

**A REASSESSMENT OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 1948
MADIUN UPRISING TO THE COLD WAR IN INDONESIA¹**

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This paper investigates the extent to which the Madiun Uprising of 1948 shaped the Cold War in Indonesia. The uprising resulted in severe and lasting antagonisms between the Indonesian Communist Party and members of the Islamic Party Masyumi due to reprisals against Masyumi members after the failure of the uprising and the death of key members of the Communist Party at the hands of the Republic. Although 1948 can be seen as an important flash point in the Cold War for Indonesia, it was not a significant turning point because the communist party recovered from this episode. After surveying a range of interpretations of the Madiun uprising and its significance internationally, this paper provides an overview of the ongoing significance of the Madiun uprising to the image of the Indonesian Communist Party in the 1950s and 1960s. The paper examines an early history war between the Communist Party and Masyumi over how the events at Madiun would be remembered. These debates signal continuing and intense hostility towards the communist party from Masyumi supporters, which endured throughout and even after the 1965–1966 anti-communist killings.

Keywords: Indonesian Communist Party, Masyumi, Cold War, Madiun, history

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There are numerous accounts of the 1948 Madiun uprising, but few scholars have pondered the extent to which this uprising shaped the Cold War in Indonesia. In this paper, I will argue that while 1948 can be seen as an important flash point in the Cold War for Indonesia, it was not a significant turning point. I will review scholarly opinion on what happened in 1948 and assess different accounts and views of the roles played by both internal and external players. I will highlight continuing debate about interpretations of this period, including the extreme view that this was a provocation supported by the US or a Soviet-directed plot whereby the Indonesia Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, [PKI]) would seize control of the Republic of Indonesia. The Madiun uprising has been variously termed the Madiun Affair, the Madiun Revolt or the Madiun Provocation depending on the writer's interpretation of this event. In this paper I use the term uprising to try to convey a more neutral view of these events, but I shall also note the terminology used by various authors and political players. Finally I will provide an overview of the ongoing significance of the Madiun uprising to the image of the Indonesian Communist Party and to continuing hostility towards the party.

Throughout the course of the Indonesian Revolution against the Dutch, splits developed between both the communists and the socialists. One split was that between nationalist communists such as Tan Malaka and so-called Stalinists, with the latter being more open to negotiations with the Dutch. Another split was that between left and right socialists represented by Amir Sjarifuddin on the left and Sjahrir on the right. In 1948, leftist socialist influence in the Cabinet was greatly reduced due to disagreement over Sjarifuddin's decision to support the Renville Agreement with the Dutch. The Renville Agreement allowed the Dutch to retain all areas that they had reclaimed from the Republic by 1947 (the areas within the van Mook Line encompassing two thirds of Java) and to hold plebiscites under United Nations supervision to determine which parts were in the Republic or the United States of Indonesia, an independent state favoured by the Dutch.

To the displeasure of many, Amir Sjarifuddin, then Minister of Defence and Prime Minister, signed the Renville Agreement. He subsequently resigned, and the Left Wing (*Sayap Kiri*) was ousted from its position of national leadership. The new cabinet, appointed by Vice President Mohammad Hatta, was dominated by members of the Masyumi party;

due to their shared hostility toward the left wing, they set about rationalising the army, targeting left-leaning troops previously supported by Sjarifuddin. Sjarifuddin joined together with the PKI, the armed youth organisation, the Indonesian Socialist Youth (Pesindo), the Labour Party, and Stalinists in the Socialist Party to form the Front Demokrasi Rakyat (People's Democratic Front, hereafter FDR). They tried to secure a new cabinet with representation during the following months.

Following a takeover of the local government in Madiun led by Pesindo members on 18 September 1948, executed without the knowledge of the PKI leadership but subsequently backed by them, the Republic moved forward with assurances from the US of greater support for the cause of independence, to crush the communists by killing the key leaders, Sjarifuddin and Musso. As the rebels fled Republican troops, they killed many teachers, officials and religious leaders who were members of Masyumi. President Sukarno condemned the plotters and the communists, declaring them traitors to the Republic. PKI leader Musso responded by saying that Hatta and Sukarno had betrayed the revolution. A few months prior to the Madiun Uprising, Musso had returned from a long period in the Soviet Union with a new plan for Indonesian communists. This created speculation that the Soviet Union was directly involved in the Madiun Uprising. The Republican army then executed key communist leaders and thousands of followers.

SCHOLARSHIP ON THE 1948 MADIUN UPRISING

There is considerable scholarship on the events of 1948 in Indonesia. Some analyses of the period are provided in larger studies of the dynamics of the 1945–1949 Indonesian revolution against the Dutch.²

² George Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1952 (1970); Anthony Reid, *Indonesian National Revolution 1945–1950*, Longman, 1974, 128–148. Several key studies of the revolution such as those of Benedict Anderson and Anton Lucas, however, end before 1948 and hence do not discuss Madiun. Benedict Anderson, *The Pemuda Revolution: Indonesian politics, 1945–1946*, Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1968 and Anton Lucas, *One Soul One Struggle: Region and Revolution in Indonesia*, Sydney: Asian Studies Association of Australia in association with Allen and Unwin, 1991.

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Different perspectives are also provided in studies of the international dimensions of the revolution, especially Dutch, American and Soviet positions on and responses to the revolution.³ In addition to these larger-picture studies, there have also been several more focused studies on the events of 1948 and in particular on the Madiun Uprising.⁴ These studies emphasise different aspects of the Uprising, including the question of the extent to which it was an internal military affair or an attempted coup against the Republic and the degree of influence of international factors on the revolt and the response to it.

A pioneering scholarly discussion of the 1948 events is provided in Cornell University scholar George Kahin's 1952 publication *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*.⁵ Kahin was physically present in the republic at this time, and he draws upon multiple local publications and discussions with key players to reconstruct the 1948 Madiun events. He charts the negative influence of the Dutch blockade and the newly agreed-upon border of the Republic (the van Mook line), which exacerbated economic conditions.⁶ He does not reflect in great depth upon the impact of the cabinet reshuffling following Sjarifuddin's resignation in fuelling resentment amongst the left. In the two previous cabinets, for example, key leaders in the newly formed PKI had held significant ministerial positions, whereas they were excluded from the

³ Alan Levine, *The United States and the Struggle for Southeast Asia 1945–1975*, Prager, Westport, 1995. Robert McMahon, *Colonialism and the Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945–1949*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1981. Paul F. Gardner, *Shared Hopes, Separate Fears: Fifty Years of US-Indonesian Relations*, Westview Press, 1997. Frances Gouda, with Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia: US Foreign Policy and Indonesian Nationalism, 1920–1949*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2002. Ruth McVey, *The Soviet View of the Indonesian Revolution*, Cornell University, Ithaca, 1957 (third printing 1969).

⁴ Ann Swift, *The Road to Madiun, The Indonesian Communist Uprising of 1948*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Program, Monograph Series No. 69, Ithaca, New York, 1989; David Charles Anderson, "The Military Aspects of the Madiun Affair", *Indonesia*, 1976; Soe Hok Gie, *Orang Orang di Persimpangan Kiri Jalan*, Bentang, Jakarta, 1997.

