

## Soerakarta 1919 : *Satria, Islamic Pradjoerit, and Peasants*

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During the early months of 1919, the Soerakarta branch (*afdeeling*) of Insulinde carried out propaganda activities for the Indies nationalism and reformist Islam in the rural areas of Soerakarta Principality. Peasants were organized into the *krings* (circles) and the membership of Insulinde in rural Soerakarta reached more than ten thousands within a few months. This highly successful peasant mobilization by the Insulinde, however, simultaneously generated successive peasant protest actions in which they refused to perform corvee labor for the tobacco plantations and demanded their wage increase. In this paper, I propose to describe and analyze the process of peasant mobilization and to answer why the nationalist mobilization of peasants resulted, though not intended, in generating peasant protest against the plantations. The major points made in this paper are two-fold.

First, the *afdeeling* leadership under Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo and Hadji Mohammad Misbach did not intend to organize peasant protest actions against the plantations. They propagated the ideas of the Indies nationalism and Islamic reformism and acted on the ideas of genuine *satria* and Islamic *pradjoerit* (soldier) at the propaganda rallies. But the *kring* leaders translated their messages into much more economic demands and recruited the peasants into the Insulinde *krings* while promising the mitigation of corvee labor and their wage increase. Therefore, it was investment for the peasants to pay the entrance fee and to join the Insulinde. Once they joined the Insulinde, they pressed *kring* leaders for quick realization of their promises. Thus *kring* leaders

led the peasants to protest actions and the *afdeeling* leaders had no way but to approve their actions to maintain their credibility as genuine *satria* and Islamic *pradjoerit*.

Second, therefore, the issues involved in the peasant protest actions under the banner of Insulinde were similar in content with those in the "traditional" peasant protest movements without any background of nationalist politics. What was new with the peasant protest actions led by the Insulinde was that the *prapat*, the traditional institutional device for conflict resolution in Java, did not work. The *kring* leaders boycotted the *prapat* and instead held Insulinde progapanda rallies. The *prapat* was the political drama to legitimize the public authority in which the state officials played the pivotal role as the arbitrator of the conflicting private interests. The progapanda rallies were the political drama of delegitimizing the public authority, in which Indies nationalists and Islamic reformists occupied the pivotal position and the public authority was deprived of its higher moral quality by their appeals to the Truth contained in *al Koran*. Thus the administration had no way but to resort to arrest *afdeeling*- and *kring*-leaders in order to restore the public authority, for the arrests of *afdeeling*- and *kring*-leaders meant the disappearance of Insulinde progapanda rallies.