

upon the valley, riding such vehicles as the shifting levels of the Tchiri River, the slave trade, the colonial state, Christianity, and the all-powerful but faceless engine they call money” (p. 241).

One of the issues that Mandala raises is the importance of local language skills in conducting research, a point well taken, yet, unfortunately, this does not necessarily justify the use of idiosyncratic spelling as being somehow more correct. Why should Shire become *Tchiri*, or Zambezi *Zembezi*, or Makololo *Magololo*, when it serves more to obfuscate than clarify? And why should Shire become *Tchiri* yet Kirk Range remain Kirk Range? In addition, although Shire, Zambezi, and Makololo, are admittedly anglicized forms, they are derived from local designations, and not merely foreign labels overlaying already existing terms. When dealing with French soldiers in the Rhineland following World War I, historians writing in English do not refer to Cologne as *Köln*, or the Rhine as the *Rhein*, or Germans as *Deutschen*, why then should this be done simply because the region of study happens to be in Africa? Quite frankly I was left feeling that with Mandala it is more an issue of *stance*, as defined by Cooper, than that his findings are of true methodological importance.

Mandala’s desire to exact retribution on those whose positions he rejects, primarily through sniping at his perceived opponents from the safety of his endnotes, is jarring and eventually becomes rather irritating. Two examples shall suffice to make the point. The work of John Iliffe is highly respected and very few would wish to suggest that his sympathies were in any way aligned with those of the settler colonists in Southern Rhodesia, present-day Zimbabwe. Mandala is of a differing opinion, and following a footnote in which the “white-controlled press” is berated for failing to adequately gauge Zimbabwe’s “food crisis” of 2000–2003, and Iliffe and Bryceson are lambasted for daring to suggest that “colonial relief programs” saved Africans from starvation (p. 254, n. 19), Mandala states that Iliffe suggests that “there is no suggestion that European settlers might have been responsible for some of the crises, which are uncritically labelled ‘precapitalist’ famines” (p. 265, n. 92). Yet a reading of John Iliffe, *Famine in Zimbabwe, 1890–1960* (Gweru, 1990) makes a mockery of Mandala’s claims. In describing the famine in Matabeleland in 1896, Iliffe notes explicitly that though they did not admit it, it was “the Europeans whose violence caused the famine” (p. 21).

In conclusion, this reader was left more irritated than informed, and greatly saddened that a topic of such great historical importance could be essentially stripped of history in the struggle for perceived authenticity that has more to do with American academia than African history.

Jan-Bart Gewald

ROOSA, JOHN. *Pretext for Mass Murder. The September 30th Movement and Suharto’s Coup d’État in Indonesia*. [New Perspectives in Southeast Asian Studies.] University of Wisconsin Press, Madison 2006. xii, 329 pp. Ill. \$60.00 (Paper: \$23.95.); DOI: 10.1017/S0020859007072963.

From late 30 September till early 2 October 1965, a few Indonesian left-nationalist officers, some communist youth and women, and a handful communist leaders, including party chairman Aidit, were involved in kidnappings and assassinations of top-level anti-communist army leaders and the proclamation of a revolutionary council. The attempts

were mysteriously poorly organized, failed almost immediately, and became the pretext for the destruction of the huge radical popular movement in the country, including by way of mass murder, in addition to thirty-three years of repression and still authorized falsification of history in textbooks and media. Hence, it remains crucial to find out what really happened and why.