⁵ George Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1952 (1970).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 250–253.

new Hatta cabinet. He also writes as if the left exploited Hatta's military rationalisation plans⁷ rather than having felt genuine upset at being the target of the Hatta government. Kahin argues, based on a document dated July 1948 (entitled *Mengindjak Tingkatan Perjuangan Militer Baru* or Entering the New Stage of a Military Struggle), that although the events in Madiun represented a premature act of rebellion that was not authorised by the party, there were plans for using non-parliamentary means to seize power once parliamentary means had been exhausted.⁸ He claims that the Republic became aware of this and for this reason moved against FDR supporters, targeting them for rationalisation in the events leading up to the Madiun Uprising.

Kahin outlines links between events in Solo, where the Republic was targeting the 4th battalion for rationalisation, and events in Madiun. In Solo, a series of murders and kidnappings of members the 4th battalion led to a showdown between the largely Pesindo and naval forces in this battalion and the Siliwangi troops and communist nationalist troops in the Barisan Benteng. Kahin suggests that the Pesindo forces in Madiun felt increasingly threatened by the next steps towards rationalisation. He claims they were faced with two choices: either allow themselves to be taken over by republican forces or take over the Republican administration in the regency, where the FDR already dominated.⁹

Kahin clearly states that the PKI did not formally plan the actions in Madiun. Musso was at the time in the middle of a speaking engagement with Sjarifuddin. Other PKI leaders were in Yogyakarta. According to Kahin, the leaders had little choice but to go along with the revolt, especially once Sukarno made his 19 September speech in which he claimed that the Communist Party of Musso had staged a coup in Madiun. In this speech, Sukarno linked the events in Solo with Madiun and called on the people to choose between Musso and the Communist Party or Soekarno-Hatta.¹⁰

⁷ Ibid., 262–266.

⁸ Ibid., 269.

⁹ Ibid., 287–924.

¹⁰ Ibid., 286.

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Kahin records the campaign of suppression of the PKI in a matter-of-fact way, but he reports with concern that as they were fleeing Republican troops, communist units became increasingly brutal, killing civil servants, school teachers, and policemen and targeting Masyumi members in particular.¹¹ Kahin speculates that the killing of several hundred people was either the result of anti-Masyumi indoctrination by the FDR or ordered by FDR leaders.¹² In the foreword to the updated version of this book, published in 1970, Kahin responds to comments that he represented the socialist leaders from the Indonesian Socialist Party (Partai Sosialis Indonesia, PSI) and Masyumi in very favourable terms in this work, as opposed to communist leaders such as Tan Malaka, and justifies this on the basis of his having less access to some leftist leaders. This is an important acknowledgement given how influential this work has been to all future studies of Madiun and especially given both the PSI's and Masyumi's hostility towards the PKI. Kahin is definitely pro-Republican in his views and unsympathetic to the communists.

Kahin's work was the first scholarly account of Madiun, and most other scholarly accounts were written after 1965. The year 1965 was a critical turning point in Indonesian history because of the attempted coup in which six senior army men were kidnapped and killed, which the army immediately blamed on the Communist Party. In Indonesia the events of 1965 were immediately tied to the events of 1948 to highlight the allegedly treasonous nature of the Communist Party.

Soe Hok Gie was a prominent student activist in the 1960s who protested against the Sukarno government and following the attempted coup joined in on protests to ban the PKI. Gie, however, became quickly disillusioned by the Suharto regime and was one of the few Indonesians to publicly raise concerns about the hundreds of thousands of Indonesians who were killed or imprisoned following the attempt.¹³ It was against this backdrop that Soe wrote one of the most balanced accounts of Madiun in the form of a Master's thesis in history at the

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 300.

¹² *Ibid.*, 305–306.

¹³ For more on Soe Hok Gie see John Maxwell, "Soe Hok Gie: A Biography of a Young Intellectual", PhD Thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 1997.

University of Indonesia, completed in 1969.¹⁴ In this work, which was not published in Indonesia until 1997, Soe argues that the key to understanding the Madiun Uprising is in the context of those times political, social (changes wrought in society after 1942) and economic (economic destruction and reconstruction in the post-war period).¹⁵ Factors such as clashes between Islamic and nationalist and between Sundanese and Javanese people also played a role. In his view, the tensions surrounding the Indonesian revolution, the high level of radicalism as a result of the times, and the thwarted hopes and unfulfilled expectations of independence all contributed to the outbreak of the Madiun Affair.

Shortly after the 1965 coup attempt, three researchers — Ruth McVey, Frederick Bunnell and Benedict Anderson — began working on a theory concerning it. They had originally intended their work to remain confidential. The contents of the paper became known, however, after the publication of an article by Joseph Kraft in the *Washington Post*, in which a summary of the findings in this paper were referred to as coming from a paper prepared by Cornell staff.¹⁶ The Cornell Paper, as it became known, concluded that the coup attempt was more likely the result of severe intra-army conflicts. This prompted the Indonesian army to produce an English-language defence of the military's version of the coup attempt.¹⁷ One possible effect of the Cornell Paper was to cast doubt on the most popular interpretation inside Indonesia of Madiun as a PKI revolt. At the same time there was concern, at least amongst some scholars, regarding the brutal treatment of many Indonesians affiliated with the communist party in 1965–1966. This sympathy and the Cornell

¹⁴ This thesis was, interestingly, supervised by the key military historian Nugroho Notosusanto.

¹⁵ Soe Hok Gie, *Orang-orang di Persimpangan Kiri Jalan*, Bentang, Jakarta, 1997, 273–274.

¹⁶ The original title of the work was “A Preliminary Analysis of the 1 October 1965 Coup in Indonesia”. Because this document became the centre of a controversy, the researchers decided in 1971 to publish the original version with some added revisions and clarifications about this text's production. Benedict Anderson, “Scholarship on Indonesia and *Raison D'État*: Personal Experience”, *Indonesia*, no. 62 (October 1996): 2, 5.

¹⁷ See Katharine E. McGregor, *History in Uniform Military Ideology and the Construction of the Indonesian Past*, Singapore University Press, 2007, 65–68.

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theory on the 1965 coup may also have influenced scholarly works on Madiun.

In 1976, just five years after this version of the 1965 coup attempt was published, David Anderson published a detailed article in the Cornell-based journal *Indonesia* focusing on the military dimensions of the Madiun Uprising. Perhaps also suspicious of orthodox Indonesian views of the Madiun Uprising, Anderson refers to this as the Madiun Affair, following the Indonesian Communist Party's preferred terminology. He focuses particularly on the responses of *lasykar* and other military units in East and Central Java in 1948 to Hatta's dramatic plans for the reorganisation of the military.¹⁸ Drawing on military records and publications and diverse local newspapers, Anderson argues that the Madiun Affair is best understood as "an internal crisis of military politics, and not, as is so often portrayed in accounts from the national and international standpoint, as an unsuccessful leftist bid for all out revolution in Indonesia."¹⁹ Anderson thus suggests that Madiun, 1948 was not a major turning point in the Cold War in Indonesia.

Anderson is clearly more sympathetic than Kahin towards those who acted on 18 September 1948 to take control of the local government. For Anderson the key to understanding the Madiun Affair lies within the territory of the Republic and the impact of Hatta's reorganisation campaign on military and other local rivalries. Like Soe, he also highlights ethnic tensions, introduced by the retreat of the largely Sundanese Siliwangi troops to the shrunken confines of the Republic, as contributing to the revolt combined with a perception that they were privileged in the reorganisation effort.²⁰ He comments on the resentment in Solo after the murder of 4th battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel Sutarto and the kidnapping of other military leaders, leading to the ultimatum by Republican military officer Gatot Subroto that members of the 4th battalion surrender or be branded traitors.

