the need and the power to exercise control over its labor force; the late 20th century market took this power away by creating economic alternatives outside the plantation. What colonial policy, in general, had something to do with the plantation labors was more on the segregation of labor based on skin color, of reserving the well-paid positions of overseer and manager to the Dutch while allocating cheaply paid manual work to Indonesians, rather than the coercion of labor. What changed from the colonial to the post-colonial period is mainly a restructuring of the labor force. Right after the nationalization of foreign companies, the positions of overseer and manager were allocated to Indonesians who received much lower salaries than the Dutch

used to earn. Seen from the perspective of a world market function, the plantation, either colonial or post-colonial, is just the same, to provide a good supply of plantation products at the lowest possible price. Therefore, any effort to find significant differences between a colonial and post-colonial plantation should be started from a question of whether the demise of the colonial regime led the plantation to obtain cheaper labor, rather than assuming that the post-colonial plantation “lost the privilege of coercion to produce cheap labor.”

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ENDNOTES

- 1) I use “emplacement” throughout this article following the term commonly used in the plantation to refer to worker housing, *emplasemen*.
- 2) Following the mother country, currency in colonial Indonesia was called gulden (*f*).
- 3) ANRI. Arsip Pekalongan. Algemeen Verslag der Residentie Pekalongan, 1864; NA, NHM, 1824–1964. No. 7953 Koffieonderneming Djolotigo.
- 4) From month to month, the number of laborers tended to change based on the plantation’s demand. In August 1891, for instance, the number was 82 males and 37 females while in October it was 126 males and 74 females (NA, NHM, 1824–1964. No. 7953 Koffieonderneming Djolotigo).
- 5) This self-portrait was understandably exaggerated, but southern Pekalongan during this period was still rich in tigers and other wild animals. In 1882, a person was reportedly killed by a tiger (KV, 1883, Bijl. BB). In the 1930s, the family dog of overseer Broekhals was eaten by a panther, while one was shot by Broekhals when it had ventured into Jolotigo hamlet (Brockhall. DJR 5, 9).
- 6) NA, NHM, 1824–1964. No. 7953 Koffieonderneming Djolotigo.
- 7) NA, NHM, 1824–1964. No. 7953 Koffieonderneming Djolotigo.
- 8) NA, NHM, 1824–1964. No. 7953 Koffieonderneming Djolotigo.
- 9) NA, Cultuurmaatschappij Djolotigo. No. 9. To improve

tea production in Java in the 1910s, the government planned to develop people’s tea cultivation. The plan was introduced in Priangan Regency with a good result, but it also invoked criticism that their tea was normally poor in quality and that the low standard of field maintenance would turn the people’s tea fields into a nest of tea shrub disease (Price, 1917; Lekkerkerker, 1917; 1924).

10) People said that labor recruiters or *werek*, from the Dutch word *werk*, work, were quite important in mustering a plantation labor force out of the impoverished Javanese mass. The *werek* employed all kinds of tricks, from sweet promises of a lavish income and nice living in the plantation down to *guna-guna*, charms to fool people into signing a labor contract or simply agreeing to go to the plantation, be it in Suriname, East Sumatra or hinterland Java (see Ismael, 1955: 40). In Javanese plantations, however, labor contracts were not common. Usually, laborers simply agreed to work in a plantation without signing any contract.

11) NA, Cultuurmaatschappij Djolotigo. No 2. Stukken; No. 15. Jaarverslag 1919.

12) NA. Cultuurmaatschappij Djolotigo. No. 3. Kasverantwoording 1936; Plomp, 1993: 50.

13) Pager Gunung, located half a kilometer north of Puwoko, was a small hamlet consisting of 18 households of farmers who stubbornly kept their way of living as subsistence land cultivators until the hamlet was destroyed by a fire. After the fire, the farmers moved to Puwoko and took up work as plantation laborers (NA, NHM, 1824–1964. No. 7953 Koffieonderneming Djolotigo).

14) NA, Cultuurmaatschappij Djolotigo. No 15. Jaarverslagen 1922–1939.

15) NA. Cultuurmaatschappij Djolotigo. No. 15. Jaarverslagen 1920–1939.

16) Rp 1 at that period was more or less equal to *f*1; and 1 kati is equal to 0.625 kg. Later on in 1947, when the Dutch army placed an economic embargo on the newly born Indonesian government, the price of tea in the area controlled by the Indonesian army was Rp 3/kati.

17) NA. Cultuurmaatschappij Djolotigo. No. 16. Correspondentie van de directie met commissarissen over de jaarbalansen en de organisatie van de onderneming, 1948–1959.

18) NA. Bestuursverslag Pekalongan, 1947–1949; van Doorn and Hendrix, 1987: 62.

19) NA, Cultuurmaatschappij Djolotigo: No. 16. Correspondentie.

20) NA, Cultuurmaatschappij Djolotigo: No. 16. Correspondentie.

21) NA, Cultuurmaatschappij Djolotigo. No. 17. “Enige interessante”.

22) NA, Cultuurmaatschappij Djolotigo: No. 16. Correspondentie.

- 23) The weakness of Jolotigo's Sarbupri was clearly reflected in the 1953 editions of Sarbupri official magazines, Warta Sarbupri (WS) and Berita Organisasi Sarbupri (BOS). These editions presented a number of news stories on Sarbupri units in Pagilaran tea plantation and Prumpang rubber plantation, both of which were next to Jolotigo, but no single piece of news on Jolotigo came up (WS, Vol. IV. No. 3-4; No. 7-8; No. 14-15; BOS, No. 16; No. 18).
- 24) Private collection R. Soebandi: Idjazah LKPS.
- 25) SM, Nov. 08, 1965; Dec. 13, 1965; Dec. 18, 1965; Dec. 21, 1965; Jan. 29, 1966; Feb. 02, 1966; Sept. 26, 1966a; Sept. 26, 1966b; June 02, 1969.
- 26) SM, Dec. 14, 1967; Gaffaret.al., 1993; Lubis, 1994; Pramono, 1996: 71.
- 27) PTPN IX Kebun Jolotigo, Surat Keputusan Direksi No. PTPN IX.0/SK/050.
- 28) PTPN IX Kebun Jolotigo, RAT Koperasi Giri Makmur 2002.

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