There have been four dominant explanations. The first, by the Suharto regime and its adherents, is that the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) was the mastermind and aimed at a coup d'état to pave the way for a communist take over – an attempt that was aborted by General Suharto, the army and violent popular reactions against communists. The other explanations grow out of the fallacies of the first. Why would a large, mass-based, peaceful and seemingly successful party get involved in adventurous and amateurish elite-manipulations? How could the party direct military actions? The most plausible initial answer, by Benedict Anderson and Ruth McVey, was that the PKI was not involved. Rather, the 30th September Movement was conducted by young officers who wanted to back Sukarno against reactionary generals. As reliable testimonies surfaced from party leaders, however, Harold Crouch argued instead that the dissident officers had received communist support on the sidelines. Yet, the questions remained how a military mutiny in support of Sukarno's policies could be so poorly organized and end up in the proclamation of a revolutionary council that would replace his cabinet? The fourth major explanation, pioneered by the late W.F. Wertheim with partial support of Ben Anderson, seemingly solved this puzzle by pointing to a possible conspiracy by General Suharto, with the backing of the United States, the main beneficiaries. New testimonies showed that one of the major Movement-leaders, Brigade Com. A. Latief, had informed Suharto about the plans. Moreover, PKI's secret agent, Sjam, acting on behalf of Aidit, was probably a double agent. Finally, declassified Washington documents suggested that the US were in favour of a "failed PKI-coup", which could serve as a pretext for military intervention.

A number of scholars were not convinced, however. Was Suharto really a genius *dalang*? Why would he kill off his senior colleagues? Why did not the rebellious officers say that they took orders from the PKI? And, why did they not suggest that Suharto should be the new chief of the army?

While researching the killings, John Roosa (student of radical politics in India and Indonesia and assistant professor of history at the University of British Columbia) came across a number of not yet fully utilized sources. These consisted of: to begin with, an analysis of the senior officer involved, Brig. Gen. Supardjo, to which were added interviews with a leading PKI member with privileged knowledge of its special bureau and director with, further, a number of statements by PKI leaders, declassified US materials, an analysis by the late Siauw Giok Tjhan (former leader of the Indonesian ethnic Chinese) based on conversations with imprisoned PKI leaders, and interviews with eight particularly knowledgeable leftists.

What did these sources indicate? The new narration may be summarized in three theses. First, that while the 30th September Movement emerged as a dissident military group, its actions were guided by the PKI chairman, Aidit, through the Party's special bureau (a secret remnant within the party's organizational department from the clandestine work in the late 1940s, and for some time headed by Sjam, an old confidant of Aidit from this period of revolutionary, elitist-cadre actions).

Second, that while this special bureau – just like many similarly secret units in other parties and groups at the time – primarily gathered supporters within the armed forces, it

was also called upon by Aidit in mid-1965 to guide dissident officers who wanted to prevent top generals from sabotaging Sukarno's policies. The officers should be guided in such a way that their mutiny would not be limited to a military affair – which had recently been the case in Algeria by Col. Boumedienne against Ben Bella – but pave the way for popular mobilization in favour of more consistent implementation of Sukarno's radical intentions. By necessity, such leadership had to be secret, to save the party should anything go wrong, and to prevent disclosure by “unreliable” top party leaders such as Njoto and Sakirman.

Third, that there was no genius mastermind behind the movement. Rather, the organization and actions were quite messy. The combination of secret guidance by a few party leaders and a majority of officers who did not want to go beyond the exposure of their reactionary superiors was a major reason for the lack of realistic planning, clear chains of command, and food for the soldiers – as well as the fact that when things went wrong, some wanted to retreat, others discussed air strikes against enemy generals and yet others tried to ignite notoriously overestimated military and mass support by proclaiming a revolutionary council.

Are these disturbing revelations for leftists, which will lead to much needed rethinking while also being abused by proponents of the argument that the 30th of September Movement was a PKI ploy to grab power?

I do not think so. To begin with, Roosa's study also reveals a number of disturbing facts for the previous and current Indonesian regimes. The scrupulous and instigating role of the US is well documented. Suharto's manipulations are clear enough. It is proven that there was no mastermind – and that the PKI was not involved as a party and movement, only through some few leaders acting secretly beyond their mandates. It is established that the 30th September movement was used as a pretext for Suharto's disobedience of President Sukarno, rise to power, and quite separately organized repression with massive executions and instigation of militia-like mass murders, (the logics of which we know better now from the organization of the post-Suharto violence in Indonesia itself and East Timor).

