

## Migration in the Time of Revolution: China, Indonesia, and the Cold War

By Taomo Zhou. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2019. xii, 318 pp. ISBN: 9781501739934.

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The title of this book does not adequately represent its contents. It is difficult to imagine devising any title of a manageable length that could indicate the full range of topics that it covers. The migration of ethnic Chinese Indonesians to the People's Republic of China is just one story among many fascinating and complicated stories that the reader encounters. *Migration in the Time of Revolution* addresses the competition between Beijing and Taipei for support from the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, the various forms of political activism of the ethnic Chinese, and the changing policies of the Indonesian government in dealing simultaneously with two foreign governments—the Republic of China (ROC) and the People's Republic of China (PRC)—and the ethnic Chinese population living within its borders.

With this complex mix of protagonists, the book is simultaneously a study of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia and a study of international relations. It is an original contribution to both fields, addressing the internal politics of Indonesia and the foreign policies of the PRC, ROC, and Indonesia within the global context of the Cold War. Taomo Zhou has consulted records in Chinese and Indonesian and archives in Taipei, Beijing, Jakarta, and many other cities besides. The archival research is complemented by more than twenty oral interviews in places like Fuzhou and Surabaya. The primary source material that informs this book is exceptionally rich.

The book begins by discussing the ROC's engagement with the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia in the 1940s. The ROC built upon the connections forged between Chinese nationalists and the overseas Chinese from the early decades of the twentieth century. An important issue not usually described in the existing literature is the ROC's hostility to the Indonesian independence movement in the latter half of the 1940s. Zhou's account provides new details to explain how the ROC, as a member of the United Nations Security Council, prioritized Western support for its war against the communists. It encouraged the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia to either remain neutral or oppose the armed struggle of Indonesian nationalists against the Dutch.

The Chinese Communist Party also attempted to influence the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia at the same time. The second chapter highlights the dramatic life history of the prolific author Ba Ren. Originally from Zhejiang, he migrated to Sumatra to become an underground activist during the Japanese occupation. After the war, he became the PRC's first ambassador to Indonesia, but the passions that made him a talented poet and activist were ill-suited to diplomacy. He was recalled to Beijing after two years in Jakarta.

Both the ROC and the PRC tended to view the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia as citizens of China, and thus under their protection. It was a confusing transition from the 1940s to the 1960s for all concerned to move away from that paradigm. With the independence of Indonesia, the ethnic Chinese had to choose between being citizens of Indonesia, or of the PRC or ROC. Zhou provides a clear description of that "conundrum of citizenship" (p. 74). Indonesia's first policy, adopted in 1949, was superseded by the Sino-Indonesia Dual Nationality Treaty, signed in 1955, but not ratified until 1960. The ethnic Chinese had to make their decisions on citizenship at a time of great uncertainty, when policies were changing, and the consequences of their decisions could not be foreseen.

Indonesia's policy of removing ethnic Chinese from the rural areas starting in November 1959 prompted many to leave the country altogether, especially when the PRC announced a month later that it would arrange to settle them in China. By September 1960, about 283,000 ethnic Chinese had registered with the PRC for a one-way ticket out—many more than the PRC could process.

The PRC did not have a ship to transport them until 1961, by which time Sukarno was promising to end the discriminatory policies. Ultimately, about 100,000 migrated to the PRC from 1959 to 1965.

Zhou's chapter on the fate of those migrants is especially revealing. She interviewed some of them on the farms in Fujian and Guangdong where they were settled. On the PRC's ship heading to China in the early 1960s, they sang a song every morning titled "Orphans Overseas Now Have Their Mother." They were enthusiastic about the prospects of moving to the "motherland." But they were disappointed upon arriving to discover that their mother was poverty-stricken. Many had been small business owners who had difficulty adjusting to a collectivist economy.

The book moves from the stories of the long-suffering migrants to the high politics of foreign relations. President Sukarno's warm relations with China in the early 1960s are discussed in chapter 7. The role of China in the events of 1965 is discussed in chapter 8. Both chapters draw upon newly declassified documents in the Beijing archives to clarify a number of controversial topics, such as China's military aid to Indonesia, its alleged involvement in the September Thirtieth Movement, and its support for the Indonesian Communist Party. These chapters are extraordinarily valuable for providing reliable information about issues that have been the grist for propaganda mills for decades.

This is a protean and pathbreaking book that will serve as an essential source for new research on the history of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia and international relations in Asia. Zhou neatly weaves the personal stories of individual figures into analyses of general social patterns. One direction new research could go is toward a deeper exploration of the life histories of the migrants. The vignettes that appear in this book made this reader wishing to know more about the experiences of migrants like Huang Huilan, who fled the anti-Chinese violence in Medan in 1967 when she was seventeen years old, and arrived in Guangzhou amid the terror of the Cultural Revolution.

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## TRANSNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE

### Virulent Zones: Animal Disease and Global Health at China's Pandemic Epicenter

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*Virulent Zones* is an impressively timely book in two senses. Its relevance to our present condition would be obvious even without the epilogue, which explicitly places the book's analysis of influenza research in the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the context of COVID-19. It also comes at the crest of a wave of recent anthropological scholarship on human-animal relations and epidemic prevention in China.<sup>1</sup> In the book, Lyle Fearnley argues that the search for the origins of influenza pandemics in China changed scientists' understanding of the disease itself, leading them toward an ecological view of influenza. He draws on World Health Organization archives, interviews, and scientific literature in

<sup>1</sup>Frédéric Keck, *Avian Reservoirs: Virus Hunters and Birdwatchers in Chinese Sentinel Posts* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2020); Liz P. Y. Chee, *Mao's Bestiary: Medicinal Animals and Modern China* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2021); Katherine Mason, *Infectious Change: Reinventing Chinese Public Health after an Epidemic* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2016); Christos Lynteris, *Human Extinction and the Pandemic Imaginary* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019).