

**Mas Marco Kartodikromo's Resistance in 1914-1926:
Between Indonesia's Independence Hope and *Persdelict* threat**

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Abstract

This research explored the traces of Mas Marco Kartodikromo's resistance in 1914-1926. He was a prominent figure in the Indonesian independence fighters of the 1920s. His resistance could be seen in his literary works, his articles in newspapers and his rebellion. The research methods used several stages: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. These stages were carried out to ensure the data was valid and credible. The result of this research concluded that the resistance made by Mas Kartodikromo to the Dutch East Indies colonial government was solely to seize Indonesian independence. The struggle made him imprisoned three times (*persdelict*) because he resisted the authority, even to the point of being exiled to the middle of the forest of Boven Digoel.

Keywords: Mas Marco Kartodikromo, independence fighter, prison

Introduction

Dutch East Indies is a territorial which is occupied by various races and tribes. The total area of its entire islands is 1.900.152km²(34.583mi²), approximately almost the same as Europe, excluding Russia. It was bordered by Strait of Malacca, South China Sea, Sulu sea (until southern Philippine), Celebes Sea (Sulawesi) and the Pacific

Ocean in the North; the Pacific Ocean and New Guinea (England) in the East; Indian Ocean in the South and West (Stroomberg 2018, 4-5).

That strategic sea lane became easy to access for the immigrant to set their feet in the Dutch East Indies, especially Persian, Arab, and European. Stroomberg (2018, 44-45) stated that the Dutch East Indies were a civilized and modest country. Their people used the advanced system of agricultural practices and it was supported by fertile lands. These facts attracted European people to come to this place. Even from the Middle Ages, spices (cloves, secondary crops, pepper) that were produced there had already well-known in Europe. It was carried to important harbors like Malacca and Batam by indigenous ships and carried further until the Persian Gulf by Hindu, Persian and Arab navigators.

The trade was experiencing problems and being ended after Turkish occupied Constantinople in 1453. Then, Portuguese came in 1498 through sea lane around Africa and built a big colonial empire in South East Asia. Portuguese occupied Malacca in 1511 under Albuquerque's command and Maluku in 1521 by monopolizing spices trade. Not only in Hindia, but they also monopolized cinnamon trade in Sri Lanka, gold and silver trade in India, and porcelain and silk trade in Japan. All those things were carried away to Europe by Dutch ships.

Portuguese monopolization was weakened after Portugal was occupied by Spain in 1580. They bothered themselves by being involved in eight years of war. The opportunity was used by Dutch to come to Indies. Finally, in 1596, they succeeded in establishing VOC to control trade. They created trade politics, making the monopolize system and their own currency.

Stroomberg (2018, 47) argued that to get a high selling price, VOC determined a certain amount of production which was enough. Annual trips were planned as

inspections and useless trees were cut down. It was the famous *bongi*-expedition. In Java, they managed to end the contracts with Javanese princes, thus lately it limited their free supply of a certain amount of produce (which is called *kontigen*) and another supply of reasonable price (delivery). In their administration era, there was no problem with constructive economic policies because they had made sure that sugar industries around Batavia were being supported by VOC. But, the amount supplied by this industry autocratically was reduced and expanded. According to the amount of sugar on the Amsterdam market; there was no doubt about the trust or success of this report.

As time went by, this trade monopoly caused some problems: chaos among all parties, massive corruption, improper salary, until reached its critical point in 1798. This encouraged the Dutch to intervene, taking all actions, confiscation of assets, and regulate policies in the Dutch East Indies. Marschals Daendels was assigned to set up a new government system for three years. Not long after, he died. Dutch East Indies was taken control by Lieutenant Governor Raffles, Dutch enemy during the Napoleon War in 1811. He ruled from 1811-1816. After that, It was returned to the Dutch Government again in 1816.

Leasing land was introduced in Java during the Raffles transitional government that summarized much of the idea of it from the land acquisition system of British-Indian land. It was based on the main thought about the rights of the ruler as the owner of all existing land. It was leased to all village heads throughout Java who in turn were responsible for dividing and collecting leases (Niel 2003, 3).

In 1926, King William I sent Viscount Du Bus de Gisingnies to observe Java island. The colonial report on May 1, 1827, mentioned that Du Bus outlined his big plan of making Java a profitable asset. Basically, Du Bus proposed that lands which were not used in Java had to be sold or rented to Europeans. They would cultivate it

using Java laborers who were withdrawn through free wage regulations. That plan was indeed rooted in the concept of a liberal economy according to the European perspective, not from Javanese's view as the direct executor of entrepreneurial activities (Niel 2003, 5; Gie 1999, 7).

Finally in 1870, the liberal system or commonly known as “the open door political system” began to be applied in the Dutch East Indies (Simbolon 2007, 146-153). The Dutch East Indies government allowed foreign investors to invest in order to strengthen industries in the Dutch East Indies. The industrialization policy by private capital was seen by Paraptodiharjo (1952, 43) as a policy that made the people thinner and poorer. This mistake was caused by the actions of the Dutch East Indies and the village government. Basundoro (2009), the system was able to increase private exports on a large scale, but it was not balanced with exports by the Dutch East Government. Another impact that had arisen was the change in the sugar industry in the village would not cause agricultural involution, but rather brought up rural capitalism and the gap between the rich and the poor grew wider.

In the end, the condition above triggered the people to strike workers at four sugar factories in Yogyakarta in 1882. The first wave took place since the last week of July until August 4th, 1882 (Cahyono 2003, 107). At the beginning of the 20th century, the organization of the labor movement began to show very significant developments, like *Nederlandsch-Indisch Onderwijzers Genootschap* (NIOG) in 1897, *Staatsspoor Bond* (SS Bond) in Bandung in 1905, *Suikerbond* in 1907, *Vereeniging voor Spoor-en Tramweg Personeel in Ned-Indie* (VSTP) in Semarang in 1908, *Duanebond* in 1911, *Perkoempoelan Boemipoetra Pabean* (PBP) in 1911, *Postbond* in 1912, *Perserikatan Goeroe Hindia Belanda* (PGHB) in 1912, *BOWNI* in 1912, *Persatoean Goeroe Bantoe* (PGB) in 1912, *Pandhuisbond* in 1913, *Persatoean Pegawai Pegadaian Boemipoetra*

(PPPB) in 1914, *Indische Sociaal Democratische Vereniging* (ISDV) in 1914, *Opium Regie Bond* (ORB) in 1916, *Vereeniging van Inlandsch Personeel Burgerlijk Openbare Werken* (VIPBOUW) in 1916, *Personeel Febriek Bond* (PFB) in 1917, and *Persatoean Pergerakan Kaoem Boeroeh* (PPKB) in 1919 (Sulton 2017, 32).

Trade union organizations began to strengthen themselves after Hendricus Josephus Franciscus Marie Sneevliet came to the Dutch East Indies in 1913. The next few months in 1914, Sneevliet founded a political organization, namely *Indische Sociaal Democratische Vereniging* (ISDV). It aimed to strengthen the communist movement in the Dutch East Indies. His friends also helped him to strengthen the organization: Adolf Baars, H. W. Deeker, Van Burink, and Brandsteder while establishing a magazine, *Het Vrije Woord*, as the funnel of ISDV political propaganda.

