




RESEARCH ARTICLE

Ethnic politics, the Cold War and sub-national dynamics: the Indonesian Communist Party, the ethnic Chinese minority and anti-Chinese activities in West Java, 1949–67

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Abstract

A growing body of scholarship has examined the intertwining of ideological polarization and inter-ethnic tensions during the Cold War. In this context, increasing attention has been paid to the experiences of the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia, and how they were affected by international and national-level developments. Less scrutiny has been given to the role of sub-national forces, despite the fact that patterns of ethnic conflict sometimes varied markedly between different parts of a single country. This article addresses this lacuna via the case study of West Java, Indonesia. The article analyses the relationship between the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, PKI), Indonesia's ethnic Chinese population and anti-Chinese agitation in the 1950s and 1960s. International and national forces encouraged closer relations between the PKI and some ethnic Chinese Indonesians through the 1950s. From the late 1950s to the mid-1960s there were also recurrent episodes of anti-Chinese harassment, driven primarily by anti-communist groups. The strength of the anti-communist coalition within West Java helped make the province the epicentre of anti-Chinese agitation during crises in 1959–60 and 1963. Yet shifts in the configuration of military and political forces in the region meant anti-Chinese actions in West Java during the contentious period 1965–67 were less severe than in some other provinces. Overall the article highlights the need to consider the interaction of not only international and national processes but also sub-national regional dynamics when analysing the relationship between Cold War polarization and inter-ethnic conflict.

Keywords: Indonesia; Communism; Cold War; Ethnicity; Ethnic Chinese

Introduction

This article examines the relationship between Indonesian communism, Indonesia's ethnic Chinese minority, international relations and episodes of anti-Chinese agitation in the province of West Java. It focuses on a period of growing international polarization in the 1950s and 1960s. The article highlights the potential of a perspective

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integrating international, national, and sub-national forces to enrich our understanding of the intersection of inter-ethnic divisions and Cold War tensions. In doing so, it intervenes with regard to several strands of historiography: social histories of the Cold War, scholarship on the ethnic Chinese in Cold War Southeast Asia, and regionally framed histories of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia.

An increasing number of studies have scrutinized the way that ideological and diplomatic fault lines during the Cold War intersected with various social identities, including ethnicity.¹ This ‘social turn’ in the study of the Cold War has also increased interest in the way that global and local forces interacted. For example, Masuda Hajimu has stressed the importance of ‘synthesizing social and diplomatic history and local and global history’.² However, despite the call to integrate local dimensions into accounts of the Cold War, histories addressing the Cold War whilst foregrounding sub-national regional dimension have remained quite rare. For example, in an important edited collection aiming to ‘de-centre’ the Cold War via an examination of ‘local and global change’, only one of the ten contributions explicitly takes such a regional approach.³

Dovetailing with the literature on social dimensions of the Cold War is a growing body of research on the intersection of Cold War dynamics and the history of the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia.⁴ In this context, Jeremy Taylor has gone as far as to argue that ‘questions of “Chineseness” [were] central to the Cold War in Southeast Asia’, whilst ‘the Cold War was foundational to competing notions in this region of “Chineseness”’.⁵ One particularly important study in the Indonesian context is Zhou

¹For some examples with a focus on ethnic, racial, and national identities see R. Knight, *Ethnicity, nationalism and the European Cold War* (London: Continuum, 2012); P. E. Muehlenbeck (ed.), *Race, ethnicity and the Cold War: a global perspective* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012); O. Drachewych and I. McKay (eds), *Left transnationalism: the Communist International and the national, colonial, and racial questions* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2020).

²Masuda Hajimu, *Cold War crucible: the Korean conflict and the postwar world* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), p. 2.

³The volume in question is J. E. Pieper Mooney and F. Manza, *De-centering Cold War history: local and global change* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).

⁴For some examples see Kung Chien-Wen, ‘In the name of anticommunism: Chinese practices of ideological accommodation in the early Cold War Philippines’, *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 53, no. 5, 2019 (pp. 1543–1573); Zhou Taomo, *Migration in the time of revolution: China, Indonesia, and the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020); Han Enze, ‘Bifurcated homeland and diaspora politics in China and Taiwan towards the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 45, no. 4, 2017 (pp. 577–594); J. E. Taylor and Xu Lanjun (eds), *Chineseness and the Cold War: contested cultures and diaspora in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021); M. Oyen, ‘Communism, containment and the Chinese overseas’, in *The Cold War in Asia: the battle for hearts and minds*, (eds) Zheng Yangwen et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Wasana Wonsuruwat, ‘From Yaowaraj to Plabplachai: the Thai state and ethnic Chinese in Thailand during the Cold War’, in *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia: ideology, identity and culture*, (eds) Tuong Vu et al. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Ngoei Wen-Qing, ‘The United States and the “Chinese problem” of Southeast Asia’, *Diplomatic History*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2021 (pp. 240–252); Show Ying Xin, ‘Mapping the South Seas: the communist fiction of Ng Kim Chew’, *Sun Yat-sen Journal of Humanities*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2016 (pp. 97–116); Hara Fujio, *Malayan Chinese and China: conversion in identity consciousness 1945–1957* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004).

⁵J. E. Taylor, ‘Introduction: putting “Chineseness” back into Cold War cultures’, in *Chineseness and the Cold War*, (eds) Taylor and Xu, p. 2.

Taomo's *Migration in the time of revolution*, which examines the interaction of 'diasporic politics, ethnic conflicts, and international relations' in relation to China's and Indonesia's experiences in the Cold War.⁶ Zhou's approach contributes to historiographies addressing Sino-Indonesian diplomatic relations,⁷ Indonesian perceptions of the People's Republic of China (PRC),⁸ and the politics of Indonesia's ethnic Chinese minority.⁹ The book emphasizes the importance of incorporating both 'top-down and bottom-up perspectives'.¹⁰ Yet regional dynamics play a only a minor role in Zhou's study, with the 'bottom-up' aspect of the analysis primarily represented by 'human stories'.¹¹ Indeed, sub-national regional patterns have been marginal in the literature addressing the interaction of Cold War conflict and the struggles of the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia.¹²

If sub-national analysis has been peripheral to the literature described above, it has been central to a further group of studies: works examining the experiences of Indonesia's ethnic Chinese within particular Indonesian regions. However, it has been rare for such scholarship to directly address a broader Cold War context; these accounts have generally been oriented toward other questions and analytical themes. Early anthropological research on Indonesia's ethnic Chinese in particular regions tended to focus on underlying drivers of socio-cultural change.¹³ Later studies have often taken a broad historical perspective addressing themes including identity, belonging, and social change over the long term.¹⁴ The most pertinent works

⁶Zhou, *Migration in the time of revolution*, pp. 218. An earlier study with a somewhat complementary approach is L. Suryadinata, *Pribumi Indonesians, the Chinese minority and China: a study in perceptions and policies* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1986, 2nd edn).

⁷Rizal Sukma, *Indonesia and China: the politics of a troubled relationship* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1999); D. P. Mazingo, *Chinese policy toward Indonesia, 1949-1967* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976); Xie Kankan, 'Beyond ideology: China-Indonesia engagement and the making of Guided Democracy', *Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2016 (pp. 25-38).

⁸Liu Hong, *China and the shaping of Indonesia, 1949-1965* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012). Liu also discusses the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, but the primary focus of the book is on perceptions of the PRC within Indonesia, as reflected in the title of the dissertation on which the book is based: 'The China metaphor: Indonesian intellectuals and the PRC, 1949-1965' (Ohio University PhD dissertation, 1995).

⁹M. F. Somers, *Peranakan Chinese politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1964); C.A. Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in crisis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

¹⁰Zhou, *Migration in the time of revolution*, p. 13.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹²Zhou's most recent work has begun to incorporate a sub-national regional dimension, but within the context of the Chinese mainland rather than Southeast Asia: Zhou Taomo, '510 Not Found: the reterritorialization of Sino-Southeast Asian relations in the Chinese hinterland', *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, vol. 43, no. 3, 2022 (pp. 325-346). For a rare attempt to integrate transnational and sub-national regional patterns in a Southeast Asian context (though primarily through the lens of 'revolutionary cosmopolitanism' rather than Cold War polarization), see Seng Guo-Quan, 'Revolutionary cosmopolitanism and its limits: the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese in Singapore, Medan and Jakarta compared (1945-1949)', *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2020 (pp. 1-30).

¹³For example Mely G. Tan, *The Chinese of Sukabumi: a study of social and cultural accommodation* (Ithaca, NY: Modern Indonesia Project, 1963); D. E. Wilmott, *The Chinese of Semarang: a changing minority community in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1960).

¹⁴Yerry Wirawan, *Sejarah masyarakat Tionghoa Makassar: dari abad ke-17 hingga ke-20* (Jakarta: KPG-EFEO-KITLV, 2013); M. F. Somers Heidhues, *Goldiggers, farmers, and traders in the 'Chinese districts' of West Kalimantan, Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018); M. F. Somers Heidhues, *Bangka tin and Mentok pepper: Chinese settlement on an Indonesian island* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1992); Hui Yew-Foong, *Strangers*

in relation to the present article are those studies that have looked at anti-Chinese violence in specific regions during the anti-communist purges of 1965–68.¹⁵ However, even these contributions, focused on the mid-1960s, have generally not been framed as addressing the historiography of the Cold War, instead tending to engage primarily with debates regarding political violence and genocide.

Against this background, the present article advocates stronger engagement between ‘regional histories’ and analysis of the social and ethnic dimensions of Cold War conflict. Such an approach can enhance our understanding of the interaction of global and local, top-down and bottom-up dynamics. It accords with Sai’s suggestion that scholars must account for the ‘fine interplay of geographical scales’ when analysing the position of the ethnic Chinese population in Indonesia.¹⁶ At the same time it can help address Paul Thomas Chamberlin’s call for greater attention to the ‘precise shape’ of global Cold War conflict both geographically and temporally.¹⁷ Whilst Chamberlin has highlighted macro-level trends in the ebb and flow of Cold War contention, a sub-national dimension can feed into what some political scientists refer to as a ‘micro-dynamic’ perspective on conflict, which explores links ‘between macro and micro’ via the ‘disaggregation of actors, time and space’.¹⁸

This article examines a tumultuous period in Sino-Indonesian relations, for Indonesian communism and for Indonesia’s ethnic Chinese population. Its starting point is 1949, the year that saw the end of Indonesia’s War of Independence and the founding of the PRC. It ends in 1967, the year in which Indonesia broke off diplomatic relations with the PRC. Across this timeframe, the Indonesian Communist Party grew from a few thousand members at the start of the 1950s to a claimed membership of millions by the mid-1960s, before being destroyed amid anti-communist massacres. For Indonesia’s ethnic Chinese population, the 1950s and 1960s were characterized by new forms of organizational life, but also uncertainty with regard to their citizenship status, and repeated episodes of harassment, sometimes involving violence. This article addresses the interweaving of these histories.

