

# How Did America Inspire Indonesian Revolution?

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper examines the American Revolution as an inspiration for Indonesia's founding fathers to fight for their nation's independence in 1945. This paper was sparked by the existence of the pamphlet 'It's 1776 in Indonesia' published in 1948 in the United States which presupposes the link between Indonesian Revolution and the American Revolution. The basic assumption of this paper is that Indonesian founding fathers were inspired by the experiences of other nations, including the Americans who abolished the British colonization of 13 colonies in North American continent in the eighteenth century. American inspiration on the struggle for Indonesian independence was examined from the spoken and written words of three Indonesian founding fathers: Achmad Soekarno, Mohamad Hatta, and Soetan Sjahrir. This examination produced two findings. First, the two Indonesian founding fathers were inspired by the United States in different capacities. Compared to Hatta and Sjahrir, Soekarno referred and mentioned the United States more frequent. Second, compared to the inspirations from other nations, American inspiration for the three figures was not so strong. This was because the liberal democratic system and the American-chosen capitalist system were not the best alternative for Soekarno, Hatta, and Sjahrir. Therefore, the massive exposition of the 1776 Revolution in 1948 was more of a tactic on the Indonesian struggle to achieve its national objectives at that time, as it considered the United States as the most decisive international post-World War II political arena.*

**Keywords:** *United States, Indonesia, Revolution, Inspiration, Soekarno, Hatta, Sjahrir.*

*Tulisan ini mengkaji Revolusi Amerika sebagai suatu inspirasi bagi bapak pendiri bangsa Indonesia untuk memperjuangkan kemerdekaan bangsa pada tahun 1945. Tulisan ini dipicu oleh adanya pamflet 'Ini 1776 di Indonesia' yang diterbitkan pada tahun 1948 di Amerika Serikat yang mengandaikan hubungan antara Revolusi Indonesia dan Revolusi Amerika. Asumsi dasar dari tulisan ini adalah bahwa bapak pendiri Indonesia terinspirasi oleh pengalaman negara-negara lain, termasuk Amerika yang menghapuskan kolonisasi Inggris dari 13 koloni di benua Amerika Utara pada abad ke-18. Inspirasi Amerika tentang perjuangan kemerdekaan Indonesia diteliti dari pidato dan tulisan dari tiga bapak pendiri Indonesia: Achmad Soekarno, Mohamad Hatta, dan Soetan Sjahrir. Penelitian ini menghasilkan dua temuan. Pertama, dua pendiri bangsa Indonesia terinspirasi oleh Amerika Serikat dalam kapasitas yang berbeda. Dibandingkan dengan Hatta dan Sjahrir, Soekarno merujuk dan menyebut Amerika Serikat lebih sering. Kedua, dibandingkan dengan inspirasi dari negara lain, inspirasi Amerika untuk ketiga tokoh itu tidak begitu kuat. Ini karena sistem demokrasi liberal dan sistem kapitalis yang dipilih Amerika bukanlah alternatif terbaik untuk Soekarno, Hatta, dan Sjahrir. Oleh karena itu, eksposisi besar-besaran Revolusi 1776 pada tahun 1948 lebih merupakan taktik perjuangan Indonesia untuk mencapai tujuan nasionalnya pada saat itu, karena menganggap Amerika Serikat sebagai arena politik pasca-Perang Dunia II yang paling menentukan.*

**Kata-kata kunci:** *Amerika Serikat, Indonesia, Revolusi, Inspirasi, Soekarno, Hatta, Sjahrir.*

*How did America inspire Indonesian leaders in their struggle for independence? It is assumed that the American Revolution is a model of a colony that rebelled and asserted its rights to self-government and nationhood, and that it has been inspiring many nationalist movements in their struggle for independence. The world-wide inspiration was predicted by Thomas Jefferson when he said in 1795: '[T]his ball of liberty ... is now so well in motion that it will roll round the globe, at least the enlightened part of it, for light & liberty go together.'* (Jefferson 1795)

How the American Revolution inspired the Indonesian Revolution is indicated by Frances Gouda with Thijs Brocades Zaalberg when they used 'It's 1776 in Indonesia' as the title of Chapter Two of their book, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia* (Gouda and Brocades Zaalberg 2010, 44). The chapter title was actually taken from the title of a pamphlet issued by Indonesian diplomats in America in 1948. Beside the pamphlet, the Government of Indonesia issued several series of stamp showing Indonesian and American figures: Achmad Soekarno with George Washington, Mohammad Hatta with Abraham Lincoln, Soetan Sjahrir with Thomas Jefferson, Agus Salim with Benjamin Franklin, and A.A. Maramis with Alexander Hamilton. One of them is exposed on the cover of the book.