In May 23rd, 1920, ISDV changed its name to the *Partai Komunis Hindia*. Seven months later, it changed its own name into *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI). PKI became the most powerful organization in the Dutch East Indies and was supported by VSTP and Sarikat Islam. In order to create political power, it gave communism teachings to young people in schools and village communities.

Movement organizations (labor organizations) and politics organizations were also spread propaganda through the newspaper that they founded. Even, not a few Islamic newspapers were communist media. Edi Cahyono (2003, 125) stated that communist newspapers could be found in Semarang, like *Sinar Hindia*,¹ *Soeara Ra'jat*, *Si Tetap*, and *Barisan Moeda*; *Islam Bergerak*, *Medan Moeslimin*, *Persatoean Ra'jat Senopati*, and *Hobromarkoto Mowo* in Surakarta (Solo); *Proletar* in Surabaya,

¹ *Sinar Hindia* was often used as a medium of movement at that time. Left-wing newspapers were growing very rapidly. Initially, the previous name of *Sinar Hindia* was *Sinar Djawa*, owned by Mr. Hiang Ling whose office was in Karangari (Liem Thian Joe 2004, 243). The name change was caused by Sariket Islam Semarang take over in 1913. This newspaper became the first indigenous daily newspaper. In the *Sinar Hindia*'s report, on January 3rd, 1920 stated that SI Semarang published *Sinar Hindia* whose circulation reached 20.000 to 30.000 copies.

the famous *Kromo Mardiko* in Yogyakarta; *Matahari*, *Mataram*, *Soerapati*, and *Titar* in Bandung; *Njala* and *Kijahi Djagoer* in Jakarta.

Besides, movement people also used literary works as their education instrument to indigenous. These literary works were considered as effective tools to instill an understanding of their homeland and criticize the situation happened in the Dutch East Indies. The language they used was created in such a way, so it was able to be accepted by the wider community (bahasa Melayu pasar), even by the people who had low education. Razif (2005, 26) stated that bahasa Melayu pasar was a language used by merchants and laborers who never had a good education of bahasa Melayu. It was different from texts which had been produced by Balai Pustaka. They had to use the government standard of bahasa Melayu and its contents were not allowed to be different from government instructions.

One of the movement people before the independence of Indonesia was Mas Marco Kartodikromo. He was one of the authors from a political movement organization in the early 20th century. Literary works were used as propaganda media, critics and resistance to the authorities. During his life in 1918, Mas Marco wrote some poems *Sama Rata Sama Rasa* (*Sinar Djawa*, April 10th 1918), *Penoentoen 1* (*Sinar Hindia*, June 26th 1918), *Penoentoen 2* (*Sinar Hindia*, June 27th 1918), *Gemeenteraad* (*Sinar Hindia*, August 24th 1918), *Syair Indie Weerbaar* (*Sinar Hindia*, September 2nd 2018), and *Bajak Laut* (*Sinar Hindia*, December 23rd 1918). Besides poems, he also wrote some novels: *Mata Gelap* (1914), *Student Hidjo* (1918) and *Matahariah* (1919).

In 1927, he was exiled to Boven Digoel along with another movement figures who were anti-government policies. The government accused him as the mastermind of many riots, propaganda, hatred and agitation spreader. Even though the accusations made by the Dutch East Indies government to him were different from the government

policies that were applied at that time. It was not in line with people's expectations. As a consequence, *kromo* people experienced misery and suffering. Mas Marco tried to improve their condition by taking a non-cooperative path: educating them through media, raising their standard, and involving himself in the populist based organization.

Therefore, bringing back Mas Marco's identity to the present is still quite relevant to be discussed, especially in terms of his idealism, communication, and political strategies. The threat of imprisonment did not make him wary. Instead, the prison became his place to reflect and create plans. He was willing to sacrifice his body and soul so that The Dutch East Indies would soon become independent and free from Dutch capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism.

Other articles or scientific studies that discuss Mas Marco in depth had not been done enough. His brief biography was written by Ahmad Adam (1997). Then, the racial identity discourse contained in his novel was discussed by Paul Tickell (2008) and Novi Diah Haryanti (2009). In the next two years, Novi stated his literary works as anti-Dutch literature. Meanwhile, Razif (2005), Sunu Wasono (2007), and Agus Sulton (2017) saw his literary works as political propaganda media.

Furthermore, this article intended to provide an understanding of Mas Marco idealism maintained, especially about his desire for the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) to become independent as soon as possible. However, that idealism eventually put him into the prison for three times. This would not make him wary. After he had been released for the third time, he joined the Indonesia Communist Party and the labor movement's organization to rebel against the government. This action led him to exile in Boven Digoel, Papua in 1927.

Research Method

This research used the stages of historical methods: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography (Notosusanto 1971). Heuristics is the collection of historical sources related to the object of research. Data collection sources are obtained from private collections, museums, and national libraries. The data sources are in the form of reference books, newspapers, magazines, and photographs.

Source criticism is the activity of selecting data on facts and events that have been collected. It is divided into two parts: external and internal criticism. Internal criticism is an activity to assess the credibility of data in historical sources. External criticism is an assessment activity and ensures whether the source is genuine, fake, or derivative, and ensures that the source is in accordance with the research or not.

Interpretation is interpreting data facts obtained in history. According to Kuntowijoyo (2005), there are several steps that must be done in making interpretations: verbal interpretation, logical interpretation, psychological interpretation, and factual interpretation. Therefore, interpretation is used by comparing existing data to reveal the reason for the occurrence of a historical event in the past.

Historiography is arranging events chronologically, systematically, and correlatively based on historical fact data that is available. After interpreting existing data, researches consider the structure and style of writing (Sulasman 2014).

Mas Marco Kartodikromo's Movement Provision

Mas Marco Kartodikromo or more commonly called Mas Marco was born in Cepu, Blora, Central Java (Dijk 2007, 459). Based on information at *Oetosan Melajoe*, No. 81, April 21st, 1917, Soemarko Kartodikromo or better known as Mas Marco Kartodikromo made a confession that in 1917 he was 28 years old. Thus, he was born in 1889. But, the indictment from *Landraad* no.989/1921, explained Mas Marco alias

Kartodikromo *oud naar gissing 35 jaren, geboren te Tjepoe* or he was estimated to be 35 years old in 1921.²

In the history of the mid-19th century, Blora was famous for teak plants. The production of teak wood from Blora was often used for development purposes and exported on a large scale. To increase the production of teak and sugar, the Dutch government forcibly monopolized residents land which was originally planted with rice to teak and sugar cane. Not a few residents of Blora had lost their livelihoods from the fields they previously managed (Hartanto 2017, 17-18). Their lives became more difficult. Most of them decided to move to Semarang, Surabaya, and Batavia to become industrial sector workers. But, most of those who kept staying in their villages became laborers from their own land because of the colonial government monopoly.

During the teak harvest, villagers were hired to transport teak from the forest to the main road with low salaries or even labor. From the main road, the woods were pulled by cows to the shelter. For the foremen children who had been able to work forced by the gentlemen to work, helping their fathers. Access to education for the poor was prohibited because the government was worried that they became smarter. They were formed to be low labor so they had the mentality to always be ruled.