Following this introduction, a second section provides some context with regard to the regional focus of the article: West Java. A third section addresses the relationship between the PKI and ethnic Chinese Indonesians from 1949 to the late 1950s. It traces the increasing entanglement of political polarization and ethnic identity against

at home: history and subjectivity among the Chinese communities of West Kalimantan, Indonesia (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Seng Guo-Quan, ‘Fujianese pioneers and Javanese kings: Peranakan Chinese: lineage and the politics of belonging in West Java, 1890s–2000s’, *Indonesia*, no. 104, 2017 (pp. 65–89).

¹⁵J. Melvin, ‘Why not genocide? Anti-Chinese violence in Aceh, 1965–66’, *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, vol. 32, no. 3, 2013 (pp. 63–91); Yen-ling Tsai and D. A. Kammen, ‘Anti-communist violence and the ethnic Chinese in Medan, North Sumatra’ in *The contours of mass violence in Indonesia, 1965–68*, (eds) D. A. Kammen and K. E. McGregor (Singapore: NUS, 2012); J. S. Davidson and D. A. Kammen, ‘Indonesia’s unknown war and the lineages of violence in West Kalimantan’, *Indonesia*, vol. 73, 2002 (pp. 53–87).

¹⁶Sai Siew-Min and Hoon Chang-Yau, ‘Introduction: a critical reassessment of Chinese Indonesian studies’, in *Chinese Indonesians reassessed*, (eds) Sai Siew-Min and Hoon Chang-Yau (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 11.

¹⁷P. T. Chamberlin, *The Cold War’s killing fields: rethinking the long peace* (New York: HarperCollins, 2018), p. 10.

¹⁸R. Haer et al., ‘Studying micro dynamics in civil wars: introduction’, *Z Friedens und Konfliktforsch*, vol. 8, 2019, (pp. 151–59) pp. 155–157.

a backdrop of the PKI's rapid growth and warming Indonesia-PRC diplomatic relations. A fourth section focuses on the emergence and impact of anti-Chinese crises in 1959–60 and 1963. It details how a particularly strong anti-communist and anti-Chinese coalition in West Java catalysed crises that saw inter-ethnic tensions combine with a shifting diplomatic environment and national political conditions. The fifth section examines events during the period from 1965–67, and anti-Chinese actions that occurred during those years. That period saw a particularly severe crisis in Indonesian politics and society which also affected the ethnic Chinese and Indonesia-PRC diplomatic relations. However, the impact was felt differently across Indonesia, and within West Java a shift in the regional balance of forces served to some extent to restrain anti-Chinese actions in the province during those years. A final section concludes by stressing the importance of integrating international, national, and sub-national regional dynamics in accounts of the Cold War and ethnic conflict.

This article draws extensively on Indonesian-language sources. It uses Indonesian-language publications ranging from newspapers, spanning both national and regional levels, to Party publications and memoirs. The article also makes use of Indonesian-language archival documents, including a number that have either previously been overlooked or have only recently become accessible to researchers. Combining these sources allows a granular analysis of the dynamics at work in the mobilization of anti-Chinese sentiment within Indonesia and West Java during this period. These sources tend to foreground the perspectives of Indonesian speakers, although some attempt to counterbalance this has been made through the use of secondary literature and some Chinese materials (such as copies of PRC diplomatic cables and official statements) consulted in Indonesian translation. In this context, the article can usefully be read in conjunction with works that have drawn on archives in China and which have focused on the experiences of the (generally Chinese-speaking) 'China-oriented' segment of Indonesia's ethnic Chinese population.¹⁹

Before continuing the analysis, it is worth briefly discussing the terminology this article uses with regard to the distinction between 'ethnic Chinese' and 'ethnic Indonesians'. By 'ethnic Chinese' the article means people, usually with some Chinese ancestry, who either self-identified as Chinese in some form or were identified by broader society as such. This group has sometimes, in both popular usage and academic literature, been juxtaposed to '*pribumi*' Indonesians or, less commonly, '*bumiputera*' or '*asli*' Indonesians.²⁰ Each of these terms can roughly be translated to mean 'indigenous' Indonesians. Using such language in an academic context, however, is problematic, given that the '*pribumi*' versus 'non-*pribumi*' distinction rests on a claim to indigeneity that has provided a basis for discrimination and exclusion.²¹ For that reason, this article follows scholars such as Mely G. Tan in referring to 'ethnic Chinese' and 'ethnic Indonesians'.²² Such an approach has the advantage of highlighting that these are

¹⁹For example Zhou, *Migration in the time of revolution*, which draws on PRC and Chinese Communist Party archives as well as Indonesian sources and (p. 6) explicitly focuses on Indonesia's 'China oriented' ethnic Chinese.

²⁰For example, Suryadinata, *Pribumi Indonesians, the Chinese minority and China*.

²¹Ariel Heryanto makes this point in 'Apa ada non-pribumi?', *Forum Keadilan*, no. 13, vol. 7, 1998 (p. 37).

²²For example, Mely G. Tan, 'Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia', in *Etnis Tionghoa di Indonesia*, (ed.) Mely G. Tan (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2008).

socially malleable ethnic designations, and also recognizes that there may be a tension between ethnic labels, national identity, and citizenship status.

West Java and anti-Chinese agitation

This article pays particular attention to developments in the region of West Java. West Java is used here to refer to the area covered by the province of West Java as it stood in the 1950s and 1960s. This includes what is now the province of Banten, but excludes the adjacent capital city Jakarta and its surrounding autonomous zone, which is in many ways sociologically and politically distinct from West Java. During this period West Java covered around one third of Java, an island which was home to over 60 per cent of Indonesia's population.²³ The province was one of the most populous in Indonesia with over 17 million inhabitants at the start of the 1960s.²⁴ It was socially, ethnically, and culturally diverse. It encompassed rural areas ranging from smallholdings to forestry reserves and plantations, as well as major urban centres.²⁵ Around one per cent of the province's population was ethnic Chinese, a similar proportion to Central and East Java.²⁶

West Java differed in some notable ways from the other large nearby provinces of Central and East Java. The largest ethnic group in West Java was the Sundanese, whereas the largest ethnic group in Central and East Java was the Javanese.²⁷ There has also tended to be a particularly close association between Sundanese ethnicity and Islam, although Islam was the majority religion in Central and East Java too.²⁸ West Java was also affected by an Islamic-inspired insurgency during the 1950s and early 1960s.²⁹ A side effect of the ongoing counter-insurgency effort was the particularly deep entrenchment of the army in West Java's provincial society.³⁰ With regard to party politics, the Indonesian Communist Party became a substantial force in West Java from the mid-1950s, but the Communist Party (as well as the left more broadly) was significantly weaker in West Java than in Central and East Java.³¹

Significantly, given the themes addressed by this article, West Java was to become the epicentre of episodes of anti-Chinese agitation in 1959–60 and 1963, crises which are analysed in further detail later in this article. In explaining the intensity of the anti-Chinese activities in 1959–60 and 1963 in West Java, some scholars have highlighted the

²³ *Sensus penduduk Indonesia 1961* (Jakarta: Biro Pusat Statistik, 1962), p. 3.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²⁵ See the maps on the inside cover of *Republik Indonesia: Propinsi Djawa Barat* (Jakarta: Kementerian Penerangan, 1953).

²⁶ M. F. Somers, 'Peranakan Chinese politics in Indonesia' (Cornell University PhD dissertation, 1965), p. 11.

²⁷ *Volkstelling 1930* (Batavia: Departement van Economische Zaken, 1936), vol. 8, p. 91.

²⁸ A helpful guide to the religious culture of West Java is Chaider S. Bamualim, 'Negotiating Islamisation and resistance: a study of religions, politics and social change in West Java from the early 20th century to the present' (University of Leiden PhD dissertation, 2015).

²⁹ On the insurgency see C. van Dijk, *Rebellion under the banner of Islam* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981); C. Formichi, *Islam and the making of the nation: Kartosuwiryo and political Islam in 20th century Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012).

³⁰ Kodam VI Siliwangi, *Siliwangi dari masa ke masa* (Djakarta: Fakta Mahjuma, 1968), Ch. 12.

³¹ A useful brief overview of West Java's politics in the 1950s is Goto Kenichi, 'Local politics in Indonesia: the case of West Java' (Cornell University MA dissertation, 1971).

sociological distinctiveness of the ethnic Chinese in the province relative to elsewhere on the island. They have noted that the ethnic Chinese in West Java were slightly more likely to live in rural areas and to own land in rural areas than in East or Central Java. They have also argued that there was a lower degree of cultural integration between ethnic Chinese in West Java, perhaps inhibited by the strong link between Islam and Sundanese ethnic identity.³² Both prior to and after the period covered by this article there were other instances of anti-Chinese violence that impacted parts of West Java, although West Java is far from alone in having repeated experiences of anti-Chinese violence.³³

However, it is possible to exaggerate the sociological distinctiveness of the ethnic Chinese in West Java, and its influence on inter-ethnic relations. For example, with regard to Chinese land ownership outside urban areas, this was rare beyond the area surrounding Jakarta, and even there it had been in decline as a result of forced government purchases under successive governments.³⁴ In terms of cultural distinctiveness, fieldwork conducted at the time revealed a process of cultural adaptation among the ethnic Chinese in West Java that showed notable similarities to that occurring elsewhere in Java.³⁵ Moreover, if the particular intensity of the anti-Chinese crises of 1959–60 and 1963 in West Java is seen as the result of underlying sociological factors, it is hard to explain why in a later crisis in 1965–67, West Java experienced considerably less violence against the ethnic Chinese than some other regions, including East Java.

Whilst recognizing that sociological factors may have had some influence, this article emphasizes the importance of a contingent process of coalition formation in explaining the spatial pattern of anti-Chinese actions. In particular, it points to the coalescing of a particularly vigorous anti-communist and anti-Chinese alliance in West Java toward the end of the 1950s. Such a coalition was to play an important role in anti-Chinese agitation in 1959–60 and 1963. However, subsequent shifts in provincial politics (particularly regarding military leadership) to some extent inhibited anti-Chinese actions in West Java in the years 1965–68. Each of these episodes is analysed further below.

³²Somers, 'Peranakan Chinese politics in Indonesia', pp. 11, 201–203; D. Lev et al., *No concessions: the life of Yap Thiam Hien, Indonesian human rights lawyer* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), pp. 129–130.

