

# Terrible Night at Maeda's Residence On Preparation of Independent Proclamation for Republic of Indonesia

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## Abstract:

The focus of this research was on the role of Admiral Tadashi Maeda before the proclamation of independence of Indonesia, who was considered as Japan's Imperial Representative by the Dutch. The presence and role of Maeda made the Dutch rejected the Independence of Indonesia on August 17th 1945. The research showed that Maeda did not obey the instruction of Central Government in Tokyo to maintain status quo in Indonesia until the handover of territory from the Allied Forces to the Dutch-Indies administration. This research based on librarian method were analyzed using historical qualitative. However, one day before the proclamation day, Maeda allowed Indonesians to use his house as the place to draft the Proclamation text and ensure the security of everyone inside the house against intervention of Japanese Army. This research finding that Maeda certainly disobeyed order from Tokyo and therefore he did not act on behalf of Japan Imperial Government. It was a strong evidence that proclamation of independence of Indonesia was not scenario from Japan.

**Keywords:** Tadashi Maeda, proclamation, Japan occupation, Indonesia independence, Dutch.

## 1. Introduction

Admiral Tadashi Maeda was an Imperial Japan's Navy high rank officer assigned in Indonesia since early 1942 as contact officer between Japan's *Rikugun*<sup>1</sup> and *Kaigun*<sup>2</sup> in Batavia. Maeda, during his office in Indonesia, had given moral and material support to Indonesia's nationalists who fought for independence of Indonesia. One of them was the establishment of House of Independent Indonesia in 1944, where he was the main fund contributor and martial art trainer for all youths living in the house.

Maeda, in 1945 also helped Sukarno-Hatta by confirming Imperial Japan's defeat in World War II by August 15th, 1945. It emerged continuous impact that brought all Indonesia's nationalists to proclaim Indonesia's Independence in August 17th 1945, when Indonesia was under *status quo*.<sup>3</sup>

August 16th, 1945, at 13:00, Maeda and all Imperial Japan's soldiers in Java received order from their superior, Major General Nishimura to maintain a *status quo* in Indonesia until the arrival of Allied Forces. However, on the night of August 16th, Maeda allowed Indonesia's nationalists to hold a proclamation drafting meeting in his house and personally guaranteed the safety of all the people in the meeting against potential intervention from Japan's Army.

A year after Indonesia's independence, Maeda and his assistant, Shigetada Nishijima, was arrested by the Allied Forces and jailed at *Gang Tengah* for about a year. He was violently interrogated about his

role in Indonesia's independence.<sup>4</sup> Maeda, when he returned to Japan in 1947, did not receive any veteran support and facility like other veterans as he was considered a traitor for disobeying order from *Tenno Heika*<sup>5</sup>.

## 2. Definition of Problem

The presence of Maeda in events of Indonesia's independence on the night of August 16th made the Dutch considered the proclamation of Indonesia's Independence at August 17th, 1945, was Japan's made and Republic of Indonesia was part of Japan's vassal state. Based on the reason, Royal Dutch until now does not admit the Indonesia's independence at August 17th, 1945. The Royal Dutch acknowledged Indonesia's independence at December 27th, 1949, when the Royal Dutch acknowledged the sovereignty of Republic of Indonesia at the time.<sup>6</sup> This historical even should the answer of the question concerning Maeda's effort in supporting the independent of Republic of Indonesia.

The article describes the role of Maeda in events toward independence of Indonesia on August 17th, 1945, especially when the independence was not part of scenario made by the Imperial Japan. Maeda did the best he could to help nationalists in Indonesia on his own initiative, without interference of the Imperial Japan. As stipulated above, Imperial Japan considered Maeda moves as treason against *Tenno Heika*, so he did not receive facilities like other veterans after they returned from war. Maeda passed away in a poor condition.<sup>7</sup> This is the answer of question that the independent of republic of Indonesia, based on Indonesian people struggle, and Maeda sacrifice himself for movement of Indonesian leader in prepared the Proclamation Tex of Independent.