Residents who could not stand the labor and exploitation encouraged awareness to oppose the government. The movement was led by Samin Surosentiko, a Saminism teaching movement that had thousands of members. It was a radical movement organization that opposed the policies of the government. Saminism actively opposed exploitation and labor, also, they fought against taxpayers. As the result, Saminism was forcibly dissolved by the government on November 8th, 1907.

² "*Perdelicht* and resistance letter from Mas Marco Kartodikromo," at the Djogjakarta *Landraad* general trial on December 8th, 1921, with a *vonnis* decision dated December 8th, 1921 (No.989/1921).

When the Saminism movement began to develop, Mas Marco was born in Blora. According to Ahmat Adam (1997), Mas Marco was born to a lowly *priyayi* family, the fifth child of six siblings. His father's name is Raden Karowikoro. He was a village head (*lurah*). Because his father's position, Mas Marco used to see residents come to his house for administrative purposes, including procedures for citizens to meet their parents, the language they used to speak with their parents, attitudes, and habits of their parents. Such social routines were routinely produced by him. According to Richard Jenkins (2016, 109), habitus was formed by experience and teaching explicitly.

At the age of six, Mas Marco was entrusted to his sister's house to get an education at Bumiputera *ongko loro* (grade 2) or *Tweede Inlandsche Shcool*, the equivalent to three years of elementary school in Bojonegoro. After graduating from Ongko Loro, he moved to Bagelen, Purworejo to get an education from *Schakel Scool* for five years. *Schakel Scool* was a public or donation school (John 1981, 26). The learning process often used Malay, Dutch, and local languages. While at Bagelen, he lived with his uncle, namely Raden Mangunkarto, who was a village head of Kemanukan.

Not satisfied with his education at *Schakel Scool* only, Mas Marco continued his study to *Ambach Shcool* (technical school) for two years and graduated in 1905. It was his luck school which he got from the assistance of Raden Mangunkarto. At the beginning of its establishment, in the 1900s, *Ambach Shcool* was specifically for European children who were specially prepared to meet the needs of technician staff and industrial needs (Lolali 1994). The instruction language in the class was always Dutch. So, it did not rule out the possibility that Mas Marco becomes more advanced in using Dutch from that school.

After getting a diploma from *Ambach Shcool*, Mas Marco Kartodikromo was accepted to work as a clerk at *Houtvesterij* (a unit of forest stakeholders) Purorejo in 1906. Eight months later, he decided to move to work at *Nederlandsch Indische Spoorweg Maatschappij*, one of the railway companies in Semarang. Feeling inconvenience at that company, he moved to work at G.C.T. Van Dorp & Co in Oudstadhuis Straat, Semarang (now Jln. Branjang, the old city of Semarang). It was a well-known publishing and printing company in that era. It started its peak in 1929 which changed its status to N.V. Drukkerij G.C.T. Van Dorp & Co because there were additional shipments that were increasingly complete and modern at that time among other companies.

The company did not make Mas Marco last long because the salary he earned was not comparable to the work he did as a printing machine operator. He was forced to move to Bandung, starting his career as a journalist at N.V. Medan Prijaji in 1909. While working here, Marco became acquainted with Soewardi Soerjaningrat,³ Martodharsono, dr. Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, and Raden Gunawan. They formed a mission with Tirto Adhi Soerjo in voicing the injustice of the Dutch East Indies government.

From 1911 until early 1912, *Medan Prijaji* experienced difficult times and bankruptcy. So, on August 23rd, 1912, it was declared closed. Tirto Adhi Soerjo was exiled to Bacan Island, southwest of Halmahera Island, South Halmahera, North Maluku in 1913. Tirto's exile was inseparable from allegations of fraud (debt) and humiliation of the Regent of Rembang, namely Raden Adipati Djodjodiningrat (late Raden Ajeng Kartini's husband).

³ A grandson of Sri Paku Alam III, son of KPH Soerjaningrat and R.A. Sandiyah, a descendant of Nyi Ageng Serang.

After *Medan Prijaji* was closed, Mas Marco joined in the Javanese language newspaper *Darmo-Kondo* which was originally chaired by R. Martodharsono (his co-worker in *Medan Prijaji*). *Darmo-Kondo* was founded by Tan Tjoe Kwan's printing in Surakarta in 1908. According to Gamal Komandoko (2008: 98), before 1910, *Darmo-Kondo* was owned and printed by Tan Tjoe Kwan and as editor-in-chief was Tjhie Siang Liang, a Chinese descendant who is fluent in Javanese and very skilled in Javanese literature. However, in 1910, it was bought by Boedi Oetomo Surakarta branch for f.50.000,-.⁴

Mas Marco Kartodikromo only stayed for one year in *Darmo-Kondo*, then he moved to *Sarotomo* magazine. The position of this magazine was under the auspices of the Surakarta's *Serikat Islam (SI)*. Raden Martodarsono (Mas Marco's friend in *Medan Prijaji*) was *Hoofdredacteur*. When Mas Marco first joined this magazine, his courageous spirit in making criticism to the government began to appear. This was proven when he wrote an article in *Sarotomo* on November 10th, 1913. That article deliberately criticized the report of the *Mindere Welvaart Commissie*, a commission whose task was to investigate the decline of the Dutch East Indies people's prosperity. This institution was formed based on the idea of A.W.F. Idenburg, minister of colonial affairs.

Hartanto (2017, 3) stated that during the two years Mas Marco joined *Sarotomo*, he faced the same obstacle as in *Medan Prijaji*. Samanhoedi as the founder of *Sarotomo* magazine did not take much care of *Sarotomo* until finally it lacked capital and went

⁴ In Malay, *Darmo-Kondo* newspaper was published on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday (except holidays). It was printed and published by *N.V. Javaansche Boekhandel en Drunkkerij Boedi Oetomo* in Surakarta, which its editorial office and administration were in Kauman. M. NG. Wirjohoesodo was the director. While Hardjosoemitro was the chief director (*hoofd-redacteur*) and R. Wirjosopono was the assistant director.

bankrupt in 1915. At the same time, Tjokroaminoto had controlled SI and moved its headquarter to Surabaya.

After Mas Marco left *Sarotomo* at the end of 1913, the texts presented in *Sarotomo* were not as militant as his writings there. *Sarotomo* had already been held by Sosro Koornio.

Ha! Ha! Djanoko zonder (without) Sarotomo, dus is useless. When Sarotomo's mission was in our hands, no one dared to interfere.⁵

Sarotomo had been controlled by *Serikat Islam*'s people who were like H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto and under the control of the *Oetoesan Hindia*. Samanhoedi had good relation with H.O.S Tjokroaminoto he also a good friend of Mas Marco. But the relationship between Tjokroaminoto and Mas Marco was not good. Both of them had a different perspective as to be seen in *Doenia Bergerak* dan *Oetoesan Hindia*.⁶

As long as *Serikat Islam (S.I.)* located in Surabaya, *Oetoesan Hindia* was used as the main medium for delivering propaganda and resistance to the government. This newspaper was founded by H.O.S Tjokroaminoto in December 1912 in Surabaya. Aside from being a director, he was also very active in writing in that newspaper, especially social, economic, political and legal issues. Even, he aligned communism and Islamic thoughts. The editor was chaired by Sosroboto and Tirtodanoedjo, while the *mederedacteur* was held by Martoatmodjo.