The title of chapter of the book and the issue of stamp expose an impression that there was a strong link between the Indonesian Revolution in the 1940s and the American Revolution of the 1770s. Therefore, this paper attempts to explain whether the impression is right or whether the pamphlet and stamps were just tactics used by Indonesian diplomats in 1948 to influence American public opinion to support Indonesia's struggle against the Dutch. The question of this paper is: How did America inspire the Indonesian founding fathers to fight for their national independence?

We answer the question by considering inspiration as transnational transfer of ideas or spirit in the perspective of symbolic-interactionism. Since the transnational transfer of ideas increased by the invention of printing, the notion of liberty expected by Jefferson rolled faster. George Athan Billias describes that there are seven 'echoes' of the American influence from 1776 to 1989: 1776-1811, 1811-1848, 1848-75, 1875-1918, 1918-45, 1945-74, and 1974-89; and that the fourth wave spread with movements for decolonization of Africa, Middle East and Asia (Billias 2009, xiv). The symbolic interactionism assumes that the meaning of an object is found in others' responses to it, not in the object itself. There is always a reader-response dialogue between the reader and the text. On this dialogue Zoltan Schwab refers to Wolfgang Iser's theory that 'we cannot find a fixed meaning in the literary text and so our task is not to *find* the meaning. Neither, however, do we *project* our meaning into the text. Instead, we have to *construct* the meaning with the help of the literary text.' (Schwab 2003, 170).

Based on the assumption of the symbolic interaction, we examine on how the Indonesian founding fathers constructed the inspiration from the Americans and connected them to their own experiences. We assume that they also got inspirations from other nations' figures and experiences, and that they filtered them to suited Indonesia. By doing so, we proposed two hypotheses: (1) that the Indonesian figures were inspired by the American experiences and figures as well as by other nations' ones, and (2) that they constructed and fitted the inspiration from America into the need of their struggle for independence.

To answer the questions, we examine three prominent Indonesian leaders, Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir, in looking at the American Revolution and its basic political values as inspirations to enhance the Indonesian independence struggle. The choice of the three figures is due to their prominent roles as thinkers and practitioners who led Indonesia to achieve its independence. Soekarno (1901-70), Hatta (1902-80) and Sjahrir (1909-1966) are three great front-runners in encouraging Indonesian independence. Also, Soekarno is the first president, Hatta is the first vice-president, and Sjahrir is the first prime minister.

The method used is the examination or review of the writings and speeches of the three figures from the end of the 1920s up to the day of independence proclamation which was on 17 August 1945. Fortunately, the three figures wrote and spoke in abundant, so the materials examined are quite adequate. For the data on Soekarno we mainly rely on four books: Soekarno's *Dibawah Bendera Revolusi*, Volume I (1965), Cindy Adams's *Soekarno -- An Autobiography* (1966), Soekarno, *Indonesia Accuses: Soekarno's Defence Oration in the Political Trial of 1930* ed. Roger K. Paget (1975), and Soekarno's 'Pidato Lahirnya Pancasila 1 Juni 1945' (1945). For the data on Hatta we rely on two books: Hatta's *Untuk Negeriku Menuju Gerbang Kemerdekaan: Sebuah Otobiografi* (2011), and Hatta's *Mohammad Hatta: Politik, Kebangsaan, Ekonomi (1926-1977)* (2015). For the data on Sjahrir we rely on Sjahrir's *Perjuangan Kita* (1948) and *Out of Exile* (1949). To strengthen the analysis, we use data from biographies, news, or other people's writings about the three figures we studied.

To control the research, we divide the research question into two guiding questions. First, in their writings and speeches, how did Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir refer to American figures and histories? Second, how did they see the American economic and political system and construct them in their struggle for independence?

