



(MUDIMA)



The War of Diponegoro: Causes, Strategies, and Impact on Indonesian Politics, Socio-Culture, and Economy

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Dutch, Prince Diponegoro, Diponegoro War, Guerrilla Strategy, Fort Stelsel, Forced Planting System, Divide and Conquer Politics

Received : 2 November

Revised : 20 December

Accepted : 19 January

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ABSTRACT

The Diponegoro War is one of the most important events in Indonesian history as it marked the beginning of the increasingly strong Dutch colonization of Indonesia. Various general and specific factors between Prince Diponegoro and the Dutch triggered this conflict. Although this war lasted a very short period of 5 years (1825-1830), it caused enormous losses, namely around 200,000 Javanese people lost their lives, almost a quarter of the island of Java was badly damaged, 8,000 European troops were killed, 7,000 Indonesian troops were killed and the costs of the war incurred by the Dutch reached around 20 million guilders. In Addition, the impact of the Diponegoro War was very significant for the people of Central Java, especially in social, economic, and political terms. This research aims to dig deeper into the history of The Diponegoro War and review various aspects related to this war, including the background, tactics, and strategies of the war, as well as the impact of the war on politics, social and economy on the people of Jawa and Indonesian. This research uses a historical approach that focuses on past events. Although the Dutch won the Diponegoro War, it marked the beginning of Indonesia's independence struggle against Dutch colonialism. It showed that the Indonesian people had the spirit and determination to gain independence from foreign colonialism

INTRODUCTION

The Diponegoro War was one of the most important and fierce Indonesian wars in the 19th century (Ricklefs & Hardjowidjono, 1995). Initially the position and power of the king were equal to Dutch officials and then became under the control of the Dutch government (Kartodirdjo, 1992). Although the Dutch politically ruled in Indonesian territory, in reality they oppressed the local people and enriched themselves by taking natural resources. This war was led by a Javanese prince named Diponegoro.

In the beginning, Prince Diponegoro was a leader who was obedient and loyal to the Dutch government. However, when the Prince felt that the Dutch government's policies were detrimental to the Javanese people, there was injustice in the division of power between Prince Mangkubumi and conflicts between political, religious, and cultural interests, he decided to rebel and lead an army to fight against the Dutch. This rebellion was the first time that the Dutch Colonial Government faced resistance and managed to change the face of Java almost entirely (Dewi, 2020). Diponegoro's War was not just a war against the Dutch colonialists but also a struggle to maintain the honor and dignity of the Javanese people.

Prince Diponegoro's struggle against the Dutch was supported by many Javanese people who felt oppressed by the colonial government. Prince Diponegoro and his troops fought the Dutch colonialists in 1825-1830 and claimed many lives, both on the part of Diponegoro's troops and the Dutch troops. This war also involved some important figures such as Diponegoro, Prince Mangkubumi, Lieutenant General Hendrik Merkus de Kock, and Sultan Hamengkubuwono V.

This research aims to explore the history of the Diponegoro War and review various aspects related to this war, including the background, tactics and strategies of the war, as well as the political, social, and economic impact of the war on the people of Java and Indonesian. By knowing and understanding the history of the Diponegoro War, it is hoped that it can provide better learning and understanding of

Indonesian history, strengthening the spirit of nationalism and patriotism as Indonesian citizens.

METHODS

This research uses a historical approach that focuses on past events. The historical approach is to analyze stories from the past (Gottschalk, 1985). The historical method uses systematic thinking by tracing historical sources, evaluating them, and then describing them in the form of quality writing (Sukmana, 2021). This research uses a qualitative description approach referring to literature studies. Data sources that use secondary data analyze published works on the Diponegoro war, such as books, articles, and journals. Research on the history of the Diponegoro war is very important to choose accurate and reliable sources and use appropriate research methods. Thus, the research results obtained can provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the Diponegoro war, and also make a greater contribution to the development of Indonesian historical science.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History of the Diponegoro War

The Diponegoro War was a war between the Mataram Kingdom under the leadership of Prince Diponegoro against the Dutch colonial government in 1825-1830 in Java. This war occurred because Prince Diponegoro was dissatisfied with the Dutch colonial government which increasingly took power in Java and exploited the Javanese people. Some sources state that the circumstances that caused the Diponegoro war are grouped into two, namely general causes and special causes.

Common Cause

First, the Dutch expanded their territory and tried to minimize and divide the Mataram Kingdom. The Dutch used the politics of divide and conquer (divide ed empera) which caused the Mataram Kingdom to be fragmented into several small kingdoms. The Giyanti Agreement in 1755 was a negotiation utilized by the VOC during the division of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom which contained the division of the Mataram region into three parts,

namely the Surakarta Sunanate, the Yogyakarta Sultanate (Nim, 2011). This caused dissatisfaction and feelings of injustice among the relatives of the palace and nobles.

