Hong Kong in the Cold War

Edited by Priscilla Roberts and John M. Carroll

HKU PRESS
香港大學出版社

Hong Kong University Press
The University of Hong Kong
Pokfulam Road
Hong Kong
www.hkupress.org

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ISBN 978-988-8208-00-5 (*Hardback*)

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed and bound by Paramount Printing Co., Ltd. in Hong Kong, China

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1
Cold War Hong Kong

Juggling Opposing Forces and Identities

Priscilla Roberts

In Hong Kong the rules of the global Cold War were often suspended. Or perhaps it is fairer to say that the territory epitomized to the ultimate degree many of the ambiguities and contradictions of the Cold War, a confrontation that, however fierce its rhetoric, was usually characterized by pragmatic caution, at least where the major powers were concerned. Hong Kong would survive two major Asian wars, lengthy conflicts that constituted the most significant of all Cold War military engagements, at least in terms of US involvement. In the first of these, the Korean War, British troops together with their US counterparts actually fought Chinese soldiers in Korea from late 1950 to mid-1953. In the second, the Vietnam War, the British declined any formal involvement, but just as during the Korean War, they allowed American military personnel to use Hong Kong for R & R (rest and recreation), hosted visits by the US fleet, and furnished significant supplies and matériel to the US war effort, worth US$50 to US$52 million in 1966, for example.[1] At the time, Chinese support personnel were assisting the North Vietnamese in their efforts to resist US bombing and attacks. It would be interesting to know just how many of the US dollars pumped into the Hong Kong economy during these port visits ended up in People's Republic of China (PRC) coffers. Likewise, one may speculate whether mainland-backed firms provided some of the goods and services that kept the American forces in Korea and Vietnam operational. During both wars, mainland China made occasional protests against British policies but left British control of Hong Kong undisturbed.

The story of Hong Kong during the Cold War reinforces a growing body of scholarship on the period that suggests that, while situating the history of post-1945 Asia in "a globalized Cold War context," one must also remember that Asia "had its own internal dynamics and trajectories, and it evolved in ways that were not entirely the making of the big powers." In the words of Michael Szonyi and Hong Liu, "Cold War political struggles were intertwined with other processes that cannot be neatly tied to the second half of the twentieth century, processes such as the global and local

1. Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992: Uncertain Friendships* (New York: Twayne, 1994), 215.

Image 1.1
USS *Hornet* and escort, 1960s. Courtesy of Tim Ko.

struggles for women's liberation, revolution, nationalism, decolonization and post-colonial experience, new regional groupings and the deterritorialization of ethnic populations." The Asian experience, moreover, challenges Cold War periodization that focuses primarily upon Soviet-Western relations.[2] Bruce Cumings has even gone so far as to argue that in Asia the Cold War ended during the 1970s, thanks to the North's victory in Vietnam and the developing US rapprochement with China.[3] Other Asian scholars agree in perceiving that decade as a hinge, the beginning of persistent long-term attempts to reintegrate China into the global economy, with massive infusions of capital from international institutions, Western countries, Japan, and ethnic Chinese overseas all directed to China from then onward. Here, too, Hong Kong would have a crucial role to play.[4] In words that might well have been designed to characterize Hong Kong, Tuong Vu likewise suggests that "the plays on Asian stages embedded both Cold War and local plots, both global and local actors, who interplayed in various ways depending on particular contexts."[5]

2. Michael Szonyi and Hong Liu, "New Approaches to the Study of the Cold War in Asia," in *The Cold War in Asia: The Battle for Hearts and Minds*, ed. Zheng Yangwen, Hong Liu, and Michael Szonyi (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2010), 1–11, quotations from 7.
3. Bruce Cumings, review of *The Cold War in East Asia, 1945–1991*, ed. Tsuyoshi Hasegawa (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), *H-Diplo Roundtable Review* 13 (30) (June 25, 2012): 16.
4. Takashi Shiraishi and Caroline Sy Hau, "China, Japan and the Transformation of East Asia," in Zheng, Hong, and Szonyi, *The Cold War in Asia*, 28–38.
5. Tuong Vu, "Cold War Studies and the Cold War in Asia," in *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia: Ideology, Identity, and Culture*, ed. Tuong Vu and Wasana Wongsurawat (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2009), 1–13, quotation from 12.

Cold War Hong Kong was not, it should be emphasized, Cold War Berlin, to which it has been compared. Even the British themselves at times drew that analogy.[6] Certainly, as one historian has remarked, Hong Kong resembled Berlin in that it "became a sort of free city in which all parties could operate within limits."[7] Both were undoubtedly special enclaves where different actors in the Cold War had opportunities to meet, assess, and negotiate with each other that were unavailable elsewhere. But there were important differences. West Berlin was part of a divided city and in 1948 became a symbol of the West's determination to block the further extension of Soviet power. When the Soviet Union attempted to cut off all supply routes by land to Berlin, for many months the Americans and British mounted an airlift that assured Berlin sufficient necessities to survive. In the second Berlin crisis of the late 1950s and early 1960s, triggered when defections from East to West Germany became so large in number that they embarrassed the Soviet bloc, Western powers resolutely opposed Soviet and East German demands that would have effectively brought West Berlin into the Communist zone. Ultimately, the Soviet bloc responded by building a wall to separate the divided city. The same was never true of Hong Kong. The great bulk of Hong Kong's population was originally sojourners or refugees from China, driven by economic or political reasons. Yet people came and went between Hong Kong and China. Despite British reluctance to countenance an official mainland presence in Hong Kong, in reality it was never absent. From 1947 onward the office of the Communist-backed Xinhua News Agency functioned as the de facto representative of the Chinese Communists in Hong Kong.[8] Chi-Kwan Mark has indeed compared Hong Kong's situation to that of Finland during the Cold War.[9] Unlike Berlin, Hong Kong itself was never physically divided; it merely had numerous fractured and conflicting loyalties and identities.

Despite the conciliatory Communist attitude in 1949, prospects for the continuance of the colonial regime were decidedly precarious. For almost fifty years, it would survive on what was ultimately the grace and favor of the Chinese Communists. The latter did not even need to use military force to take Hong Kong. At any time they had the option of cutting off supplies of food and—by the early 1960s—water, or flooding

6. Steve Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 155; Alexander Grantham, *Via Ports: From Hong Kong to Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1965), 171; and John M. Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007), 142.
7. Francis Pike, *Empires at War: A Short History of Modern Asia since World War II* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 247.
8. Lu Yan, "Limits to Propaganda: Hong Kong's Leftist Media in the Cold War and Beyond," in Zheng, Hong, and Szonyi, *The Cold War in Asia*, 102; Frank Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong* (London: HarperCollins, 1993), 445; and Christine Loh, *Underground Front: The Chinese Communist Party in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 72–73, 81–82.
9. Chi-Kwan Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War: Anglo-American Relations, 1949–1957* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 224–25.

the territory with would-be migrants, to make the British position there untenable. This never happened. The British deliberately attempted to suggest or imply that any Chinese attack on Hong Kong would provoke a response not just from their own forces but also from the United States, initiating a conflict with China that conceivably might trigger World War III. But did the leaders of Communist China really credit this scenario? Did even the British themselves believe it? Or was it a clever conjuring act, a sleight-of-hand heavily reliant upon blue smoke and mirrors? The United States never made any firm commitment to defend Hong Kong. When the British position in Hong Kong became problematic during the 1967 riots, the United States—admittedly embroiled in the Vietnam War—was sedulously noncommittal as to just what actions it might take, should the situation escalate to the point where British rule in Hong Kong was in jeopardy. "Understandings" between allies were one thing, but their actual implementation another. As the riots continued, the US State Department contemplated the possibility that Britain would lose Hong Kong, an outcome American officials might have regretted but most likely would have accepted.[10]

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, as Mark has demonstrated, American leaders noted that the British were reluctant to discuss the details of Hong Kong's defense with them, and they suspected that, faced with a genuine Chinese challenge, the British would decline to fight for Hong Kong. Would American airpower really have been used against invading Chinese forces? It seemed more likely that in any such crisis the Americans would have restricted their actions to assistance to the British in evacuating Western nationals and others who sought to flee Hong Kong, something top US military officials feared the British might be unable to accomplish without American help. In 1957, British prime minister Harold Macmillan assiduously kept secret even from his cabinet an arrangement whereby the United States had agreed to consider Hong Kong a "joint defense problem" and also to acquiesce in Britain's relaxation of the existing Cold War regime of export controls on China, in exchange for a British pledge not to push for mainland China's membership in the United Nations.[11] Budgetary pressures brought substantial British defense cuts in the 1950s and 1960s. These included reductions in the Hong Kong garrison to a level only adequate to maintain internal security in the colony. Eventually, in 1968, economic difficulties in Britain led Harold Wilson's Labour government to decide to withdraw all British

10. Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992*, 213–14; Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 229–31; Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 156–57; Chi-Kwan Mark, "Lack of Means or Loss of Will? The United Kingdom and the Decolonization of Hong Kong, 1957–1967," *International History Review* 31 (1) (March 2009): 45–71; and Chi-Kwan Mark, "Hostage Diplomacy: Britain, China, and the Politics of Negotiation, 1967–1969," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 20 (3) (November 2009): 473–93.

11. Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 72–79, 169–73; Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, 449–50; Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992*, 208–9; and David Clayton, *Imperialism Revisited: Political and Economic Relations between Britain and China, 1950–54* (Houndmills, UK: Macmillan, 1997), 99–100, 114–15.

forces deployed east of Suez by 1971.[12] Until the 1980s Hong Kong's exact future remained unclear, but most British and Chinese officials assumed that it would ultimately revert to China, probably when the lease on the New Territories expired in 1997.[13]

That reversion did not occur until then was because Hong Kong's greatest value to the People's Republic of China was economic. Although the Chinese Communists gradually nationalized most important sectors of the Chinese economy, China was not an autarky. In 1949, China was recovering from close to three decades of war, internal and external. New China's leaders sought to modernize their impoverished country, to ensure at least a basic standard of living for all. In the 1950s, the Soviet Union initiated a substantial aid program, with several thousand Soviet "experts" spending time in China on projects designed to encourage China's modernization.[14] But China nonetheless desired access to foreign goods and foreign exchange, and it also sought to sell for profit in outside markets commodities and goods originating in China. With virtually all foreign firms forced to cease operations in China in the early 1950s, Hong Kong still served as a conduit for some such transactions. Much of Hong Kong's own food came from over the border with China. Goods from China were on sale in the local mainland-run China Products Stores, not to mention many smaller shops. Hong Kong was also usually the route whereby external remittances sent to the mainland by Chinese overseas reached their destination. When the United States resumed trade with China in the early 1970s, Hong Kong handled most of the shipments involved.[15] John Darwin has gone so far as to suggest that post-1949 Hong Kong effectively served as mainland China's treaty port, through which the bulk of transactions with the West were conducted, taking on the role that Guangzhou (Canton) had played during the Qing dynasty.[16]

As Lu Xun and Tracy Steele describe later in this volume, on the economic front, the Cold War was initially seriously disadvantageous to Hong Kong. Drastic cutbacks in trade with China occurred during the Korean War, which were highly detrimental to

12. Mark, "Lack of Means or Loss of Will?" 45–71; Mark, "Hostage Diplomacy," 473–93; Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, 452–53; and Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 70–75.
13. Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, 471–72; Grantham, *Via Ports*, 172, 183; and Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 154–56.
14. Deborah A. Kaple, "Soviet Advisors in China in the 1950s," and Shu Guang Zhang, "Sino-Soviet Economic Cooperation," in *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949–1963*, ed. Odd Arne Westad (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 117–40, 189–225.
15. Mei Renyi and Chen Juebin, "Hong Kong's Role in US-China Trade Relations during the 1970s," in *Bridging the Sino-American Divide: American Studies with Chinese Characteristics*, ed. Priscilla Roberts (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 412–30; Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 130–32, 169; Clayton, *Imperialism Revisited*, 120–21, 199–200; Loh, *Underground Front*, 84; and Richard Roberts and David Kynaston, *The Lion Wakes: A Modern History of HSBC* (London: Profile Books, 2015), 15–18.
16. John Darwin, "Hong Kong in British Decolonisation," in *Hong Kong's Transitions, 1842–1997*, ed. Judith M. Brown and Rosemary Foot (Houndmills, UK: Macmillan, 1997), 29–31.

Hong Kong. The United States broke off all commercial relations with China, freezing Chinese assets in the United States, embargoing all imports originating in China from entering the United States, and forbidding the export of either American raw materials or manufactured products that might ultimately be destined for the mainland. Soon after the Korean War began, the administration of President Harry S. Truman was also instrumental in persuading the United Nations to impose severe economic sanctions upon China that banned trade in a numerous commodities defined as strategic. Despite protests from the British government and Hong Kong businesses, these controls, which brought major economic hardships to Hong Kong and its population at all social levels, were not relaxed until 1957, by which time the Hong Kong economy had been substantially reoriented.[17] Within a few years of the Korean War, the colony became a major manufacturing center, producing inexpensive goods such as textiles, shoes, toys, and plastic flowers for international markets around the world.[18] In a later chapter in this volume, Lu Xun goes so far as to argue that, by forcing Hong Kong to reinvent itself economically, ultimately the tight export controls on Hong Kong were beneficial in terms of its long-term development. At the time, however, they were a remarkably well-disguised blessing, causing severe distress to the entire community, to the point that at least some Hong Kong people felt lasting resentment toward the United States. Somewhat ironically, moreover, as Nancy Bernkopf Tucker points out, faced with growing competition from Hong Kong goods, American manufacturers and labor unions then sought to impose import controls on such products.[19]

Hong Kong always performed a range of economic functions for China. Despite the imposition of trade controls on China, and especially after the United States acquiesced in the reduction by its Cold War allies of the international regime of sanctions, Hong Kong continued to serve as a transshipment center for a significant portion of China's trade with other countries, especially those outside the Soviet bloc, providing China with much of its badly needed foreign exchange. Hong Kong–based shipping lines carried most of this trade, and leading Hong Kong business figures maintained close relations with China.[20] As David Meyer describes in his chapter in this volume, during the Cold War banks and businesses from Europe, North America,

17. On these controls, see Shu Guang Zhang, *Economic Cold War: America's Embargo against China and the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949–1963* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 132–73; Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, 450–51; Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 158; and Clayton, *Imperialism Revisited*, 109–11, 131–32, 173–76, 191–93.
18. Grantham, *Via Ports*, 172; Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, 450–52; Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 162–67; and Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 143–44.
19. Tucker, *Hong Kong, China, and the United States, 1945–1992*, 205–6.
20. See esp. Cindy Yik-yi Chu, *Chinese Communists and Hong Kong Capitalists: 1937–1997* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 46; and Shu Guang Zhang, *Beijing's Economic Statecraft during the Cold War 1949–1991* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 26–27, 33–34, 46–47, 50, 54–55.

and across Asia established branches and regional headquarters in Hong Kong. Mainland Chinese institutions likewise set up offices in the territory. Since the mid-nineteenth century, Hong Kong had been part of global networks of capital. During the Cold War years this pattern was intensified, as—thanks in part to the absence of any other such center in mainland China—the territory became a key hub where top-level economic decision makers encountered and worked with each other. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, when mainland China began to modernize in earnest, it was able to utilize these networks to mobilize funding and expertise for that purpose. And when China launched its modernization program, mainland economic officials seeking pointers for their own country's development toured Hong Kong, together with Macau, Japan, Singapore, and various European countries, to determine what lessons China might draw from the experiences of those locations.[21] One major preoccupation of Xu Jiatun, director of Xinhua's Hong Kong office from 1983 to 1989, was indeed to ensure that local and overseas Chinese capital did not flee Hong Kong before the handover.[22] His concern was justified, since by 1986 Hong Kong ranked first among all sources of foreign investment capital in China.

Mainland China also, however, valued Hong Kong as its own "window to Southeast Asia, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Western world," a "watch tower, weather station, and beachhead" for China that would act as "a frontline . . . to break the embargo by [the] US-led Western camp" on China. Communist officials clearly perceived this embargo as embracing not just the economic but also the intellectual and informational sphere.[23] Hong Kong provided a convenient base for Chinese Communist intelligence and espionage efforts.[24] As British Joint Intelligence Committee reports repeatedly recognized, from 1949 on, "the Chinese government relied on Hong Kong as a base for its espionage operations against the West just as much as the West relied on Hong Kong for its operations against China." Taking over Cold War Hong Kong would have made no strategic sense for China.[25] Hong Kong was also home to two major leftist and Communist-backed newspapers, the *Wen Wei Po* and *Ta Kung Pao*. In 1952 these publications' highly critical reporting of what were perceived to be the shortcomings of the colonial government, particularly in providing adequate and safe housing and social welfare, led the Hong Kong government to suspend their licenses to publish and to impose substantial fines on their owners and

21. See Mei and Chen, "Hong Kong's Role in US-China Trade Relations during the 1970s," 422–30; Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong,* 159, 175–79; Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 136–37, 142; Roberts and Kynaston, *The Lion Wakes*, 167–71; and Chu, *Chinese Communists and Hong Kong Capitalists*, 68.
22. Shiraishi and Hau, "China, Japan and the Transformation of East Asia," in Zheng, Hong, and Szonyi, *The Cold War in Asia*, 33; and Chu, *Chinese Communists and Hong Kong Capitalists*, 54–47, 69–76, 78.
23. Xinhua documents, as quoted in Lu, "Limits to Propaganda," in Zheng, Hong, and Szonyi, *The Cold War in Asia*, 101–2; also Clayton, *Imperialism Revisited*, 120.
24. Loh, *Underground Front*, 84, 94–95.
25. Calder Walton, *Empire of Secrets: British Intelligence, the Cold War and the Twilight of Empire* (London: William Collins, 2013), 332.

editors. Pressure from London soon caused the colonial government to reduce or reverse these penalties, while Beijing reined in the journalists responsible for producing these newspapers. Their coverage of events in Hong Kong quickly became far less confrontational, belligerent, and ideologically slanted, with greater emphasis on entertainment and local news. Circulation of the leftist media increased, in large part because the papers adjusted themselves to appeal to the local Hong Kong market.[26] A tacit understanding existed that Beijing would not destabilize Hong Kong, so long as the Hong Kong government maintained order within the colony and did not permit it to become too serious or effective a base for challenging and subverting the People's Republic.[27]

Hong Kong was scarcely a workers' paradise. Especially after the massive refugee influx of the 1950s, many of its inhabitants lived and worked in the most primitive of conditions, often crowded into dangerous hillside squatter villages, lacking running water or electricity, with access to little or nothing in the way of social services or labor regulations. (The outbreak of massive fires in the refugee squatter settlements at Shek Kip Mei on Christmas Day 1953, killing two and leaving 58,000 people homeless, did finally propel the Hong Kong authorities into rehousing squatters in what were admittedly spartan government-built multistory apartment blocks.)[28] Indeed,

Image 1.2
Refugee family, early 1960s. Courtesy of Tim Ko.