### **America as a Reference and Inspiration**

Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir read a lot since they were still very young. They also exposed their ideas by writing a lot to influence their people. Soekarno admitted that he was inspired by American figures and experiences, and also wrote America as reference in his writings. Hatta did not admit the way Soekarno did, but by referring so often on the American experiences and figures, it is clear that Hatta was also inspired by some American figures and experiences. Sjahrir referred several times to America when describing the characteristics of his society and comparing them to Dutch, German and Italian societies.

The most visible proof that Soekarno and Hatta were inspired by American Revolution is their words in the dawn of 17 August 1945 when they were among many Indonesian leaders in the home of Maeda, to draft and write the Indonesian Declaration of Independence. When the draft was completed, Soekarno asked the audiences whether they agreed to the draft. Soekarno and Hatta admitted to being inspired by the American experience of writing the declaration of independence. On this momentous event Soekarno said: 'I know Presidents of the United States distribute pens with which they sign important bills, but me, with a great moment of history staring at me in the face -- I don't even remember where the pen came from. I think I borrowed it from somebody.' (Sukarno and Adams 1966, 217). On the same event, in 1981 Hatta recalled the

event as follows:

After that he [Soekarno] asked the audience, can you agree? Rumble sounds agreed. Repeated by Soekarno: 'Really you all agree?' Agreed, the word was present all. I think nobody disagreed. After that I said: 'If you all agree, let us all present here sign the document of the Proclamation of Indonesia Merdeka, a historic document. This is important for our children and grandchildren. They should know who was the one who proclaimed Indonesia Merdeka. Take an example to the manuscript of the First United States Proclamation of Independence. All who decided to join in signing their decisions together.' (Hatta 2015, 234)

Sjahrir was not present in that event, because there was an agreement between the three leaders to fight in different ways and places: Sjahrir fought underground, while Sukarno and Hatta fought openly. This is because Sjahrir was considered as one of many leaders who did not want to collaborate with the Japanese. Sjahrir also did not want the independence become a grant from the Japanese authority at that time.

Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir agreed that Sjahrir were Soekarno's friend since high school had developed a fond to read books. Soekarno could read many books because he had access to a library in Surabaya run by Theosophical Society, where his father was a theophany. Therefore, since his teenage years Soekarno already knew the greatness of American figures, such as Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. About reading books in the library Soekarno said:

There I met great men. Their thoughts became my thoughts. Their idealism form the basis of my view, a learning in the idea. ... I mentally talked to Thomas Jefferson, with whom I am friendly and felt close, because he told me about the Declaration of Independence he wrote in 1776. I discussed the issues that arose between him and George Washington. I deliberately searched for errors in the life of Abraham Lincoln, so I could discuss this with him. My boyhood was spent worshipping American's founding fathers. I wanted to emulate her heroes. I loved her people. I still do... I will always feel friendly toward America... A grounding such as mine could not leave me unfriendly to the United States of America. (Sukarno and Adams 1966, 39)

Soekarno called the Declaration of Independence as one of the things that inspired him in terms of political equality. But for his struggle, Soekarno also took other elements. Regarding this statement Soekarno said: 'We take political equality in the Declaration of Independence of America. We take the spiritual equations of Islam and Christianity. We take the scientific equation from Marx.' (Sukarno and Adams 1966, 90). Soekarno also posted a picture of Abraham Lincoln in a room at the presidential palace in Yogya showing that Soekarno appreciated, even admired, Lincoln. Long before the Independence Day, in 1930 Soekarno wrote in his *Indonesia Sues* about the spirit of freedom by citing Patrick Henry's shouting 'Give me freedom, or put me to death at all.' (Paget 1975, 54).

Soekarno appreciated America when he was speaking in the momentous meeting of 1 June 1945 which today is popular as the Birthday of Pancasila. Soekarno on that speech said: 'The American people are able to defend their country. ... whenever a

nation has been able to defend its land ... at that time it has been ripe for freedom.’ (Soekarno 1945).