Second, the influx of Western cultural influences into the Yogyakarta palace (Carey, 2014). The Dutch became increasingly free to bring elements of Western culture into the royal territory that contradicted the values of Islam and the traditional culture held by the palace (Ma'arif, 2014). The influence of Western culture in the Yogyakarta Palace is increasing every year, namely Dutch officials sitting in line when facing the Sultan, removing the presentation of betel to guests, and drinking alcohol among the nobles and even the general public.

Third, intervening in the kingdom's internal policies. The Dutch intervened in various internal policies of the Mataram Kingdom, especially when intervening during the change of throne (Carey, 2014). In 1822 Hamengkubuwono IV who was 19 years old died with a son who was still 2 years old. Prince Diponegoro and Prince Mangkubumi were supposed to be guardians who should occupy the throne of the palace. However, the throne was entrusted to the Dutch Resident Smissaert. This was heartbreaking for Prince Diponegoro, plus another Dutch policy that took care of the internal workings (Firdiani, 2010).

Fourth, reduction of the rights of nobles and royal servants (*abdi dalem*). The Kingdom of Yogyakarta had a tradition of providing a living guarantee to *sentono dalem* (king's family) in the form of *apanase land* and to the *abdi dalem* (royal employees) in the form of *lungguh* or *bent land*. However, with the presence of the Dutch, the *appanage land* and *lungguh land* were controlled by the Dutch government, which resulted in reduced sources of income. This action triggered feelings of resent within the Yogyakarta Palace (Warto, 2016).

Fifth, the increasing tax burden. The people were very miserable due to various taxes set by the Dutch government. The taxes included *pejongke* (house moving tax), *kering aji* (land tax), *pengang-awang* (yard and yard tax), *pecumpling* (doors tax),

pajigar (livestock tax), *penyongket* (name change tax), and *bekti* (tax for renting land or accepting a position) (Mawarti, 2011).

Special reasons

The specific cause of the Diponegoro War was the provocation by the Dutch government. The Dutch government deliberately planted stakes to make a new road through Prince Diponegoro's land and ancestral grave in Tegalrejo (Ruspani, 2008). Prince Diponegoro and his followers uprooted and replaced the planted road stakes. Then began the upheaval between Diponegoro's troops and the Kerator troops under Patih Danurejo IV due to the construction of the road to Tegalrejo, Prince Diponegoro's home in May 1825.

On July 20, 1825, the battle with the Dutch began in Tegalrejo and quickly spread to Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Central Java, and East Java. Various groups from nobles, officials, clerics, to rural people welcomed Diponegoro's struggle. The Diponegoro War ended in May 1830 when Prince Diponegoro was tricked into the negotiating table in Magelang (Ajisaka et al, 2010). These negotiations were a Dutch trap to capture Prince Diponegoro. Prince Diponegoro was arrested and exiled to Manado then moved to Makasar until his death on January 8, 1855.

The Diponegoro War caused both material and non-material losses: 200,000 Javanese people lost their lives, almost a quarter of Java was badly damaged, 8,000 European troops were killed, 7,000 Indonesian troops were killed and the war costs the Dutch 20 million guilders (Carey, 2001). The enormous costs of the war led to bankruptcy for the Dutch Government at this time. After the war ended, the Dutch adopted the policy of the Forced Cultivation System (*Kultuurstelsel*) which was applied to the agricultural sector to cover bankruptcy due to the war costs (Koentjaraningrat, 1994),

Prince Diponegoro's Strategy

First, the guerrilla strategy. Prince Diponegoro used a guerrilla strategy against Dutch troops where this strategy still exists today and in the future (Meideri A. & Prakoso LY., 2021). Diponegoro implemented various tactics and strategies in line

with the idea of total war involving the entire Javanese community, namely farmers, religious leaders, and their students, as well as nobles and soldiers (Rusyadi et al, 2022). Prince Diponegoro implemented a guerrilla strategy including territorial use, blitz attacks, impromptu attacks, sieges, psychological warfare, and rebellion in isolated Dutch areas. In the lightning attack tactic, Diponegoro's troops attacked Dutch posts quickly and then disappeared before Dutch troops could respond. Impromptu attacks were carried out by attacking Dutch troops from unexpected places, while sieges were carried out by encircling Dutch posts to cut off supplies and aid coming from outside. Rebellions in isolated Dutch areas were another tactic employed by Diponegoro's forces to disrupt Dutch forces and expand the territory they controlled. This tactic succeeded in keeping the Dutch troops busy with unexpected tasks and reduced their ability to launch major attacks. With this strategy, Diponegoro's troops managed to avoid confrontation with Dutch troops and gained an advantage on the battlefield. However, the guerrilla strategy used also had weaknesses, namely the lack of weapons, supplies and logistics; the lack of military training; vulnerability to enemy tactics and difficulty of coordination between troops scattered throughout the region.