⁵ *Doenia Bergerak*, April 18th, 1914.

⁶ During the position of the *Serikat Islam (S.I.)* in Surabaya, the *Oetoesan Hindia* newspaper was used as the main medium for delivering aspirations. It was founded by H.O.S Tjokroaminoto in December 1912 in Surabaya. Aside from being a director, H.O.S Tjokroaminoto was also very active in writing on it, especially social, economic, political and legal issues, align between communism and Islamic teachings. The editor was chaired by Sosroboto and Tirtodanoedjo. The *mederedacteur* was held by Martoatmodjo.

Mas Marco Kartodikromo Contribution

Mas Marco began to look radical when he founded the *Inlandsche Journalisten Bond* (IJB) and a magazine, *Doenia Bergerak*. In that magazine, he took advantage of the opportunity to convey his ideas and protests to the authorities. However, the opportunity was not able to last long as he was exposed to *delictpers*. So, both of IJB and *Doenia Bergerak* could only last for less than one year. Mas Marco was incarcerated in *Vrijmetselaarsweng* prison, *Weltevreden* from April 1917– April 1918.

After leaving prison, Mas Marco went to Semarang to join as a journalist in *Sinar Djawa*. He chose Semarang because it was the center of industrialization in *Bumiputera* and there was a large port as a distribution center for export and import (European trade center). In this city, the organization of the labor movement and political parties developed rapidly. Liem Thian Joe (2004, 221) said that *the gemeenteraad* organization changed its characters. This organization was mostly occupied by *Olanda Indo* (Dutch Indo) who had the awareness to take part in politics. It was proven by Douwes Dekker enrollment.

Based on Dewi Yuliati (2000, 65) opinion, Semarang was the place where ethical and liberal Dutch journalists gather in the second half of the 19th century. This city was the center of the radical activity in *Bumiputera*. In the second decade of the 20th century, Semarang witnessed other forms of development and the life of the press. If a press manager had not appeared yet in the 19th century, then in the second decade of the 20th century, the Semarang *Bumiputera* appeared in the press world.

At the beginning of working as a journalist in *Sinar Djawa*, Mas Marco often wrote in the section that had previously been written by Mohammad Joesoef.⁷ Here,

⁷ Mohammad Joesoef was the chairman of the Semarang branch of the *Serikat Islam* and editor-in-chief of the *Sinar Djawa* newspaper. He had been out for a while from *Sinar Djawa* due to his disappointment at the newspaper he managed. It had been strongly influenced by the communist movement. In the end, he returned to strengthen it.

he began to get to know Darsono, Noto Widjojo, and Semaoen as well. All of those people were involved in *Indische Sociaal Democratische Vereeniging* (ISDV), a political organization aimed to strengthen communism in the Dutch East Indies. The ISDV was established in May 1914 by Dutch socialist groups working in Semarang such as Dekker, Bransteder, Bergsma, Koch, and Sneevliet. These people had a concern to improve the condition of Bumiputera.

In the previous year, Dekker and Hulshoff also founded *Vereeniging voor Spoor en Tramweg Personeel* (VSTP) in 1908 in Semarang. VSTP was an organization of *spor* and *tram* workers in Semarang. The *De Volharding* newspaper was a forum for propaganda and information about organizational activities. Initially, this organization was intended for Dutch people who worked at the *Staatsspoor* (SS) and *Nederlandsch Indische Spoorweg* (NIS). Then, in 1913, many *Bumiputera* joined VSTP. It became the strongest organization of the labor movement at that time.

Both ISDV and VSTP shared Marxism ideology. They were radical organizations which were loud and dare to express their critics on government policies, anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, and anti-capitalism. They also collaborated with *Serikat Islam* to strengthen their power, although not a few members of ISDV and VSTP joined as members of *Serikat Islam* and vice versa.

Mas Marco became a member of *commissaris besturr* in *Serikat Islam* Semarang. He was also actively involved in *vergadering*, anti-government propaganda and against Dutch colonial racial politics. This could be seen in articles, poetry or novels such as *Mataharian*, *Student Hidjo*, dan *Mata Gelap*. The issue of racial and social class differences had always been the gist of his and his colleagues' writings in the movement. That's why Mas Marco often campaigned the slogan '*sama rasa dan sama rata*':

Supaya jalannya Sama Rata
Yang berjalan pun Sama me Rasa
Enang dan senang bersama-sama
*Yaitu: Sama Rasa Sama Rata*⁸

To walk equally
Those who walk feel the same
Enang and happy together
That is same feeling, equally

He had hope that the Dutch East Indies would soon be free from colonialism and social inequality: no capitalists had the chance to exploited laborers and no difference between the Dutch, Chinese, Arabic and indigenou people of the Dutch East Indies. If life could be *sama rasa* and *sama rata*, there would not be hostility among fellow human beings.

Mas Marco was an idealist, hard-nosed person, and was not afraid of the colonial government. His characters could not be separated from his childhood experiences in Blora, Central Java. The people's poverty and suffering had been felt and seen by him when he was still a kid. It was one of the provisions that underlie his strength and hopes when he was in an arena. On the other hand, he got better network access when he was a journalist in *Medan Prijaji*. He got the chance to discuss a lot of things with his journalist friends who were educated at STOVIA, a Javanese medical school.

The knowledge and understanding gained during his time joining Tirta Adhi Soerjo were well recorded by Mas Marco. He took many active positions in several

⁸ *Sinar Djawa*, April 10th 1918.

organizations. In May 1919, Mas Marco was appointed as the *commissary* of the Al-Islam committee. This organization took care of Islamic burial grounds' problems in Semarang which was then chaired by H. Fachroedin.⁹ While taking care of the funeral, he was given the mandate by Semaoen to take care of the agenda of *Serikat Islam* Semarang because Semaoen was charged by *delictpers* in July.¹⁰

While in Semarang, Mas Marco continued to protest through the *Sinar Hindia*. Because of this courage, he was appointed as an editor there. According to Ahmad Adam (1997), in early December 1919, Mas Marco was no longer working as editorial staff in *Sinar Hindia*. He moved to the *Soeara Tamtomo*, a newspaper founded by Wono Tamtomo (an organization of forestry employee association) in Blora. Despite changing his job, Mas Marco did not let *Sinar Hindia* go just like that. He kept sending his articles or serial stories to *Sinar Hindia*.

Semaoen considered Mas Marco as a potential person in the movement. Even, he gave the mandate as *voorzitter* in *Pasar Derma* Semarang. The *Pasar Derma* or charity market was an effort from *Serikat Islam* to raise funds to villages while singing *Internasionale*, a compulsory song sung when laborers strike and rebellion. It aimed to support a school that the *Serikat Islam* founded. The school was established in 1921, equivalent to the *Hollandsche Inlandsche School* (HIS). Semaoen as the SI chairman and his fellow comrades wished that the people of *Bumiputera* could be accepted and received the HIS education.

Mas Marco Kartodikromo and Prison World

Since De Fock became the Governor General in 1921, policies to minimize

⁹ *Islam Bergerak*, July 10th, 1919.