³³For an account of anti-Chinese riots that impacted most major cities in Java in the 1910s see Azyumardi Azra, 'The Indies Chinese and the Sarekat Islam: an account of the anti-Chinese riots in colonial Indonesia', *Studia Islamika*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1994 (pp. 25–53). For scholarship that mentions violence in West Java in the context of anti-Chinese actions that occurred across Indonesia during the Indonesian Revolution, see M. F. Somers Heidhues, 'Anti-Chinese violence in Java during the Indonesian Revolution, 1945–49', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 14, no. 3–4, 2012 (pp. 381–401), especially pp. 385–387; R. Raben, 'Anti-Chinese violence in the Indonesian Revolution', paper for the conference 'Dekolonisasi dan posisi etnis Tionghoa Indonesia 1930-an s/d 1960-an', Padang, June 2006, particularly pp. 7–9. For anti-Chinese riots in Bandung, West Java, in 1973 see Erma Nur Rakhmaniar, 'Kerusuhan rasial anti-Tionghoa di Bandung 5 Agustus 1973' (Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati undergraduate dissertation, 2021). For a list of instances of anti-Chinese riots violence during 1996–99, ranging across Indonesia, see appendix A of J. Purdey, *Anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia, 1996–1999* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2006).

³⁴For the geographic variation in land ownership patterns see Mona Lohanda, 'The Kapitan Cina of Batavia 1837–1942' (SOAS PhD dissertation, 1994), pp. 233–251.

³⁵The key study being Mely G. Tan, *The Chinese of Sukabumi*, drawing on fieldwork conducted in the 1950s.

At a broader level, though, anti-Chinese actions during this period were also shaped by international and national-level developments. Therefore, the following section delineates how wider developments in diplomatic relations and Indonesian domestic politics encouraged the intertwining of left-right polarization and inter-ethnic tensions as the 1950s progressed. Subsequent sections will then zoom in on the crises of the late 1950s and the 1960s and how they played out in West Java.

The ethnic Chinese, the PKI and political contestation, international and domestic, circa 1949–58

At the end of Indonesia's War of Independence in 1949, the fates of Indonesia's ethnic Chinese minority, Indonesia-PRC relations and the PKI were each in a state of flux. Indonesia's Chinese minority were still reeling from inter-ethnic violence during the war, Indonesia had yet to establish diplomatic relations with the newly founded PRC, whilst the PKI was tiny and in disarray. By the late 1950s, each seemed to be on a somewhat firmer footing. There had been some progress in resolving the citizenship status of the ethnic Chinese and providing opportunities for political representation. Indonesia-PRC relations tended to improve over the decade. The PKI, meanwhile, had grown to become a major political force. Yet, amid these trends, countervailing forces were also evident, with strands of anti-Sinicism and anti-communism within Indonesian society tending to become increasingly entangled toward the end of the 1950s. This section first provides a brief sketch of Indonesia's ethnic Chinese population, before examining how broader trends took shape through the 1950s and how these developments set the scene for crises that emerged in 1959–60 and 1963.

By the point that Indonesia became independent, a long history of Chinese migration to the Indonesian archipelago had resulted in a small but significant ethnic Chinese minority, amounting to about two per cent of the population.³⁶ The ethnic Chinese population was culturally and linguistically diverse. One important distinction was that between 'totok' ethnic Chinese (who tended to be relatively recent immigrants or their descendants, to speak Chinese languages, and to be culturally and politically oriented toward China) and the 'peranakan' ethnic Chinese (who were born in Indonesia, tended to speak Malay-Indonesian or other regional languages, and had a stronger orientation toward Indonesia).³⁷ The socio-economic status of ethnic Chinese varied, but relative to the overall population they had a disproportionately strong presence in the field of commerce.³⁸ The relative economic strength of the ethnic Chinese, as well as their distinctive status under colonial law and the fact that most ethnic Chinese were not Muslims, tended to encourage a perception of difference between the ethnic Chinese and ethnic Indonesians.³⁹ This was compounded by

³⁶Somers, 'Peranakan Chinese politics in Indonesia', p. 9, citing data from the 1930 census in the Netherlands Indies.

³⁷On the *totok/peranakan* distinction, see Suryadinata, *Pribumi Indonesians, the Chinese minority and China*, pp. 86–95.

³⁸Somers, 'Peranakan Chinese politics in Indonesia', pp. 23–31.

³⁹R. Cribb, 'Minorities in Indonesian history: from ambiguous advantage to cantonisation', in *Contentious belonging: the place of minorities in Indonesia*, (eds) G. Fealy and R. Ricci (Singapore, ISEAS, 2019), pp. 25–26.

changing migration patterns and rising nationalism in the first half of the twentieth century.⁴⁰

In Indonesia's early post-Independence period, the ethnic Chinese minority faced considerable uncertainty. During Indonesia's War of Independence there had been a number of instances of ethnic Indonesian forces attacking ethnic Chinese populations, and memory of this violence underpinned a profound sense of insecurity.⁴¹ Through the 1950s the ethnic Chinese population also faced efforts by successive governments to restrict their participation in the economy.⁴² Moreover, the citizenship status of many ethnic Chinese was uncertain amid a shifting legal context.⁴³ It was in this context of uncertainty on multiple fronts that in 1954 the Consultative Body on Indonesian Citizenship (*Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia*, Baperki) was founded.⁴⁴ Baperki quickly came to play an important role in representing *peranakan* ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, who made up the large majority of its membership.⁴⁵

The position of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia was also impacted by evolving diplomatic relations between Indonesia, the PRC, and the Republic of China (Taiwan). After a rocky start to the decade, intergovernmental relations between Indonesia and the PRC tended to improve through the 1950s.⁴⁶ Official diplomatic relations between Indonesia and the PRC were established in 1950. Diplomatic ties were disrupted when in 1951 the Indonesian government launched a series of anti-communist raids, with the support of Taiwan, some of which targeted ethnic Chinese individuals. Relations began to improve after the PRC fired its assertive ambassador and dissolved overseas Chinese Communist Party branches in 1952. Indonesian and PRC leaders found increasing common ground, symbolized by the PRC's attendance at the Afro-Asia Conference in Indonesia in 1955. Warming relations between the PRC and Indonesia were reflected

⁴⁰G. W. Skinner, 'The Chinese minority', in *Indonesia*, (eds) H. Feith and R. T. McVey (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1963), pp. 105–106; L. E. Williams, *Overseas Chinese nationalism: the genesis of the pan-Chinese movement in Indonesia, 1900–1916* (Cambridge, MA: MIT CIS, 1960); Xie Kankan, 'Ambivalent fatherland: the Chinese National Salvation Movement in Malaya and Java, 1937–41', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 52, no. 4, 2021 (pp. 667–700); Shiraishi Takashi, 'Anti-Sinicism in Java's new order', in *Essential outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the modern transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe*, (eds) D. Chirot and A. Reid (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1997).

⁴¹On anti-Chinese violence during the revolution see Somers Heidhues, 'Anti-Chinese violence in Java during the Indonesian Revolution, 1945–49'; Raben, 'Anti-Chinese violence in the Indonesian Revolution'. On legacies and memories of this violence see F. X. Harsono, 'Reconfiguring history', in *Visual representations of the Cold War and postcolonial struggles: art in East and Southeast Asia*, (eds) Yamamura Midori and Li Yu-Chieh (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021).

⁴²Suryadinata, *Pribumi Indonesians, the Chinese minority and China*, pp. 128–133; Somers, 'Peranakan Chinese politics in Indonesia', pp. 137–143, 154–157.

⁴³Suryadinata, *Pribumi Indonesians, the Chinese minority and China*, Ch. 5.

⁴⁴See the minutes of Baperki's inaugural meeting: 'Notulen rapat pembentukan Baperki, 13 Maret 1954', available at <https://www.hastamitra.net/2008/06/notulen-pembentukan-baperki.html>, [accessed 7 April 2022].

⁴⁵Somers, *Peranakan Chinese politics in Indonesia*, Ch. 1.

⁴⁶The remainder of the paragraph is based on a synthesis of Zhou, *Migration in the time of revolution*, Ch. 3; Mozingo, *Chinese policy toward Indonesia*, Chs 3–5; Rizal Sukma, *Indonesia and China*, pp. 17–27; United States Information Agency, 'China topics: background brief – China and Indonesia' (January 1968) (available from the University of Hong Kong's Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture online archive, item reference number A0076058).

in the signing of the Dual Nationality agreement in 1955 and a series of bilateral trade and aid agreements. Taiwan's support for a failed rebellion in Indonesia in 1957–58 reinforced this trend and precipitated an Indonesian ban on the Guomintang. During the late 1950s President Sukarno's agenda of left-nationalist anti-imperialism also helped strengthen Indonesia–PRC ties.

Against this background, the PKI's position towards the ethnic Chinese was cautious. In 1950–51 a new group, headed by D.N. Aidit, took over control of the PKI, displacing Tan Ling Djie, an ethnic Chinese. The leadership shift marked the effective exclusion of the ethnic Chinese from the Party's most senior leadership.⁴⁷ The PKI's new leaders were aware of resentment against the ethnic Chinese among the population and even within elements of the Party's grass-roots membership.⁴⁸ As the 1950s progressed and the PKI grew from a small cadre organization with a few thousand members into a successful mass party millions strong, the PKI was careful to avoid becoming closely associated with the ethnic Chinese. The growing prominence of the PRC on the international stage, and the prospect of warming relations between Indonesia and the PRC complicated matters. The PKI leadership viewed the PRC favourably as both an emerging independent Asian nation and an example of Marxism-Leninism in practice, but was also wary of the charge of being foreign-controlled and accusations that the Party relied on overseas financial assistance.⁴⁹ Such accusations would only gain greater traction if the PKI cultivated close relations with the ethnic Chinese, who were seen by many ethnic Indonesians as potentially having dual loyalties.⁵⁰

Despite the PKI's caution, the Party's opposition to racial discrimination, coupled with personal and ideological factors, encouraged an affinity between the Party and parts of the ethnic Chinese population. Through the 1950s the PKI repeatedly found itself in a minority opposing policies discriminating against the ethnic Chinese.⁵¹ More broadly, the Party articulated a policy of 'equal rights for all citizens' and 'respect for minorities of foreign descent'.⁵² The PKI and its allied organizations maintained

⁴⁷D. Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia 1951–1963* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1964), pp. 63–64.

⁴⁸R. T. McVey, 'Indonesian communism and China', in Tsou Tang, *China in crisis* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1968), vol. 2, p. 361, citing interviews with PKI leaders Aidit and Nyoto. For the PKI's ambivalent relations with the ethnic Chinese in an earlier period see Xie Kankan, 'Various forms of Chineseness in the origins of Southeast Asian communism', in *Left Transnationalism*, (eds) Drachewych and McKay, pp. 302–303.

