

Wage System Given By Plantation Lords to Contract Coolie Workers In East Sumatra

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Abstract: This study tries to find out the wage system that coolies obey in tobacco plantations in Deli, East Sumatra, the methods used by the authorities to punish coolies there, and the influence of the wage system on the colonial life of coolies in tobacco plantations in Deli. East Sumatra. using research techniques and libraries to obtain the necessary facts (library research). The research findings indicate that Development has emerged as a key attraction for other parties wishing to make financial investments in Deli. The gardeners' piece rate scheme is used only for their benefit. The coolies actually suffered a lot under this regime because their 35 cents per hour work was too little to meet their needs. Another problem is if the garden owner withholds wages when the employees are disciplined and pays for tools that the employees will use at work according to the wage system. The porter was responsible for paying for everything in bulk. This causes the life of the coolies to become even more difficult, because for their daily needs they have to toil with lives that are threatened.

Abstrak: Kajian ini mencoba untuk mengetahui sistem pengupahan yang dipatuhi oleh kuli di perkebunan tembakau Deli, Sumatera Timur, metode yang digunakan aparat untuk menghukum kuli di sana, dan pengaruh sistem pengupahan terhadap kehidupan kolonial kuli di perkebunan tembakau di Deli. Sumatera Timur. menggunakan teknik penelitian dan perpustakaan untuk mendapatkan fakta-fakta yang diperlukan (library research). Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Pembangunan telah muncul sebagai daya tarik utama bagi pihak lain yang ingin melakukan investasi keuangan di Deli. Skema upah borongan tukang kebun digunakan hanya untuk keuntungan mereka. Para kuli sebenarnya sangat menderita di bawah rezim ini karena 35 sen per jam kerja mereka terlalu kecil untuk memenuhi kebutuhan mereka. Masalah lainnya adalah jika pemilik kebun menahan upah saat karyawan disiplin dan membayar alat yang akan digunakan karyawan di tempat kerja sesuai dengan sistem pengupahan. Porter bertanggung jawab untuk membayar semuanya dalam jumlah besar. Hal ini menyebabkan kehidupan para kuli menjadi semakin sulit, karena untuk kebutuhan sehari-hari mereka harus membanting tulang dengan nyawa yang terancam.

INTRODUCTION

East Sumatra is one of the areas on the island of Sumatra that was exploited by the private sector during the colonial period, especially in plantation development. clearing forests, cultivating commodity crops, bringing in large amounts of investment, and attracting foreign workers to maintain plantation exploitation, which led to the rapid development of East Sumatra and became famous in Sumatra.

As a result of large-scale exploitation by onderneming, there was a reduction in the amount of agricultural land available to residents, which had various impacts on the lives of people living outside the plantation. Establishing new tobacco plants in the area required interests stemming from disputes over land use rights for Dutch private entrepreneurs that belonged completely to the people and the sultan.

If the sultan agrees to grant land concession rights, tobacco plantations may be opened. The grandfather who served as the community leader in this area was not present when the plantation was officially opened; Instead, only planters and sultans. Embellishing the respect and understanding these Kings once enjoyed gradually diminished and vanished, and the people began to believe that these Kings came to power through contract politics (which was exactly what they did, not through the affection and love of their people), which resulted in rich but unwise kings.

The main problem in Deli is also about the payroll and compensation of coolies. The coolies are paid twice a month, on certain days. The coolies should strive to ensure that their two to two and a half dollar monthly salary is enough to support them every day. This does not reflect the salary reduction that occurs when employees make mistakes in their work. Farm owners are assured by this wage structure that coolies will try their best and the duration of shifts. The coolies had to give their full attention to their crops to earn the minimum wage. They usually have to spend more time than the 10 hours specified in the contract.