¹⁰ *Darmo Kondo*, July 30th, 1919 and *Persatoean Hindia*, December 20th, 1919.

radicalization in the Dutch East Indies had been tightened again with *persdelict* articles. In 1921, there were 3638 arrests only in Java. These people eventually got preventive detention. The highest residency which got *Spreek and Persdelict* sentences was Surakarta. A total of 331 people detained and 134 were not taken to court. Then, in 1925, the number increased: 6118 people from all Javanese residencies and 4279 people from outside Java, especially Sumatera.

Mas Marco Kartodikromo was one of the people who was arrested by the state security forces for violating the *persdelict* (Book of the Criminal Code) for three times. He was one of the prominent figures of the movement in the Dutch East Indies. He often made protests to the government through the newspapers, magazines, and caricatures. The protest was a form of disappointment in the government and its desire to become an independent country, free from the Dutch colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism. Therefore, the protest he made actually caused havoc. So, he had to be jailed three times.

First *Delictpers*

In December 1914, Marco got *persdelict* or *delictpers*¹¹ for the articles, he wrote in *Doenia Bergerak*. Allegations filed against him making this magazine did not get distribution license. As well as the *Inlandsche Journalisten Bond* had no power for the militia movement and finally disbanded. Mas Marco was considered to have

¹¹ *Delict pers* are the articles' terms in *strafwetboek* (now KUHP or Criminal Code) which talked about defamation or humiliation. There are several causes that make someone got *delict pers*: (a) proofs that they spread their ideas through mass media, (b) the ideas itself, (c) the actions towards that ideas. In KUHP, violations of law are divided into complaint offense and normal offense. Complaint offense is an act considered as a crime after there is a complaint from certain community or group, such as defamation in Articles 310, 311, 315, 316; slander in Article 317; humiliation in Articles 320 and 321. Whereas normal offense is an act which is considered as a crime even though there is no complaint or report from certain groups or community, such as insulting the president or vice president mentioned in Articles 134, 136, 137; insulting the leader of other countries in Articles 142, 143, and 144; insulting another public institution in Articles 207, 208, and 209.

violated Article 66a and Article 66b which were just passed on March 15th, 1914 on charges of spreading hatred and provocation.

On Monday, January 26th, 1915, Mas Marcio was investigated at the office of the Solo Resident Assistant, a legal institution *Officer van Justitie* headquartered in Semarang. Then he was sentenced to 9 months in a prison in Semarang in July 1915 until March 1916.¹² However, Takashi Shiraishi (2005, 115) had other observation. He stated that Mas Marco was sentenced to 7 months in prison by *Officer van Justitie's* court.

After the investigation process, Mas Marco Kartodikromo planned to run to Singapore. The plan could be done on April 25th, 1915. His departure was financially supported by Haji Samanhoedi, Darnakoesoema, Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, and Sosrokoornio. While in Singapore, he lived in the house of M.A. Hamid (*Islamic Review's* chief editor) No. 67, Minto Road. After living in Singapore for a month, he was arrested by two British police and three Malay police. Both of M. A. Hamid and Mas Marco were taken to the police station to be interrogated and put in prison for 24 hours.¹³ After the arrest, Mas Marco was forcibly sent back to the Dutch East Indies by the Singapore police. His return was heard by the Dutch East Indies intelligence and he was taken to the court office to be processed into prison.

After being released from prison in March 1916, Mas Marco wanted to quit the journalism for a while. But, the sudden invitation came. It was from Raden Goenawan (his old friend from *Medan Prijaji*), the owner of *Pantjaran Warta*. Mas Marco began to work at *Pantjaran Warta* in May 1916. Two months later, on July 5th, 1916, he went to the Netherlands. He arrived in the Netherlands on August 29th, 1916.

¹² In the *Sarotomo* newspaper (1915), Mas Marco once wrote an article entitled *Soerat Terboeka*. It was his response to a letter sent by Soerjaningrat from the Netherlands on August 15th, 1915. In the article, Mas Marco explained that he was imprisoned for nine months in prison.

¹³ *Goentoer Bergerak*, May 15th, 1915 and June 12th, 1915.

Dr. Tjipto Mangoenkoesomo and his friends who did not agree with the Dutch East Indies government raised funds for Mas Marco's departure to the Netherlands with the main goal of meeting Mr. Maup Mendels. Then Soesrokoernio campaigned for donations to his press colleagues and people who had sympathy. However, the donation collected by him was not enough for the cost of Mas Marco's departure to the Netherlands. It was only enough for Mas Marco's family when he left to the Netherlands.¹⁴ Mas Marco's departure was then specifically funded by Raden Goenawan but, Dr. Tjipto Mangoenkoesomo responded cynically to that. He considered Raden Gunawan as *satria maling*. He accused Raden Goenawan of deliberately using Mas Marco in his personal interest, not wanting to help meet Mr. Maup Mendels.

Mas Marco Kartodikromo's main objectives to the Netherland are:

1. Visiting Soewardi Surjaningrat, a discussion friend of Mas Marco Kartodikromo when they were in *Medan Prijaji*. Their meeting focused on discussing the strategy of strengthening the movement in the Dutch East Indies;
2. Visiting Mr. Maup Mendels, an official of *Lid Tweede Kamer* (a representative council member) 1913 – 1937 and *Lid Eerste Kamer* (a senate member) 1913–1937. Their meeting discussed *Strafwetboek* 66a and 66b which took effect March 15th, 1914. Those articles were considered as a disruption to freedom of expression and press for the people of the Dutch East Indies who wanted to criticize the government;¹⁵
3. Picking up Raden Ayu Siti Soendari;
4. Doing a special correspondence for *Pantjaran Warta*.

¹⁴ *Sarotomo*, August 5th, 1915.

¹⁵ *Goentoer Bergerak*, August 21st, 1915.

Siti Soendari Roewiyo Darmobroto, better known as Raden Ayu Siti Soendari, is the daughter of a public pawnshop in Pemalang. Raden Ayu Siti Soendari completed her HBS education in Semarang. After graduating, she decided to become a private school teacher in Pemalang. It didn't last long. She decided to move to Pacitan but still worked as a teacher at the Boedi Moelja elementary school, a private school for women.

Raden Ayu Siti Soendari started her journalism career when she joined *Poetri Hindia*, the women first newspaper founded by Tirta Adi Soerjo and R.T.A. Tirtokoesoemo (Karang Anyar Regent) on July 1st, 1908. Then she joined the Pacitan branch of *Wanita Sworo* as an editor. It was a newspaper founded at Brebes in 1913 by Boedi Oetomo. A year later, the *Sekar Setaman* was established in 1914. *Sekar Setaman* was one of the magazines which affiliated with *Wanita Sworo*. So when people bought *Wanita Sworo*, they would get *Sekar Setaman* also, which was inserted in the middle.¹⁶

In 1914, Raden Ayu Siti Soendari joined Mas Marco Kartodikromo in *Inlandsche Journalisten Bond* (IJB), as well as being a *medewerker* (an assistant editor) *Doenia Bergerak* and the secretary of *Boedi Wasito*. After Mas Marco Kartodikromo as the chief of *Doenia Bergerak* was being involved in legal issues, Raden Ayu Siti Soendari was fired from Boedi Mulja elementary school in Pacitan. She had always been under the supervision of the intelligence services due to her activities in the political movement organizations. She was fired because of the number of protests and fear from parents of that school. They were worried if they graduated, they could not become *bestuur ambtenaar*.

