

not want to antagonise the white workers (at one point it was even suggested that white miners – notoriously racist – should organise the African mineworkers!). We may safely assume – and Hirson provides ample evidence for this – that African workers knew better. As it was, they were left in the cold by the white working class. This was one of the most important lessons they learnt.

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SWIFT, ANN. *The Road to Madiun: The Indonesian Communist Uprising of 1948*. [Monograph Series, no. 69.] Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca (NY) 1989. xii, 116 pp. Ill. \$ 9.00.

The revolt of some communist-led troops in East Java, which led to the occupation of the provincial city of Madiun on 18 September 1948 and presented a formidable challenge to the Republican government in Yogyakarta, constitutes a controversial issue. A number of opposing theories have been put forward to explain the events surrounding this revolt. Observers within the Communist movement are prone to see evidence here of an American-imperialist plot, in which the Dutch were also involved, which made use of “Trotskyist traitors”; on the other hand the prevailing political and military view in Yogyakarta was that the revolt represented an attempt on the part of communists to subvert and overthrow the legitimate Republican government – and within Masyumi circles the hand of Moscow was perceived to be the force behind events. The literature on the subject offers some slight variation on these two themes and provides more details, but essentially no new analysis of the political crisis of September 1948 has been presented.

The first scholarly attempt to deal with the “Madiun affair” was that of Professor Kahin, whose extensive on-the-spot research in the years 1948–1949 formed the basis of his book, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (1952). His view of the “Madiun affair” might be summarized as follows. In September 1948 the Hatta government and the Army High Command stepped up their drive to rationalize the heterogeneous armed forces; part of this process of rationalization involved the removal of officers from the regular army (TNI). Attempts to implement reforms within the IVth Division, which was stationed in Surakarta (a hotbed of radicalism) and commanded by lieutenant colonel Suadi (a communist sympathizer), led to skirmishes and to the expulsion of this division from the city. This alarming setback for the left precipitated an offensive reaction on the part of local commanders in East Java who feared an all-out campaign against their autonomy: they seized control of the city of Madiun on 18 September. The leadership of the PKI was presented with a *fait accompli*, which left them with very little alternative, “[. . .] they found themselves catapulted from the Gottwald-Plan phase of their campaign into the revolutionary phase [. . .]” Kahin characterized the general socio-economic and political conditions at that time as ones unfavourable for revolution, however, and for a long time this view has not seriously been challenged.

Benedict Anderson’s study, *Java in a Time of Revolution* (1972), has increased

our understanding of the dynamics of the national revolution in its early years, 1944–1946, the years which constituted the height of the social-revolutionary phase that came to an end in 1946. A few years later D. C. Anderson published a detailed description of *The Military Aspects of the Madiun Affair* (1976). He regarded it as an internal crisis of military politics and not an “unsuccessful leftist bid for all-out revolution”; it was rather a struggle between hinterland East Javanese units determined to preserve a mass populist army, and a high command determined to bring the field units under greater central control. Oddly enough, though she has drawn on a considerable number of newspaper sources and published studies, Ann Swift does not make use of Anderson’s work in her book, the first scholarly monograph dedicated to this subject.

The first chapter of Swift’s book provides a survey of the main political forces existing at the time. There was the “Sayap Kiri” (Left Wing), an alliance of leftist groups in which the members and sympathizers of the Communist Party (PKI) gradually emerged as the strongest political force. Opposing them were the Masyumi, an alliance of Muslim organizations. Somewhere in between were the Nationalists (PNI), who were essentially conservatives too. The “nationalist-communist” tendency constituted a separate faction on the left under the influence of Tan Malaka. Finally there was the largely autonomous world of the “politicized military”, consisting of the regular, though still far from centralized, national army and the larger group of numerous independent “lasykar” militia units, who were often radically inclined.

In the chapters which follow, the author deals with the stages in the development of the political crisis of September 1948: the fall of the national cabinet under the leftist premier Amir Sjarifuddin (23 January 1948); the formation of a presidential cabinet under Mohammad Hatta which drew mainly on the support of the Masyumi and the PNI; the unwilling transformation of the Sayap Kiri into a party of opposition; the break up of the Social Democrats’ (“popular front”) alliance with the Communists and the transformation of the Sayap Kiri into the Front Demokrasi Rakyat (FDR) (February); the agreement between the Russian Embassy in Prague and the head of the Indonesian Information Centre, Suripno, a communist, (26 May 1948), and the “outbreak” of the Cold War in Indonesia.

The unilateral recognition of the Indonesian Republic by the Soviet Union was most embarrassing for the Hatta government, and it pushed the FDR and the PKI further into opposition: supporting fierce anti-Masyumi propaganda, strikes, demonstrations by the peasantry, and determined resistance against the government’s military reforms. A new phase started with the arrival of Musso from Moscow in August 1948 and the recognition of the Communist Party, which proceeded to institute a vigorous anti-imperialist policy more in line with the new Zhdanov “two camp” doctrine promulgated by the Cominform. Whereas the PKI and its allies in the Sayap Kiri/FDR had long been regarded as a specifically Indonesian phenomenon, the suspicion now dawned that the Soviets were attempting to set in train a communist revolution. Finally there were the clashes in Surakarta, providing the spark which ignited the Madiun revolt.

The author provides a well-balanced account of the decisive events occurring in the middle of September 1948. The leadership of the PKI were completely surprised by events. Their response was ambivalent: on the one hand they felt obliged to

support Sumarsono's initiative in occupying Madiun; on the other hand they may have made some attempt to mediate. Only after President Sukarno's ultimatum on September 19 did Musso and others relinquish their wait-and-see position and opt for revolution. That "Madiun" was a "Soviet coup" was quickly denied; it was a "corrective measure" taken on the initiative of the Republic's government.

In her conclusion Ann Swift rejects both the theory that "Madiun" was an American-inspired revolt and the theory that it was stage-managed from Moscow. She similarly gives little credence to the theory that "Madiun" was a PKI plot which was prematurely executed. Here she follows Ruth McVey rather than Kahin: it was very likely that the FDR and the PKI had discussed the possibility of armed rebellion, but "Madiun" was neither government inspired nor a coup; it was a regional revolt among the lower-echelon PKI leadership which turned into a full-scale rebellion. This might not have happened without the intervention of Musso.

As a political history this book gives a useful account of the main events surrounding "Madiun". It does not, however, provide any new understanding of the Madiun problem; there is little here which adds to our knowledge about the transition from the "Dimitrov" "popular front" to the "Zhdanov" line, the political crisis within the army, and the struggle for power among the national leadership (between Sukarno and Hatta, between the PNI and the Masyumi, and between the political and the military elites, etc.).

The national revolution in Indonesia constituted the initial stage in a long drawn-out process of state formation, implying the monopolization of armed force and the centralization of political power. Within this historical framework a decisive confrontation between the central political and military authorities on the one hand and, on the other, a defiant political organization that disposed of armed force was inevitable (whether the latter was inspired by a communist or a fundamentalist Muslim ideology). The relative ease with which the army high command did crush the revolt demonstrates the limits of PKI influence and discipline: the vast majority of the *lasykar* militants who also constituted the power base of the Communist Party were *abangan* populist nationalists, ideologically quite akin to Sukarno and army commander Sudirman – rather inclined to fight the *santri*, orthodox Muslim middle class than to fight a "class war" against the nationalist elite.

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