26. Lu, "Limits to Propaganda," in Zheng, Hong, and Szonyi, *The Cold War in Asia*, 103–12; also Loh, *Underground Front*, 91–94.
27. Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 26–30; and Clayton, *Imperialism Revisited*, 116–22.
28. Gavin Ure, *Governors, Politics and the Colonial Office: Public Policy in Hong Kong, 1918–58* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), chs. 8–9.

Hong Kong generally prided itself on being a free-market society. As with so much else in Hong Kong, the labor movement was politically fragmented, with pro-Communist, pro-Kuomintang, and independent trade unions. The ethos of self-reliance was—and even today still remains—strong in Hong Kong.

But social tensions and frustrations could have significant implications for British rule. From 1950 until the mid-1960s, labor relations in Hong Kong were fundamentally peaceful. This changed dramatically with the Star Ferry riots of 1966, outbursts that, like the far more extensive and politically freighted disturbances of 1967, were rooted in the grievances of working class Hong Kong people, even though the 1967 riots also became heavily politicized and took up Cultural Revolution themes of class warfare and anticolonialism. Mainland officials were quite cold blooded in taking no real part in these battles, showing little compunction in distancing themselves from their pro-Communist allies within Hong Kong's labor movement.[29] Essentially, they left it to the Hong Kong government to address these problems and maintain order within the territory. After repressing the riots rather efficiently, the British authorities moved to address some of the underlying discontent that had prompted them. The implementation of a massive array of social reforms—the provision of basic but adequate public housing, far broader popular access to education at every level, a crackdown on corruption, the expansion of medical facilities, and even some social security and other welfare benefits, however limited—was the major accomplishment of Sir Murray MacLehose, governor of Hong Kong from 1971 to 1982. It also

Image 1.3
Struggle between leftists and police, 1967. Courtesy of Tim Ko.

29. On the attitude of the central Beijing government to the Hong Kong riots, see, e.g., Chu, *Chinese Communists and Hong Kong Capitalists*, 48–50; Loh, *Underground Front*, 103–22; and Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 150–57.

owed something to the fact that the flagrant absence of any genuine welfare state in Hong Kong, by that time one of Britain's few surviving colonies, together with extensive official corruption among police and civil servants, had become something of an international embarrassment to the British government back in London.[30]

The Acrobatics of Multiple Balancing

Throughout the Cold War, both internally and internationally, maintaining the status quo required that the British in Hong Kong perform a delicate balancing act. Britain, a leading ally of the United States in the Cold War with the Soviet Union, was heavily dependent on the United States in terms of both its economy and its own defense. Both were partners in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Western security alliance established in 1949, in part at British instigation. From 1950 onward, for twenty years the United States was apparently locked into policies of relentless antagonism toward the Communist People's Republic on the mainland, refusing to accord the PRC diplomatic recognition and blocking mainland membership in the United Nations, while maintaining that the Republic of China on Taiwan, led by Chiang Kai-shek, was the only legitimate government of all China. As Communist forces won control of ever-larger portions of China in the late 1940s, hundreds of thousands of refugees flocked into Hong Kong. Many of these were defeated Nationalists and their families, some at least of them vehement anti-Communists who were determined to reverse the outcome of the Chinese Civil War. Lu Xun and Tracy Steele build in this volume on earlier work by Chi-Kwan Mark and Steve Tsang to describe in detail various aspects of just how the British government attempted to maneuver and negotiate among these opposing forces, clamping down on Nationalist operations and Communist excesses in Hong Kong, while allowing the United States a carefully circumscribed sphere of action within the territory, one that would in practice be acceptable to the mainland authorities.[31]

The operational guidelines of these arrangements took some time to develop. The British government in London, concerned primarily with broader Cold War strategy, often proved readier to conciliate the United States at mainland expense than the Hong Kong administration would have wished. This was particularly apparent in

30. Joe England and John Rear, *Chinese Labour under British Rule: A Critical Study of Labour Relations and Law in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1975), 4–22, 278–310; on the labor movement in Hong Kong, see also chs. 4–5. On the post-1967 reforms, see Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 157–64; Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 203–5; and Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, 475–93.

31. On Hong Kong's policies toward Communist and Nationalist activities in Hong Kong, see Steve Tsang, "Strategy for Survival: The Cold War and Hong Kong's Policy towards Kuomintang and Chinese Communist Activities in the 1950s," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25 (2) (May 1997): 294–317; also Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 158–59; Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, 444–46; Clayton, *Imperialism Revisited*, 99–107; and Loh, *Underground Front*, 75–76, 80–82, 95.

the early Cold War years, when both the Communist and Nationalist regimes laid claim to the assets and aircraft of the China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC), most of which had been moved to Hong Kong after the Communist takeover. In lengthy legal proceedings that dragged on for three years, the Hong Kong and British courts upheld the claims of the PRC as the de facto government of China. The Hong Kong and British governments then came under heavy pressure from the US government, as well as the Nationalists' legal representatives, who included General William J. Donovan, former head of the wartime US intelligence agency, the Office of Strategic Services, to surrender the airplanes to the Nationalists. Ultimately, the British government bowed to American demands and—somewhat to the dismay of Sir Alexander Grantham, Hong Kong's governor—passed an order-in-council directing that the aircraft be handed over to Nationalist ownership. In this case, in the eyes of London, the need to conciliate the Americans took priority over maintaining reasonable relations with China.[32] On other occasions, however, when Chinese artillery opened fire on British naval vessels or civilian aircraft, British reactions were relatively restrained.[33] The British nonetheless took a fairly tough line toward aggressively Communist elements in Hong Kong, with the most incendiary on occasion arrested and jailed and others expelled back to the mainland.[34] One such deportee, a Chinese university graduate blessed with "charm and intelligence above the average," had spent several years as a personal bodyguard to Grantham himself, no doubt reporting regularly on the governor to his superiors in Beijing.[35]

The information this young man sent back may have been enlightening. Governor of Hong Kong for a crucial decade, from July 1947 to December 1957, Grantham was probably the single British official most responsible for setting the territory's Cold War guidelines. As often as not, from the 1950s onward, governors of Hong Kong and their top civil servants tended—sometimes successfully, sometimes not—to speak for their colony's interests rather than those of metropolitan government in London. During the 1950s, the Hong Kong government won itself increasing financial autonomy from London, in terms of setting budgets and managing its own affairs. Grantham also demonstrated considerable skill in limiting the amount of funds the Hong Kong government handed over to the British Treasury as a contribution to the expenses of maintaining British military forces in Hong Kong.[36] As Tracy Steele describes in a subsequent chapter, in 1957 Grantham successfully blocked an attempt

32. Grantham, *Via Ports*, 161–64; Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, 446–48; Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 94–100; Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 142–43; Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992*, 207–8; and Clayton, *Imperialism Revisited*, 112–13.
33. Grantham, *Via Ports*, 164.
34. Grantham, *Via Ports*, 147–49; Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 137–38; and Clayton, *Imperialism Revisited*, 103–7.
35. Grantham, *Via Ports*, 179.
36. Ure, *Governors, Politics and the Colonial Office*, ch. 10.