¹⁶ Based on the R.A. Siti Soendari confession entitled "*Lazing*". It was then copied by Ki Wiro in Malay and was published in *Doenia Bergerak*, No. 2 of 1914.

After not actively teaching, Raden Ayu Siti Soendari returned to her parents' home in Pemalang. In this city, she did not keep herself quiet. She was active in *lezing* activities during *installatie vergadering* (formation meeting) and *kampoeng vergadering* (village meeting). His father tried to force Raden Ayu Siti Soendari to marry so that her activities in the political movement organization could be reduced. But, she rejected it.

She forced herself to flee to Semarang, joining her friends in the organization. In Semarang, she was one of the female propagandists when *vergadering* took place. Thus she always became the supervisor of the *Kantoor Inlichtingen* due to her involvement in political movement activities that endanger the colonial government. It made her family worried. Finally, she was sent to live temporarily in the Netherlands.

Mas Marco Kartodikromo was interested in Raden Ayu Siti Soendari when she first joined as a contributor in *Doenia Bergerak* and IJB. His love for her was so deep. Even after being released from his first time in prison, he sought her to the Netherlands. While in the Netherlands, he did not stay long. Hence, he took advantage of the opportunity to meet with *Bumiputera* students and attend discussions in *Indische Vereeniging*.

After he felt his goal had been reached, Mas Marco came back to the Dutch East Indies on December 20th, 1916. He arrived at Batavia port on February 14th, 1917. Raden Ayu Siti Soendari arrived in Batavia earlier, January 18th, 1917. She was told to go back first because he still had some businesses in the Dutch East Indies movement with the *Bumiputera* student union there. His experience in the Netherlands was partly mentioned in his novels: *Student Hidjo* (published in 1919) and *Matahariah* (published in 1918).

Second *Delictpers*

After Mas Marco returning from the Netherlands, he rejoined as an editor in *Pantjaran Warta*. In this newspaper, he wrote a poem '*Anti Indie Weerbaar*' published on February 14th, 1917 No. 36. But, two days after it was published, he was arrested on February 21st, 1917 for interrogation. In his writings at *Pantjaran Warta*, he repeatedly wrote scathing criticism to the government and used the slogan '*sama rasa*' and '*sama rata*'. He demanded equal rights in education, freedom of the press, and freedom of expression among European, Arabian, Chinese and *Bumiputera* people. In *Sinar Djawa*, Dr. Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo wrote about his admiration for Mas Marco who spread the idea of '*sama rata*'. Even he regretted the arrest of Mas Marco. This mistake would make Mas Marco a martyr (a person who has a strong stance and will continue to fight to the death in defense of something).¹⁷

Mas Marco's arrest became a scene among the Dutch East Indies press, either *Bumiputera*, Chinese and Dutch press. He was widely praised by the press and the movement people because of his criticism demanded equal rights. His friends referred as a martyr. When Mas Marco was imprisoned for the second time, he was admired and praised by more people. So that, not a few people took the opportunity to benefit themselves by (for an example) putting Mas Marco's name in their commerce. There were traders in Solo who used his name as *reclame* (advertisement) to sell their wares. There was a cigarette advertisement that used his name *Sigaret Djawa Merk Marco*. Apparently, besides the purpose of commercial promotion, the advertiser also advertised his name as '*pahlawan pembela bangsa Djawa*' and some of the sales profit was supposedly given to his wife.¹⁸

¹⁷ *Sinar Djawa*, March 5th, 1917.

¹⁸ *Sinar Djawa*, July 18th, 1917.

On April 14th, 1917 in Batavia, *Ordenaris Raad van Justitie Binnen Het Kasteel Batavia* (Office of the Justice Council) was preparing Mas Marco's case which had shocked the *Bumiputera* press. The outcome decision of the trial was that Mas Marco was sentenced to two years in prison due to *delictpers* violating Articles 63a and 63b.

During the Dutch East Indies, institutions related to attorneys and prosecutors were: (a) District Court (*Landraad*) is a court which is active every day for *Bumiputera* people in both civil and criminal matters; (b) Court of Justice (*Raad van Justitie*) is an active court every day for Europeans and an appeal court for *landraad* (district court). This court also has the authority to decide disputes or do trials. The office now is the Museum of Fine Arts and Ceramics located on Jl. Pos Kota No. 2, West Jakarta; (c) Supreme Court (*Hooggerrechtshof*) is a high court that has appeal case authority from cases decided by Court of Justice, decide the case for appeal, decide on cases belonging to the elite such as high officials or Sultans, and authority disputes adjudicate (*jurisdictie geschillen*) between appellate courts, between civil and military courts and between autonomous courts (Surachman and Hamzah 1966; Tresna 1978; and Effendy 2005).

In Mas Marco's case, the two-year prison sentence was canceled. This was because of the advice of *Openbaar Ministerie* for martyr's political reasons. *Openbaar Ministerie* was employees of *Landraad*, *Raad van Justitie*, and *Hooggerrechtshof* who were given the authority to defend all state regulations, prosecute criminal acts and carry out the decisions of competent criminal courts. He was later sentenced to one year in Vrijmetselaarsweng prison, Weltevreden, which began from April 1917 until April 1918. Weltevreden was an area on the outskirts of Batavia (now Sawah Besar, Central Jakarta) which was inhabited by many European citizens.

Syair inilah dari penjara

*Waktu kami baru dihukumnya
Di Weltevreden tempat tinggalnya
Dua belas bulan punya lama¹⁹*

This poem is from prison
When we were just punished
In Weltevreden he lived
Twelve months long

While in prison, Mas Marco could not remain silent, mourned for fate, or admitted his mistakes. From there, he wrote the poem ‘*Sama Rasa dan Sama Rata*’ which was finally published by *Sinar Djawa*, April 10th, 1918, here the poem:

*Ini syair nama: “Sama Rasa”
“Dan Sama Rata” itulah nyata
tapi bukan syair bangsanya
yang menghela kami di penjara*

This poem named “*Sama Rasa*”
“*Dan Sama Rata*” that is real
But not his nation’s poem
Who chased us in prison

For two times in prison, it did not make him shrink and despair. He continued to struggle to clean the dirt (crime) or injustice committed by the colonial government.

¹⁹ *Sinar Djawa*, April 10th 2018

Despite threats, pressure, and intimidation directed at him, Mas Marco remained strong, unlike a child who could only wake up from sleep.

Jangan takut kami putus asa

Merasakan kotoran dunia

Seperti anak yang belum usia

Dan belum bangun dari tidurnya²⁰

Don't be afraid we are desperate

Feeling the dirty of the world

Like a child who has not aged

And he hasn't woken up from sleep

Mas Marco remained consistent, continuing to struggle to defend the weak people in the Dutch East Indies. He said that the struggle against the Netherlands would be carried out even to the end of his blood. He understood the ideology that he struggled had too many obstacles, challenges, and barriers. But, he remained steadfast in his goals and was optimistic he could do it thoroughly.