Second, diplomacy. In addition to military strategy, Prince Diponegoro also disseminated information about the struggle for Javanese independence to the wider community through religious leaders and mass media such as newspapers. The aim was to raise the spirit of struggle and garner support from the community. In addition, the inherent cultural and religious values were very different from Dutch culture, which triggering conflict (Ariwibowo, 2021). Prince Diponegoro used diplomacy to gain support from local leaders and build alliances with other resistance groups. This was reflected in the support from the Yogyakarta Sultanate, ulama, religious leaders and rural communities which later expanded to various regions, namely Kudus, Banyumas, Pekalongan, Semarang, Pati, Bojonegoro, Madiun, Kediri and

surrounding areas (Surjo, 1990). In addition, Prince Diponegoro also utilized traditional and religious ceremonies to strengthen support from the people and build his image as a respected and just leader.

Third, the attack on the Dutch headquarters. One of Diponegoro's bravest war strategies was to attack the Dutch military headquarters directly. Prince Diponegoro and his troops often attacked Dutch troops and headquarters. The attack strategy was carried out to weaken the strength and morale of the Dutch troops and to seize weapons and food supplies. Prince Diponegoro successfully attacked several Dutch bases, such as the Cepu base and Magelang base, which caused many casualties on the Dutch side. In June 1825 Prince Diponegoro attacked the Vredeburg Fort in Yogyakarta. In this attack, Prince Diponegoro's troops managed to capture the fort and killed around 200 Dutch soldiers. In addition, Prince Diponegoro's troops also often attacked convoys of Dutch troops carrying weapons and food supplies. This strategy was carried out to reduce the supply of Dutch troops and strengthen Prince Diponegoro's troops. One of the biggest attacks was carried out in 1827 when Prince Diponegoro's troops attacked a convoy of Dutch troops carrying supplies on the slopes of Mount Merbabu. Although he managed to capture several bases and convoys of Dutch troops, the attack strategy carried out by Prince Diponegoro was unable to defeat the Dutch troops and the war ended with the defeat of Diponegoro's troops.

Based on the description above, it can be illustrated that Prince Diponegoro used effective military strategies in fighting for the independence of Java from Dutch colonization. These strategies included guerrilla warfare, diplomacy, and attacks on Dutch bases. The combination of these strategies helped Diponegoro and his troops gain an advantage on the battlefield, although ultimately the war was not won by Diponegoro's side.

Dutch Strategy

First, the mobility and fortress stelsel strategy. In the early stages of the battle, Dutch troops followed Diponegoro's troops to remote areas but this strategy often failed because Diponegoro's

troops were agile and could maneuver easily, as well as the ability to assimilate into rural communities (Indarhti, 2003). Because the strategy failed, General De Kock in 1827 implemented the fort stelsel strategy. The fort stelsel strategy was a strategy of using temporary forts that functioned in a mobile manner to secure an area and stem the attacks by Prince Diponegoro's troops (Djamhari, 2014). The Dutch built forts along their defense lines to defend important areas, including strategic posts in hilly areas. In the face of Diponegoro's attacks, the Dutch used a mobility strategy that allowed them to move troops quickly and take over areas controlled by Diponegoro's forces.

Second, the siege strategy. The siege strategy aimed to force Diponegoro's troops out of the area and confront Dutch troops in open battle (Miksic, 2007). In addition, the siege strategy aimed to cut off food supply and supplies for Prince Diponegoro's troops. Some of the siege strategies used by the Dutch were: city sieges, which placed troops around the cities of Yogyakarta and Surakarta; fort sieges, which surrounded the forts controlled by Diponegoro's troops; area siege, which surrounded the area where Diponegoro's troops were based. With this siege strategy, the Dutch succeeded in cutting off food and supplies for Diponegoro's troops and forcing Diponegoro's troops out of the places that became their base. Thus forcing Diponegoro's troops to deal directly with Dutch troops in open battle.

Third, the strategy of intelligence and psychological operations. The Dutch conducted intelligence operations by sending secret agents to spy on and gather information about Diponegoro's troops. They also used reconnaissance troops to gather information about the location and strength of Diponegoro's troops. In addition, the Dutch also used psychological strategies to influence Diponegoro's troops and the surrounding community by distributing leaflets and letters containing propaganda and false information about the strong and cruel Dutch troops, as well as providing rewards for people who helped the Dutch troops.