Image 1.4
Governor Sir Alexander Grantham (center), Sir Lindsay Ride (right), Lady Maurine Grantham (far left), Lady Violet May Ride (second left). Courtesy of Tim Ko.

by the budget-conscious Department of Defence to close all British naval facilities in Hong Kong, something he believed would be highly detrimental to local morale.[37]

The British authorities in Hong Kong were generally less effective in fighting the territory's corner when Hong Kong–related issues featured in some way in broader Anglo-American negotiations. Yet Grantham—who had an American wife—also proved himself an eloquent exponent of Hong Kong's special position and its value to the Western world before influential audiences in the United States. Speaking to the elite Council on Foreign Relations in New York in September 1954, Grantham explained that Hong Kong was one of the few places where Communist China and the "free world" encountered each other. It was not just a China watching station and listening post but also "a living example for the Chinese of a free life," a lesson disseminated throughout South China and beyond. Five thousand people entered and left Hong Kong every day, he said, many of them Chinese. Speaking at a time when Britain was hoping to win a US defense commitment to Hong Kong, Grantham warned that, though some considered Hong Kong "expendable," abandoning the territory and its 2.5 million people would send the message throughout Southeast Asia

37. See also Chi-Kwan Mark, "Defense or Decolonisation? Britain, the United States, and the Hong Kong Question in 1957," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 33 (1) (January 2005): 60–62, 65, 67.

that the West would not stand up to Communism in Asia. Although the attitude of the PRC to Hong Kong was one of "cold hostility," Britain had been able to crack down on Communist agitators in the colony. But given that China could at any time cut off food supplies to Hong Kong, Britain sought neither to "appease" nor to "provoke" China unnecessarily in the territory. Asked what value British control of Hong Kong had for China, Grantham replied that it provided "a peephole and a place in which to do business with foreign firms." To an inquiry as to what might induce Britain to return Hong Kong to China, Grantham replied that, should "a reasonably responsible government" come to power in China, he believed "the force of world opinion" would impel Britain to give up the colony.[38]

Returning to the council two years later, in September 1956, rather late in his term of office, Grantham took up these themes again. He unsentimentally described Hong Kong as "a benevolent autocracy or even a police state," whose people were generally "apathetic toward politics." The Soviets had been largely excluded from undertaking any activities in Hong Kong. There was also no "recognized Red Chinese diplomat" in the territory, in part because 85 percent of Hong Kong people were still Chinese citizens, prompting fears that any such representative might try to "establish himself as king of the Chinese citizenry." Grantham anticipated that Hong Kong would revert to Chinese rule in 1997, not least because its water supply, airfield, and other essential facilities were in the leased portion of the territory. He believed the Chinese had no great wish to take Hong Kong by force, in part because the British and perhaps the Americans would probably fight for it and destroy most of its infrastructure before they left. In Grantham's view, Hong Kong was "of no use to Communist China except in times of peace when it serves as a peephole on the world and provides trading, insurance, banking and other facilities for her." One major problem was that around 80 percent of mainland visitors to Hong Kong refused to return to China. Grantham stated that most Chinese in Hong Kong were "anti-Communist but . . . not pro-Nationalist," with many "undecided" in sympathy. China therefore sought to win over influential local Hong Kong people and was currently conducting a "cultural offensive" targeted at professionals such as lawyers, teachers, and doctors.[39]

While such mainland efforts clearly left the British authorities uneasy, Nationalist efforts to transform the territory into a redoubt for anti-Communist activities were a greater source of alarm. The arrival in 1949–50 of several thousand mostly destitute and starving former Nationalist soldiers, probably close to 10,000 by mid-1950, proved particularly problematic. Initially, the colonial authorities funded supposedly

38. Digest of Meeting, Sir Alexander Grantham, "China as Seen from Hong Kong," September 29, 1954, Folder 1, Box 446, Council on Foreign Relations Papers, Mudd Manuscripts Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, United States.

39. Digest of Meeting, Sir Alexander Grantham, "A British Estimate of Communist China," September 16, 1956, Folder 5, Box 447, Council on Foreign Relations Papers.

private philanthropic efforts to feed them, while hoping to deport them all to Taiwan in the near future. CCP officials declined to readmit them to the Chinese mainland, while the Nationalist government on Taiwan, although they eventually took several thousand from this group, was reluctant to admit the remainder. In their first few months in Hong Kong, members of this particular Nationalist cohort were held in an old fort on Mount Davis on western Hong Kong Island, where in June 1950 they became a target for demonstrations by pro-Communist Chinese in Hong Kong, which led to violent clashes. The British government had already been planning to remove this Nationalist cluster to a more remote location in the New Territories, Tiu Keng Leng or Rennie's Mill; it did so one week later, shipping 6,000 refugees there. The Nationalist settlement quickly became a magnet for other likeminded refugees, and numbers soon swelled, with probably an additional 10,000 to 20,000 settling nearby. With the colonial government's encouragement, philanthropic groups established a Hong Kong Rennie's Mill Refugee Camp Relief Committee (HKRMRC), supported by wealthy Chinese business leaders, an organization that soon became a conduit for Nationalist funds from Taiwan, provided by the Free China Relief Association (FCRA). Until 1953, however, the colonial government continued to provide the bulk of financial support for the community. Although Nationalist officials promised that all would eventually move on to Taiwan, in practice the FCRA set about constructing a permanent community in Hong Kong that would serve its international propaganda goals of maintaining a pro-KMT anti-Communist redoubt in Hong Kong itself. Pro-Nationalist agents infiltrated the community and—as in some of the Chinese prisoner-of-war camps in Korea—enforced discipline, demanding that all members ostentatiously demonstrate their enthusiastic support for Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT. Although several thousand of these refugees did move to Taiwan, those suspected of being only lukewarm in their enthusiasm for this cause or lacking the right political connections or friends were unlikely to be chosen for repatriation to the island. Some were even expelled from Rennie's Mill, while after the cessation of subsidies from the British authorities numerous others departed voluntarily in 1952 and 1953, incurring fierce criticism and ostracism from Nationalist representatives. Those who were left, around 7,500 in late 1958, developed a strong sense of community and camaraderie, even as they maintained educational and cultural links with the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan. Rennie's Mill, still low rise and undeveloped, remained an increasingly anachronistic pro-Nationalist enclave, tolerated until the early 1990s, shortly before the handover, when the inhabitants were dispersed and the site bulldozed to accommodate a new Mass Transit Railway station.[40]

40. Dominic Meng-Hsuang Yang, "Humanitarian Assistance and Propaganda War: Repatriation and Relief of the Nationalist Refugees in Hong Kong's Rennie's Mill Camp, 1950–1955," *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 10 (2) (November 2014): 165–96.

For several decades, from the mid-1950s until the 1990s, the Hong Kong government effectively attained a modus vivendi with those surviving Rennie's Mill residents who never reached Taiwan, allowing them limited scope to continue their ROC leanings and identification, so long as they created no major disturbances or public embarrassments. The British authorities were, however, exceedingly eager to rid the territory of Nationalist-backed agitators and intelligence operatives, some of whom sought to attack and assassinate pro-Communist officials and business figures in Hong Kong. In a particularly egregious episode, in 1955 Nationalist agents at Kai Tak Airport in Hong Kong placed a bomb on the *Kashmir Princess*, an Air India flight carrying a party of journalists to the Bandung Conference. The aircraft blew up in midflight, killing all on board. The perpetrators had apparently believed that Premier Zhou Enlai of China would be traveling on that particular plane. In this case, the British government made strenuous efforts to locate and arrest those responsible, eventually identifying a probable suspect, who fled to Taiwan before he could be arrested. The Taiwan authorities ignored British requests that the Nationalists extradite him to Hong Kong. Other agents of a Nationalist intelligence organization in Hong Kong who were implicated in planning this operation were deported. The British had no intention of allowing Hong Kong to become the venue for open warfare between Chinese Nationalists and Communists, with the Chinese Civil War effectively still in progress on Hong Kong's streets.[41]

Nor did the British wish US activities in the colony to be unduly provocative toward China. With all remaining US diplomatic missions in China closed after 1949, Hong Kong became the closest vantage point from which the United States and other nations that declined to recognize the new PRC could observe developments in China. The same was true for foreign journalists, whose access to New China was usually sharply restricted by the mainland authorities. In this volume Lu and Steele follow other historians in describing how the number of diplomats attached to the American consulate general in Hong Kong in a variety of nominal capacities mushroomed dramatically in the early 1950s, making it the largest consulate in the world. Some of these were, as Lu describes, collecting verbal and written information on China, interviewing refugees and recent visitors to China, amassing data from mainland publications of every kind, and vacuuming up the output of Chinese radio broadcasts. They also gathered information on Communist elements within Hong Kong itself. NSC 6007/1, a US National Security Council (NSC) policy paper of June 1960, described the American consulate in Hong Kong as "the most important source of hard economic, political and military information on Communist China."[42]

41. Grantham, *Via Ports*, 180–81; Steve Tsang, "Target Zhou Enlai: The 'Kashmir Princess' Incident of 1955," *China Quarterly* 139 (September 1994): 766–82; and Richard J. Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence* (New York: Overlook Press, 2002), 311–13.