Anderson reminds us that Madiun was significant at this time because it was the third largest city under Republican control after Yogyakarta and

¹⁸ David Anderson, *Military Aspects of the Madiun Affair*, *Indonesia*, 1976, Vol. 21, pp. 2–9.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

Solo. Here there had been a recent shift from widespread support for socialism to some gains for Masyumi and the national communists (represented by Tan Malaka).²¹ Pesindo as an armed youth organisation and the police units felt more threatened by Hatta's plans to make Madiun a military capital for East Java. Here they also openly condemned the proposed military reforms. They feared they would eventually lose their positions after being gradually phased out.²² There were already reports of repression of leftist troops near Blitar, southeast of Madiun, in East Java.

Like Kahin, Anderson suggests that the Pesindo forces in Madiun felt increasingly threatened by rationalisation.²³ He notes that once the revolt led by Pesindo leaders had taken place, the PKI leaders made an offer to the Republic to contain the revolt if they were allowed to return to the cabinet, but this was rejected. This last point is not frequently mentioned and it adds greater weight to the theory that this was not a PKI-planned revolt.²⁴ The PKI's backing of this revolt in the end is, however, significant because the PKI became associated with this event thereafter.

In the most comprehensive study of the Madiun uprising published in 1989, Ann Swift puts forward the theory that the Madiun Affair was the product of mutual suspicion and anticipation from each side that the other would soon move against it.²⁵ Swift draws on an impressive array of Indonesian newspaper reports from the period and other primary accounts by Indonesians. She charts in detail the role of the politicised military, Indonesia's place in the world, the impact of cabinet changes preceding Madiun and the programmes of the FDR concerning labour and farmers in shaping the events in Madiun.

Swift comments that it is difficult to judge the authenticity of the documents quoted by George Kahin concerning the PKI's plans to take over the republic by force in November 1948, to which he was given

²¹ Ibid., 20–21.

²² Ibid., 22.

²³ Ibid., 25.

²⁴ Van der Kroef, *The Communist Party of Indonesia*, 35.

²⁵ Ann Swift, *The Road to Madiun: The Indonesian Communist Uprising of 1948*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Program, Monograph Series No. 69, Ithaca, New York, 1989.

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access during the revolution. Sukarno had also used forged documents from the communist nationalist party Murba in his radio address of September 19th concerning Madiun. She suggests that the *Entering the New Stage of a Military Struggle* document, which was supposed to be written in July, follows the events of September too closely to be believed, including specific plans, for example, for creating a “wild west”-like atmosphere in Madiun. She argues it is impossible to say definitively whether the PKI was planning to take over the government by force or by legal means.²⁶ Mortimer offered a similar criticism of Kahin, suggesting that his account of Madiun accepted the government version too much at face value.²⁷ Significantly, however, these documents were widely disseminated at the time of Madiun so as to spread the view that this was a planned communist revolt.²⁸ In Indonesia after the 1965 coup attempt, this also became accepted as the definitive history of Madiun.

One surviving leader of the Madiun uprising from the FDR gave an account to the Dutch in 1949 of his role and many years later also gave a similar verbal account. These two versions of Madiun provided by Sumarsono, who became military governor of Madiun under the rebel government, have been the subject of a Master's thesis by Akiko Sugiyama.²⁹ In these accounts Sumarsono, provided information similar to that described by Anderson, of FDR members in Madiun feeling as if they were being closed in upon. He asserts the idea that the Madiun actions constituted self-defence following the events in Solo and fears

²⁶ Swift, *The Road to Madiun*, 89–90.

²⁷ Rex Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno: Ideology and Politics 1959–1965*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1974, 38, footnote 19.

²⁸ See, for example, “Rentjana-Rentjana Moeso”, *Trompet Masyarakat*, 1 October 1948. On these propaganda efforts see also Swift, *The Road to Madiun*, 88–89.

²⁹ Akiko Sugiyama, *Indonesia's Madiun Affair of 1948: Two Accounts by Sumarsono*, Masters Thesis, Ohio University, 2002. This thesis includes translations of Sumarsono's 1949 account provided under interrogation by the Dutch, entitled *de Madioen Affaire*, 11 November 1949 (unpublished document from Algemeen Rijksarchief: Tweede Afdeling Procureur-Generaal bij het Hooggerechtshof in Nedelands-Indie 1945–1950, Nr 595, Jakarta, 11 November 1949) and two interviews with him in 1998 and 2000 by Kusalah Subagyo Tur.

that rationalisation was about to commence in Madiun with the arrival of Siliwangi forces.³⁰ Contrary to most analyses, he claims in his 1949 account that he was instructed by the FDR executive (including Musso and Sjarifuddin) to disarm the police and Siliwangi units before they themselves were targeted.³¹ In a more recent account of Madiun, Harry Poeze relies on Sumarsono's testimony and reports from an *Antara* newspaper photographer that two Politburo members Wikana and Setiadjit had left Musso's speaking tour for Madiun prior to the uprising.³² Although Poeze is convinced that this proves the hand of the PKI in the uprising, the *Antara* report was filed after the event and thus is also possibly biased towards supporting the Republic's version of events. Sugiyama notes inconsistencies between the two accounts of Madiun given by Sumarsono in 1949 and in interviews in 1998 and 2000. In both accounts, however, Sumarsono claims that he acted on the instructions of the FDR and not, as Swift and Kahin claim,³³ independently. As Sugiyama notes, Sumarsono's account is motivated more by self-interest and a desire to absolve himself of responsibility than by his political allegiances. Many questions thus remain about Madiun and due to the problem of biased sources, it is difficult to reach a definitive conclusion.³⁴ Many questions thus remain about Madiun and due to the problem of biased sources, it is difficult to reach a definitive conclusion.

The Role of the US and the Soviet Union in the Madiun Uprising

Despite the relatively depoliticised account by Sumarsono, Swift notes that since the Madiun Affair, interpretations of this episode have often been influenced by Cold War politics and fallen into two extreme interpretational camps regarding the episode. One interpretation, given

³⁰ References to Sumarsono's views in this paragraph and the next are based on the translation of Sumarsono's 1949 account provided by Akiko Sugiyama, *Indonesia's Madiun Affair of 1948: Two Accounts by Sumarsono*, Masters Thesis, Ohio University, 2002, 21–57.

³¹ Sugiyama, *Indonesia's Madiun Affair of 1948*, 31.

³² Harry Poeze, "The Cold War in Indonesia, 1948". Paper presented at the Roundtable on the Sixtieth Anniversary of 1948: Reassessing the Origins of the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 10–11 July 2008, Asia Research Institute.

³³ Swift, 90; and Kahin, 290–291.

³⁴ Sugiyama, *Indonesia's Madiun Affair of 1948*, 117–120.