The Peonale Sanctie (the rule of law for coolies working on plantations) created by the Dutch colonial government in the region in 1879 basically threatened these contracts. In addition, tobacco farmers in Deli carried out extensive repression against plantation employees (koeli contracts). In addition to the Sanctie Peonale granted by the Dutch government, the Koeli Ordonatie was also issued to control these coolies as a mechanism by which companies could force contract employees to remain on plantations.

The life of a coolie in the Deli Plantation of East Sumatra is fairly varied, it can even be said to be repetitive. No action is taken outside the well-controlled plantation environment. If indeed the worker is found to have escaped, the guards will check on them in any way as a result. If discovered, the manual laborers will

be put in order and given to the owner of the garden to be beaten, beaten, and kicked. Since most of them are confined in secret gardens, the plight of different types of garden laborers can no longer be recorded.

So, it is clear from the above description that the Dutch colonial rulers in Deli consciously or unconsciously approved of the unexpected behavior of plantation owners. Researchers became interested in writing about "The Wage System of Coolie Tobacco Plantations in East Sumatra during the Colonial Period" because of the oppression and suffering experienced by plantation workers. In particular, researchers write about the lives of workers, known as contract koeli, and how their suffering and ill-treatment led to the hostility of the porters.

Based on this explanation, the researcher conducted a research entitled "The Wage Provision System given by Plantation Masters to Contract Coolie Workers in East Sumatra".

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach. From the beginning of the investigation to the analysis of the data, a qualitative approach with the author as an instrument has been used consistently.

DISCUSSION

History of the coolie wage system

Sultan Mahmud Perkasa Alam (1858–1872) supervised Deli during his reign, and in 1862, the Sultanate of Deli and the Dutch government signed

an agreement. At that time the Dutch arrived in Deli and made an Acte Van Verband agreement under the leadership of Riau Resident Eliza Netscher. This incident occurred aboard the battleship Reinier Claassen on August 22, 1862. Labuhan, the capital of Deli at that time, was used as a base for Dutch power and where the Cats de Raet "controller" was installed.

The Deli tobacco factory was first introduced in 1864, and Nienhuys is considered its inventor. New gardens were opened in Sunggal in 1869, then in Sungai Besar and Kelumpang in 1875. Very significant gains were obtained in 1868 alone, which led to the growth of tobacco in the region by hordes of other foreign aircraft. Mr. Janssen-P.W.Clemen and Nienhuys formed a partnership in 1866 with an initial capital investment of \$10,000,000. After that, Chinese and Indian coolies from Penang came, forming Deli Maatschappij, which was then encouraged by the entry of Lord Cremer, a figure who caused tobacco plantations to develop rapidly.

After moving to Deli, Nienhuys managed to obtain a land permit from Sultan Mahmud Perkasa Alamsyah to establish a tobacco factory there. Without lease, Nienhuys received land use rights (concessions) for 20 years. He was exempt from paying taxes for the first five years; Only then did he start paying 200 guilders every year. Here on the banks of the Deli River is the permit zone that became the initial tobacco plantation. Tanjung Sepassi is the site, and has a total area of 4,000 bau (1 bau equals 7,096.5 square meters; 1 shoulder is 0.74 hectares).

Since then, tobacco plantations have existed in the Deli region.

The original grower, Nienhuys, initially argued that land in East Sumatra could only produce tobacco sustainably for one harvest. In the early 1890s, after conducting research, tobacco in previously undeveloped areas, tobacco can also be cultivated and produced in high-quality rolls. The purpose of abandoning used land for 8 or 12 years is to restore soil fertility.

Although the color of the leaves is lighter than tobacco from forest land, tobacco grown in open land is of high quality. Processing of plants is carried out with the help of 4 or 6 assistants and supervised by an administrator. 400 tobacco plots covering an area of 1 hectare each will be planted with 16,000 tobacco stalks in the agricultural area. Tobacco leaves are given to enterprises after harvest. Assistant gardeners screen, count and assess tobacco leaves. Only very high-quality tobacco leaves are used to make cigar wrappers.