42. NSC 6007/1, "US Policy on Hong Kong," June 11, 1960, quoted in Johannes R. Lombardo, "A Mission of Espionage, Intelligence and Psychological Operations: The American Consulate in Hong Kong, 1949–64,"

From 1949 onward, the Hong Kong government was quietly cooperating with the United States in providing electronic information on both China and Indochina, from a British Government Communication Headquarters listening post established at Little Sai Wan in the remote eastern part of Hong Kong Island, well away from public view. During the Korean War, this facility proved particularly helpful in terms of providing information on China; in the Vietnam War, it was valuable in intercepting North Vietnamese military and diplomatic radio traffic, information that the Americans used when planning bombing strikes on targets in North Vietnam. By the later 1970s, the station was also monitoring Soviet naval movements in the western Pacific Ocean, both up around the Vladivostok naval headquarters and also in Vietnam, where the Soviets obtained special naval base rights at Camranh Bay soon after North Vietnam conquered the South in 1975.[43] It is possible that during the 1970s and early 1980s mainland Chinese agents in Hong Kong successfully penetrated the Little Sai Wan Station and the nearby Stanley Fort Satellite Station, removing various documents, including information that would have enabled them to counter Anglo-American surveillance of PRC communications and satellites. If so, all involved chose not to publicize the matter.[44]

Far more problematic for the British was US backing of Nationalist terrorist activities within Hong Kong and American attempts to use Hong Kong as a launching pad for Nationalist operations intended to topple or at least weaken the Communist government of China. US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operatives were apparently implicated in at least some of these activities, which were a chronic feature throughout the 1950s and the early 1960s. The CIA maintained a massive facility in Hong Kong, and its officers sometimes acted unilaterally, omitting to consult or inform the Hong Kong authorities. At the very least, the CIA almost certainly provided much of the funding that supported Nationalist anti-Communist enterprises for which Hong Kong was a venue or platform. In October 1956, full-scale street battles in which Nationalists attacked Communist sympathizers erupted; eventually, the British garrison assisted the local police in putting these down. Governor Grantham suspected the American consulate general bore at least some responsibility

in *The Clandestine Cold War in Asia, 1945–65: Western Intelligence, Propaganda and Special Operations*, ed. Richard J. Aldrich, Gary D. Rawnsley, and Ming-Yeh T. Rawnsley (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 75. On the role of the American Consulate, see also Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, 306–11; and Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 178–85. For a personal account of the experience of China-watching in early 1960s Hong Kong, see Nicholas Platt, *China Boys: How U.S. Relations with the PRC Began and Grew; A Personal Memoir* (Washington, DC: New Academia / Vellum Books, 2009), 31–50.

43. Stephen Dorril, *MI6: Fifty Years of Special Operations* (London: Fourth Estate, 2000), 719–20; Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, 308, 400–401; Lombardo, "A Mission of Espionage," 66; and Jeffrey T. Richelson and Desmond Ball, *The Ties That Bind: Intelligence Cooperation between the UKUSA Countries—United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand*, 2nd ed. (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 40, 190, 206.

44. Richelson and Ball, *The Ties That Bind*, 22.

for these events. British officials feared these campaigns might bring Chinese retaliation against Hong Kong, not least because Premier Zhou Enlai warned the British government that the PRC "could not permit further Hong Kong disorders on the doorstep of China" and had "a duty to protect the Chinese nationals there." The British not unnaturally resented this cavalier American behavior within Hong Kong, a territory under British, not American, rule. Hong Kong–based Nationalist sabotage and operations and against China became particularly intense in the late 1950s and early 1960s, bringing forceful requests, formal and informal, to the Americans from the governments in both Hong Kong and London to rein in their Nationalist associates. The Hong Kong authorities also began prosecuting Nationalist saboteurs and sentencing them to lengthy jail terms, rather than as in the past simply deporting them to Taiwan.[45]

Hong Kong's Cultural Cold War

Within Hong Kong, the Chinese Civil War also continued in the cultural sphere. Pro-Nationalist and pro-Communist Chinese writers and filmmakers competed with each other to win the loyalties of Hong Kong and overseas Chinese and to interpret developments in China to the rest of Asia and beyond. From the American consulate general, American personnel attached to the US Information Service (USIS) used the talents of such individuals in assorted initiatives that disseminated a wide range of anti-Communist propaganda of every kind throughout Hong Kong, with the intention of countering Communist efforts, and also produced publications and radio broadcasts targeted at overseas Chinese throughout East and Southeast Asia. Hong Kong was indeed the leading Asian center for preparing and distributing such materials. Radio Free Asia also transmitted broadcasts to mainland China itself, though assessments vary as to just how effective such efforts were, given how few Chinese had access to radios and the extent of formal and informal surveillance within Communist China. At times, indeed, in 1953 for example, the British in Hong Kong considered them excessive, forcing USIS to cut back its programs of publishing anti-Communist material.[46]

45. Lombardo, "A Mission of Espionage," 66–67, 72–74, 76–78; Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*,455–56; Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, 307–8, 311–13; Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 182–83, 185–94; Mark, "Defense or Decolonisation?" 57–58; Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992*, 206–7; Grantham, *Via Ports*, 169–70; and Clayton, *Imperialism Revisited*, 114–16. The quotation from Zhou Enlai is taken from Chi-Kwan Mark, "The 'Problem of People': British Colonials, Cold War Powers, and the Chinese Refugees in Hong Kong, 1949–62," *Modern Asian Studies* 41 (6) (November 2007): 1164. For a Chinese view of US Cold War propaganda against China and its effectiveness, see Guo Yonghu, "Soft Containment: US Psychological Warfare against China in the 1950s and 1960s," in *Going Soft? The US and China Go Global*, ed. Priscilla Roberts (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2014), 141–56.

46. Lombardo, "A Mission of Espionage," 71; Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, 309–11; Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 191, 194–204; and Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992*, 206–7.

More often, however, the British government simply maintained what a 1957 US National Security Council paper described as "the careful fiction of Hong Kong's neutrality with regard to Communist China."[47] This meant, for example, that in the 1950s US government funding for anti-Communist publications and filmmakers within Hong Kong, notably the Asia Press and Asia Pictures, was funneled through the supposedly nongovernmental though in reality largely CIA-funded Committee for Free Asia (subsequently the Asia Foundation). It was not simply pressure from the Hong Kong authorities that led the US government to conceal its role in funding anti-Communist cultural activities in Hong Kong. Chang Kuo Sin, the pro-Nationalist journalist who founded and ran the Asia Press and Asia Pictures throughout the 1950s, was equally insistent that the financial backing his enterprises received from the Committee for Free Asia must be kept secret. He feared that, should this become known, his films and publications would lose all credibility. Some anti-Communist propaganda, especially the films, was extremely subtle and conveyed ambivalent messages, though print publications were often more blatant in their overtly pro-Nationalist and anti-Communist bias.[48]

The mainland Chinese government was undoubtedly aware of many of these activities. In 1958, the PRC authorities even published a lengthy press story describing in detail US propaganda activities, front organizations, and recruiting of Chinese agents in Hong Kong.[49] For the most part, however, it seems to have tolerated and largely ignored them, leaving it to Britain to keep American efforts to win hearts and minds within bounds. Some Sino-US direct rivalry certainly existed. In his memoirs, Governor Grantham wryly recalled how, after every Hong Kong disaster, such as the Shek Kip Mei fire, the mainland and the United States competed in offering humanitarian aid to Hong Kong.[50] The British perennially tried to impose a certain restraint on their American ally. For example, when the Universities Service Centre (USC), a research facility funded by American foundations, was established in 1963 to collect materials of every kind on mainland China and provide a base for American scholars and policy experts studying China, the "rather skittish" British authorities in Hong Kong were not hostile but warned US officials to keep a low profile.[51] Initially, the British wanted no publicity whatsoever even for plans to establish the

47. NSC 5717, "US Policy on Hong Kong," July 17, 1957, quoted in Charles Leary, "'The Most Careful Arrangements for a Careful Fiction: A Short History of Asia Pictures," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 13 (4) (December 2012): 548.
48. Leary, "'The Most Careful Arrangements for a Careful Fiction," 548–58.
49. Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, 310–11; also Lombardo, "A Mission of Espionage," 74.
50. Grantham, *Via Ports*, 155–56.
51. A. Doak Barnett to William W. Marvel, November 13, 1961, Chronological File October–November 1961, Box 147, A. Doak Barnett Papers, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, NY, United States; also Barnett to Marvel, August 22, 1962, Chronological File January–March 1961, Box 147, Barnett Papers.