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little weight, was that this was an American provocation aimed at getting the government of the Republic to suppress leftist opposition in return for diplomatic support.³⁵ The second was that it was a Soviet plot in which the Russians sent the leader of the Indonesian Communist Party, Musso, back from Moscow to radicalise the party in line with Stalinism and to overthrow the government.³⁶

In her account, Swift claims that the US was not deeply involved in Indonesian domestic matters at that time, despite maintaining its concern about the need to guard against a communist government.³⁷ In *Nationalism and Revolution*, Kahin devotes very little attention to American views of Madiun and relations between Hatta and the Americans. For Kahin, Musso's return to Indonesia was evidence of Soviet interest in directing events in Indonesia, although he does not state that Musso acted on behalf of the Russians. He also suggests that the Calcutta Youth Conference, which several lower-level PKI leaders attended, introduced an awareness of the new Zhdanov line by which the Soviets now advocated the division of the world into two blocs: the "aggressive capitalist" bloc led by the US and the "democratic bloc" led by Russia.³⁸ Kahin also charts the influence of the Suripno affair on the view that Hatta was pro-US. Suripno was sent to Eastern Europe by the Republic to garner support for the Republic. In January 1948 he achieved an agreement with Prague, but the Republic under Sjarifuddin and then Hatta did not want to jeopardise negotiations with the Dutch. Prague went on to say the Russian government had agreed, but the Republic's response was to withdraw Suripno.

Overall, Kahin's analysis concentrates on charting the path towards independence rather than mapping out how the Cold War was playing out in Indonesia. In a much later piece, however, Kahin suggests that the US's role in renegeing on the Renville Agreement by giving aid to the Netherlands (which was used to fund weapons in Indonesia and seize further territory) was so significant that without it there might not have

³⁵ Swift, *The Road to Madiun*, 81–87.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 81–91.

³⁷ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 84–86.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 257.

been a Madiun rebellion.³⁹ He argues that the US's position regarding Renville resulted in a real shift of support towards Moscow.

In a comprehensive study of American responses to and intervention in the process of Indonesian decolonisation from 1920–1949, Gouda and Zaalberg argue that the Dutch tried very hard to play up the threat of the Republic's falling to communism to the US State Department. The Americans were also concerned about communism in Indonesia, but in contrast to the Dutch, they eventually came to the conclusion that an independent state, versus one ruled by foreigners, was a better safeguard against communism.⁴⁰

By 1948 the US had for some time been watching the growing split between communists and non-communists in Indonesia. They were aware that the differences were becoming irreconcilable. According to Gouda and Zaalberg, the Suripno Affair also contributed to this split. Gouda writes that the FDR continued to push for Soviet recognition of the Republic's autonomy despite Hatta's recalling Suripno from Prague.⁴¹ Gouda describes ex-Prime Minister Amir Sjarifuddin as having tried to consolidate and expand left-wing control over the armed forces at the same time Hatta was rationalising the TNI. As both Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Hatta tried to reduce the TNI to 160,000 armed troops from 463,000 troops.⁴² Hatta became increasingly reliant on Sudirman and also Siliwangi troops under Nasution and on the elite Police Mobile Brigade.

Soon after the FDR merged into the Communist Party and when Sjarifuddin declared himself a communist, US Naval Intelligence reported that they perceived Indonesians had lost faith in the UN and expected guerrilla warfare soon, which would be met with Dutch repression. In their view, this would lead to further support for communism in the Republic because it would allow Musso to categorise

³⁹ George Kahin, "Some Recollections From and Reflections on the Indonesian Revolution", in Taufik Abdullah, *The Heartbeat of the Indonesian Revolution*, Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1997, 15.

⁴⁰ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 272.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 273–274.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 274.

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the Republic and the Netherlands Army as part of the same US camp.⁴³ Because of US pressure the Dutch refrained from military action at this point. Rumours about Soviet support were rampant and backed up by the Dutch, who were still hoping for a change in position on the part of the US. Hatta was fearful of Soviet arms assistance.

At this point Hatta wanted to know if the Truman Administration would provide assistance to the Republic in its battle against communism. On September 9th, Merle Cochran, the American representative to the UN's Committee of Good Offices was given permission from State Secretary Marshal to inform Hatta that the US government "would in every way practical assist the democratic non-communist government of Indonesia successfully resist communist tyranny", including offering financial help for a peaceful federation and pushing through the Cochran plan as quickly as possible.⁴⁴ In contrast to Swift, who claims that there is no weight to the US provocation theory, Gouda's analysis suggests at the very least that assurances from the US played a role in shaping the Republic's response to communist resistance to rationalization. Assurances of US support made Hatta respond more firmly.

Gouda notes that Hatta accused Musso of attempting to drag Indonesia into the Soviet-American global conflict. Hatta openly proclaimed that the future of Indonesia did not rest with the Soviets.⁴⁵ Washington was watching Indonesia very closely at this point because of developments elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Gouda notes that on 20 September, Merle Cochran met Hatta in Kaliurang and extended his appreciation for Hatta's role in crushing the communists. Hatta requested arms to continue this process.⁴⁶ On the surface, Hatta appeared to continue to support neutrality to appease others in the leadership.⁴⁷ The US did not concede regarding the provision of weapons because of Dutch sensitivities, but it did consider training Republican troops.⁴⁸ Kahin also notes that after the Republic crushed the communists, a CIA agent named Arturo Campbell made a week-long visit to the Republic to seek

⁴³ Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia*, 277.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 278.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 278–279.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 283.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 284.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 285.

out key Police Mobile Brigade members involved in crushing the revolt and suitable for sending to the US for training. This visit was kept very secret.⁴⁹

Gouda also notes that Washington encouraged harsh treatment of communists rather than advocating that a settlement be reached with them. Merle Cochran was instructed to inform Hatta that firm action would be well received in the Western world.⁵⁰ Key leaders were indeed killed without trial. The US also put pressure on Hatta to deal with Tan Malaka and his nationalist independent communist movement.⁵¹ Tan Malaka, who attempted a coup against the republican government in 1946, was released from gaol in 1948 to help provide another source of opposition to Musso's forces. He was shot dead by Republican troops in 1949.

According to Gouda and Zaalberg, anti-communism thus drove both Dutch and US views of the Republic. Gouda notes that the year 1948 began with the Truman Administration's fully backing the Netherlands, but that by the end of 1948 the US was warning the Netherlands not to engage in military action or Marshall Plan aid to the Netherlands and Dutch East Indies would be jeopardised.⁵² They note that the US support for the Republic resulted from a desire to "bind the fledgling nation-state to their own Cold War strategies".⁵³

Although 1948 could be seen as the year the Indonesian government chose to side with one camp, Gouda and Zaalberg stress that this was largely a pragmatic decision driven by the overall goal of achieving independence. They suggest that Hatta's move away from a policy of non-alignment and his decision to crush the communists was a tactic to accelerate the process of independence. Shortly thereafter, Indonesia returned to non-alignment, and by the 1950s Hatta was sidelined. In contrast, Sukarno believed in accommodating the communists.⁵⁴ This

⁴⁹ Kahin, "Some Recollections From and Reflections on the Indonesian Revolution", 16.

⁵⁰ Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia*, 285.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 288–289.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 290–291.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 302.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 302.

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conclusion should lead to caution in seeing 1948 as a teleological turning point. Instead it should be viewed as a flashpoint in the Cold War.

From the American perspective, in 1948 the Republic formed closer ties with the US and won over their support, but Gouda correctly argues that this was not a lasting alliance with the Indonesian government. The Madiun uprising did not set the course for an enduring partnership between the Indonesian and American governments. I would, however, argue that for some sections of Indonesian society, including elements of the Indonesian military and certainly Masyumi supporters, the experience of Madiun cemented a tradition of anti-communism and thus a cause shared with the US. In this way, the events of 1948 contributed to an enduring fracture within Indonesia between the left and right, which continued to influence the direction of the Cold War in Indonesia. I will return to this point later.