⁴⁹For Aidit rejecting the claim the Party was funded from abroad and complaining of the damage of such allegations from the right-wing press, see his speech in 1959: 'Pembangunan organisasi penting, tapi lebih penting lagi pembangunan ideologi', in D. N. Aidit, *Pilihan tulisan* (Jakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1959–65), vol. 3, pp. 52–53. For (inconclusive) discussions of rumoured PRC financial support to the PKI see McVey, 'Indonesian communism and China', pp. 364–366; Hindley, *Communist Party of Indonesia*, Ch. 10.

⁵⁰On popular perceptions that ethnic Chinese had dual loyalties see Suryadinata, *Pribumi Indonesians, the Chinese minority and China*, p. 46.

⁵¹On these controversies see Suryadinata, *Pribumi Indonesians, the Chinese minority and China*, pp. 128–133; Somers, 'Peranakan Chinese politics in Indonesia', pp. 137–143, 154–157. A notable exception was the PKI's support for the appropriation of property from Taiwan-oriented ethnic Chinese when Taiwan supported regional rebellions in Indonesia in the late 1950s.

⁵²'Bersatulah untuk menjelesaikan tuntutan2 Revolusi Agustus 1945, laporan umum, kepada kongres ke-VI, Juli 1956', in Aidit, *Pilihan tulisan*, vol. 2, p. 85.

cordial relations with parts of the ethnic Chinese community. Although the *totok* Chinese generally did not participate in Indonesian political parties, mass organizations allied to the PKI sometimes used the buildings of pro-Beijing ethnic Chinese organizations for meetings.⁵³ Moreover, whilst ethnic Chinese were excluded from the very highest echelons of the Party, some *peranakan* activists played relatively prominent roles in the PKI, including one of the Party's members of parliament.⁵⁴ In this context, despite the PKI's caution, the tendency was for increasing left-right politicization of debates about the ethnic Chinese. For example, although debates about ethnic Chinese influence in the Indonesian economy were rarely explicitly linked to anti-communism in the early and mid-1950s, by 1957 a prominent critic of ethnic Chinese business interests was arguing that ethnic Chinese were a potential fifth column for the PRC.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, Baperki, the largest predominantly *peranakan* organization from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, saw a leftist element become increasingly influential over time. Baperki at its founding encompassed a broad range of ideological views.⁵⁶ Moreover, much of its work focused on social and cultural activities of interest to ethnic Chinese across the political spectrum, such as charitable works, running schools, and providing support for individuals looking to register as Indonesian citizens.⁵⁷ However, Siauw Giok Tjhan, Baperki's national secretary and its most influential leader, was politically on the left, and his influence over Baperki tended to increase over time. As the 1950s progressed, growing left-right tensions were evident. In 1955 Injo Beng Goat, a prominent Baperki member, left the organization, claiming it was 'being exploited by communists ... using Baperki as a front organization'.⁵⁸ In some parts of Java there were also signs of local branches becoming closer to the PKI, for instance with some cooperation during elections in 1955 and 1957, although in West Java Baperki branches seem to have kept a distance from the Communist Party.⁵⁹ From the late 1950s the

⁵³For examples from West Java, see 'Ulang tahun Pemuda Rakjat ke-VI', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 13 November 1951; 'Ulang tahun Sarbupri', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 18 February 1952; 'Perselisihan Maro tidak dapat diselesaikan di daerah', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 16 June 1955; 'Volksfeest', *De Preangerbode*, 18 November 1957; 'Mobilisasi semua kekuatan dan ganjang kaum kontra revolusi', *Harian Rakjat*, 22 June 1963.

⁵⁴See Parlaungan, *Hasil rakjat memilih tokoh-tokoh parlemen di Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gita, 1956), pp. 309–310. Additionally, for biographical data on two ethnic Chinese who sat for the PKI in the Constituent Assembly, the body formed to produce a new Indonesian constitution, see Syahrul Hidayat and K. W. Fogg, 'Konstituante.net', available at www.konstituante.net, [accessed 30 January 2022].

⁵⁵Assaat, *Usaha nasional harus diperlindungi oleh pemerintah* (Medan: Pertjetakan Indonesia, 1957), p. 17.

⁵⁶Somers, 'Peranakan Chinese politics in Indonesia', p. 149.

⁵⁷For examples in West Java, see: 'Bekendmaking Baperki', *De Preangerbode*, 6 August 1957; 'Baperki en bandjir', *De Preangerbode*, 8 August 1957. Also the following internal Baperki files: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia [ANRI], Komando Operasi Tertinggi 1963–1967 [KOTI], folder 888, 'Laporan singkat tjabang Tangerang', 25 October 1958; ANRI, KOTI, folder 888, 'Rentjana kerdja Baperki tjab. Tangerang', 11 January 1959; ANRI, KOTI, folder 888, 'Laporan singkat J.P.K. "Baperki" tjabang - Tangerang', 9 August 1965.

⁵⁸See the discussion of this criticism in Baperki, *Nomor istimewa kongress ke III* ([Jakarta]: [Sin Po], 1955], pp. 19–20.

⁵⁹ANRI, KOTI, folder 888, 'Laporan kongres Baperki ke II', 7–9 August 1954. Some Baperki branches in East and Central Java entered vote pooling arrangements with the PKI in the 1957 regional elections, as recorded in the microfilmed document held by Cornell University, 'Daftar angka2 hasil pemilihan D.P.R.D. tahun 1957–1958'.

public rhetoric of Baperki was increasingly shaped by the left-nationalist flavour of President Sukarno's slogans.⁶⁰

By the end of the 1950s several trends were therefore coming together at a national and international level: the ongoing vulnerability of the ethnic Chinese population, a surging Communist Party, and increasingly strong diplomatic ties between the PRC and Indonesia. These factors encouraged the increasing intertwining of anti-Sinicism and anti-communism within Indonesia, a mixture evident in recurrent episodes of harassment of the ethnic Chinese in the following years.

The crises of 1959–60 and 1963

In the years 1959–63 Indonesia witnessed two crises which were traumatic for Indonesia's ethnic Chinese population. The first was the result of the imposition of stringent restrictions on the freedoms of ethnic Chinese living in rural areas in 1959–60, and the second manifested in a period of anti-Chinese rioting in 1963. The national and international dynamics outlined in the previous section were an essential part of the context for these events, but the contention of 1959–60 and 1963 also exhibited a marked regional dimension. In both cases, the province of West Java was at the epicentre of the crises. This section looks more closely at events in the province across the period 1959–63, highlighting the role of a coalition of forces within the region in driving anti-Chinese actions which catalysed the interweaving of anti-Sinicism and anti-communism more broadly within Indonesian society.

The crisis of 1959–60 was conditioned by a policy put in place by the national government, but it soon became clear that the impact was playing out unevenly across Indonesia. The precipitant was the Indonesian Trade Minister introducing a regulation that banned non-Indonesian citizens trading in rural areas. It was introduced whilst President Sukarno was out of the country, and although he eventually approved the measure, he seems to have been ambivalent about it.⁶¹ Given the remaining uncertainty over the citizenship rights of ethnic Chinese Indonesians, the regulation potentially threatened all Chinese Indonesians. The move was in some senses a development of policies from earlier in the 1950s aimed at weakening the economic position of the ethnic Chinese. But the scope was broader than earlier measures, which had mostly focused on credit or ownership in particular industries. Implementation varied widely, with the impact being much more severe in areas where regional authorities zealously implemented the regulation or even went beyond it. West Java was, by some distance, the most important example.⁶² By early 1960 almost 10,000 ethnic Chinese people had been forcibly removed from rural areas across West Java, possibly more

⁶⁰'Pendukung UUD 45', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 18 March 1959; 'Dari regional konperensi Baperki: proses integrasi [sic] dipertjepat sampai tak mengenal pengangguran: semua golongan supaya tak berlomba', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 30 October 1958; ANRI, KOTI folder 888, 'Laporan D.D. Baperki Djabar pada sidang harian d.d. jang pertama', 20 January 1962.

⁶¹See Siauww Tiong Djin, *Siauww Giok Tjhan, perjuangan seorang patriot* (Jakarta: Hasta Mitra, 1999), pp. 316–317.

⁶²Important secondary accounts of the 1959–60 crisis include Zhou, *Migration in the time of Revolution*, Ch. 6; Somers, 'Peranakan Chinese politics in Indonesia', Ch. 7; Mozingo, *Chinese policy in Indonesia*, pp. 158–180; J. A. C. Mackie, 'Anti-Chinese outbreaks in Indonesia, 1959–68', in *The Chinese in Indonesia*, (ed.) J. A. C. Mackie (Melbourne: Nelson, 1976), pp. 82–97.

than in the rest of Indonesia combined. In the process a number of so-called 'evacuees' were beaten and two were killed.⁶³ Tensions were escalated further by PRC diplomatic representatives who had been instructed to stiffen opposition to the measures.⁶⁴ The outcome of escalating tensions was a full-blown diplomatic incident between Indonesia and the PRC and over 100,000 ethnic Chinese departing Indonesia for the PRC.⁶⁵

The particular harshness of the implementation of measures in West Java was shaped by a coalition of forces at the regional level. An important role was played by the West Java military leadership. Across Indonesia the army held emergency powers which gave the regional military commander wide influence in provincial political life, but the army's long-running military counter-insurgency campaign in West Java had also left the army particularly well entrenched in the province. The West Java provincial military commander, Colonel R. A. Kosasih, was particularly keen to drive the issue forward. He issued a decree banning all non-Indonesian citizens living outside urban areas, going significantly beyond the national regulations which only restricted trading. Kosasih also issued inflammatory statements, warning of 'a-national elements' and 'foreign domination', as well as criticizing the alleged interference of PRC diplomats.⁶⁶ Army units followed through on Kosasih's measures and played an active role in the removals.⁶⁷ Contemporary press reporting makes clear that the army also had the support of a coalition of civilian elites within the province. The civilian bureaucracy aided the army in the implementation of the regulations.⁶⁸ Supportive public statements were issued by most political parties at a regional level, as well as Islamic youth groups and ethnically Indonesian business groups.⁶⁹

The most prominent political force to criticize the measures was the PKI, supported by some left-nationalist groups and Baperki. The PKI was careful to avoid entirely rejecting the new regulations, which after all had been signed by the President, whose protection the Party relied on. The Party also stressed its support for 'nationalizing' the economy.⁷⁰ However, it criticized the implementation, calling the restrictions on the ethnic Chinese misdirected, economically damaging, and reflecting 'chauvinism'.⁷¹

⁶³Somers, 'Peranakan Chinese politics in Indonesia', pp. 198–200.

⁶⁴Mozingo, *Chinese Policy in Indonesia*, pp. 158–179.

⁶⁵Somers, 'Peranakan Chinese politics in Indonesia', p. 209.