USC or that the Carnegie Corporation was providing the necessary financial backing.[52] American scholars and others temporarily attached to the new USC, including A. Doak Barnett of Columbia University and Jerome Cohen and Ezra Vogel of Harvard, who were publishing research-based books on Communist China, soon began using the center to interview émigrés from the Chinese mainland. The British government tacitly "tolerate[d]" these activities, just so long as interviews were conducted discreetly in a USC "neutral sub-office" rather than at the center's main premises in Kowloon.[53]

A certain competitive element always characterized Britain's dealings with the United States in Hong Kong. When reestablishing the University of Hong Kong after the Second World War, British officials saw this move as necessary to enable Britain to maintain its position in China and Asia in the face of American rivalry.[54] As Tracy Steele points out in this volume, the British were decidedly wary of involving US forces directly in Hong Kong's defense, preparing to leave the precise nature if any of American military commitments to Hong Kong veiled in convenient ambiguity and obscurity. Law Yuk-fun suggests that, after October 1949, not only did American officials initially doubt Britain's ability to hold Hong Kong against a determined Communist assault, but they also felt real misgivings over publicly endorsing the continued existence of a bastion of Western colonialism in Asia. (Even when supporting the French in Vietnam, one should note, the United States sought the cover of a suitable indigenous but non-Communist figure as the nominal head of government.) Hong Kong's efforts to keep up its trade with Communist China after Chinese intervention in the Korean War also angered many influential American congressional figures. Only gradually did the American government come to appreciate the international propaganda value of Hong Kong as a flourishing capitalist redoubt, an oasis of economic prosperity and development that offered ever-greater contrasts and an implicit rebuke to the bleak situation on the Communist mainland. American officials also came to perceive the influx of refugees to Hong Kong, Chinese who had literally voted with their feet in fleeing Communist rule, as representing a significant Western advantage in the Cold War. In the mid-1950s, therefore, Americans switched to considering Hong Kong far more in terms of its appreciable value as a Cold War asset, psychological as much as strategic. In Law's view, these increasingly sympathetic US perceptions of Hong Kong had much to do with the Eisenhower administration's growing readiness, in 1957 and 1960, to make some kind of indication,

52. Barnett to "Professors Wilbur, Ho, Dallin, deBary, Hazard, Fried, Morley, Passin, and Howard Boorman and Mrs. Roberts," April 19, 1963, Chronological File April 1963, Box 147, Barnett Papers.
53. Stanley Lubman to Preston Schoyer, n.d. [mid-1960s], File Preston B. Schoyer, Box 146, Barnett Papers.
54. Duncan J. Sloss, "The British Position in Hong Kong in Relation to China," November 14, 1945, talk at Chatham House, RIIA/8/1168, RIIA Papers, Chatham House, London, United Kingdom.

however equivocal, that maintaining the status quo of British rule in Hong Kong was in the interests of the United States.[55]

The influx of refugees to Hong Kong—667,000 were there by 1954, almost 30 percent of the colony's population—strained the city's existing infrastructure and resources to the limit.[56] Glen Peterson's chapter documents how by late 1951 the United States government had come to perceive the Chinese refugees in Hong Kong as a potential asset. American politicians and diplomats, especially those with an interest in China and ties to the Nationalists, wished to assist at least some of the refugees, the relatively small number—under 5 percent of the total—who had received sufficient education to be considered "intellectuals." In November 1951 Congressional Representative Walter H. Judd, a former missionary to China and key member of the China Lobby in the United States, founded the Committee to Secure Aid for Refugee Chinese Intellectuals (ARCI), a nominally private organization whose members included top business leaders, media figures, and educators, and former missionaries, diplomats, and military personnel with an interest in China. As was also true of the National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE), founded slightly earlier, while ARCI made well-publicized appeals for private donations, much of its funding came—largely covertly—from the State Department and CIA sources. The British government, eager not to antagonize mainland China by sanctioning overtly anti-Communist US operations in Hong Kong, specifically asked the American consul general in Hong Kong to ensure that the State Department did not publicize the fact that ARCI was at least partially financed by US government sources. Nor were the British willing to allow ARCI to set up mass relief stations throughout Hong Kong to highlight the suffering and difficulties of the mainland refugees.[57]

ARCI officials hoped to resettle educated refugees in locales where they might become leaders in anti-Communist efforts, including the overseas Chinese communities across Southeast Asia, as well as Taiwan. In practice, despite the fiercely pro-Nationalist leanings of most top ARCI officials, Southeast Asian governments were generally reluctant to increase the numbers of their overseas Chinese populations,

55. Law Yuk-fun, "Delayed Accommodation: United States Policies towards Hong Kong, 1949–60" (PhD dissertation, University of Hong Kong, 2001).

56. Perceptive overviews of Hong Kong refugee policies during the 1950s and the complex international ramifications of these include Meredith Oyen, *The Diplomacy of Migration: Transnational Lives and the Making of U.S.-Chinese Relations in the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 154–84; and Mark, "The 'Problem of People,'" 1145–81.

57. On US support for ARCI and other refugee programs in Hong Kong, see Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 204–9; Oyen, *The Diplomacy of Migration*, 163–70; and Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992*, 209–10. On allegations that the CIA—not just the US State Department—was heavily involved in providing finance for ARCI, see Hsu, "Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Inc. and the Political Uses of Humanitarian Relief, 1952–1962," *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 10 (2) (November 2014): 142, 145–46; and Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 295–96, note 36.

and the Nationalists in Taiwan were somewhat suspicious of these refugees, fearing some might be Communist spies. Ultimately, ARCI resettled around 14,000 Chinese intellectuals and their families in Taiwan, a few in Southeast Asia, and around 2,500 in the United States. Another 15,000 individuals and their families remained in Hong Kong. Predictably, some of them found employment helping to implement various US-backed propaganda efforts aimed at China, as translators, editors, and broadcasters.[58] Other refugees worked on the distribution side, profiting by selling on the open market in Hong Kong attractive USIS propaganda magazines they themselves had received gratis from the American consulate.[59]

The constraints the Hong Kong government placed on ARCI and other politically motivated humanitarian efforts in Hong Kong were one further example of how in practice the British sought to allow the United States some latitude for activities within the colony yet keep these within limits that would not antagonize the mainland authorities. Peterson describes how in 1952, the Hong Kong government also opposed a proposal by ARCI to establish a Free Chinese University in Hong Kong, a venture the British feared would become a focus for Nationalist-backed anti-Communist efforts. The Hong Kong authorities were equally concerned, however, by what Sir Lindsay Ride, vice-chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, described in 1956 as the Communist "infiltration problem in educational circles."[60] This led to a gradual rethinking of British policies on the creation of a new university, with refugee Chinese personnel at its core. The British government funded the English-language University of Hong Kong, established in 1912, but both within Hong Kong and around Southeast Asia, which had a large overseas Chinese population, many young Chinese sought higher education in the Chinese language. Regionally, this was available only in Taiwan, where the Nationalist government rigidly controlled the educational system, or on the Communist mainland. In both American and British eyes, Hong Kong offered a more neutral platform for Chinese-medium education, one that would help to counter the attractions of Communist-run mainland universities among young people in Hong Kong and beyond while avoiding the ideological rigidities of Nationalist-administered Taiwan institutions.

With the local Hong Kong British administration's acquiescence, from the early 1950s onward, several American private or quasi-private organizations—the university-based Yale-China and Harvard-Yenching groups, plus the wealthy Ford Foundation, and the CIA-funded Asia Foundation—helped to finance and steer

58. On ARCI's operational dealings with Taiwan in particular, see Madeline Y. Hsu, "Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Inc.," 137–64; on its American programs, see Madeline Y. Hsu, *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), ch. 6.

59. Oyen, *The Diplomacy of Migration*, 176.

60. Alan Watt to Richard Casey, April 1956, Correspondence File Alan Watt, Series M1129 Richard Gardiner Casey Papers, National Archives of Australia, Victoria Branch, Melbourne, Australia (Digitized on NAA RecordSearch catalog).

the establishment in Hong Kong of Chinese-language colleges that would provide postsecondary education first to local and eventually to overseas Chinese students. Founded by eminent Chinese refugee scholars, these institutions, of which New Asia College was the most prestigious, eventually merged to become the Chinese University of Hong Kong, an institution whose establishment owed much to pressure and backing from the CIA-funded Asia Foundation, working quietly under the cover of the quasi-independent Mencius Educational Foundation, set up in the early 1950s to fund Chinese-language educational ventures in Hong Kong. The Americans believed that the existence of a relatively free and neutral intellectual space in Hong Kong, in which leftist ideas could at least be discussed, offered a more propitious locale than authoritarian Taiwan for academic institutions that would in practice counter Communism's attractions. By the late 1950s the British government, alarmed by the growing numbers of Hong Kong young people who were seeking higher education outside the territory, with many emigrating permanently, had come to realize that expanding Chinese-medium higher education within Hong Kong by merging the Chinese-language colleges, led by the prestigious New Asia College, into a second university had genuine practical advantages. Both the Americans backing this initiative and the British government deliberately downplayed the extent to which the US government and philanthropic organizations with close American official links were involved in setting up the Chinese University of Hong Kong, an institution that—like their propaganda activities in the territory—Americans involved perceived as an integral part of US efforts to contain the spread of Chinese Communist influences in Asia.[61] While still wary of potential Communist infiltration into the new university's power structure, British government officials were at least as keen to limit Kuomintang and Taiwan involvement in New Asia College and the projected Chinese University. They insisted that financial subsidies from Chiang Kai-shek to New Asia should cease, queried the pro-Taiwan backgrounds of several individuals proposed for senior administrative and academic appointments, and objected to displays of Nationalist flags on October 10 national days. Continuing such practices would, they warned, jeopardize New Asia's inclusion in the new university, a message that the organization's Yale-China American sponsors reinforced.[62]

British functionaries took an equally jaundiced view of unduly flamboyant mainland activities. In mid-1956, Sir Alexander Grantham sought to fend off mainland demands that Chinese dancing teams be allowed to visit Hong Kong, a "cultural offensive" that the government's political adviser believed indicated "that the Communists

61. See Grace Ai-Ling Chou, *Confucianism, Colonialism, and the Cold War: Chinese Cultural Education at Hong Kong's New Asia College, 1949–63* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2012), esp. chs. 2–4; and Zhang Yang, "Cultural Cold War: The American Role in Establishing the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)," in *The Power of Culture: Encounters between China and the United States*, ed. Priscilla Roberts (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2016), 148–69.