In her 1957 study of Soviet views of the Indonesian revolution, McVey notes that although the FDR openly declared that it sided with the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union was slow to back the Madiun revolt.⁵⁵ It eventually viewed Madiun as a provocation by the Republican government in league with the US and took a wary approach towards the Hatta government.

Based on documents from the Central Committee of the All Union Communist Party (Bolshevik, AUCPB) including writings from Musso and correspondence with Dutch Communists (CPN), Efimova argues against the view that Musso acted on instructions from Moscow when he returned to Indonesia in 1948. Instead she suggests that Musso returned to Indonesia primarily to strengthen links between All Union Communist Party (Bolshevik AUCPB) and Indonesian communists, a move desired by both sides.⁵⁶ A second reason was the Soviet Union's frustration with the passing of power from the communists to the bourgeois nationalists in Indonesia. They blamed this not only on the US and right-wing parties, but also on mistakes by the Indonesian

⁵⁵ Ruth McVey, *The Soviet View of the Indonesian Revolution*, Cornell University, Ithaca, 1957, 71–75.

⁵⁶ Efimova, "Who Gave Instructions to the Indonesian Communist Leader Musso in 1948?", 173.

communists, especially their failure to follow the Zhdanov Doctrine with regard to the world's division into two camps.⁵⁷ Interestingly, Musso tried to defend the actions of the Indonesian communists by suggesting that the PKI were trying to paralyse Dutch anti-communist propaganda by minimising their outward strength.⁵⁸ After the Sjarifuddin government fell, however, Musso was subject to much critique for defending this, and his decision to return to Indonesia may also have been based on a desire to correct the course of Indonesian communists.

Both McVey and Efimova have traced sources of influence on *The New Road*, Musso's plan for the future direction of Indonesian communism. Efimova suggests that Musso was inspired by multiple sources. First of all, he was influenced by Soviet communist assessments of Indonesia, which laid much blame on the tactics of the PKI and on Sjarifuddin for signing the Renville Agreement.⁵⁹ The Soviets critiqued the rejection of the armed struggle with the Netherlands, transferring state power to nationalists, co-operating with rightist parties and keeping a distance from the USSR with no open declaration about the Soviet camp.⁶⁰ McVey and Efimova both also note that Musso was inspired by the Chinese communist experience and Maoist thought. The Chinese had created a national front with representatives of layers of working people including the bourgeoisie, and this was a key idea outlined in the *New Road*.⁶¹ Lastly, Musso was influenced by Dutch communist thinking.

Musso's plans outlined in the *New Road* were acted upon soon after he returned to Indonesia in 1948 and were thus critical to shaping the direction of the Indonesian left. Efimova, however, stresses the independence of Musso and Suripno in representing the needs of Indonesian communists and points to departures from both Soviet views and those of Dutch communists in Musso's plans.⁶² She thus concludes that Musso was not a Soviet agent or acting on behalf of the Soviets. She also believes that Indonesia remained peripheral to Stalin's interests.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 174.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 175.

⁵⁹ The Assessment was entitled, "the situation in Indonesia after the signing of the Dutch-Indonesian agreement on 17 January 1948", Efimova, "Who gave instructions to the Indonesian communist Leader Musso in 1948", 177.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 178.

⁶¹ Ibid., 179, McVey, 62–66.

⁶² Ibid., 184–188.

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Along with Anderson's analysis that Madiun was largely an internal military affair and Gouda and Zaalberg's suggestion that the Republic's decision to court the US was pragmatic, Efimova's conclusions regarding the independence of Indonesian communists at this time and her emphasis on a unique model for action in Indonesia suggest that in 1948, as the Cold War was developing, Indonesians drew different sources of inspiration from both sides of the Cold War divide for different ends. Combined, these studies reinforce the necessity of understanding specific Indonesian responses to the Cold War rather than seeing them as puppets within a larger drama.

Lasting Legacies of the Madiun Uprising in Indonesia

Although the events of 1948 were not pivotal in determining Indonesia's position in the Cold War, they had long-lasting effects within Indonesia. One aspect of the Madiun uprising that has not received much scholarly attention is the enduring significance of the reprisals by FDR troops against Masyumi members. On 2 October 1948, the Surabaya-based newspaper *Trompet Masyarakat* reported a broadcast from *Soeara Indonesia Merdeka* radio that as Republican troops were cleaning up the rebels who had attempted to seize power in Madiun (remnants of the FDR), the rebels (*kaum pengacau*) "did not let their prisoners go but instead killed tens of people including kiai, school teachers, local community leaders and elites".⁶³ *Trompet Masyarakat* claimed that Sjarifuddin gave instructions to kill detainees in the Madiun gaol as Republican troops were approaching. This plan was thwarted, but an article on the same page also reports that in Tirtomojo, South Solo, fifty-six people were found dead. These included policemen, prominent Islamic figures and pamong praja (local government officials).⁶⁴ In the 1950s, Masyumi members repeatedly raised these killings as a way of attacking the PKI. Swift also notes, based on an account from communist leader Suripno, that these excesses caused many to reject the communists.⁶⁵

⁶³ "Pidato Pres, Soekarno: Moeso c.s melarikan diri ke Doengoes", *Trompet Masyarakat*, 2 October 1948.

⁶⁴ "Amir Sjarifuddin mati diboenoeh", *Trompet Masyarakat*, 19 December 1948.

⁶⁵ Swift, *The Road to Madiun*, 80.

Estimates of the number of leftist troops killed in the aftermath of Madiun are sparse. Fealy suggests that 8,000 people, mostly communist troops, lost their lives.⁶⁶ Hindley notes that Pesindo claimed to have lost 1000 members.⁶⁷

The PKI was not banned as a result of the Madiun Affair, and some leaders escaped persecution. Feith notes that 35,000 people were arrested, some only briefly for involvement in Madiun, but that the organised power of the Communist Party in both the army and the irregular army units was destroyed.⁶⁸ Many second-echelon leaders were killed in the fighting, and eleven of the most prominent communist prisoners, including Sjarifuddin and Suripno, were shot in December 1948 when the Dutch troops were advancing.⁶⁹ Following the second Dutch aggression on 18 December 1948, most of the 35,000 prisoners were released to help fight against the Dutch and most PKI supporters were welcomed back to the revolution. Swift claims that their participation in the fight against the Dutch enabled the gradual acceptance of a rehabilitated party after independence.⁷⁰

The PKI was, however, in a fairly precarious position until the early 1950s, particularly because of the dominance of Masyumi in all cabinets prior to 1953. In Kahin's study, he states that Masyumi members chose to believe that they were deliberately targeted for persecution by the FDR under the orders of FDR leaders in the violence following the Madiun Affair. Madiun thus served to consolidate the anti-communist sentiment of Masyumi. Feith notes this hostility extended to nationalist communists (including against Tan Malaka's forces, who had helped suppress the Madiun rebels) and also to non-communist socialists such as Sjahrir for a brief time.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Greg Fealy, *Ijtihad politik utama: Sejarah NU 1952–1967*, LKiS, Yaogjakarta, 1998, p. 313, footnote 24.

⁶⁷ Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia 1951–1963*, 199 footnote 2 *Sin Po*, 22 March 1951.

⁶⁸ Hebert Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and New York, 1962, 52.

⁶⁹ Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia 1951–1963*, 21.

⁷⁰ Swift, *The Road to Madiun*, 90.

⁷¹ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 306.

