

Tamao Zhou, *Migration in the Time of Revolution: China, Indonesia and Cold War*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2019, 301 p. index, plates.
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Histoire contemporaine et Société

Tamao Zhou, *Migration in the Time of Revolution: China, Indonesia and Cold War*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2019, 301 p. index, plates. ISBN: 97898114843331.

In this book, Tamao Zhou investigates the ethnic Chinese dimension in the making of the governmental relations between China and Indonesia, from the surrender of the Japanese in 1945 up to 1967 – year which marks the breakdown of diplomatic relations between the PRC and Indonesia – with numerous flashbacks into the first half of the 20th century.

In the introduction, the author explains that she relied on the Chinese Foreign Ministry Archives (declassified in 2008, but reclassified in 2013), as well as on those of the Chinese Communist Party, the Guomindang, and the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia (partly destroyed during the chaotic transition of power after the regime change in 1965). In order to complement these sources, she also consulted the materials kept in various libraries, especially in the PRC and Hong Kong, as well as the family archives of the journalist and writer Wang Renshu 王任叔 (pen name Baren 巴人, 1901-1972, who had spent five years in Sumatra in the late 1940s, before becoming first ambassador of the PRC to Indonesia in 1951). She also grounded her research on numerous oral history interviews with refugees, retired diplomats, members of the Chinese community in Indonesia, and Chinese from Indonesia who migrated to the PRC where they were relocated in Overseas Chinese farms.

The book follows a chronological approach and is divided into ten chapters. The first and the second compare Chinese nationalists and communists as regards their attitudes and strategies towards the Chinese in Indonesia. Chapter 2 focuses on Baren, his vision of Indonesia while in Sumatra (as reflected in his *Yindunixiya zhi ge* 印度尼西亚之歌 “Song of Indonesia” completed in 1952), and his political mobilization of the local Chinese during the Indonesian national revolution (along with other leftist intellectuals such as Hu Zhihe 胡愈之, his wife, Wang Jiyuan 王纪元, and Yu Dafu 郁达夫, whose actions are not detailed here).

Chapters three and four proceed to the 1950s and 1960s. Chapter three details the evolution of the PRC starting from 1952, in order to dissipate the Indonesian government’s suspicion of the local Chinese, and the actions taken by Taipei to encourage the latter to support the Republic of China. Chapter four focuses on the rivalries between Beijing and Taipei among the Chinese of Indonesia. Worthy of note, the clashes within the Chinese community of Jakarta during the short period just after the independence of Indonesia (1949) are well described in the collection of short stories by the journalist Zhang

Youjun 张又君 (born in Medan in 1915, pen name Hei Ying 黑婴) entitled *Hongbaiqi xia* 红白旗下 “Under the Indonesia Flag” (1950), that the author does not seem to know.

Chapters 5 and 6 show how the political struggles between these two factions and their impact on the Chinese minority shaped the policy of the Indonesian government. Chapter 5 presents altogether the various perceptions of the problem by Indonesian authorities and the measures they took to control the local Chinese. Chapter 6 details the various large-scale economic actions taken in the 1950-1960, starting with the interdiction for alien Chinese to reside in rural areas, and the moderate attitude of Beijing towards Jakarta, the PRC being unwilling to sacrifice stable bilateral relations. As a result, more than 100,000 Chinese were forced to leave Indonesia, compelling the PRC to start to call back these displaced ethnic Chinese and to relocate them in Overseas Chinese Farms.

Chapters 7 to 9 show the efforts of China and Indonesia to rebel against the bipolar international order in the early 1960s. The Gerakan 30 September or Movement the 30th September 1965 announced the end of diplomatic relations between the two countries, and the violence against ethnic Chinese in 1965 and 1967 during the power transition, the new waves of migrations.

The two last chapters deal with the new competition between Beijing and Taipei after the rise of Suharto, the attitude of the two Chinese regimes towards new violence against ethnic Chinese, and finally the situation of the repatriated Overseas Chinese in the PRC and their grievances.

Admittedly the book is not an easy read. The abundance of events, the continual move from political history at the national and international levels to the daily social and political level make the narrative difficult to follow. The adding of Chinese characters to the text and the bibliography, as well as various appendices might have helped the reader. For instance, a political chronology for the period under consideration, short biographical notes for Chinese activists in Indonesia, either new migrants like Wang Jiyuan 王纪元 (1910-2001), who from 1947 until he was expelled in 1951, was the editor in chief of the *Shenghuo bao* 生活报 in Jakarta, or local born journalists like Heiyong (or Zhang Youjun mentioned above) who also worked for this newspaper, and Ang Jan Goan (or Yong Yuanyuan 洪渊源, born in Bandung in 1894) who was editor in chief of the leftist *Sin Po* 新报, until it ceased publication in 1959.

It remains that this research offers a rather comprehensive overview of the importance of the ethnic Chinese factor in the political relations between Beijing, Taipei, and Jakarta. In the event that this book is reissued, it would be desirable to correct the legend of Figure 2.1 (p. 39), and to add in the bibliography the reference of Glen Peterson's work which is quoted in the text.

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