62. Chou, *Confucianism, Colonialism, and the Cold War*, 132–48.

wish to use Hong Kong as a show window for the New China." A group of mainland dancers had already visited Macau, monopolizing a local hotel, which was guarded by Macau-based Communists toting machine guns. Grantham thought Hong Kong would be unable to sanction similar arrangements for the safety of mainland artistes.[63] Such mainland-sponsored cultural events were nonetheless staged in Hong Kong and sometimes indeed carefully choreographed in multiple ways. A few years later, in 1961, the Shanghai Yue Opera Company came to Hong Kong and gave sixteen extremely successful performances of the *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Appearing in Hong Kong at the height of the Great Famine, the cast spent the fortnight before their visit immured in a Guangzhou resort hotel being plied with nutritious food, with the objective of dispelling rumors that starvation was rife in China.[64]

Other visitors could pose different dilemmas. Since at least the late nineteenth century, Hong Kong had been a standard port of call for passenger liners carrying well-heeled tourists. The playwright Noel Coward, having written the first draft of his classic comedy *Private Lives* in the Cathay Hotel in Shanghai, revised it in the Peninsula Hotel in Hong Kong. By the early 1960s, tourism was a major Hong Kong industry, second only to textile manufacturing in earnings. Many of these visitors were civilians, particularly Americans. Others, however, were US military personnel, some flown in from Vietnam or Japan, others in Hong Kong for port visits by their ships. Such stopovers by US naval vessels began in the nineteenth century and continued for the first decades of the twentieth but became far more significant to the local economy in the aftermath of the Second World War. Chi-Kwan Mark's chapter describes how, during the Vietnam War, visits by US military tourists on R & R from a war that mainland China officially condemned as an instance of American imperialism had the potential to become extremely controversial politically. The British government simultaneously sought to placate the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson, who deeply resented the failure of Labour prime minister Harold Wilson to dispatch any British troops to assist the Americans in Vietnam, while not pushing mainland Chinese sensitivities to the point of an outright breach. The PRC government did indeed issue four official protests, prompting the Hong Kong and US authorities to develop guidelines for these visits that would, they hoped, keep them within bounds that the mainland would tolerate. Limits were set to the numbers of ships and US military in Hong Kong at any one time; port visits did not coincide with particularly sensitive occasions, such as the Communist and Nationalist national days in early October; and US shore police maintained tight control over the behavior of young American service personnel in Hong Kong. These negotiations paralleled quiet

63. Watt to Casey, April 1956, Correspondence File Alan Watt, Series M1129 Casey Papers.

64. Xiaojue Wang, "Eileen Chang, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and the Cold War," in *Eileen Chang: Romancing Languages, Cultures and Genres*, ed. Kam Louie (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 115–16.

signaling between the United States and China, facilitated at times by the British Foreign Office, over the limits of US involvement in Vietnam that China would be prepared to accept without intervening militarily in that conflict.[65]

A recent article by Peter Hamilton describes how local mainland-backed newspapers continued to report at length all instances of bad behavior by American military visitors and excoriate the presence of US warships in Hong Kong's harbor. But American military personnel—many of them quite literally spending like proverbial drunken sailors—also made a major contribution to local prosperity, leading many in Hong Kong to welcome or at least tolerate their presence.[66] While local sex workers, businesses, and taxis may sometimes have overcharged or cheated them, Americans enjoying themselves on R & R in Hong Kong never became targets for Communist violence. Leftist objections to their presence were confined to the realm of rhetoric, not direct action. Nor did American naval vessels in Hong Kong harbor attract the attentions of Communist saboteurs. As Mark describes, maintaining Hong Kong's attractiveness as a prominent American tourist destination was indeed a major preoccupation for government officials and local businesses. The protracted 1967 riots in Hong Kong, widely reported in the international press, brought a massive downturn in tourism, especially by nonmilitary personnel. While no American military tourists or ships were attacked, mobs stoned hotels on Nathan Road much patronized by visiting US armed forces, as well as the Bank of America, while two bombs were placed in US Information Service offices. Yet, as the British authorities noted with relief, even during the riots individual Americans, including military men and women on leave, were exempt from attack. US warships were likewise ignored and left unscathed.[67] In response, the Hong Kong Tourist Association (HKTA), local businesses, airlines, hotels, travel agents, the media, and the Hong Kong government cooperated in mounting a major international campaign designed to restore the image of Hong Kong as a safe and secure tourist destination, a glamorous and exciting locale and combination of East and West, offering inexpensive shopping, delicious food, exotic and picturesque sights, and abundant local color. By late 1968, their efforts had succeeded, and Hong Kong was once again attracting tourists from around the world, including 158,915 nonmilitary Americans.

65. See also Chi-Kwan Mark, "Vietnam War Tourists: US Naval Visits to Hong Kong and British-American-Chinese Relations, 1965–1968," *Cold War History* 10 (1) (February 2010): 1–28; and Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992*, 211. On Sino-American signaling on Vietnam, see also James G. Hershberg and Chen Jian, "Informing the Enemy: Sino-American 'Signaling' and the Vietnam War, 1965," in *Behind the Bamboo Curtain: China, Vietnam, and the War beyond Asia*, ed. Priscilla Roberts (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 193–258.
66. Peter E. Hamilton, "'A Haven for Tortured Souls': Hong Kong in the Vietnam War," *International History Review* 37 (3) (September 2015): 565–81.
67. Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992*, 213; and Mark, "Vietnam War Tourists," 14.

Cold War Hong Kong: Images and Identities

Hong Kong's image and Hong Kong realities were often at considerable variance with each other. This was readily apparent in depictions of Hong Kong in Cold War popular culture. Several James Bond movies used Hong Kong as a photogenic backdrop and setting for assorted scenes. Earlier, the colony was the setting for two extremely popular Hollywood movies, *Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing* (1955) and *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960). Each was an adaptation of a novel. Han Suyin's semi-autobiographical bestseller, *A Many-Splendoured Thing* (1952), was the story of the doomed Hong Kong love affair between a widowed Eurasian (half Chinese and half Belgian) doctor and a married Australian war correspondent who was killed in the Korean War. Richard Mason's *The World of Suzie Wong* (1957) was the story of a British artist and a Wanchai bargirl who fall in love and, after various complications, ultimately marry. In the film versions, the British and Australian male protagonists were transformed into Americans, both coincidentally played by William Holden, a characterization that lends itself to interpretation as a Cold War analogy of the strong, masculine United States saving a weaker, feminized Hong Kong, a protective role that could be extended to all China or even Asia as a whole.[68]

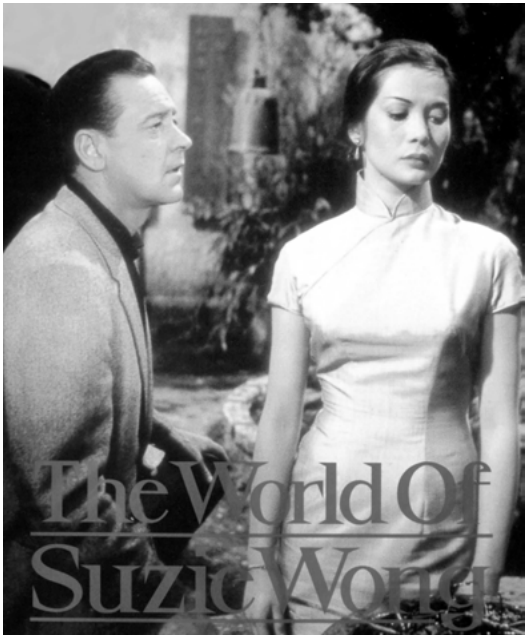

Image 1.5
Publicity still, *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960). Courtesy of Tim Ko.

68. Gina Marchetti, *Romance and the "Yellow Peril": Race, Sex, and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 109–24.