## 3. Literature Review

The next step made to meet the independence promise issued by Prime Minister Koiso on September 7th, 1944, Maeda personally established a 'school' for Indonesian youth in October 1944 named as House of Independent Indonesia. Maeda played role as fund contributor and trainer provider for students in the House. Ahmad Subardjo wrote, House of Independent Indonesia was established to train youth in Indonesia to become well-educated nation in order to build Asian Nation Solidarity<sup>8</sup>.

George Mc Turnan Kahin, US historian who conducted research for a year (1948-1949) in Indonesia had different opinion to Subardjo. He wrote that the Imperial Japan Administration established House of Independent Indonesia as alternative political policy if they were defeated in World War II. They hoped to negotiate and cooperate with Communist Sovyet. In other word, if Japan made an alliance with Communist country, they had to ensure that Indonesia had been well guided to be a Communist country. If the plan succeed then, communist country like Indonesia would be useful to meet their ideals and purposes. That was the reason behind the establishment of House of Independent Indonesia, to educate Indonesia youths and made them attracted to Communist ideas.

Kahin, in his book *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, wrote that the House of Independent Indonesia was managed by Wikana, an Indonesian youth with good connection to Communist underground movement in Indonesia, and also Ahmad Subardjo who was a chairman in communication department of Imperial Japan Navy in Jawa. He also wrote that Ahmad Subardjo in the mid 1920s was a communist who then decided to leave communist movement in 1930s. so, the House of Independent Indonesia was actually a stepping stone for a closer relation with communist.<sup>9</sup>

Why did Japan establish House of Independent Indonesia? Kahin tried to elaborate the idea from Syahrir as his resource. Syahrir said that the House was designed to infiltrate communist underground movement in Indonesia and controlled them. Graduates of the House will be activated in a political organization made by Subardjo to fight against England and United States, two major countries with potential ability to attack Indonesia.<sup>10</sup>

Once we analyzed Kahin's research carefully, there were some misjudged analyses based on the 'sources' he used for his book related to Japan's occupation in Indonesia. Kahin interviewees 'sources' who were the ruling government at the time, whom had certain interest behind their given statements to Kahin.

The ruling government at the time was the 'socialist faction' led by Syahrir and Amir Syarifudin. They used the best opportunity to provide information to a well known author like Kahin. Their statements were related to the US perspective on the world post World War II. They hoped that their perspective and information would attract aid and support for Indonesia foreign affair diplomacy. Syahrir, the Prime Minister, used the momentum to make statements and provide information that would make good public opinion in United State about Indonesia, although he then lost his political support in Indonesia.<sup>11</sup>

The returned Dutch-Indies administration did not acknowledge the independence of Indonesia *de facto*<sup>12</sup>, and Indonesia was pinched by series of military attack by the Dutch and Allied Forces. The Dutch did not want to negotiate with Sukarno-Hatta who was considered as Japan's collaborator. Syahrir was then assigned by Soekarno to negotiate with the Dutch, since he was an anti-Japan figure. Syahrir was assigned to fight for *de jure*<sup>13</sup> international acknowledgment for Indonesia's independence, by gaining support as many as possible from independent countries. US support, as the winner of World War II, would greatly assist Syahrir administration to gain international acknowledgement, *de facto* and *de jure* on the independence of Republic of Indonesia.

Kahin's arguments on the communist based House of Independent Indonesia was weak as stated by a professor from *Hoveer Institute and Library* at Stanford University, Nobutaka Ike. He said that, based on United States Strategic Bombing Survey, the Imperial Japan prepared only for a short war, no more than two years. In the mid of 1944, Japan's Naval high rank officer, especially intelligence officer in Indonesia, had realised that Japan could not win the war. Nobutaka Ike said to Kahin, that rumors had spread in Japan's Navy that if Japan lost the war, there would be communist revolution in Japan. Russia would certainly help the revolution and these Japan's officer thought that Russia would be Japan's ally. In order to anticipate the communist regime in Japan and the form of Japan-Russia alliance to attack USA, the most rational action was to train Indonesian youth with thoughts about Communism.

The fact, although Japan was defeated in World War II, there was no communist revolution in Japan and no World War III where Japan-Russia alliance will fight against United State and Allied Forces. Based on facts mentioned above, Kahin's analyses on the establishment of House of Independent Indonesia and other similar school by Imperial Japan Administration in Java, was denied and Nobutaka Ike statement was just a prediction.