Fourth, diplomacy strategy. Some of the diplomatic strategies used by the Dutch included

utilizing internal conflicts, namely the Dutch utilizing internal conflicts between Diponegoro and local leaders who disagreed with Diponegoro's movement. The Dutch provided support to these local leaders to fight Diponegoro and divide the Diponegoro's resistance movement (Vickers, 2005); giving false promises, namely the Dutch gave false promises to Diponegoro and local leaders who disagreed with Diponegoro's movement. These promises were aimed at defusing Diponegoro's resistance and dividing the resistance movement. However, these promises were never fulfilled by the Dutch (Vickers, 2005); obtaining foreign support i.e. the Dutch asked British and France to send their troops to help the Dutch in fighting Diponegoro's troops (Miksic, 2007).

Fifth, modern weapons. The Dutch relied on various modern weapons to defeat Diponegoro's troops. The weapons used by the Dutch included rifles, artillery, bayonet knives, pistols. This weapon provided a great advantage in long-range combat and allowed Dutch troops to dominate the battlefield.

Sixth, the division of troops. The Dutch implemented the Benteng Stelsel Strategy, namely reorganizing and re-locating their troops into several parts spread across various regions in Java. This was intended to narrow the space for Diponegoro's troops to move and make it difficult to coordinate between Diponegoro's troops which were scattered in various regions. The rearrangement of Dutch troops consisted of several mobile colonies in several areas, namely Boyolali, Kalitan, Klaten, Yogyakarta, Kalijengking, Menoreh, Wonosobo, and Banyumas (Ariwibowo, 2021).

The Impact of the Diponegoro War on Politics, Socio-Culture and Economics

First, the political impact. The Diponegoro War had a significant political impact on Indonesia, especially in the relationship between the Dutch colonial government and indigenous people. Some of the political impacts of the Diponegoro war include increasing awareness of nationalism, namely the Diponegoro War had a major influence on the awareness of Indonesian nationalism, increasing the spirit of the people's struggle for independence from

Dutch colonialism, and continuing to fight to defend the honor and dignity of their nation to inspire future nationalist movements; opening opportunities for collaboration, namely that after the war ended, the Dutch took several steps to improve relations with the Javanese people, including providing economic assistance and introducing development programs; adopting Dutch power, namely modernization programs such as the construction of roads and bridges that support Dutch economic and military activities.

Second, social and cultural impacts. Some of the social and cultural impacts of the Diponegoro war include damage to infrastructure and settlements, namely the Diponegoro War resulted in major damage to infrastructure and settlements in the Java region which resulted in the loss of sources of livelihood for the community and huge losses to the economy; changes in community values and traditions, namely the Diponegoro War also brought changes in the social and moral norms of Javanese society, including in terms of violence, capital punishment and coercion; the development of war art and literature, where many works of literature and art in the form of poetry, songs and visual art were inspired by the events of the war, for example *Serat Centhini*, which contains stories about the Diponegoro war and the lives of Javanese people at that time; increased awareness of nationalism, where courage in defending the honor and dignity of the nation became an inspiration for future nationalist movements and had a major influence on the struggle for Indonesian independence.

Third, the economic impact. Some of the economic impacts of the Diponegoro war include economic losses for the community in which many agricultural lands and plantations were damaged by the conflict, resulting in the loss of livelihood and increased prices of basic commodities; changes in the economic system in which war conditions forced society to shift to a larger economic pattern of small industries, increased trade activities, and the development of the financial system; social system changes where many farmers and agricultural workers were forced to become soldiers or laborers

in infrastructure development, leaving them out of work and reducing the production of food and other economic commodities; regional economic development where most of the war-affected areas suffered economic setbacks, but several regions experienced economic development due to increased demand for food and logistics.

CONCLUSION

The Diponegoro War is one of the key events in Indonesian history that marked the beginning of the Dutch colonization of Indonesia. This conflict was triggered by various factors, namely Dutch expansion that narrowed the territory of the Mataram Kingdom, intervention in the internal affairs of the kingdom, reduction of the rights of nobles and royal officials, and an increase in the tax burden on the people. In addition, there was a special trigger, namely the direct provocation of the Dutch government in building a road through the land and ancestral grave of Prince Diponegoro.

The Diponegoro War took place in 1825-1830 with many casualties from Diponegoro's troops, the Dutch, and the people of Central Java as a whole. In this war, Prince Diponegoro led the people's struggle against Dutch colonization. Diponegoro's war strategy involved guerrilla warfare, diplomacy and direct attacks on Dutch bases. Meanwhile, the Dutch used various strategies such as troop mobility, siege, intelligence, and psychological operations, as well as diplomatic approaches and modern weapons to overcome Diponegoro's troops. The impact of the Diponegoro War included huge human and material losses, affecting in the politics, social, culture and economy in the region.

Although the Dutch won the Diponegoro War, this war marked the beginning of Indonesia's independence struggle against Dutch colonialism. It also showed that the Indonesian people had the spirit and determination to gain independence from foreign colonization. Overall, the Diponegoro War significantly influenced Indonesian history, and taught us important about the struggle for independence, as well as the importance of defending the sovereignty of the nation.

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