In 1930, Soekarno basically included the United States as a colonial state, and that among the colonies it would take the struggle and the war of ‘life or death.’ (Paget 1975, 121). Soekarno also admitted that he was inspired by Americans when he wanted to strengthen the pluralism of his people. About this Soekarno wrote:

We must overcome tribal and regional prejudices by forging a belief that a nation is not determined by any color or religion. Look at Switzerland, which includes Germans, Frenchmen and Italians, but they are all the Swiss. Look at the American, consist of people with black skin, white skin, red skin, and yellow skin. Likewise Indonesia, which consists of various kinds of tribes. She’s a rainbow of races. (Sukarno and Adams 1966, 89)

It should also be uncovered here that in time of Japanese occupation, Soekarno preached hatred against America by saying in 1943: ‘Friends, our greatest enemies ... are America and England. ... Therefore, our slogan recently is “We iron America, we break open England with a crowbar”.’ (Kurasawa 2001, 100). This slogan was then used by the Dutch to impress Americans that Soekarno was the enemy of America. Soekarno himself admitted that he had to say that the circumstances at that time compelled him to do so, and that it was just a tactic of his struggle for independence. Recalling the orders, Soekarno said:

My orders were to ‘Attack the Allies, laud the Axis, drum up hatred for our enemies the British, the Americans, and the Dutch and enlist support for Dai Nippon’; however, despite my speeches microscopically examined by the Department of Propaganda, a careful study will reveal 75 percent of them were pure nationalism. (Sukarno and Adams 1966, 178).

Like Soekarno, Hatta also originally saw the United States as a role-model champion against colonialism. Hatta regarded the British colonial defeat by the American colony as an important milestone for decolonization. Quoting Rene Grousset, Hatta states that the victory of Turkey was the recognition of the greatest Western colonial decline, that Britain suffered so much from its greatest defeat since the defeat of the American colonies and that Turkey’s victory was “the loss of the East” for Britain (Hatta 1981, 71).

When trying to explain the nation-state, in 1928 Hatta chose to use two examples, one of which was the United States. Hatta wrote in 1928: ‘May I take too much space from this sheet, when I call all those examples, then I limit myself to two states, the United States and Germany.’ (Hatta 1981, 79). This of course shows the importance of the United States to Hatta. In his explanation, Hatta at the time explained the naming of the United States as common, ‘not only because the Americans call it that, but also because the countries on the continent each has distinctive name.’ (Hatta 1981, 79-80).

Hatta appreciated Woodrow Wilson’s political stance that encouraged decolonisation with the principle of ‘the right of each nation to determine its own destiny.’ Hatta in 1939 wrote that Wilson’s spirit was ‘spreading everywhere, into the colonies.’ Hatta appreciated Wilson’s political attitude because he believed that self-determination was the basis for achieving eternal peace. (Hatta 1981, 184). Hatta also described the meeting of *Indonesische Vereeniging* in 1923 which chose *non-cooperation* as its stragey was inspired by Wilson’s principle of ‘right of self-determination.’ (Hatta 2011,

194). Hatta also admitted that he was inspired by the economic ideal of 'freedom from wants' as one of four points delivered by Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR). Agreeing with FDR, Hatta in 1946 recalled that it was necessary that the world economy be governed by the ideals of 'common prosperity' for all nations in the world (Hatta 1981, 350).

As an economist, when explaining how capitalism and industrialization work, Hatta took the example of the Ford factory in America. According to Hatta, Ford previously made one car in a month; after that, with new technology and a tidy division of labor, Ford only takes five minutes to build one car (Hatta 1981, 98).

Sjahrir referred to a more mature American tendency than the people of Holland, Germany and Italy. Sjahrir acknowledged early on that Indonesian intellectuals were actually closer to Europe and America than to their own societies, as the following quotation indicates: 'We intellectuals here are much closer to Europe or America than are to the Boroboedoe or Mahabharata or to the primitive Islamic culture of Java and Sumatra. Which is our basis: the West or the rudiments of feudal culture that are still to be found in our Eastern society?' (Sjahrir 1969, 67)

Sjahrir also appreciated American society when he commented on the development of American magazines and films and compared them with magazines and films in the Netherlands, as shown in the following quote:

To my surprise, I have recently noticed that the short stories in American magazines have undergone a real change, and that they now are a class above those found in Dutch publications. This alteration seems to have occurred during the last few years of the Roosevelt administration, and from the improved caliber of American films, it also appears that under Roosevelt the Americans have acquired more and more spirit, refinement, and taste. Moreover, the common, banal films at present no longer come from America, but from Germany and Holland and the rest of Europe; and it is, in fact, the American films that have the higher spiritual stature now. An American culture is thus apparently developing, for the spirit behind these films is definitely not European. I find the new, developing American culture better, because it contains a sort of dry objectivity that is nevertheless permeated with spirit and humor. (Sjahrir 1969, 151)