Moreover, a previous study that arrived at almost the same conclusions did not generate much attention by the Left, which appeared to largely suppress mistakes that did not fit into a Maoist reading. Not even Roosa himself seems to be aware of the earlier results, published some twenty-five years ago (in English by Zed Books in 1984). That study (by this author) on the destruction of the PKI was primarily based on theoretical and comparative readings of the longer historical perspective; a perspective revealing that PKI was only visibly successful, that its major strategies of anti-imperialism and land reform had partially backfired, that it had abandoned democratic elections, and that it was thus in need of elite manipulations to advance. In its eighteenth chapter, moreover, the study utilized some of the sources that Roosa draws on, including about Aidit's conclusions about the coup in Algeria.

However, Roosa's important contribution is in the details, by which he expands firmly on previous less comprehensive and less well-substantiated conclusions. Most crucially, he proves that the 30th September Movement was a miserably messy affair with many aims and actors but few firmly applied organizational principles. This, I'm afraid, reminds us more of the militant youth groups during the national revolution, or the fragmented pro-democrats of today, than of a coherent party that is kept accountable by members and broad mass organizations.

Indeed, one might have wished a more extensive discussion of the possible biases of some of the sources due to their harsh feelings against Aidit, including the major informant

on the role of Aidit, Sjam, and PKI's special bureau; an informant who in passing is identified as "a follower of the Maoist line on armed struggle" (p. 137). One may also wonder why an historian has not made use of a longer historical perspective (that could have been based on already existing literature) to thus place his sources and pieces of oral history in context and improve the interpretation of them. Similarly, several additional factors that affected the 30th of September Movement remain to be added; for instance why Suharto did not act swiftly against the dissidents but waited until it was clear that Sukarno had not appointed him the new chief of the army. Even later in the afternoon, General Nasution, Suharto's senior and Minister of Defence who had escaped arrest and assignation, was stunned by his indecisiveness, (interview with this author in 1980).

In general conclusion, however, Roosa's account of the 30th of September Movement is an impressive piece of detective work. It is true that he does not venture into the historical puzzle of why a few leaders of the third largest communist party in the world got associated with the 30th of September Movement in the first place. But he has certainly contributed the best study hitherto of who organized it, why it failed, and how it could lead to mass killings, followed by decades of repression. It deserves the widest possible reading.

Olle Törnquist

CHARI, SHARAD. *Fraternal Capital. Peasant-Workers, Self-Made Men, and Globalization in Provincial India*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, California 2004. xxv, 379 pp. Ill. £31.95; DOI: 10.1017/S002085900708296X.

In *Fraternal Capital*, Sharad Chari turns his formidable analytical lens on Tirrurpur, south India, tracing the evolution of the town's knitwear industry from small-scale units catering primarily to the domestic market to an export industry thriving in a highly competitive global environment. Chari's questions revolve around a changed industrial landscape in the 1990s, when Tiruppur exports grew exponentially, and the town acquired many of the characteristics of global factory towns, including the casualization and feminization of the labor force.

However, this is no "standard" ethnography of the garment industry or of the gendered labor regimes that accompany the production of apparel for a global market. Rather, Chari has produced what he calls an agrarian history of the industrial present. Locating Tiruppur firmly within India's political economy, Chari's analysis weaves together local, global, and regional perspectives on Tiruppur in multiple directions. Using critical geography and anthropology, he complicates the relationship between globalization and "indigenous" capitalism and challenges dominant paradigms of late industrialization and capital accumulation in provincial sites.

Chari seeks to explain Tirrurpur's rise to industrial prominence by focusing on the historical transformation of social capital wielded by the dominant caste in the region, the Gounder Vellalas. He accounts for the rise of the seemingly paradoxical category of "peasant-worker", primarily of working-class origin, who became the dominant fraction of capital in the knitwear industry. Through close readings of life histories and existing historical accounts, Chari shows how at particular moments, Gounder men invoked their agrarian past to construct their ethics of "toil" and successfully convert the "virtue" of their labor into the idiom of social capital. Thus, Chari turns to agrarian history to "make sense of memories of toil in shaping industrial work processes today" (p. 51).