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In 1951, under Masyumi Prime Minister Sukiman (April 1951–February 1952) there were anti-communist raids following strikes and small-scale disturbances throughout Indonesia. Rumours spread of another Madiun. Many PKI leaders and labour union leaders were arrested, but not Aidit, Lukman, Njoto or Alimin.⁷² The PKI referred to these sweeps as the August Raids and took the opportunity to critique this as evidence of creeping fascism in Indonesia.⁷³ They accused religious groups of working in collaboration with FBI agent Campbell. They also linked Masyumi with these raids.⁷⁴ This was a significant anti-communist sweep, as by 29 October, 15,000 people had been arrested. The cabinet held some discussions about the legality of this action, but no major objections were raised, especially from Masyumi leaders. On the reasons for Sukiman's actions, Feith writes that Sukiman was an anti-communist and did not fear setting precedents like this; he saw an opportunity to deal with the communists here. Sukiman was also close to Merle Cochran, who was anxious to see the strengthening of anti-communism in Indonesia, especially given the Korean war and McCarthyism in the US.⁷⁵ Feith's observations suggest continuing US intervention in Indonesia and add weight to the PKI's claims.

The August 1951 raids were a major setback for the PKI, from which they did not recover until 1953.⁷⁶ This made the communists determined to oppose the Sukiman government and to seek an alternative government from amongst the nationalist bourgeoisie.⁷⁷ All this time, the PKI was also trying to recover from the damage that the Madiun Affair had inflicted upon its name. In addition to this, there were also splits within the party over leadership and tactical issues, especially between older and younger party members. In 1951, the communist

⁷² Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, 187–189.

⁷³ For a lengthy analysis of the raids, see Alamputra (a pseudonym for Aidit), *Overcoming Our Weaknesses*, *The Selected Works of D.N. Aidit*, Translation of Pilihan Tulisan, compiled in honour of the Sixth National Congress of the PKI in 1959. US Joint Publications Research Service, Washington, 1960–1961, 3–40. See also Aidit, *The Birth and Growth of the Communist Party of Indonesia*, 23 May 1955, 298.

⁷⁴ Aidit, *Overcoming Our Weaknesses*, 6.

⁷⁵ Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, 192.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁷⁷ Aidit, *The Birth and Growth of the Communist Party of Indonesia*, 23 May 1955, 298.

party magazine *Bintang Merah* provided a long account of what it called the “Madiun Provocation”.⁷⁸ On the subject of overcoming the stigma of Madiun there were, however, divided views within the PKI. Some felt they needed to work within other parties first, but Aidit felt loyalty to the nationalists would serve them better.⁷⁹

The year 1953 marked a turning point for the PKI because they decided to adopt a less aggressive position towards the ruling government from which they had continually been excluded. The PKI had stood against the Hatta, Natsir and Sukiman cabinets, viewing them as imperialist and sometimes fascist. The Wilopo cabinet, which assumed duty in April 1952, was again to be PNI- and Masyumi-dominated, but the PKI spoke out, saying it would accept this as long as it was “progressive and national”.⁸⁰ From 1953 onwards, the PKI thus decided to court the PNI. During the period of the Wilopo cabinet, the PKI became more accommodating and developed an improved relationship with the Indonesian Nationalist Party, the PNI and Sukarno, who had also felt the need to include more radical voices in the government. Discontent with the Wilopo Cabinet led to the formation of a new cabinet under the leadership of PNI figure Ali Sastroamidjojo.

As the PKI regained ground, interpretations of the Madiun uprising were hotly contested in the Indonesian press between supporters of Masyumi and the PKI as a way of discrediting either side. On the 7 September 1953, the socialist paper *Pedoman* reported that the Organisation for Islamic contacts had declared the Madiun Revolt a black page in the history of the nation.⁸¹ It accused the PKI of having stolen hundreds of thousands of rupiah from the Republic in the revolt and of having killed many ulamas and teachers. Furthermore, it called upon the Republic to declare 18 September as the National Day of Mourning and to arrest and try those behind the revolt. They also called upon all Islamic and non-communist forces to support these calls and asked all mosques to hold religious contemplation services with prayers so that those who died in the Madiun Revolt would be received as martyrs.

⁷⁸ Tiga Tahun Provokasi Madiun, *Bintang Merah*, v. 7, September–August 1951, 39–52.

⁷⁹ Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, 241.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁸¹ Pemberontakan Kaum Madiun, *Pedoman*, 7 September 1954, I.

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Capitalising on its increased stature, the PKI produced a White Book on Madiun 1953 which, similar to the earlier PKI version which appeared in *Bintang Merah* outlined the theory that Madiun was a provocation.⁸² In September 1953 *Pedoman* accused the PKI of wanting to plant a myth that Madiun was a provocation.⁸³ Tensions were so high that the Attorney General issued a ban on any meetings or demonstrations on the anniversary of the Madiun Affair.⁸⁴ In September 1953, Masyumi council member Jusuf Wibisono reminded the public of those who fought in the independence struggle and especially Muslims, who find it difficult to forget 18 September 1948. He sought to remind the people that on this occasion, the people chose Sukarno and Hatta over the PKI and Musso.⁸⁵ The Masyumi Surabaya branch called for the arrest and trial of people involved in Madiun, such as Sukirman.⁸⁶ The League of Former Islamic Fighters in Yogyakarta continued to campaign for 18 September to be declared a National Day of Mourning.⁸⁷ In October there were reported sweepings (forced seizures) of the PKI's White Book in bookshops in Surabaya, the capital city of East Java.⁸⁸

In September 1954, on the sixth anniversary on the Madiun uprisings, Masyumi leader Sjarif Usman called upon Indonesians to remember the "Madiun Revolt".⁸⁹ He accused Aidit of falsifying history and also of defaming former Vice President Muhammad Hatta. Furthermore, on 25 November 1954, public prosecutor Dali Mutiara formally accused Aidit of violating articles 134, 207, 310 and 311 of the Criminal Code by insulting the honour of the Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia, Muhammad Hatta. He made this accusation on the grounds of a statement issued by the Central Bureau of the PKI on 13 September calling upon members of the party to commemorate the Madiun Affair internally. This resulted in Aidit's being tried on 24 February 1955.

⁸² Partai Komunis Indonesia, *Buku Putih; tentang peristiwa madiun*. Sekretariat Agitasi-Propaganda, C.C. PKI, Djakarta, 1953.

⁸³ Buku Putih PKI, *Pedoman*, 18 September 1953, 1.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁸⁵ Kedjadian Madiun: Sedjarah Pemberontakan PKI, *Keng Po*, 18 September 1954, p. 2.

⁸⁶ Masyumi Surabaya, *Pedoman*, 24 September 1953, 1.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁸⁸ Buku Putih PKI disita, *Pedoman*, 21 October 1953, 2.

⁸⁹ Sjarif Usman, Mengenang Persitiwa Madiun, *Suara Masjumi*, 20 September 1954, 6-7.