⁶⁶Peperda [Penguasa Perang Daerah] Jawa-Barat ambil keputusan: tempat orang-orang asing - hanja ibukota2 sadja paling rendah tingkat kabupaten - mulai berlaku 1 September', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 29 August 1959; 'Panglima Kosasih: ada usaha2 djebak petugas', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 28 November 1959; 'Laporan ketua Peperda Kol. Kosasih: agar djangan didjadjah dlm bentuk lain dari sudah2', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 14 January 1960.

⁶⁷5.000 orang asing di Jawa Barat terkena peraturan Peperda: P[embantu] U[tama] P[elaksana] K[uasa] P[erang] sibuk laksanakan penjaluran', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 22 September 1959.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Reaksi pimp. partai2 atas tindakan konsul RRT Ho An jg propokatif: djalankan peraturan dengan tegas', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 19 November 1959; 'Sokong Peperda', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 23 November 1959; 'Sokong Peperda: Ansor Djabar', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 26 November 1959; 'Peraturan Jawa Barat agar diambilalih untuk seluruh Indonesia: statement BP Kensi Jawa Barat', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 24 November 1959.

⁷⁰CC PKI, *Pesan tahun baru politburo CC PKI* (Jakarta: Komite PKI Jakarta Raja, 1959), pp. 7–8.

⁷¹'Pembangunan organisasi penting, tapi lebih penting lagi pembangunan ideologi', *Harian Rakjat*, 26 May 1959; 'Realisme atau sovinnisme?', *Harian Rakjat*, 29 May 1959; CC PKI, *Pesan tahun baru politburo CC PKI*, pp. 7–9.

It also reported critically on the removal process in West Java,⁷² and reprinted a series of articles by the prominent left-wing author Pramoedya Ananta Toer that critiqued and historicized 'racial discrimination' against the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia.⁷³ As well as rejecting the 'indigenous' versus 'non-indigenous' distinction, Pramoedya addressed claims that the ethnic Chinese were economically exploitative and attacked the 'myth' that the ethnic Chinese represented a 'fifth column' beholden to the PRC.⁷⁴ Press coverage made clear the extent to which the left was isolated on the issue. The PKI complained that they had been 'slandered in many underhand ways ... as though the PKI's attitude was anti-national and ... favouring Chinese people and the PRC'.⁷⁵ For example, one critical newspaper rhetorically asked 'Is the PKI the slave of the Chinese?'⁷⁶ Pramoedya, who had recently joined the Institute of People's Culture, an artists' organization allied to the PKI, was detained by the military for over a year for his writings on the issue.⁷⁷ Within West Java the PKI were also repeatedly criticized by the army and political parties.⁷⁸

The events of 1959–60 therefore saw the coming together of a coalition that combined elements of ethno-nationalism, anti-Sinicism, and anti-communism. This helps explain why West Java proved a particular flashpoint; this coalition was significantly stronger in the province than in Central and Eastern Java, where the Communist Party and left nationalists groups were relatively well entrenched and were gaining a foothold within civilian administrations and sometimes even sections of the army.⁷⁹ Indeed, in West Java, the same political parties that supported the removals had worked together to keep the Communists out of important jobs in the regional administration when posts had been shared out after regional elections a couple of years earlier.⁸⁰

After the crisis of 1959–60 the next major episode of anti-Chinese harassment occurred in 1963, when a series of anti-Chinese riots took place. Although the riots

⁷²See the multi-part 'Laporan kronologis ttg kundjungan menlu ke: tempat2 penampungan Hoakiau di Djabar', *Harian Rakjat*, 21–26 January 1960.

⁷³See the articles in *Harian Rakjat* on 1 January 1960, 9 January 1960, 16 January 1960, 1 February 1960. These were reprints of articles that initially appeared in the left-nationalist daily *Bintang Timur* and later formed part of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's book, *Hoakiau di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Bintang Press, 1960). This book has been translated by Max Lane as *The Chinese in Indonesia* (Singapore: Select Publishing, 2007).

⁷⁴Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Hoakiau di Indonesia*, letter three.

⁷⁵CC PKI, *Pesan tahun baru politburo CC PKI*, pp. 7–9.

⁷⁶United States National Archives and Records Administration [NARA], Record Group [RG] 59, box 3447, reference 756D.001/2-255, 'Communists attack government restrictions on red Chinese retailers', despatch Jakarta to Secretary of State, 9 June 1959, citing *Duta Masyarakat*, the newspaper of the Islamic party Nahdlatul Ulama.

⁷⁷See the introductory essay by S. K. Mandal, "'Strangers who are not foreign": Pramoedya's disturbing language on the Chinese of Indonesia' in Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *The Chinese in Indonesia*.

⁷⁸See the thinly veiled criticism of the PKI in: 'Reaksi pimp. partai2 atas tindakan konsul RRT Ho An jg propokatif: djalankan peraturan dengan tegas', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 19 November 1959; 'Jang dukung dan jang minta ditunda', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 27 November 1959; 'Panglima Kosasih: Ada usaha2 djebak petugas', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 28 November 1959; 'Kosasih dukung: seksi III DPRD djuga', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 4 December 1959.

⁷⁹D. Lev, *The transition to Guided Democracy: Indonesian politics, 1957–9* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1966), p. 99; H. Crouch, *The army and politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 143.

⁸⁰Lev, *The transition to Guided Democracy*, p. 113.

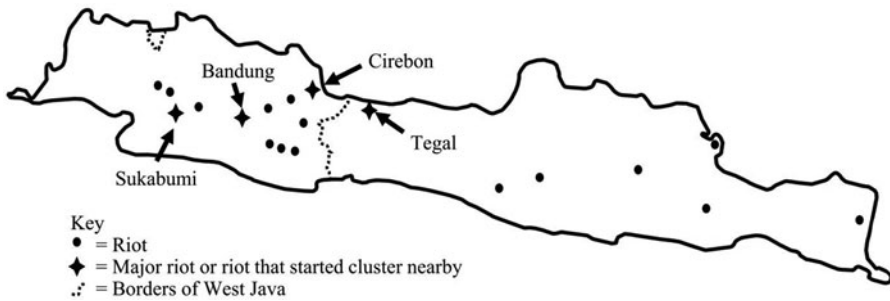


Figure 1. Map of anti-Chinese riots in Java in 1963.

were not confined to West Java, it was again the site of the most severe episodes of conflict. The spatial distribution of reported rioting in Java is shown in Figure 1.⁸¹ The first of the rioting occurred in Cirebon in late March, whilst a riot in Bandung on 10 May marked the start of a cluster of riots in neighbouring urban centres.⁸² A particularly severe bout of unrest in Sukabumi on 19 and 20 May effectively marked the end of the rioting. Some of the literature has described the riots as limited in scope,⁸³ but it did not seem that way to those on the ground at the time. According to an official report, which drew on data gathered by local police and public prosecutors' offices, at least 15 people were killed in the rioting, and over 5,000 buildings were damaged.⁸⁴ The scenes of destruction were also covered with dramatic images in the press, conveying an impression of chaos and violence to readers across Indonesia.⁸⁵

There were a range of contributory factors in the violence at a national and international levels. Deteriorating economic conditions and a recent downgrading of martial law provisions were both potentially destabilizing.⁸⁶ More broadly, the continued growth of the Communist Party and the ever-warmer diplomatic relationship between Indonesia and the PRC also formed an important part of the backdrop to the crisis. The PKI's claimed membership had increased from 1,500,000 in 1959 to over 2,500,000 by 1963,⁸⁷ and in 1962 PKI leaders Aidit and Lukman were raised to ministerial rank

⁸¹The map, created by the author, draws on aggregated newspaper reports summarized in Asep Achmad Hidajat, 'Kerusuhan anti-China di kota Garut tahun 1963' (University of Indonesia PhD dissertation, 2014), pp. 181–182 and an unpublished Indonesian government report, available at the Leiden University library: 'Laporan umum lengkap tentang peristiwa Tjirebon – Tegal – Bandung dan lain-lain', dated 20 June 1963.

⁸²'Akibat2 "10 Mei" di Bandung dan "11 Mei" di Sumedang', *Pikiran Rakjat*, 13 May 1963.

⁸³Zhou, *Migration in the time of revolution*, p. 141.

⁸⁴This is based on summing the reports on riots in various localities included in 'Laporan umum lengkap', pp. 12, 14, 16, 28, 42–3, 47.

⁸⁵For some representative examples, see the photos carried in *Pikiran Rakjat* on 11 May 1963.

⁸⁶Selo Soemardjan et al., *Gerakan 10 Mei di Sukabumi* (Bandung: Ganaco, 1963); Somers, 'Peranakan Chinese politics in Indonesia', pp. 276–282; Mackie, 'Anti-Chinese outbreaks in Indonesia, 1959–68', pp. 99–100.

⁸⁷The 1959 figure was given in D. N. Aidit, *Problems of the Indonesian Revolution* (Bandung: Demos, 1963), p. 386. The 1963 figure comes from 'Bung Karno, Aidit dan PKI alat Revolusi, Tengku Cs alat imperialis sekarat!', *Harian Rakjat*, 14 November 1963.

in the government, albeit without portfolio.⁸⁸ Meanwhile, in the early 1960s the PRC and Indonesia undertook an increasing number of high-level state visits, cultural exchanges, and struck an economic and technical assistance agreement.⁸⁹ The worst of the rioting in 1963 followed a visit by PRC chairman Liu Shaoqi to Indonesia.⁹⁰

The particularly severe extent and intensity of the rioting in West Java was conditioned by a coalition of state and non-state actors on the political right. There were a range of participants involved in the rioting, from teachers and students to the urban poor, and possibly even a few members of the Communist Party and its youth organizations acting without Party approval.⁹¹ However, the role of right-wing groups in stoking tensions in West Java was apparent. Among the instigators were a group of military officers who had links to academics and students in universities in Bandung. This informal network was hostile to President Sukarno and the leftward direction his rule entailed.⁹² The arrival of groups of students from Bandung helped precipitate a number of the riots across West Java.⁹³ With the West Java army commander General Ibrahim Adjie away when violence broke out, an initially tepid army response to rioting was shaped by the attitudes of officers such as his vehemently anti-communist and anti-Chinese chief of staff, Ishak Djuarsa.⁹⁴ Indeed, Ishak Djuarsa was moved from his post following the riots. In his new position as regional military commander in Aceh, Djuarsa was to preside a couple of years later over a brutal anti-communist campaign of extermination and an attempt to forcibly expel all 'alien' Chinese from Aceh, as is further discussed in the next section.⁹⁵

The diplomatic fallout from the riots of 1963 was relatively constrained, but the rioting strengthened the association between political orientation and attitudes toward the ethnic Chinese. As the rioting spread, the PRC expressed concern, but seemed to want to avoid a major confrontation.⁹⁶ More important was the effect of the violence on alignments within Indonesia. The Communist Party stood out among major political parties in condemning the perpetrators of the violence rather than criticizing the

⁸⁸R. Mortimer, *Indonesian communism under Sukarno: Ideology and politics, 1959–1965* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 126.