Deli lacks manpower as well as plantation labor

Farmers clearly need additional employees because plantations continue to grow. The establishment and growth of these plantations led to a shortage of coolies in plantations in East Sumatra. The growth of East Sumatra's international business requires a lot of human labor. It really requires manpower to remove impenetrable logs, build canals, manage land to grow tobacco, and other tasks. It was well understood from the start that hiring employees

would be a challenge. The colonists recognized that the natives were not eager to work in agriculture, nor were they proficient in tobacco production. They finally relied on coolies imported from outside, first Chinese coolies and then Javanese coolies.

Originally finding coolies for plantations was very difficult. Pak Nienhuys wanted to recruit Chinese coolies in the opposite country (Penang) at that time because the Batak people he used at that time were quite substandard. Chinese coolies and Voor Indiers (later known as Nail Rivets) were invented. They accepted Nienhuys' offer in Penang and were promised a large salary, but when they arrived in the country of Deli, the salary was only a few ringgit. That's why many coolies ran away, that's the explanation. They then persuaded Chinese bosses (Chinese coolies who had lived in Deli for a long time) to offer incentives in the past to travel to China to have their employees work as "contract workers" in Deli. Judging from the large number of Chinese porters who often visit Deli, it seems that this campaign is quite successful.

Plantation owners are increasingly looking for labor as a solution to the problem of an increasing labor force. Hence, in addition to continuing to import coolies directly from China, these businessmen also import coolies from Java. thanks to the dedication and hard work of these Javanese employees. East Sumatran tobacco plantation owners have realized that these Javanese laborers have a fairly good level of agricultural skills so that

they are easily accustomed to working in plantations.

Brokers advertise labor by offering grandiose promises. They said the same thing about the Chinese labourers they were looking for in Penang; Hence, working in a deli is a very simple way for everyone to make money and go home. In addition, every day there are fantastic game shows and shadow puppet shows presented, and the cuisine is amazing. Yet none of these things actually happened as predicted; In reality, the opposite is true.

Another trick to get the money needed is the gardener's \$1 cent. In addition, the owner of the garden did so that the owner's coolie money was only left on the estate. A coolie who works on the Bindjai plantation is paid in Kebon Bindjai currency; however, this currency cannot be used to purchase plantations in Serdang or Medan. This is quite limiting; The individual has money but cannot spend it elsewhere.

Implementation of Tobacco Plantation Coolie Compensation System

In large plantations in East Sumatra, the employment contract system has a unique form. The wholesale plantation system in East Sumatra, supported by large capital European plantation corporations, employs thousands of Javanese and indentured labourers. The ethnicity of the people of East Sumatra has undergone significant changes since then as a result of this system. Javanese settlers and their descendants, later

referred to as "JaDel" (Java-Deli), have contributed significantly to the economic prosperity of considerable plantations in East Sumatra. Workers who found odd jobs, which were likely to complicate their economic life in Java, could have been the forerunners of indentured coolies and colonization plantations in East Sumatra, as can be seen from the description above.

Most tobacco plantation workers receive wages in the form of piece wages or piece compensation under the current state wage structure. The amount of achievement that has been determined and must be done before the deadline is basically a daily and monthly salary. The whole process of growing tobacco, including all Chinese workers engaged in clearing land, planting, tending and harvesting it, is carried out in bulk, and the payment of piece wages is carried out in lieu of monthly wages.

The discipline of labor in tobacco plantations in the early stages of capitalism was characterized by a system of wholesale labor combined with strict supervision. The patron of the Chinese in Malacca was immediately warned of the many abuses resulting from wholesale labor practices, and he played an important role in the spread of Chinese coolies. The Protector lamented the low salary levels, ambiguous salary calculations, and illegal behavior of East Sumatran inspectors in an official report from 1881. The Protector encouraged the Dutch colonial government to implement a monthly salary, but in vain.