In the trial, Aidit defended his statements about Madiun on the basis that the newspapers *Pedoman*, *Abadi* and *Keng Po* had been publishing very negative accounts of the communist role in Madiun. In response Aidit had made a statement on 13 September 1953 using the words “provocation”, “cruelties”, “served” (meaning serving the US imperialists), “bloodstained” and “heroism” to refer to the events.⁹⁰ These words had apparently caused great offence, but Aidit defended their use, stating he did not intend to cause insult. Instead:

We used the word provocation because we really meant provocation, we used the word cruelties of the Hatta, Sukiman and Natsir government because we are of the opinion that that government really was cruel; we said that the Hatta, Sukiman and Natsir government served by unleashing civil war because, by unleashing civil war, they really did “serve” their group and class; we said that the hands of the Hatta, Sukiman and Natsir clique were bloodstained because we really meant that; we spoke of the heroism of the Hatta, Sukiman and Natsir government in crushing the Communist and patriots because we really meant that the Hatta, Sukiman and Natsir government were indeed “heroes” in the eyes of their group and class.⁹¹

He clarifies that the 6th cabinet in his view was largely a Masyumi cabinet led by Mohamad Hatta. Aidit writes, “From the time of its formation on 29 January 1948 this cabinet pursued a completely Masyumi policy and the Madiun Provocation was the most important implementation of this policy, that is the policy of rounding up and murdering Communists, the policy which the Masyumi leaders still pursue right up to this day.”⁹² Clearly the 1951 raids were still fresh in the party’s mind, and Aidit sought to emphasise these raids as part of a trend of persecution of the PKI.

Aidit concludes his trial statement by claiming that Masyumi has long been celebrating 18 September as a day of mourning and the PKI agrees

⁹⁰ Aidit, “Aidit Accuses the Madiun Affair”, in *The Selected Works of D. N. Aidit*, 259.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 260.

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to this. Instead however this should be a day of mourning for victims of the left and for Musso, Sjarifuddin, Harjono, Wirono, as well as for “many more heroes of the people whose names will live forever in the hearts and minds of all Indonesian people with genuine patriotic feeling and with the blood of the people flowing in their veins.”⁹³ He continued:

We must mourn every 18 September so that we may always remember that we must be vigilant and strong in the face of every provocation. We must mourn every 18 September so that we may always remember that we do not want to be divided, and that we must guard our national unity as the apple of our eye.⁹⁴

Here Aidit reframes Madiun as a time when the nation was fractured, an experience that he says must never be repeated. His emphasis on national unity also follows the PKI’s recent political stance closely. At the end of the trial, Aidit was initially sentenced to three months’ jail time with six months’ probation.

In the time leading up to the 1955 elections, Masyumi frequently alluded to the PKI’s links to Moscow, reminded people of Madiun and tried to stress the antireligious position of the communists. One example of this is the April 10th report in the Islamic magazine *Hikmah*, which claimed that Aidit planned to make Indonesia a satellite to the Soviet Union.⁹⁵ The international plot theory was given more credence by events in neighbouring Southeast Asia. The PKI negotiated its credentials very carefully in this context. In November 1954, Aidit accepted Pancasila and the party tried hard not to appear anti-religious.⁹⁶ The PKI claimed it had 500,000 members by November 1954 and 1 million by February 1956.⁹⁷ In 1954, several cabinet members attended the party congress and Sukarno sent his well-wishes. For Feith, this suggested that “the stigma of Madiun was being erased rapidly.”⁹⁸

⁹³ Ibid., 275.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 275.

⁹⁵ “Siapa Mau Indonesia Mendjadi Negeri Satelit Rusia and RRT? P.K.I Jang Berusaha ke Djurusan ini! Quo Vadis N.U dan PSII? *Hikmah*, 10 April 1954.

⁹⁶ Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, 359.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 408.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 408.

Masyumi performed surprisingly badly in the 1955 elections, achieving only 57 out of 257 seats, mostly based on outer island support; the PKI, on the other hand, surprisingly achieved 39 seats. Between March 1956 and March 1957, Ali Sastroamidjojo presided over another cabinet. This cabinet was PNI-Masyumi-based in part, in reaction to a sense of threat from the PKI felt by some regional PNI leaders.⁹⁹ In September 1955, the newspaper *Suara Masyumi* also attempted to remind Indonesians about the Madiun Revolt.¹⁰⁰

In 1957 the regional revolts in Sumatera, which several Masyumi members backed, escalated. The Sumatran rebellions, as George and Audrey Kahin have detailed, were another important flash point for the Cold War in Indonesia, where American intervention was direct.¹⁰¹ The regional revolt began as a response to the perceived Java centrism of the government and was led by regional military commanders in Central, North and South Sumatra with the support of local politicians. In January Masyumi, which was equally perturbed by the pro-Java focus of the government, withdrew its members from the Ali cabinet. Prior to this in the People's Representative Council, Masyumi leader Udin Sjamsudin had tried to obscure what was happening in Sumatera by bringing in issues related to Madiun.

In response to these efforts, Aidit delivered an address to the Council on 11 February 1957.¹⁰² Through this speech, Aidit again hoped to publicly show that the Madiun Affair was a provocation by reactionary forces led by Hatta. Secondly, he hoped to highlight that the PRRI rebellion was something quite different from Madiun. The speech was clearly also a polemic against Masyumi's comment that the PKI was a party that was rebellious by nature.

In this speech, Aidit concurred that there were commonalities between the rebellion in Sumatra and the events of Madiun because both were

⁹⁹ Ibid., 467.

¹⁰⁰ *Suara Masyumi*, 20 September 1955, 1, 8.

¹⁰¹ Audrey Kahin and George Kahin, *Subversion as Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia*, The New Press, New York, 1995.

¹⁰² Aidit, *Konfrontasi Peristiwa Madiun 1948, Peristiwa Sumatera 1956*, Jajasan Pembaruan, Djakarta, 1964, 4.

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tied in to imperialist interests: American and Dutch. In the case of Sumatra, Aidit had more evidence to point to a definitive role played by the US. Aidit claimed, “The PKI is not afraid to talk about Madiun as it gives them the opportunity to speak of the injustice perpetrated against them. When the PSI (Indonesian Socialist Party) and Masyumi seem like they are implicated in the events in Sumatra, do not bring up Madiun to hit the PKI with, for this is like slapping water in one’s own face (the faces of the PSI and Masyumi).”¹⁰³ Aidit also clearly stated the party line on armed rebellion:

The PKI has stated over and over again – and has incorporated it also into its syllabus in party courses etc that we do not want a repeat of Madiun and that we will reach our political aims through the parliamentary road. So long as the PKI had its political rights guaranteed, we are prepared to play along with the political process, but clearly if we were faced with bayonets and bullets, we would not be baring our chests for the bullets and bayonets of the counter-revolutionaries (to pierce us).¹⁰⁴

By the time of this statement in 1957, it was clear that the PKI was still working hard to erase the image of the party as rebellious. However, the outbreak of regional rebellions in Sumatra culminating in the February 1958 declaration of the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia, which several Masyumi politicians backed, provided the PKI with a valuable means of rebutting Masyumi’s efforts to denigrate the party.

By mid-June the Sumatra rebellion was crushed, and all associated including Hatta and Masyumi, who refused to condemn Masyumi members who supported the revolt, were discredited. One result of the rebellions and Sukarno’s statement about the need to bury the parties and move to an alternative political system was that all parties except the PKI lost much of their importance.¹⁰⁵ Feith notes that the PKI’s confidence grew when it came to light that there was Western support for the rebels. Top leaders condemned Western powers at this time,

¹⁰³ Ibid., 7.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 13.

¹⁰⁵ Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy*, 548.

especially the US, but by May–June Indonesia had achieved *rapprochement* with USA.¹⁰⁶ The PKI received a major reprieve, however, with the banning of Masyumi and the PSI in August 1960 for their involvement in the rebellions.