#### 4. Research Method

This research based on librarian method by exploring data and articles made by figures involved in the process of independence of Indonesia and interview results. All documents were analyzed using

historical qualitative methodology, visited Maeda's house at Jalan Imam Bonjol nomor 1, Menteng Jakarta Pusat. This house constructed in 1927 was then the official residence of Great Britain Consulate from 1931 until 1942. In 1942 the house than became the residence of Tadashi Maeda. This house consist of many room: dining room where the texts of Proclamation of independent discussed and write by Soekarno, Moh Hatta and Achmad Soebardjo. The other room are; typing room where the text of proclamation typed by Sayuti Melik and B.M Diah Meeting Room and other room where the proclamation Text authentication and legalization. Abundant information collected at that house. At present the house changed into The Museum of Proclamation Text.

## 5.Result Finding

### Contra Argumentation Between Maeda and Nishimura

Maeda's decision on the independence of Republic of Indonesia was written on a document No.11172 ICRVO of a report from high Japan's officer (probably Capten Nakamura of *Kikaku ka*<sup>14</sup>) dated August 19th, 1945. The document stated that on August 19th, 1945 Maeda came to Mayor General Nishimura and held an interview as follow.

*Maeda: "I came here to protest on the reaction of Gunseikanbu to Indonesian nationalists after the capitulation.<sup>15</sup> Why did your office always oppress Indonesians whom I care and fighting for their independent?"*

*Nishimura: "May I ask you sir, why did we have to give attention to Indonesia when the war was over?"*

*Maeda: "Because Tenno Heika promised Indonesia's independent, based on holy ideas fo Hakko Ichiu<sup>16</sup>".*

*Nishimura: "You were wrong. It was the desire of Tenno Heika during the war. The situation was not the same anymore. The struggle for independence by Indonesian people was a different battlefield. It was nonsense if we stopped the war for Tenno Heika, but supporting the nationalists who fought against the returned Dutch regime. Beside that, Tenno Heika did not always have the same idea all the time. His policy changed based on national and international situation. He ordered us to go to war against our enemies, and we went to war. Now, Tenno Heika ordered us to stop the hostility. We both do not know the reason behind it, but we must obey his order. One more thing, did you ever think what kind of punishment given to person who broke the capitulation rule? It was easy for us to die, but I had my own calculation. The most suffered party on the punishment was not we but the government in Tokyo, including Tenno Heika. Potsdam agreement<sup>17</sup> allowed Tenno Heika to remain in throne. Our gratitude to the Allied Forces for the agreement could not be stated in words. However, the agreement could be revoked if Japan's soldiers outside Japan violated status quo rules. Now we had to admit that Indonesia was a problem beyond our control. Indonesia had become international matter. Did you still disagree with me?"*

*Maeda: (left the room).<sup>18</sup>*

Based on the document, the disagreement between Maeda and Nishimura is on a distinctive issue. Nishimura decided to obey the order of Tenno Heika and thought that Japan had to show gratitude to the Allied Forces, which kept Tenno Heika in throne. He tried to convince Maeda that the independence of

Indonesia was not Japan's affair. Nishimura reminded Maeda on punishment received from the Allied Forces if Japan involved in the independence of Indonesia. Maeda seemed disagree and was not affected by Nishimura words, so he supported the independence of Republic of Indonesia, aside of disagreement from Japan.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1 Japan's Promise on Indonesia's Independence

On September 1944, United State Navy took over Palau island, located between Phillipines and Turk island, which resulted in communication lost between Japan Naval Base in Turk island and Japan Naval Base at Leyte island, Phillipines. US Navy then attacked Japan Naval Base at Turk island from Palau and Mariana. The defeat of Japan Naval Base in Turk island made the Japan's defense in Pacific in ruins.<sup>19</sup>

The destroyed Japan Naval Base in Pacific lead to potential total defeat in war, therefore, the Imperial Japan administration in Java announced a promise of independence for Indonesia, as long as the people helped Japan to defend Java and Madura.<sup>20</sup>

### 6.2 The Formulation of House of Independent Indonesia

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### 6.3 Proclamation Text Drafting in Maeda's Residence