⁸⁹Mozingo, *Chinese policy in Indonesia*, Ch. 7.

⁹⁰'Tamu agung dari RRT tiba', *Pikiran Rakyat*, 16 April 1963.

⁹¹Mackie, 'Anti-Chinese outbreaks in Indonesia, 1959–68', pp. 109–110; Selo Soemardjan et al., *Gerakan 10 Mei di Sukabumi*; 'Laporan umum lengkap', especially appendix 41: 'Daftar orang-orang yang tersangkut dalam peristiwa Tjirebon-Tegal-Bandung dan lain-lain'.

⁹²U. Sundhaussen, 'The political orientations and political involvement of the Indonesian officer corps' (Monash University PhD dissertation, 1972), pp. 557–559, citing interviews with army officers and media reporting from the trials that occurred after the riots. For the outlook of the students see Hasyrul Moechtar, *Mereka dari Bandung* (Bandung: Alumni, 1998), pp. 46–57, citing interviews with a number of students involved.

⁹³This is evident in the chronologies of various riots provided in 'Laporan umum lengkap', Ch. 2. It was also corroborated by an oral history interview with a former student activist, in Cianjur, 25 January 2018.

⁹⁴Sundhaussen, 'The political orientations and political involvement of the Indonesian officer corps', pp. 557–559, citing interviews with army officers.

⁹⁵On the anti-communist campaign in Aceh in late 1965 see J. Melvin, *The army and the Indonesian genocide: mechanics of mass murder* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018); on anti-Chinese actions in Aceh see Melvin, 'Why not genocide?'.

⁹⁶On the relatively little direct disruption the 1963 riots caused the Indonesia-PRC relationship see Zhou, *Migration in the time of revolution*, pp. 134, 142.

ethnic Chinese. They conducted detailed reporting on the origins and impact of the rioting,⁹⁷ and denounced the violence as counter-revolutionary 'racialism'.⁹⁸ Aidit saw the May 1963 riots as necessitating 'a politics of revolutionary integration' whereby 'the PKI intensifies its work among those of foreign heritage so that they actively join in the revolutionary struggle in an organized way'.⁹⁹ Communist Party publications gave increased coverage to Baperki's activities, and emphasized Baperki's role in bringing the ethnic Chinese population in a 'progressive' direction in contradistinction to reactionaries and racists.¹⁰⁰ There were also indications that Baperki and to some extent the PKI were gaining greater support among the *peranakan* ethnic Chinese population in the aftermath. For example, in early September 1965 a US diplomat, drawing on extensive conversations with Indonesian Chinese contacts, described the riots as a 'central event' influencing the shifting perceptions of the ethnic Chinese population, and had led them to 'look to the political left for protection'.¹⁰¹ The trend was not universal. Some ethnic Chinese, particularly those associated with Catholic organizations, saw the left as a growing threat and sought to organize to counteract the challenge.¹⁰² However, the visibility of Baperki's activity and its leaders' increasingly leftist politics 'helped to identify the Chinese in the minds of many Indonesians ... with communism'.¹⁰³

The events of 1959–63 had further encouraged the interweaving of a political left-right division and perceptions of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. Yet there were also cross-cutting factors. PKI leaders were aware of grassroots resentments against the ethnic Chinese, even within the Party, and remained wary of being too closely associated with them.¹⁰⁴ Even as the PKI increasingly advocated revolutionary integration, there were indications that Baperki was seen as more distant than other allied organizations. When listing the Party's allied mass organizations in late 1965, PKI leader Aidit did not include Baperki.¹⁰⁵ Meanwhile, Siauw Giok Tjhan was wary of

⁹⁷See especially the multi-part reports in *Harian Rakjat*, which had a strong focus on events in West Java: 'Dari kota korban rasialisme', *Harian Rakjat*, 4 June 1963–8 June 1963; 'Meninjau bekas2 keganasan teror rasialis', *Harian Rakjat*, 14 June 1963–20 June 1963.

⁹⁸'Pengatjauan2 terkutuk', *Harian Rakjat*, 15 May 1963; ANRI, KOTI, folder 332, 'Pernyataan comite P.K.I. Djawa Barat, Pertiinggi kewaspadaan, perkuat persatuan dan bantu polisi dalam melawan tindak rasialisme', Bandung, 19 May 1963.

⁹⁹'Revolusi Indonesia dan Tugas-tugas mendesak PKI: laporan untuk Sekolah Partai Tinggi CC Partai Komunis Tiongkok, Peking, 2 September 1963', in D.N. Aidit, *Kibarkan tinggi pandji revolusi* (Jakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1963). See also ANRI, KOTI folder 380, 'Tentang masyarakat warga negara peranakan Tionghoa'. This document is undated and unsigned, but this seems to have been teaching material used at the PKI's training institute and from internal evidence can be dated to between 1963 and 1965.

¹⁰⁰For example, 'Bung Aidit kepada Baperki: madjulah terus Baperki untuk progres dan kesatuan nasion Indonesia' and 'Kongres Baperki' in *Harian Rakjat*, 14 March 1963; *Harian Rakjat* also carried the full text of Siauw Giok Tjhan's keynote speech.

¹⁰¹NARA, RG 59, 1964-6, Box 2311, POL 12. 7-1-65, 'Fearful mood of the Chinese in Java pushing them leftwards', Airgram, 2 September 1965.

¹⁰²Jusuf Wanandi, *Shades of grey: a political memoir of modern Indonesia, 1965-1998* (Singapore: Equinox, 2012), pp. 29–34, 44–45; Salim Said, *Dari Gestapu ke Reformasi: serangkaian kesaksian* (Jakarta: Mizan, 2013), pp. 33–37.

¹⁰³Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in crisis*, p. 50.

¹⁰⁴McVey, 'Indonesian Communism and China', p. 361, citing interviews with Aidit and Nyoto.

¹⁰⁵'D.N. Aidit kepada 50 wartawan A-A-A: tentang PKI, Nasakom, GKI, Singapura, Vietnam dll', *Harian Rakjat*, 20 August 1965. This was also true in internal PKI documents, for example ANRI, KOTI, folder 332,

PKI support among parts of Baperki potentially weakening its autonomy, and sought to limit Baperki facilities being used for PKI activities. By 1965 Siau's relations with Aidit were deteriorating.¹⁰⁶ Siau also maintained good relations with a wide range of figures on the left, including politicians from the Murba Party, which was notably hostile to the PKI.¹⁰⁷ Despite the forces encouraging closer relations between the PKI and Baperki in the late 1950s and the first half of the 1960s, the relationship remained cautious to the end.

The crisis of 1965–67 and after

Indonesia's political landscape and diplomatic orientation changed dramatically following the events of late 1965. The precipitant was a failed coup attempt by the so-called Thirtieth September Movement. The PKI's leader Aidit was involved in organizing the Movement, co-ordinating with a small group of military officers via the secretive PKI 'Special Bureau'. The Movement was badly organized and quickly collapsed.¹⁰⁸ The army, along with its civilian allies, took the opportunity to destroy the PKI 'down to its very roots', driving forward a campaign of mass violence in which around half a million alleged communists were killed and hundreds of thousands more were detained without trial.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, General Suharto consolidated his position at the head of a regime underpinned by the military, a regime that was authoritarian, fiercely anti-communist, and wary of the PRC.

This section focuses on the period from late 1965–67, examining how the situation of the ethnic Chinese evolved in the context of the anti-communist purges and the consolidation of Indonesia's so-called 'New Order'. Although at a national level the ethnic Chinese were not disproportionately overrepresented amongst those killed, they did face waves of harassment and periodic episodes of violence, particularly in late 1965, in early to mid-1966, and in 1967. The government also introduced a series of legal measures that discriminated against the ethnic Chinese. Amongst the overall national picture of deteriorating conditions, there was also significant regional variation. Notably, levels of anti-Chinese violence differed across the country. The approach of regional military commanders and the extent of political contestation in particular regions influenced conditions on the ground, and unlike in 1959–60 and 1963, this time West Java saw lower levels of conflict than a number of other regions.

It is important to recognize that the vast majority of people killed in the violence of 1965–66 were ethnic Indonesians. Robert Cribb and Charles Coppel have estimated that despite enduring claims of widespread massacres of the ethnic Chinese in 1965–66, it is likely that the total number of ethnic Chinese killed was probably somewhere in the

'Plan 4 tahun tentang kebudayaan, ideologi dan organisasi untuk daerah Djawa Barat' [Undated, but from internal evidence likely from 1963].

¹⁰⁶Siau Tjong Djin, *Siau Giok Tjhan*, pp. 382–6, citing interviews with Baperki leaders.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.* pp. 387.

¹⁰⁸J. Roosa, *Pretext for mass murder: the September 30th movement and Suharto's coup d'état in Indonesia* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

¹⁰⁹G. Robinson, "'Down to the very roots": the Indonesian army's role in the mass killings of 1965–66', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 19, no. 4, 2017 (465–486).

region of 2,000.¹¹⁰ With the best estimates of the total killings in 1965–66 in Indonesia of around 500,000, and an estimate of the ethnic Chinese population as two per cent of the population of Indonesia, it does not seem to be the case that the ethnic Chinese were disproportionately likely to be killed.¹¹¹ Cribb and Coppel argue that this may have been due to the fact that most ethnic Chinese lived in urban areas (a pre-existing tendency strengthened following the measures of 1959–60), where levels of killing tended to be much lower, and also influenced by the perception that most ethnic Chinese were somewhat aloof from Indonesian politics.¹¹²

Yet although the ethnic Chinese do not seem to have been disproportionately affected by the killings of 1965–66 (at a national level at least), the rapidly shifting political climate did create an increasingly hostile environment. Through the last months of 1965 the military press was, in a relatively low-key way, critical of the PRC, for example complaining that the PRC did not do enough to condemn the Thirtieth September Movement and that its embassy had failed to fly its flag at half mast in response. However, the press were initially cautious about directly blaming the PRC for the Thirtieth September Movement.¹¹³ Despite propaganda efforts by the USA and UK to link the Thirtieth September Movement and the PRC, army leaders were concerned about overreaching. As one general explained: ‘We already have enough enemies. We can’t take on Communist China as well.’¹¹⁴ The emerging line, as explained in a military newspaper, was that the ethnic Chinese due to their ‘social economic position’ were unlikely to be sympathetic to the communists but some had been ‘financial supporters’ as some leaders had told them an alliance with the PKI could protect this position. In this context, the ‘people’s reaction’ would be determined by how effectively the ethnic Chinese ‘cleansed themselves’ of ‘counterrevolutionary’ elements.¹¹⁵ In particular, the military-controlled press implicated Baperki in the Thirtieth September Movement.¹¹⁶

In October, in many parts of the country, including West Java, the buildings of Chinese overseas associations were wrecked or burnt down, apparently with the collusion of local military authorities.¹¹⁷ Across Indonesia members of Baperki and its youth

¹¹⁰R. Cribb and C. A. Coppel, ‘A genocide that never was: explaining the myth of Anti-Chinese massacres in Indonesia, 1965–66’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 11, no. 4, 2009 (pp. 465–486), pp. 447.