Sjahrir still praised the Americans and laughed at the arrogant Dutch people. Sjahrir described how American and Dutch soldiers treat his family as well as Hatta's family. American soldiers are more human, respect independence, and can argue rationally, while Dutch soldiers consider Indonesians to be inferior and stiff. Sjahrir's story ends with his opinion as follows:

I had the feeling that these simple, young, and still very inexperienced Dutch boys maintained such stern visages because they didn't quite know what else to do; and perhaps also they were a little ashamed over what had happened with the baggage and the Americans. I think the incident also showed how sternness and apparent strength do not always contribute to awe and authority. (Sjahrir 1969, 229)

### **America: Democratic and Capitalist**

For political system, Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir were attracted to democracy much more than other political systems, such as fascism and authoritarianism. However, they did not see liberal democracy as the best and suitable system for the Indonesian people. They did prefer social-democracy over liberal democracy. For economic system, they preferred socialism to capitalism and communism. Since America was a capitalist country, they did not intend to follow the path taken by the US in building their country. They knew well that colonialism is the fruit of imperialism, and imperialism is the fruit of capitalism. They also did not intend to follow the path taken by the Soviet Union that developed communism, since they were religious figures.

Soekarno saw the political system of parliamentary democracy in European countries and liberal democracy in the United States unsuitable for the Indonesian nation. According to Soekarno, precisely with the democratic system, it is rampant capitalism. Soekarno writes: 'In America there is a representative body of the people, and is it not in America the capitalists rampant? Is it not true that in all the Western continent the capitalists are rampant? There is political democracy, but it is not social justice.' (Soekarno 1945)

In *Mencapai Indonesia Merdeka* (Achieving Indonesian Freedom), Soekarno in 1933 criticised America as being politically democratic but basically ruled by new feudalism, by saying:

Yes, the political democracy is just the smells, the bourgeoisie with its treasures, with its newspapers, with its books, with its schools, with its theaters, with all its means of power can influence voters, shaping the course of politics. It is quite true of Cailaux's words that now Europe and America are under the rule of new feudalism. (Soekarno 1993)

Soekarno basically included the United States as a colonial state, and that among the colonies it took the struggle and the war of 'life or death.' (Paget 1975, 121. But, Soekarno criticised America by mentioning that even though it has more than enough resources in its country, America left her isolationist politics to run the politics of imperialism in the East. According to Soekarno, since the open door policies, Dutch imperialism in Indonesia was seized by American imperialism, British imperialism and Japanese imperialism (Paget 1975, 131).

In 1930 Soekarno mentioned that lust for fortune became the very soul of the company in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and underlay the 'race for colonies' in the nineteenth century, or after the growth of modern capitalism in Europe and America. (Paget 1975, 13-14). According to Soekarno, France, Portugal, England, Spain, Germany and America were *belorong-belorong* (dragons) vying for the colony (Paget 1975, 314). Soekarno writes:

France stepped into North Africa, Indo-China, and Martinique...; America seized Cuba, Puerto Rico...; Imperialistic Germany reached out for the Marshall Islands...; Italy sought an area for emigration in Assab near the strait of Bab-El-Mandeb, legalized her authority in North Africa, took Kassala, attempted subjugation of Abyssinia, and gnawed at Tripoli and elsewhere. (Paget 1975, 16)

Hatta was impressed by the political courages of some American figures. He was in favor of Roosevelt's ideal of freedom from wants. In 1930s Hatta wrote: 'If it is true that the new world after this new war will carry out the economic ideal Roosevelt calls "freedom from wants" is free from poverty, it is necessary that the world economy be governed by the ideals of "common prosperity" for all nation in the world.' (Hatta 1981, 350).

As mentioned by Ignas Kleden, Hatta studied his economy oriented more towards Gustav Schmoller, Werner Sombart, and Karl Marx than Adam Smith (Kleden 2002). Like Soekarno, Hatta greatly appreciated Karl Marx's thinking. On this, Hatta wrote: 'Whoever read historisch-materialism composed by Karl Marx, he can not deny that it has the most rational basis.' (Hatta 1981, 155). Kleden also notes that economics in Hatta's view 'is not an ahistorical science such as mathematics, but a social science that lives according to the times, so the textbook uses the title "sociological economy," that in the history of philosophy and philosophy of science, Hatta's 'main orientation is on the notion of neurtianism,' and that in sociology, Hatta 'wore Max Weber, who at that time asserted the essential difference between social science as empirical and socio-political as the practice of expressing societal ideals to be achieved.' (Kleden 2002).

Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir appreciated –and were inspired by–Marx, but they are not communist. There are five points to ponder that Soekarno is not a communist. First, he did never become a member of Indonesian Communist Party. Second, he and Hatta did crushed the communist rebellion against the Soekarno-Hatta government in Madiun Affairs in September 1948. Third, as reported by the *Jakarta Post*, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on 7 November 2012 acclaimed president Soekarno as a national hero, and urged the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) to apologise to Soekarno over communism accusation (The Jakarta Post 2015). Fourth, Soekarno once said: 'I am a socialist rather than a communist. I am a leftist who wants a change of capitalist and imperialist power that exists now. The will to spread social justice is left. But it does not need to be communist. Even a leftist can quarrel with the communist.' (Wardhana 2017). Fifth, since the 1930s Soekarno became obsessed with unity and thus developed the concept of 'nasakom' (nationalism, religion and communism) as the most important condition for the success of the nation's struggle. Because of this obsession, Sukarno was always considered close to the communists.

Dakhidae exposes a finding that in his exile on the Island of Ende (1934-38), Soekarno was inspired by the *Quadragesimo Anno*, an encyclical issued in 1931 by the Catholic Pope. Explaining his proposal of social justice, Soekarno used the term *sociale rechtvaardigheid*, which was often used in the encyclical (Dhakidae 2013, 135-6). In his speech of 1 June 1945, Soekarno said: 'Therefore, if we really know, consider, and love Indonesian people, let us accept the concept of *rechtvaardigheid*, which is not just political equality, ... but also in economy we have to pursue equality, the best social welfare.' (Soemohadiwidjojo 2016, 102).

Hatta was once closed to Semaun, one of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) leaders, but disagreed with the Communist principles and methods of struggle. On Hatta's relations with Semaun, Deliar Noer writes: 'Hatta's relations with the communist turn sour and never improved after that. His standpoint on the struggle, even his leadership of the PI, was often severely criticised by PI members who had come under PKI influence.' (Noer 2012, 23-24).



Hatta is also the father of social-economic justice from the beginning. His preference of social-economic justice made him in 1925, accompanied by Samsi Sastrawidagda, visited Denmark and other Scandinavian countries to learn about the development of cooperation in the those countries in which the majority of its population registered as members of cooperatives (Noer 2012, 33-34). His political struggle for social justice and welfare makes Hatta known as the father of cooperation and the founder of Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution, which states: (1) The economy shall be organized as a common endeavour based upon the principles of the family system, (2) Sectors of production which are important for the country and affect the life of the people shall be under the powers of the State, (3) The land, the waters and the natural resources within shall be under the powers of the State and shall be used to the greatest benefit of the people, and (4) The organisation of the national economy shall be conducted on the basis of economic democracy upholding the principles of togetherness, efficiency with justice, continuity, environmental perspective, self-sufficiency, and keeping a balance in the progress and unity of the national economy.

Hatta since his teenage years had shown his critical views on colonialism. When he was 18 years of age Hatta wrote a short story entitled 'My Name Hindiana' published in *Jong Sumatra Magazine*, No. 5, 1920. The short story is about a wealthy widow, married by Wolanda, a Dutchman, who loves wealth more than wives and does not love his wife's children. 'Hindiana' is not a petty romance, but it speaks of history. Hindiana is the personification of Indonesia. Wolanda is the personification of the Netherlands. In the story Hatta quotes Heinrich Heine, Leo Tolstoy, Karl Marx, Bakunin, and Dostojevsky (Kleden 2002, 9). The short story shows how since his teenage years Hatta had read many books in foreign languages, and how he from very beginning saw colonialism as the root of the problem of his nation.

Sjahrir was different from Soekarno and Hatta. According to Charles Wolf, Jr., Sjahrir was the most socialist and 'the most moderate and undoctinaire revolutionist' (Sjahrir 1969, ix). Since the 1920s, it has been active in socialist activities. He has been a socialist since he studied in the Netherlands. He seriously struggles with the theories of socialism. He searched for radical friends, wandering far to the left, to anarchists. He also worked for the Secretariat of the International Transport Workers Federation. He founded the Indonesian Socialist Party in 1948.

Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir were sure that America is a capitalist and therefore imperialist country. They positioned America as one of many capitalist countries which threatening their nation. Hatta writes that 'the grip of world imperialism extends beyond Asia and Africa,' that 'Central and South American countries are now threatened by them too, especially from the United States,' and that 'a modern Yankees is very ingenious in exploiting the Monroe Doctrine for the sake of their own economic expansion.' (Hatta 1981, 66).

About the international dynamics of the 1930s, in 1939 Hatta wrote that at that time the world war was between two great ideologies, between between Western democracy and Nazi fascism; and that Indonesia's position was 'next to democracy! ... which is about the size of our ideals.' (Hatta 1981, 75). This statement seems to show Hatta's thinking that the imperfect Western democracy is still better than fascism and totalitarianism, and that therefore Indonesia should be basically and strategically leaning to --and not contradict to-- the Western democracy. Hatta also admitted that democracy was chosen but the founding fathers in 1945 faced two alternatives: presidential cabinet in the US

and parliamentary cabinet in Western Europe (Hatta 1981, 410).

From 1930, Soekarno wrote that imperialism in Indonesia was international. Soekarno wrote: 'Not only Dutch capital but since the "political opendeur" is also the British capital, as well as American capital, as well as Japanese capital, as well as other capital, so that imperialism in Indonesia is international because of it.' (Paget 1975, 410). Soekarno again wrote: 'Since the open door politics, Dutch imperialism in Indonesia was seized by American imperialism, British imperialism and Japanese imperialism.' (Paget 1975, 131).

Sjahrir was aware that the international dynamics of the 1930s and 1940s would end with the victory of America over Japan. He was always listening to radio broadcasts from abroad, illustrating the course of World War I and II, then made predictive analyzes of the end result of world war. He insisted that the main enemy of the struggle is fascism and totalitarianism, not democracy, so it must not oppose Western democracy. He stated that in terms of competition the political system, '[t]he existence of the Netherlands Indies and the existence of the Netherlands itself are both now threatened,' 'at least Holland has England as its natural ally,' and 'Without allies we in Indonesia cannot maintain our existence.' (Sjahrir 1969, 212).

### **Conclusions**

The evidences shown in this paper seems to support our two hypotheses. Therefore, we may expose five conclusions. First, both Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir were inspired by American figures and struggles. They mentioned several names of American figure in their writings and speeches. They considered America as a nation-state that successfully fought its independence against British colonialism. They exposed Americans who had political courages, such as Jefferson, Washington, Lincoln, Wilson and Roosevelt. However, they also mentioned many more names from other nations. It is reasonable, since America was not yet a super-power at that time, and Indonesia was colonised by the Dutch, the exposure of news from America was not as much as those from the Netherlands and other European nations.

Second, though Soekarno and Hatta were impressed by the political courages of American figures, they did not idealise American political and economic system. Instead, relying on Marxist analysis in the struggle for independence, they criticised American economic system. They realized that as a capitalist, the America also became imperialist, which became a threat to the Indonesian nation. As a result, Soekarno and Hatta were more inspired by experts and fighters from Western Europe and Asia. Sjahrir was impressed by the political courages of American figures, but did not show his criticism on American political and economic system the same way Soekarno and Hatta did.

Third, Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir did indeed prefer democracy to communism, fascism, naziism, and totalitarianism. But they did criticise liberal democracy as unsuitable to Indonesia. They prefer social democracy, not liberal democracy. Social democracy is a political democracy, economic democracy and social democracy.

Fourth, Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir considered America as one of some capitalist

countries which became colonialist and imperialist country. However, it seems that by saying that Indonesia was 'next to democracy,' Hatta considered Indonesia as being closer to America and other democratic European countries rather than to the Soviet Union and other totalitarian countries, so that he did not want to be conflictual with the United States. Sjahrir was the most expressive in encouraging his nation to shy away from being a fascist such as Germany, Italy, Russia and Japan.

Fifth, the four conclusions above show that the pamphlet 'It's 1776 in Indonesia' does not illustrate the strength of inspiration of the America Revolution on Indonesian founding fathers to achieve their nation's independence. Instead, the pamphlet was just a tactic to attract leaders and mass-critical attention in America in 1948, hoping them to help the Indonesian struggle for independence.

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