The army, Sukarno and the PKI were increasingly important after these rebellions and with the beginning of Guided Democracy in 1959.¹⁰⁷ The history wars between the PKI and former Masyumi supporters fell silent in this period due to the muzzle on Masyumi, yet there were also sections of the Indonesian military for whom Madiun cemented an enduring suspicion of communism. Chief amongst these people was Nasution, who rose to prominence beginning in the mid-1950s. In the early 1960s, Nasution also tried to use the memories of Madiun whenever he could to check communist influence. In 1964, for example, he worked with the former soldier Nugroho Notosusanto to quickly produce an army version of the Madiun Affair to counter a planned PKI history in which the Madiun Affair would be omitted.¹⁰⁸

On 30 September 1965 members of an armed group kidnapped and killed six of the most senior army generals and disposed of their bodies in a disused well. As noted above, the army immediately blamed the coup attempts on the PKI, but it also set about spreading stories of the alleged barbarity of the PKI. In this context it did not take long for some Islamic groups to resurrect memories of the cruelty of the PKI in Madiun as a means of consolidating support for crushing the communists in 1965–1966. Soerasto Sastrosoewignjo, a member of the modernist Muslim organization Muhammadiyah, wrote in the Jakarta daily *Mertjusuar*:

Puppet master, how many times have you practiced your craft to stab our revolution from behind? In 1948 in the midst of the armed revolution a shameful and accursed treachery was perpetrated. How many thousands, tens of thousands, and hundreds of thousand patriotic folk, of religious leaders, and true

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 589.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 548.

¹⁰⁸ Katharine McGregor, *History in Uniform: Military Ideology and the Construction of the Indonesian Past*, 2007.

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nationalists fell victims in that famous Madiun Affair of yours?
Mass burials in disused wells are no innovation for you!¹⁰⁹

Immediate assertions were thus made regarding the alleged brutality of the communists against the Muslims in 1948, as further evidence that they must have been behind the murder of the generals in the coup attempt. Several respondents from the traditional Islamic organisation Nahdlatul Ulama in Java have also claimed in interviews since the 1965–1966 killings that Madiun was very much on their minds after the coup and that this memory worked to reinforce a belief in 1965–1966 that the possible response was to kill Communists or to be killed by them.¹¹⁰ In the early New Order period, some triumphalist publications concerning Madiun began to appear to reinforce the view that 1948 was the first communist coup attempt.¹¹¹ In 1969 the Masyumi paper *Harian Abadi* called again for 18 September to be declared a National Day of Mourning.¹¹² By this stage approximately half a million Indonesians, mostly those affiliated with the PKI, had been killed by the military and religious vigilantes, and hundreds of thousands more had been imprisoned.

Several decades later, as non-government organisations and the government began to pay more attention to human rights abuses, histories of Madiun again appeared. In 1990 Agus Sunyoto, historian and former head of the Nahdlatul Ulama-linked youth group Ansor in East Java, published *The Pits of Slaughter: The PKI's Schemes in*

¹⁰⁹ Soerasto Sastrosoewignjo, “You have stabbed us in the back again” (1965), in Feith and Castles (eds.), *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945–1965*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970.

¹¹⁰ Interviews Chalid Mawardi, Jakarta, 22 February 2007 and Abdullah Faqih, Tuban, 27 February 2008.

¹¹¹ Some examples are A. (Akhmad) Notosutarjo, *Peristiwa Madiun, tragedi nasional*, Endang : Pemuda : Api Islam, Djakarta : 1966. Pinardi. *Peristiwa coup berdarah P.K.I. September 1948 di Madiun: sebuah case-study tentang proloog-peristiwa-epiloog dan beberapa analisa tentang sebab dan akibat pemberontakan P.K.I.–Musso jang dilakukan terhadap pemerintah Republik Indonesia jang sah pada bulan September 1948*, Djakarta: Inkopak-Hazera, 1967.

¹¹² Hari Berkabung Nasional, *Harian Abadi*, 18 September 1969, 1.

Madiun.¹¹³ Written together with Maksum and A. Zainuddin, the book highlights “communist” brutality related to the Madiun Affair.¹¹⁴ Soe Hok Gie’s more balanced 1969 thesis on Madiun was also published in Indonesia in 1997 for the first time.

Since the fall of Suharto, there has been far greater openness to re-examining the 1965 killings. The prominent Nahdlatul Ulama religious leader Yusuf Hasyim has, however, tried to resist this process by reviving memories of Madiun. Yusuf Hasyim narrowly escaped the revenge of Pesindo troops in 1948, and in 1965–66 he participated in and directed killing campaigns in Java as a leader in the armed militia Banser. Until his death in 2006, he frequently tried to remind Indonesians of “communist cruelty” in the Madiun Affair of 1948. In 2001, for example, Yusuf Hasyim organised a photographic exhibition in Jakarta detailing the cruelty of communists in 1948 and 1965 in addition to communist cruelty in other countries. The exhibition was repeated in 2003.¹¹⁵ Then in 2004, he hosted a national dialogue between ulama and those who identified themselves as families of victims of the communists both in Madiun in 1948 and in 1965.¹¹⁶ The exhibitions and dialogue were intended to stem any tide of sympathy towards victims of the post-coup violence and to prevent concessions to them. By reviving memories of Madiun, he thus tried to legitimise the 1965–1966 killings. Since the killings, it has become even more important for those linked to them to revive memories of communist violence in 1948, particularly in the context of growing attention to the human rights violations in 1965–1966. The events of 1948 have thus continued to reverberate in Indonesia until this day.

¹¹³ Agus Sunyoto, Maksum and A. Zainuddin, *Lubang-Lubang Pembantaian Petualangan PKI di Madiun* (The pits of the PKI’s slaughter in Madiun). Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1990.

¹¹⁴ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 300.

¹¹⁵ Yusuf Hasyim, ‘Komunikasi dan Sejarah Hitam Bangsa’, *Republika*, August 2003.

¹¹⁶ The Dialogue was called *Dialog Ulama NU Dengan Keluarga Korban PKI 48 di Madiun and “65 di Jakarta*, hereafter *Dialog Ulama NU*” and held on March 12th 2004 in Jakarta. Many thanks to Lakpesdam NU for allowing me to purchase a VCD copy of the dialogue. The following observations are based on this recording.

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CONCLUSION

The year 1948 was, I have argued, a flash point in the Cold War for Indonesia. For the two superpowers, it was a year in which the Americans felt they had gained a real ally and in which the Soviets had effectively lost one battle. This was not, however, an enduring alliance. By examining the events of 1948 in Indonesia purely from the point of view of the superpowers, we miss an opportunity to assess the enduring significance of 1948 for Cold War fractures within Indonesia.

As I have argued, the events of 1948 had other, more subtle and lasting effects that shaped positions in the Cold War within Indonesia. While fleeing Republican troops, Peindo members killed approximately one hundred people. Memories of this violence were kept alive and passed down across generations within Islamic circles. They also became a key reference point in the competition between the PKI and Masyumi to win over Indonesians in the 1950s.

Madiun was a significant scar for the PKI, and for many years the party remained vigilant in guarding against any form of provocation. The PKI continually emphasised its own victimhood in this episode, claiming that in fact this was only a local action blown completely out of proportion. More than anything, the events of 1948 worked to cement existing antagonisms between the PKI and Islamic groups. This antagonism also played a part in the violence of 1965–1966. Although the Cold War has ended, there are on-going motives today for upholding the orthodox view in Indonesia of Madiun as a PKI revolt.

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