On August 16th, 1945, Indonesian nationalists youth were having problem to find a place to draft the proclamation text. Maeda, through Subardjo, offered his residence to be the place for draft meeting. He even would guarantee the safety of all meeting participant against any potential arrest made by the Japanese Army which preferd to maintain the status *quo*.<sup>26</sup>

Although there were some Japanese inside Maeda's residence, the draft meeting was not interfered by these Japanese people at all. There were rumors where Japan took part in the draft meeting. It was stated by Maeda's assistant, Shigetada Nishijima, on an interview with Basyral Hamdy Harahap, about the role of Maeda and Shigetada Nishijima in proclamation draft meeting in Maeda's residence. Nishijima said that he and Maeda took part in the draft meeting at August 16th, 1945. Beside that, Basyral Hamidy Harahap also wrote that "hopefully, the wish of Nishijima and Mr. Ahmad Subarjo was finally granted, a historian who wrote the proclamation draft meeting based on facts."<sup>27</sup>

What did Hamidy Harahap mean by 'based on fact'? Perhaps, 'the fact' that he said was what Shigetada Nishijima said. How ababout fatcs described by other Indonesian nationalists who directly involved in the meeting? Did we have to close our eye on historical facts they described on the history of proclamation draft meeting compare to 'facts' described by Hamidy Harahap?

Hamidy Harahap seemed to overrate helps given by some Japanese people in the proclamation draft meeting. It is true that there were some Japanese in Maeda's residence at the night of August 16th, but they did not take part in the draft meeting. It is true there were four Japanese (Tadashi Maeda, Shigetada Nishijima, Yoshizumi, and Miyoshi of Japan's army) sat at the round table, but not at the

same time when Sukarno-Hatta and Subardjo drafted the proclamation text. It was found on Hatta's book *Sekitar Proklamasi* that described the situation during Proclamation draft meeting.

Mohammad Hatta did not mention the role of Shigetada Nishijima or other Japanese people in the residence. Hatta even described how Japanese people inside the residence did not interfere the proclamation draft meeting. Hatta stated that Maeda went to bed at night on the second floor while Miyoshi just sat and quiet, did not interfere in the draft meeting.<sup>28</sup>

Similar statement also said by Ahmad Subardjo, in his book *Lahirnja Republik Indonesia*, when Sukarno-Hatta went home from talks at Mayor General Nishimura's residence. It is true that there were four Japanese people sat at the round table, but they were not there when Sukarno-Hatta and Subardjo held a draft meeting. They were there to hear stories from Sukarno-Hatta and Maeda related to meeting with Mayor General Nishimura<sup>29</sup>.

Subardjo also wrote that, about the proclamation draft meeting, Japanese people inside the Maeda's residence left the room when the Indonesian nationalists held a meeting about proclamation text. Subardjo wrote that it was a 'green light' from Japan that they would not interfere the proclamation draft meeting.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, Shigetada Nishijima statement was rejected because Subardjo and Hatta said that Japanese people inside Maeda's residence did not take part in the proclamation draft meeting and they moved to other rooms quietly

## 7. Conclusions

Maeda's decision to establish House of Independent Indonesia, trained Indonesian youth in the House, allowing proclamation draft meeting in his residence on the night of August 16th and protecting the people in the draft meeting from potential arrest made by Japan's army was a brave act to help the struggle for Indonesia's independence. It does not mean that the independence of Republic of Indonesia was a gift or designed by Japan. Maeda's decision to help nationalists in Indonesia was against status *quo* instruction from the central government in Tokyo.