Kami berniat berjalan terus

Tetapi kami berasa aus

Adapun pengharapan tak putus

Kalau perlu boleh sampai mampus

Jalan yang ku tuju amat panas

Banyak duri pun anginnya keras

Tali-tali mesti kami tatas

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Palang-palang juga kami papas²¹

We intend to continue

But we feel worn out

The hope is not broken

If necessary, it may go up

The road I'm headed is very hot

Many thorns, even the wind is hard

The ropes we have to tie

The bar we crossed

Mas Marco continued to resist the Dutch government through various media. According to Dewi Yuliati (2000, 106), the newspaper did not the only function to fulfill commercial interests, but on the contrary, it mainly functioned as a medium to spread ideas relating to improve people's living standards. Media was his tool to solve misery in the Indies.

Anak Hindia kamu percaya

Kepada Tuhan Maha Kuasa

Si khianat yang menganiaya

Kepada kamu anak Hindia

Pukullah dia setengah mati

Kalau perlu boleh sampai mati

Berani itu senjata kami

²¹ *Ibid.*

*Guna hidup dan mati sejati*²²

You Indian child you believe

To God Almighty

The betrayer who persecutes

To you Indian child

Hit him half-dead

If necessary, he may die

Brave is our weapon

To live and die truly

Ahmat Adam (1997) stated that Mas Marco in his journalistic strategy used a very realistic approach. He viewed Europeans as capitalists and all of the European employees were racist. He also saw all regents and *priyayi* superiors as mere tools of the colonial government. His simplistic view was easily accepted by *kromo* people. It was illustrated in his writings which intensely raised the issues of extortion of Javanese peasants in sugarcane fields, lack of educational opportunities for the people, inferiority complex and Javanese fear of the superior and colonial employees which were felt at once. All of those problems were experienced by many indigenous people, but no one dared to fight.

Ahmat Adam's observation in understanding Mas Marco's journalistic work was considered right. Mas Marco always tried to criticize government policies that were deemed quite deviant and had the desire to make people think more critically about their fate. He had noble ideas. So, Indonesia could immediately be independent, both

²² "Syair Indie Weerbaar" *Sinar Hindia*, September 2nd 2018

in terms of labor welfare and in the sense of state. It could be seen in his writing a *Pewarta Deli*, December 9th, 1931, as mentioned below:

Suatu kejadian ganjil di mana peradaban sedang berada di lembah pergaulan. Wahai kalian, kaum cendekiawan dan nasionalis, kami mohon kalian tidak terlalu keras menilai orang buangan, sampah masyarakat kalian, kaum buangan politik di Digoel. Kepada kalian orang Indonesia kami tujukan kata-kata ini. Renungkanlah, untuk apa kami telah berjuang dan menderita. Ingatkan, bahwa kami telah berkorban (berjuang) untuk “Ibu Indonesia”

An odd event in which civilization is in the valley of association. O you, intellectuals and nationalists, we beg you not to overestimate the exiles, the rubbish of your people, the political exiles in Digoel. To you Indonesians, we address these words. Contemplate, for what we have struggled and suffered. Remind, that we have sacrificed (struggled) for “Indonesia Mother”

From the writings he produced, we can conclude that Mas Marco Kartodikromo was a hard and strong-minded person, discipline in his attitude and smart in understanding the events around him both realistically and critically. Even his determination and arrogance were deliberately delivered to insinuate the intellectuals, scholars and nationalists, as quoted below:

...memang saya buka keluaran dari sekolah tinggi, tetapi guna turut bergerak di lapangan kemajuan, kepandaian saya kurang lebih sudah sepadan dengan teman-teman saya. Dan semakin tambah pengetahuan

*saya, bertambah berani saya bergerak di medan kemajuan, tetapi ada banyak orang yang berkepandaian tetapi itu kepandaian digunakan menjilat kotorannya orang-orang yang merampok kita.*²³

...indeed I am not a graduate of high school, but to participate in the field of progress, my intelligence is more or less commensurate with my friends. And the more knowledge I gained, the more courageous I moved in the field of progress. But there are many people who are talented but that cleverness is used to lick the filth of those who rob us.

Even Mas Marco was sarcastic and was surprised to see intelligent people used their intelligence to strengthen colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism in the Dutch East Indies. He deeply regretted the person who put an apathy towards the conditions of poverty in the Indies. So that the path of Mas Marco's pen was at least a transcendent path. It was able to open the reader's insight into things around.

Kami bersyair bukan keroncong

Seperti si orang pelancong

Mondar-mandir kebingungan

Yaitu pemuda Semarangan

Dulu kita suka keroncong

Tetapi sekarang suka terbangun

Dalam S.I Semarang yang aman

Bergerak keras ebeng-ebengan

²³ *Sinar Hindia*, August 28th 1918

We made poem not *keroncong*
Like the traveler
Pacing in confusion
Who is *Semarangan* youth
 We used to love keroncong
 But now like *terbangan*
 In S.I. Semarang which is safe
 Move hard *ebeng-ebengan*

The struggle that had been carried out so far was his earnest preference. Here, he wanted to show to the readers that although he was imprisoned, he still maintained the ideology he followed. So that his struggle was not like playing *keroncong* or travelers who moved from one place to another.

In the second verse, he quipped the movement of *Serikat Islam*. After the coming of it, people liked to enjoy *keroncong*. But, after its arrival, people tended to like rebana or *terbangan* music. In addition, *Serikat Islam* had a safe, hard and unfair competition with other organizations. Safe means not to dare to fight against the colonial government. When Tjokroaminoto took control of it, it was seen as an organization that would not endanger the government. Marco saw it from the affiliation of both parties, Dr. Rinkes and Tjokroaminoto.

Third Delictpers

In 1921, Mas Marco was brought again to *Landraad* (a district court). He was accused by *Landraad* Yogyakarta of violating Article 240 a, 240 e paragraph 3.6, Article 154, 155, 156, and 157 from *Wetboek van Strafrecht*. On October 25th, 1921, he

entered his first investigation there. This trial aimed to ensure document which had been found by the investigators based on the facts carried out by the defendant. Then, the second trial took place at the same place on Thursday, December 8th, 1921 with a *vonnis* on December 8th, 1921 no.989/1921.

Based on the judge's decision of *Landraad* Yogyakarta, Mas Marco was found guilty of a picture he printed at the printing company of *Perserikatan Poenggawai Pegadaian Boemipoetera* (PPPB) and circulated in *Pemimpin* on June 6th, 1921 and July 1st, 1921. These decisions involved several issues :

- a. Spreading insult images to the Dutch East Indies police or European commanders. Thus, he intentionally attacked the honor and image of civil servants or other governmental powers, emerged the feelings of hostility, hatred, and insult to the readers towards the Dutch East Indies government. The images seemed to give an impression that the police and other government officials are humane to a lesser degree, which sucked the poor indigenous for the interests of the capitalists and the supply of large markets in Europe. Government and European capitalists were considered to have enriched themselves and sacrificed the indigenous people of the Dutch East Indies.
- b. Publishing and distributing *Rahasia Kraton Terboeka* on May 30th, 1921. That book was also distributed at the time of *Perserikatan Poenggawai Pegadean Boemipoetera* congress in Yogyakarta on July 5th, 1921. It contained insulting and insinuation words to the government that were written: "*Ingat bahwa Goepermen itoe soaatoe vereeniging koempoelanja orang-orang dagang jaitoe orang jang mentjari oentoeng! Keoentoengan mana jang didapat dari kita Boemipoetera. Dari sebab kita anak Hindia ini digoenakannja mentjari*

keoentoengan, maka kita tinggal koeroes kering, sebab darah kita diboeat minoeman dan daging kita dimakan oleh orang-orang jang boeas.”