Gardeners say that competent porters will not be encouraged by monthly salaries, while poor coolies will be more forced to shirk their duties. By denying them the freedom to spend their already meager wages, park managers regularly deceived coolies. Some estates paid their coolies partly with production money in the form of paper bills or metal pieces that could exclusively be redeemed at plantation shops (taverns). Gardeners claim that the lack of cash in East Sumatra is the reason they carry out tool exchanges. A dollar consists of 100 kupang or 1000 money, both of which are referred to as money.

Since company executives still take the final amount to cover some of their expenses, this approach is obviously bad for porters. The first expenditure is the cost of clearing land and performing other tasks necessary to establish tobacco plantations. worth between \$5 and \$10. Then, porters are responsible for bearing the cost of replacing any tools they use themselves. To the extent that the coolies themselves have to pay for the newsboard in the bedroom, a small book to record the salary, and the coolie's down payment.

The owner of the company hopes to create the impression through this wholesale system that he is recruiting tobacco farmers at his own risk and responsibility, with the help of inexperienced personnel and additional items based on other requests. Because of these cuts, a farmworker cannot earn more than \$75 during the growing season (roughly eight months). Even the most

experienced coolies at the turn of the century could only expect to make an average of \$100 a year due to the poor pay of yeast chamber jobs after years of farming.

This way of working, in my opinion, exacerbates conflicts between coolie colleagues. Gardeners claim that although alternative foliar picking techniques, which involve picking each leaf individually, will provide a larger salary, it is applied gradually. Salary deductions are a daily practice because coolies often miss work or arrive late, as well as because of their indifference to their duties or other types of negligence.

Soon after the Deli Planters Vereeniging (DPV) group was formed, members initially agreed to pay a maximum of \$8 for each tobacco tree. The plantation, which by then had spent more than \$8 (nine dollars for the highest quality tobacco at the time), received instructions to stop violating laws that would eventually have serious and unpleasant repercussions. Strategies intended to avoid salary increases in the event of a labor shortage are quite effective. The number of reserve coolies is not proportional to the continuous growth in demand in the following decades. Premiums paid to middlemen did increase at the time, but labor costs did not.

Depending on quality, the price was rarely more than \$8 until the early 20th century. In addition, most farms actually expose field employees to the risks of growing tobacco. They receive money for trees harvested rather than for every tobacco tree planted. The

income of a coolie can fluctuate due to bad weather, bad soil, and several other factors that farmers cannot control. This was demonstrated by the Deli Milled Tobacco Crisis of 1890, which was caused by the economic downturn associated with capitalism and forced the imposition of the McKinley Tariff. Depending on the quality, the regulation applies to different types of tobacco at a cost of 35 to 37 cents per pound. About 60,000 bales were bought in the spring by U.S. tobacco companies due to rising import costs.

The American business owner canceled the tobacco he had ordered, even though it was also available in other seasons. In 1891, when the number of tobacco plants increased by 25%, tobacco production occurred at the point of harvest. The tobacco crisis that occurred in East Sumatra between 1891 and 1907 led to the closure of more than 300 factories. Coolies are only paid 35 cents per day, or f 10.50 per month, and f 2 must be taken from that amount to pay an advance or advance when they work and sign contracts. Not to mention the 14 bushels of rice that the porter and his wife consumed in one month.

Handling of Plantation Coolies by Officers in Deli

a) Worker Fraud

Chinese porters are available in Penang through various channels. Through intermediaries the amount continues to increase over time (brokers). These brokers used deception rather than selection or screening to obtain Chinese workers

from the Malay Peninsula. They lure potential employees by making exaggerated promises to lure them into working on the property.

b) Punishment and Violence

Wage deductions or extra work are the most common forms of discipline by coolies who do not have the will to carry out orders or are considered disrespectful. Discipline managers according to their personal beliefs. As an additional punishment, people who fled the plantation had to pay all costs to find and bring them back. The immobility of contract employees also increases with debt levels. Coolies believe that they will only be allowed out of the plantation once they are debt-free. Despite the fact that it took longer than first negotiated.