## 8. Future Scope

Indonesian Independent struggle historically was Indonesian not Japanese, and in Maeda case it was personal effort, and many Japanese soldier did not back to their country and life or married Indonesian girl. This topic not yet become importance issue for academic research, but have important meaning concerning Japanese military occupation in Indonesia

## 9. Acknowledgments

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- <sup>1</sup> *Rikugun* was Japan's Army consisted of two military administrations, the 16th Armed Forces in Jakarta controlling Java and Madura, the 25th Armed Forces in Bukittinggi, controlling Sumatra.
- <sup>2</sup> *Kaigun* was Japan's Navy, the 2nd South Fleet in Makassar controlling Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara, Maluku, and Papua.
- <sup>3</sup> *Status quo* was the vacuum of power, where Imperial Japan has surrendered the war without any condition to the Allied Forces, leaving Indonesia territories without control while the Allied Forces had not arrived yet at the occupied area to take over the control and handed over to the Dutch-Indies administration.
- <sup>4</sup> *Kisah Istimewa Bung Karno*, (Jakarta: Kompas, 2010), pp. 84-91.
- <sup>5</sup> *Tenno Heika* was people's calling to the ruling Emperor of Japan
- <sup>6</sup> "Dutch did not admit Proclamation of August 17th 1945". See: [nasional.republika.co.id](http://nasional.republika.co.id). 17 Augustus 2015. 30 April 2016. <http://nasional.republika.co.id/berita/nasional/politik/15/08/17/nt7hm4257-belanda-belum-akui-kemerdekaan-17-agustus-1945>
- <sup>7</sup> "Interview with Prof. Aiko Kurasawa (1): Naturally, Japan Supported Indonesia's Independence". See: [Islam indonesia.id](http://islamindonesia.id). 21 Maret 2014. 30 April 2016. <http://islamindonesia.id/berita/wawancara-prof-aiko-kurasawa-1-secara-nurani-jepang-dukung-kemerdekaan-indonesia-2.html>
- <sup>8</sup> Ahmad Subardjo, *Lahirnja Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta: PT Kinta, 1972, p. 77.
- <sup>9</sup> George Mc Turman Kahin, *Nasionalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, New York: Cornell University Press, pp. 115-116
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.
- <sup>11</sup> Ahmad Subardjo, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
- <sup>12</sup> *De facto* acknowledgement was an acknowledgement given by a country to another country which had met the need for an independent country : leader, People and territory. However, the *de facto* acknowledged country could not establish bilateral diplomatic relationship and trading/economic relation.
- <sup>13</sup> *de jure* acknowledgement was the independence acknowledgement of a country officially based on international law with all consequences. *De jure* sovereignty acknowledgement is very important for Indonesia at the time to initiate diplomatic bilateral relation.
- <sup>14</sup> *Kikaku ka* was a supporting clerk bureau, land transport, radio broadcasting, education agencies, and researches controlled by Japan's administration in Java.
- <sup>15</sup> The capaital meant in the article was the proclamation of Indonesia's Independence by Soekarno-Hatta.
- <sup>16</sup> *Hakko Ichiu* was the universal brotherhood slogan used by Japan to create a Greater East Asia Prosper Commonwealth during World War II, which was literally translated as Japan's control in Greater East Asia Region as the roof of eight points of the world
- <sup>17</sup> Potsdam declaration was a meeting held by leaders of Allied Forces on July 17th in Germany to determine the future of Germany, war against Japan, and solve Europe's problem post World War II. Allied forces leaders gave ultimatum to Imperial Japan to surrender without condition or Japan would be destroyed in war. Japan refused the demand and then the Allied Forces bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. After that, Japan decided to surrender without condition and would obey regulations controlled by Allied Forces according to Postdam agreement.
- <sup>18</sup> Adam Malik, *Riwayat dan Perjuangan Sekitar Proklamasi Kemerdekaan Indonesia 17 Agustus 1945*, Jakarta: Widjaya Jakarta, p. 53-54.
- <sup>19</sup> Slamet Muljana, *Kesadaran Nasional Jilid I*, Yogyakarta: LKiS Yogyakarta, 2008, p. 18-19.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- <sup>21</sup> Ahmad Subardjo, *Lahirnja Republik Indonesia*, Jakarta: PT Kinta, 1972, p. 77.
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- <sup>26</sup> Ahmad Subardjo, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
- <sup>27</sup> *Kisah Istimewa Bung Karno*, Jakarta: Kompas, 2010, p. 91.
- <sup>28</sup> Mohammad Hatta, *Sekitar Proklamasi*, Jakarta: Tinta Mas, 1970, p. 56-58.
- <sup>29</sup> Ahmad Subardjo, *op. cit.*, p. 104-105.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.