¹¹¹For a discussion of estimates of total numbers killed, see R. Cribb, ‘How many deaths? Problems in the statistics of massacre in Indonesia (1965–1966) and East Timor (1975–1980)’ in *Violence in Indonesia*, (eds) I. Wessel and G. Wimhofer (Hamburg: Abera, 2001). For a recent analysis of demographic data that supports the view that the 500,000 figure is plausible: S. Chandra, ‘New findings on the Indonesian killings of 1965–66’, *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 76, no. 4, 2017 (pp. 1059–1086), p. 1078.

¹¹²Cribb and Coppel, ‘A genocide that never was’, pp. 449–450.

¹¹³‘KBRI Peking tempat penggodokan kader2 revolusi proletar PKI?’, *Angkatan Bersendjata*, 20 October 1965; ‘Hubungan baik dg RRT’, *Angkatan Bersendjata*, 29 October 1965; ‘Djangan di-besar2-kan konflik kita dengan RRT’, *Angkatan Bersendjata*, 20 December 1965.

¹¹⁴On US efforts see B. Simpson, *Economists with guns: authoritarian development and U.S. –Indonesia relations, 1960–1968* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), p. 180; for British propaganda see D. Easter, ‘“Keep the Indonesian pot boiling”: Western covert intervention in Indonesia, October 1965–March 1966’, *Cold War History*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2005 (pp. 55–73), p. 63. The quotation comes from Melvin, ‘Why not genocide?’, p. 71, directly citing a US diplomatic telegram.

¹¹⁵‘Awas propokasi rasialisme dari Gestapu’, *Angkatan Bersendjata*, 23 October 1965.

¹¹⁶‘Baperki djelas punja peranan penting dalam Gestapu’, *Angkatan Bersendjata*, 27 October 1965.

¹¹⁷Diplomatic note from PRC to ROI, no. Wai/161/65, 4 November 1965, in Direktorat Research, *Hubungan Republik Indonesia dengan Republik Rakjat Tjina* (Jakarta: Departemen Luar Negeri, 1967),

organization were also detained.¹¹⁸ Whether violence extended beyond detentions and attacks against property seems to have been influenced by local conditions, including the approach of regional military commanders. In West Java the military authorities sought to avoid the targeted violence against property escalating into wider violence against the ethnic Chinese. An important factor seems to have been the role of West Java military commander General Adjie. During the earlier occurrence of anti-Chinese rioting in 1963 he seemed to have been taken off guard by the escalation of violence and subsequently struggled to get a handle on events.¹¹⁹ By contrast, as a crisis unfolded in late 1965, Adjie quickly consolidated his control and was determined that anti-communist violence should not spiral into disorder.¹²⁰ A further factor which may have encouraged restraint with regard to the ethnic Chinese community in particular was that Adjie himself had ties with some ethnic Chinese businessmen and community leaders.¹²¹ A concern to avoid violence escalating was evident following the attacks on ethnic Chinese properties in West Java in October 1965. An important article appeared in the West Java newspaper *Pikiran Rakjat* (literally, *Thoughts of the People*), at the time under close military oversight. The article agreed that the ethnic Chinese community needed to ‘cleanse itself’ of counter-revolutionary elements, but warned that people needed to ‘keep a cool head’ and ‘avoid destructive racialist actions’ such as ‘vandalism and arson’.¹²² Of the few thousand killings that took place in West Java in 1965–66, killings of ethnic Chinese seem to have been rare.¹²³ The situation contrasted notably with conditions in northern Sumatra, particularly the Medan area and Aceh. There, regional commanders Mokoginta and Ishak Djuarsa (who had been moved following his involvement in anti-Chinese violence in West Java in 1963) struck a considerably harsher tone towards the ethnic Chinese, and were more supportive of anti-communist violence in general. This context was important in influencing the higher levels of violence against the ethnic Chinese in parts of Northern Sumatra, including massacres, detentions, and forcible expulsions.¹²⁴

There was a significant shift in the period from March–May 1966, at the point where Suharto and the army leadership had secured their position by effectively destroying the PKI and also marginalizing President Sukarno. It was at this point that the army-led

pp. 88–90. This internal Indonesian Foreign Ministry dossier is a compilation of diplomatic notes, press statements and regulations produced by Indonesian and Chinese bodies.

¹¹⁸Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in crisis*, p. 58.

¹¹⁹Sundhausen, ‘The Political orientations and political involvement of the Indonesian officer corps’, p. 559.

¹²⁰M. G. B. Woolgar, ‘Communism in context: the Indonesian Communist Party in West Java, 1949–66’ (University of Oxford PhD dissertation, 2021), pp. 198–215.

¹²¹On Adjie’s links with ethnic Chinese businesspeople see NARA, RG 59, 1964–6, Box 2319, POL 29. 1–1–64, telegram from Jakarta to Secretary of State, 6 September 1966; ‘Laporan umum lengkap’, p. 65. See also the photo of Adjie with an ethnic Chinese community leader in *Pikiran Rakjat*, 3 October 1962.

¹²²“G-30-S” & rasialisme’, *Pikiran Rakjat*, 25 October 1965.

¹²³For one possible example, see the report of a US embassy staff person passing through Subang in May 1966, who commented on the number of recently dug graves in a Chinese cemetery, which ‘might have represented the fatal results of a recent anti-Chinese action’, NARA, RG 59, 1964–6, Box 2319, POL 23–9. 1966, Airgram Jakarta to Department of State, 7 May 1966.

¹²⁴On anti Chinese violence in Aceh, see Melvin, ‘Why not genocide?’ and for the Medan area see Tsai and Kammen, ‘Anti-communist violence and the ethnic Chinese in Medan, North Sumatra’.

regime explicitly blamed the PRC for the Thirtieth September Movement.¹²⁵ Around the same time, sustained pressure on the ethnic Chinese ramped up across the country, including the closing of Chinese organizations and the confiscation of their property, often accompanied with an implicit or explicit threat of violence.¹²⁶ Within West Java, a further factor accelerating the campaign of harassment was the replacement of General Adjie as head of the army in West Java with H. R. Dharsono. Dharsono was keen to take a more aggressive approach to anti-communism, and also had close links to the anti-communist student movement which was also taking on an increasingly anti-Chinese tone.¹²⁷ During this period an army-student alliance was crucial in driving anti-Chinese actions. Within West Java, waves of confiscations were often undertaken by student groups, with the military setting the tone via public statements, regulations, and the provision of logistical support.¹²⁸ In March 1966 a wave of takeovers of Chinese-language schools took place.¹²⁹ In April, the properties of more Chinese associations were taken over,¹³⁰ and in July they were banned.¹³¹ Around the same time, hundreds of ethnic Chinese Indonesians in the town of Sukabumi changed their names to more 'Indonesian' sounding names, under pressure from the local authorities.¹³² From May 1966 Chinese citizens in West Java were required to register,¹³³ and in August Dharsono issued an order for the expulsion from Indonesia of Chinese citizens who had previously been members of Chinese associations.¹³⁴ Leaders of Chinese Associations were seized by 'rioters', and were beaten, interrogated, and threatened.¹³⁵ Harassment, extortion, and beatings of ethnic Chinese were reported in the province into late 1966.¹³⁶

These actions mixed together racial animus and anti-communism. The rhetoric used against the Chinese drew on a mix of anti-Chinese language and hostility to the PRC with its association with communism and the PKI. For example a photo of a confiscated Chinese school in Bandung shows slogans scrawled on the wall including 'expel

¹²⁵For initial indications in this direction from the military see 'China linked to uprising in Indonesia', *Washington Post*, 27 March 1966. A key article indicating the shift in the public line was the multi-part 'Kisah gagalnja coup Gestapu jang dimasak di Peking', *Angkatan Bersendjata*, 25 April 1966–28 April 1966.

¹²⁶Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in crisis*, pp. 61–72; Mackie, 'Anti-Chinese outbreaks in Indonesia 1959–68', pp. 115–118.

¹²⁷Woolgar, 'Communism in context', pp. 210, 220–223.

¹²⁸Diplomatic note from PRC to ROI, no. Wai/68/66, 19 July 1966, in Departemen Luar Negeri, *Hubungan Republik Indonesia*, p. 192; diplomatic note from PRC to ROI, no. Wai/161/65, 27 March 1966, in Departemen Luar Negeri, *Hubungan Republik Indonesia*, p. 133; also Kodam VI Siliwangi, *Siliwangi dari masa ke masa*, p. 637.

¹²⁹Diplomatic note from PRC to ROI, no. Wai/161/65, 27 March 1966, in Departemen Luar Negeri, *Hubungan Republik Indonesia*, p. 133; also Kodam VI Siliwangi, *Siliwangi dari masa ke masa*, p. 637.

¹³⁰Diplomatic note from PRC to ROI, no. Wai/45/66, 10 April 1966, in Departemen Luar Negeri, *Hubungan Republik Indonesia*, p. 147.

¹³¹Diplomatic note from PRC to ROI, no. Wai/68/66, 19 July 1966, in Departemen Luar Negeri, *Hubungan Republik Indonesia*, p. 192.

¹³²Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in crisis*, pp. 82–85.

¹³³'Warganegara di Jawa barat harus daftarkan diri', *Angkatan Bersendjata*, 26 May 1966.

¹³⁴'Pepelrada Djabar perintahkan pemulangan orang2 RRT', *Angkatan Bersendjata*, 8 August 1966.

¹³⁵Diplomatic note from PRC to ROI, no. Wai/68/66, 19 July 1966, in Departemen Luar Negeri, *Hubungan Republik Indonesia*, p. 192.

¹³⁶Peking NCA International Service via Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 5 October 1966.

the Chinese', 'cut diplomatic relations with the PRC', and the word 'PKI'.¹³⁷ In Cirebon, students shouted 'expel the Chinese' and defaced portraits of Chairman Mao.¹³⁸ In these contexts the word '*Tjina*', which had derogatory connotations, was often used for 'China' or 'Chinese', rather than more polite terms such as '*Tiongkok*' or '*Tionghoa*'. The coming together of ethnic stereotyping with anti-communism was particularly clear in a statement from the West Java branch of the Indonesian Youth and Student Action Front (*Kesatuan Aksi Pemuda Pelajar Indonesia*), who in late 1966 called for the expulsion of the ethnic Chinese from Indonesia as they 'played an active part in helping the Gestapu/PKI', referring to the Thirtieth September Movement, as well as being a 'parasite which sucks up the wealth and livelihood of the Indonesian people'.¹³⁹ Whilst many of bans and seizures focused on organizations seen as sympathetic to the PRC, such as the *Chung Hua Tsung Hui* (literally 'Chinese Organization'), and some measures specifically targeted PRC citizens, it is possible to over-emphasize the distinction of PRC and Indonesian citizens in terms of the impact. The divide was often not clear-cut given the complex relations within families, the mix of students at Chinese language schools, and the vulnerability of all ethnic Chinese to harassment.