The Effect of the Wage System on the Quality of Life of Plantation Coolies

All operations are carried out exclusively within the perimeter of secure housing. If the porter makes a mistake, they will pay for it. The estate's guards would search them in every imaginable way if it was determined that they were trying to escape. Especially when discovered, the guards will punish the evasive coolies with punches and hard kicks. The gardener will then greet them and arrange the punishment according to the conditions set by the gardener. Often, the punishment they receive from the gardener will be more severe, in the form of lashes according to the gardener's rules and beatings or kicks.

Another tactic is to encourage expired porters to spend more money

than they earned in the current month. Prostitution was legalized during this period, gambling was encouraged, and prostitutes were allowed access to nearby farms. This kind of things are often used in plantations to tie up coolies and force them to continue working there forever. The reason is, the owners deliberately allow prostitution, opium circulation, and gambling so that on the one hand the coolies are entertained and feel at home working on the plantation. However, other employers arrange coolies to spend money and then owe money to the employer.

When the employer lends money to a coolie, this loan (debt) then requires the coolie to renew the employment agreement with the employer to pay off the loan (debt) to the employer (plantation lord). . In the end, the master's main goal—asking coolies to continue working on the plantation—was achieved. It is very uninhabitable, especially for villages that are often inhabited by coolies. Fifty coolies often lived in one settlement (barracks), jostling and debating which settlement was suitable for coolies.

While coolies have a very low level of knowledge about health values. Because some hostels only have one small room (now we call it toilet). Many coolies are attacked by various diseases such as skin diseases, sore throats, lungs, and even sexually transmitted diseases because there is not enough water or spring water for coolies to do MCK (bathing, washing, latrine). This disease is usually caused by poor hygiene, but it is also more

often caused by men and women who change partners frequently.

From the foregoing it follows that the cost of coolies is much higher due to the need for goods and personal satisfaction to find free time to relieve their boredom and tension in nearby plantations. In the end, coolies who should be able to meet basic needs and even save, feel lacking and even in debt. And because of this debt, coolies are required to resign from the work agreement with the plantation.

CONCLUSION

The wholesale wage system is used to regulate the wage structure in plantations, especially for field workers. Since the authorities were the only ones who benefited from this arrangement at the time, park owners only used it for their personal gain. With this method as a whole, the harvest is determined by the gardener while the plantation employees work according to a predetermined schedule. Tobacco is grown by field workers. Their labor affects the quantity and quality of tobacco products. The techniques used in plantations are very detrimental to coolies because even though they work up to 10 hours a day, they do not get a salary commensurate with their work.

Not to mention the extras that the workers have to pay to the Garden Lord. Chinese, Javanese and Indian workers (commonly known as Orang Paku Keling) manage all aspects of tobacco growing in this wholesale system, from planting to leaf collection and processing (drying, fermentation

and sorting). Each job is compensated under the contract. The socioeconomic situation of workers gets worse when low wages are received.

Mr. Garden's actions were brutal, including deception, beatings, humiliation, and other behaviors that human coolies often considered but were not well received by humans causing them to feel miserable and tormented. Ending the ongoing tyranny of coolies is challenging. It even tends to increase because owners believe that porters can survive without having to be tried by the courts, even if they are sentenced most harshly for torturing coolies and accused of breaking the law.

Therefore, the existence of porters at that time was very challenging. Sometimes coolies are really ignorant; They just want to work and engage in prostitution. They also often squander money on puppets, which requires them to sign employment contracts again. Even though this action was also done because the coolie life was very boring. As a result, coolies who should be able to meet their needs and even save, feel drained and even in debt. And because of this debt, the contract with the estate had to be re-signed.

The inflexibility of debt bondage workers also increases with debt levels. Look, the coolies believe that once they are debt-free, they can just leave the estate. Although the term of the contract is longer than anticipated.

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