Trans: Remember that the government is an association of trade people, people who profit! Which benefits were obtained from us, *Bumiputera*. Because we, these Indies children, were used by them to seek profit. So we stay emaciated because our blood were made drinks and our flesh were eaten by savage people.

- c. Distributing intentionally and selling *Matahariah* for free and at a low price in May–June 1921 in Yogyakarta. It contained content of feelings of hostility, hatred, and humiliation to the government of the Dutch East Indies as well as against Dutch residents.

Mas Marco’s trial began at 08.00 a.m. The trial was led by Mr. B. Ter Har as the chairman (*voorzitter*), Wisnoetojo as the prosecutor, Remrev as griffer, and followed by R.M.T. Brotoatmodjo (Patih Paku Alaman) and R.M.T. Djajengirawan (retired Patih Pakualaman Pengulu) as *leden*. Twelve people were presented as witnesses to the trial, such as the *Sinar Hindia* editor, *De Beweging* administrative officer, *Kaoem Moeda* editor, and so on. There were also quite a number of spectators. About 50 people attended the trial. They consisted of Mas Marco’s close friends from the press and movement.

In the first case, Mas Marco was accused of having distributed images (caricatures) in the newspaper *Pemimpin* led by Mas Marco as chief editor and assisted by Soerjopranoto and Soewardi as deputy editors. When the picture was published, *Pemimpin* printed 750 copies. It depicted a fat person wearing pants and tie while lying

on his back with his mouth open. Next to him was a very thin person without any clothes. He wore pants and a headband only. His hand pointed towards the fat person while being handcuffed by 3 people wearing pants and a pet.

In his first defense, Marco explained that the image printed at the printing company of *Perserikatan Poenggawai Pegadaian Boemipoetera (PPPB)* was not a new picture. It had previously been published in *Pantjaran Warta* in Batavia and in 1918 was published in *Sinar Hindia*, Semarang. Under the picture, Semaoen added some words “*Kapitalisme Bekerdjia I.*” So, it was considered by Mas Marco as an old picture and at the beginning of the image distribution both in Batavia or in Semarang, there were no police and government spies disputing it.

In his defense of the second case, Mas Marco tried to explain that the *Rahasia Kraton Terboeka* only explained the groups of each movement throughout the world, not inciting or as the government propaganda or coming from certain groups of people in the Indies. This article was stated by Mas Marco as a text that had previously been published continuously in *Sinar Hindia* in 1918. But, it was printed as a book in 1921.

Then in the defense of the third case, Marco explained that the novel *Matahariah* had been published continuously (*feuilleton*) in *Sinar Hindia* newspaper starting in August 1918 and the government spies were not questioning it. According to Mas Marco, the romance was built on a fictitious event that described the treatment of good and bad people. With the presence of it, Mas Marco wanted the readers could distinguish and understand which action that was supposed to be done or not.

All of Marco's defenses above made the court chairman, prosecutor, and members accept and lighten his sentence. Finally, *Landraad* on December 8th, 1921

decided on the verdict of Mas Marco with a sentence of one year and six months in Vrijmetselaarsweng prison, Weltevreden.²⁴

Conclusion

One of the poverty causes in the Dutch East Indies people is the beginning of the complementation of 1/5 submission from the harvest of their cultivated lands to the government. It was the most popular commodity in the global market by means of forced cultivation. This happened during the reign of Governor-General Johannes van den Bosch in 1830. That system greatly benefited the Dutch government because it was able to save government in a short amount of time due to the Java war in 1825-1830. This massive exploitation of the political-economic sector caused the people to become more miserable and starving.

European investors came to the Dutch East Indies to invest in several industrial sectors. It had a negative impact on the local industry which still using manual systems such as batik and the production of other basic needs. World war in Europe was also one of the factors in the regulation of the Dutch East Indies economy that experienced shocks. Not a few local industries and large-scale industries experienced congestion due to not being able to export to several countries. So, labor costs were lowered. Despite that difficult situation, they were willing to work with cheap wages to fulfill their daily needs. This human exploitation activity lasted for years.

People who could not stand such situations, eventually formed organizations or *vakbond-vakbond* to create a place of struggle, a forum for unity, and a place for collecting workers' aspirations if they experienced unequal treatments. In the 1920s,

²⁴ Writing by Mas Marco Kartodikromo, *Korban Pergerakan Rakyat H.M. Misbach, Hidoep*, September 1st, 1924.

organizations of the labor movement began to be infiltrated by Marxism ideology. Their role became increasingly militant after being triggered by various social problems in the Dutch East Indie. One of the problems was a massive sugarcane planting policy. This problem caused a drastic increase in rice prices. The proposal of a 50% reduction in sugarcane planting had been proposed by Tjokroaminoto to the Governor General in 1918. However, it was rejected outright. A year later, during the *Volksraad* on February 20th, 1919, Tjokroaminoto proposed that the sugarcane planting could be reduced by 25%. It was rejected by members of the congregation present. Most of them were disagree with Tjokroaminoto's proposal.

This government policy was strongly opposed by the organizations of the labor movement by carrying out large-scale strikes in Semarang, Yogyakarta, Batavia, Solo, and some other places. The strike in Semarang was led by Semaoen. There were several demands submitted in the action including the demand for the increase of labor wages and reducing working hours into eight hours per day. It gave a positive impact. Their company granted their requests. But, in some areas, some of the participants got fired from the company they worked.

In strengthening organizations, the labor movement established various media and strengthened the strategy of creating media for means of propaganda, education, agitation, and criticism. The presence of those media was not responded well by the government. They made new policies to reduce those media by making comparable readings containing the majesty of the government and the goodness of the Dutch kingdom. In addition, the government also strengthened military militias, intelligence agencies, and legal systems. So, people who violated government regulations would be charged with imprisonment. Even, people who were perceived as very threatening the government authority were provided with exile places.

Mas Marco Kartodikromo was one of the people who was exiled to Boven Digoel, Papua along with other movement figures who were anti-Dutch East Indies colonial policies. He was more active when compared to his fellow movement friends in the early 20th century. Even though he spent three times in prison, it did not make him stop criticizing the government. He kept making social networks to construct massive movements. It was proven by his involvement in Centraal Serikat Islam Semarang and Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI) branch of Solo as his equipment voicing the interest of *kromo* people (poor people).

Partai Komunis Indonesia was Mas Marco's medium toward a new nationalist way by loving and defending his homeland from the colonial attack. He and his fellow movement friends wanted the Dutch East Indies became an independent country. However, his way of rebellion was not something approved by the Dutch government. The government decided to arrest and examine those who were involved in the rebellion. The result of the decision stipulated that the people who were involved in the rebellion would be exiled to Boven Digoel, imprisoned, and not a few of the thousands were killed without any trials.

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