Anti-Chinese actions in West Java ended more quickly than in some areas of Indonesia. An important factor in this pattern was the relatively rapid consolidation of the military regime, designating itself the 'New Order', in the province. Notably two other regions which saw anti-Chinese violence as late as 1967 were where the New Order faced ongoing resistance. In East Java, a heartland of the PKI and the nationalist left, the strongly anti-Chinese regional commander Sumitro introduced a series of local regulations at the end of 1966, restricting the movement, economic activity, and cultural expression of ethnic Chinese. When ethnic Chinese protested against the measures there was a wave of anti-Chinese riots.¹⁴⁰ Meanwhile, in West Kalimantan, a left-wing guerrilla movement, including remnants of the PKI in the region, had benefitted from favourable geographic conditions and had gained significant support among the region's unusually large rural ethnic Chinese population. As the army's counter-insurgency response escalated in 1967, the military 'organized, armed, and encouraged Dayaks to massacre rural ethnic Chinese', with estimates of ethnic Chinese killed ranging from the low hundreds to the low thousands.¹⁴¹

While harassment and violence against the ethnic Chinese gradually died down, the consolidation of the New Order institutionalized a shift in the position of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. The regime's vehement anti-communism heightened attention to the boundary between Indonesians and 'foreign' Chinese, as Cold War suspicions became further entwined with racial stereotypes. The government approach was that the ethnic Chinese should either be sharply distinguished from Indonesians or be 'assimilated' and forego any cultural distinctiveness. The interweaving of Cold War thinking and racial logic that underpinned this approach was encapsulated in

¹³⁷ Arsip Propinsi Jawa Barat, inventaris photo 003, envelope 26.

¹³⁸ Peking NCNA International Service via Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 5 October 1966.

¹³⁹ Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in crisis*, p. 96, quoting the original statement.

¹⁴⁰ Mackie, 'Anti-Chinese outbreaks in Indonesia', pp. 120–128; Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in crisis*, pp. 100–105.

¹⁴¹ Davidson and Kammen, 'Indonesia's unknown war and the lineages of violence in West Kalimantan', pp. 67–68, 72.

an important government report produced in 1966: 'The problem of foreigners in Indonesia and a concept for how to solve it'. The report warned of the ethnic Chinese's 'slyness' in 'dominating the economic field in Indonesia', whilst also claiming they were the 'main source of moral support for reviving the PKI' and a 'fifth column for the PRC'. It called for restrictions on the political and economic activity of non-Indonesian citizens whilst recommending measures to accelerate the assimilation of those willing to become Indonesian citizens.¹⁴² This approach was broadly reflected in a flurry of measures introduced over 1966–67, which tightened controls on the education of the ethnic Chinese,¹⁴³ on Chinese-language media,¹⁴⁴ and Chinese religious practices.¹⁴⁵ Increasing pressure was put on ethnic Chinese Indonesian citizens to adopt 'indigenous' sounding names.¹⁴⁶ The broad contours of a discriminatory regime remained in place throughout Suharto's time in power.¹⁴⁷

1967 also witnessed the crystallization of tensions between Indonesia and the PRC. The consolidation of the New Order allowed an increasingly explicit anti-PRC foreign policy. Meanwhile, the PRC responded vociferously amid the escalating Cultural Revolution. The harassment and sometimes violence faced by ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, particularly in some regions, further aggravated diplomatic relations. The sign of an irrevocable rupture between the Indonesian regime and the PRC was marked when Indonesia also broke off diplomatic relations with the PRC in 1967. It did not re-establish them until 1990.¹⁴⁸

The period 1965–67 saw the intersection of international, national, and sub-national crises. The ascendancy of an anti-communist military regime radically transformed domestic politics and also placed great strain on Indonesia's relationship with the PRC. A further dimension was the harassment of the ethnic Chinese population in Indonesia and recurrent episodes of violence. These episodes were in turn influenced both by national developments and by the configuration of forces on the ground, particularly the orientation of local military commanders and the nature of political coalitions. In this context, although West Java had seen some of the strongest anti-Chinese agitation in the late 1950s and early 1960s, during the period of 1965–67 anti-Chinese activity was less pronounced in the province than in some other regions. First, the wariness of General Adjie about disorder (and potentially his own links to ethnic Chinese businesspeople and community leaders) were restraining factors. Adjie's replacement with Dharsono, along with increasing national-level army propaganda aimed against the PRC, saw an acceleration of anti-Chinese harassment in the region in

¹⁴² ANRI, Sekretariat Menko Kompartimen Perhubungan 1963–1966, folder 1942, Komando Ganjang Malaysia Gabungan 5, 'Masalah orang asing di Indonesia dan gagasan tjara penjelesainnja', Jakarta, 9 June 1966. For the impact of this report and its warm reception by the cabinet see also Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in crisis*, pp. 77–78.

¹⁴³ Instruksi Presidium Kabinet no.37/U/IN/6/1967.

¹⁴⁴ Instruksi Presidium Kabinet no.49/V/IN/8/1967.

¹⁴⁵ Instruksi Presiden no.14/1967.

¹⁴⁶ Keputusan Presidium Kabinet no.127/U/ Kep/12/1966.

¹⁴⁷ On the durability of these measures through the New Order (and in some instances beyond), see T. Lindsey, 'Reconstituting the ethnic Chinese in post-Soeharto Indonesia', in *Chinese Indonesians: remembering, distorting, forgetting*, (eds) T. Lindsey et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

¹⁴⁸ On the trajectory of Indonesian-PRC relations during this period see Mozingo, *Chinese policy toward Indonesia and China*, Ch. 8; Zhou, *Migration in the time of revolution*, Ch. 9.

the second quarter of 1966. The relatively rapid consolidation of the new regime in the province meant that West Java did not experience the ongoing political contestation that conditioned flare ups in East Java and West Kalimantan in 1967.

Conclusion

Overall, this article has highlighted the importance of analysing the interaction of international, national, and sub-national dynamics in accounts of the relationship between Cold War tensions and inter-ethnic relations. In particular, it has applied this logic in examining the experience of the ethnic Chinese minority in Indonesia in the 1950s and 1960s. The rapid progress made by the PKI and the growing warmth of Indonesia's relationship with the PRC through the 1950s strengthened the association between anti-Chinese feeling and anti-communism within Indonesia. In this context, attitudes to inter-ethnic tensions increasingly tended to take on a left-right political colouring, despite the PKI's wariness at being seen as too close to the ethnic Chinese community or being seen as under foreign direction. Growing ideological polarization at a national and international level furthered the trend through the first half of the 1960s. The vulnerable ethnic Chinese community was a potential pressure point that could be exploited by anti-communists who were becoming ever more alarmed at the possibility of a PKI takeover and the increasingly warm relationship between the PRC and the Indonesian government. The crisis of 1965–67 saw the culmination of this process of polarization. Although the ethnic Chinese were not disproportionately targeted in the anti-communist mass killings of 1965–66, they faced a raft of discriminatory legal measures, widespread harassment, and violence against property, as well as localized massacres in some parts of Indonesia. The new military regime combined its anti-communism with hostility to the PRC, and wariness with regard to Indonesia's ethnic Chinese.

Whilst broad trends at an international and national level were important, patterns of anti-Chinese agitation varied considerably by region. In this context, West Java is a particularly interesting case study, given that the province was the epicentre of two crises centred on anti-Chinese activities, first with the forced removal of 'alien' Chinese from rural areas in 1959–60, then with extensive rioting that targeted the ethnic Chinese in 1963. A key factor in the severity of the events in West Java was the presence of a relatively strong coalition of anti-Chinese and anti-communist forces in the province, a coalition that encompassed elements in both West Java's civilian and military elites. These crises, with their marked regional inflections, in turn had knock-on effects at an international and national level. The crisis of 1959–60 temporarily disrupted diplomatic relations and the rioting of 1963 further deepened the association between anti-communism and anti-Sinicism at a national level. Whilst the events of 1965–66 saw the intersection of particularly severe diplomatic and domestic crises, the way that these manifested on the ground again varied significantly by region. This time, anti-Chinese actions in West Java were less severe than in some other parts of the country, although anti-Chinese harassment still took place. Important factors in this pattern were the determination of West Java's regional military commander General Adjie that violence should not be allowed to spiral, and the relatively rapid consolidation of the new regime within the province.

This analysis prompts a reconsideration of Taylor's argument that 'questions of "Chineseness" [were] central to the Cold War in Southeast Asia', and that 'the Cold War was foundational to competing notions in this region of "Chineseness"'.¹⁴⁹ This article concurs with regard to the urgency of interrogating the relationship between 'Chineseness' and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, and finds that Chinese ethnic identity became increasingly entangled with Cold War tensions in Indonesia in the 1950s and 1960s. It also sees this process as having far-reaching consequences in an Indonesian context. Indonesia saw a durable and vehemently anti-communist military regime entrenched for three decades, which brought with an anti-PRC posture internationally and racially discriminatory measures domestically. However, it is problematic to put Chinese ethnic identity at the centre of Cold War tensions in Indonesia when the vast majority of the victims of the anti-communist killings in 1965–66 were ethnically Indonesian. Additionally, to see the Cold War as foundational to ideas of Chinese identity also has the potential to obscure continuities. For example, it was notable how anti-Sinicism during the Cold War period managed to combine allegations of an ethnic Chinese communist 'fifth column' with an older, and somewhat incongruent, claim that the ethnic Chinese were economically exploitative.

More broadly, the analysis in this article has pointed to the need to be sensitive to spatial and temporal variation at a range of scales when contextualizing the intersection of Cold War tensions and inter-ethnic relations. It points toward a 'micro-dynamic' approach to the Cold War, integrating both macro- and micro-perspectives. Such an approach emphasizes the pluralism and contingency of forces shaping both the Cold War and inter-ethnic dynamics in Southeast Asia and beyond. In doing so, it highlights the challenges of viewing any single phenomenon as foundational to the Cold War or Chinese ethnic identity in Southeast Asia.

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Competing interests. The author declares none.

¹⁴⁹Taylor, 'Introduction: putting "Chineseness" back into Cold War cultures', in *Chineseness and the Cold War*, (eds) Taylor and Xu, p. 2.

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