The World of Suzie Wong soon came to symbolize the seedier tourist attractions of Hong Kong, the well-known brothels and bars that were magnets for Western—and Asian—men intent on having a good time in the city in districts where commercial sex was readily available and almost anything was for sale. During the Vietnam War, free-spending US servicemen undoubtedly did much to enrich Hong Kong and power the local economy, especially in times of recession. Publicity for the tourist industry deliberately capitalized on the fame of Suzie Wong, associating her with the Wanchai area where the fictional Suzie had plied her trade.[69] The image of rather dubious glamor and excitement pervaded many other Cold War era films and novels by Western authors set at least in part in Hong Kong, including thrillers, detective and spy stories, and melodramatic historical blockbusters clearly based on prominent Hong Kong business houses and families. John le Carré's massive Cold War espionage novel *The Honourable Schoolboy* (1977) contained recognizable portraits of some of the colony's journalists, with scenes set in the Foreign Correspondents' Club, a Hong Kong institution.[70] University of Hong Kong academics produced several notable examples of this genre. The philosopher Christopher New wrote a series of thrillers, several set at crucial moments in Hong Kong's and China's history, including the Cultural Revolution, the 1967 riots, the fall of top Chinese Communist politician Lin Biao, and the handover negotiations.[71] The well-known detective writer Jonathan Gash, who spent several years in the 1960s teaching in the university's Department of Pathology, used Hong Kong as the setting for *Jade Woman* (1989), one in his series of novels featuring Lovejoy, a rather shady British antique dealer. Beside a university professor who cheerfully forges Chinese documents to authenticate a fake Chinese impressionist painting, its characters included an assortment of Chinese gangsters and beautiful women, most notably the eponymous Jade Woman, an almost impossibly beautiful, talented, and intelligent paragon of high-class femininity, a triad goddess and director. *The Year of the Woman* (2005), set in prehandover Hong Kong, features a penniless young woman who lives in a squatter shack near the university but possesses supernatural powers, which likewise make her a valuable triad asset, so that she not only survives but prospers.[72]

Chinese portrayals of Hong Kong were more nuanced and ambivalent. Han Suyin was in fact one of the more interesting personalities who spent time in Hong Kong

69. Mark, "Vietnam War Tourists," 4–5.
70. C. Mary Turnbull, "Hong Kong: Fragrant Harbour, City of Sin and Death," in *Asia in Western Fiction*, ed. Robin W. Winks and James R. Rush (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990), 117–36; and Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992*, 229–30.
71. See esp. Christopher New, *The Chinese Box* (London: W. H. Allen, 1975); Christopher New, *Goodbye Chairman Mao* (London: Coward, McCann, and Geoghegan, 1979); Christopher New, *Shanghai* (London: Summit Books, 1985); Christopher New, *A Change of Flag* (London: Bantam Books, 1990); and Christopher New, *The Gage Street Courtesan* (Hong Kong: Earnshaw Books, 2013).
72. Jonathan Gash, *Jade Woman* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989); and Jonathan Gash, *The Year of the Woman* (London: Allison and Busby, 2005).

and in her own life and career exemplified many of its Cold War contradictions. The Eurasian daughter of a Chinese railway engineer and a Belgian mother, she defined herself primarily through her Chinese heritage. The widow of a Chinese Nationalist general, a marriage she later characterized as extremely unhappy, she left China in the 1940s to pursue medical studies in London. After the Communist revolution, she moved to Hong Kong, but not back to China, though she traveled frequently to the mainland from the mid-1950s onward and was on good terms with many of China's Communist leaders. Her subsequent defenses of Mao Zedong's policies and admiring biographies of Mao and Zhou Enlai led many to attack her as an apologist for Chinese Communist excesses. Despite Han Suyin's decision to remain based outside China itself, *A Many-Splendoured Thing* was sharply critical of the hypocrisy and narrow-mindedness of postwar colonial and expatriate Hong Kong society and largely supportive of the Communist revolution just across the border. In the 1960s she identified strongly with Asian struggles against Western imperialism and staunchly condemned American policies in Vietnam. She was, however, openly critical of the June 1989 Tiananmen massacre of Chinese students in Beijing. At the time the movie based on her book appeared, much of this still lay in the future. But the American-made film undoubtedly romanticized and sentimentalized a decidedly complicated woman and a reasonably complex novel, one that highlighted many of the ambiguities and contradictions of Hong Kong and its residents, temporary or permanent.[73]

Chinese literary figures could indeed be profoundly ambivalent toward or alienated from Hong Kong. As Prasenjit Duara points out, many of those who fled the mainland for Hong Kong in the late 1940s and early 1950s believed the city lacked any kind of genuine Chinese culture and considered themselves deracinated exiles. The well-known Chinese writer Eileen Chang (Zhang Ailing), a former University of Hong Kong student, initially remained in Shanghai after October 1949, producing a leftist novel and story, *Eighteen Springs* (1951) and "Xiao'ai" (1952), before leaving Shanghai in 1952. She then spent three years based in Hong Kong, where she benefited from the US government's Cold War largesse, doing translation work for USIS that supported her as she produced two English-language novels, *The Rice-Sprout Song* (1955) and *Naked Earth* (1956), each with an anti-Communist subtext.[74] She even dedicated the English-language version of *Lust, Caution* (1979), her spy novella set in Second World War Hong Kong and Shanghai, to R. M. McCarthy of Hong Kong's

73. On Han Suyin, as well as *A Many-Splendoured Thing* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952), see her various volumes of autobiography: *The Crippled Tree: China: Autobiography, History* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1965); *A Mortal Flower: China: Autobiography, History* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1966); *Birdless Summer: China: Autobiography, History* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1968); *My House Has Two Doors: China: Autobiography, History* (London: Triad, Grafton Books, 1980); and *Wind in My Sleeve: China, Autobiography, History* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1992); also G. M. Glaskin, *A Many-Splendoured Woman: A Memoir of Han Suyin* (Singapore: Graham Brash, 1995).

74. Wang, "Eileen Chang, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and the Cold War," in Louie, *Eileen Chang*, 113; and Hsu, *The Good Immigrants*, 163.

US Information Agency.[75] Yet Chang's feelings about the Cold War and the various competing incarnations of China—Nationalist Taiwan, British-run Hong Kong, and the Communist mainland—remained deeply conflicted, as she found herself able to identify fully with none of them. Chang moved to the United States in 1955, but much of what she wrote there in English failed to find its way into print, because mainstream American publishers thought her fiction too sympathetic or at least insufficiently antagonistic to Communist China and therefore liable to draw McCarthyite censure.[76]

Multiple identities were increasingly common in Hong Kong. For some, this could be deeply problematic. Chang's 1963 travel essay "A Return to the Frontier," an account of a trip to Hong Kong and Taiwan, published in the anti-Communist US journal the *Reporter*, described her sense of alienation in Taiwan, which she had never visited before. Chang also highlighted problems on the mainland, including shortages of food and poor conditions in the communes, arbitrary harassment of those considered politically suspect, and the eagerness of many Chinese to escape to Hong Kong or Macau. Hong Kong was depicted as part of "the free world," to which the Lo Wu border crossing served as the bridge.[77] For the next twenty years, Chang continued to rewrite much longer versions of this essay in Chinese, conjuring up memories of

Image 1.6
Lo Wu border crossing, c. 1960. Courtesy of Tim Ko.

75. Shuang Shen, "Betrayal, Impersonation, and Bilingualism: Eileen Chang's Self-Translation," in Louie, *Eileen Chang*, 106.
76. Wang, "Eileen Chang, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and the Cold War," in Louie, *Eileen Chang*, 126–29.
77. Eileen Chang, "A Return to the Frontier," 1963, http://www.ft77.com/book/mingjia/zhangailing/%E6%95%A3%E6%96%87/063.htm, accessed on September 27, 2014.

her earlier times in Hong Kong, with the piece culminating in her departure once more for the United States. Shuang Shen plausibly suggests that her constant revision and translation of many of her writings, both fiction and nonfiction, switching from one language to another, were symptomatic of the difficulties Chinese in Hong Kong and beyond experienced in adjusting to the Cold War framework while maintaining their identity.[78] One of Chang's most famous and controversial stories, *Lust, Caution*, set partly in Hong Kong, focused upon the difficulties of impersonating a character without losing one's own identity in the process, a juggling act the heroine of that story finds beyond her skills, thereby bringing about her own death. Others were more successful in reconciling different identities. Recently, Stacilee Ford, an American who has lived in Hong Kong for more than two decades, has perceptively explored how the experience of navigating and adjusting to multiple overlapping national and ethnic communities has affected American and Chinese American women within Hong Kong and the ways that they perceive themselves, others, their own country, and the society around them.[79]

Over time, too, Hong Kong began to create its own identity, a process in which the Cold War experience and the particular openings it offered undoubtedly featured significantly. Some of the hundreds of thousands of Chinese who entered Hong Kong following the Second World War were indeed merely sojourners, passing through. The Hong Kong government initially assumed that, as had often been the case in the past, many would return to China once the situation there had stabilized. By the mid-1950s, it was increasingly clear that this would not be the case; the influx from across the PRC border was indeed continuing, albeit more slowly though steadily than in 1949–50, and very few sought to return. Only a limited number of these migrants went on to other countries; many were there to stay. Particularly after the October 1956 clashes between Nationalist and Communist supporters in Hong Kong, which left more than fifty people dead, Hong Kong authorities began to focus upon integrating the recent arrivals into broader Hong Kong society, building more multistory apartment blocks in which to resettle them and offering at least limited educational and community facilities, as well as jobs in private industry. While a range of international political considerations ensured that the precise status of the newcomers—whether they were refugees or merely economic migrants—remained ambivalent and carefully undefined, when the United Nations declared 1959–60 World Refugee Year, Hong Kong received around US$4.5 million from a range of governments and private sources. These funds helped to finance such long-term facilities as primary schools, community centers, and public health clinics.[80] Meanwhile, the imposition

78. Shen, "Betrayal, Impersonation, and Bilingualism," in Louie, *Eileen Chang*, 93–111.

79. Stacilee Ford, *Troubling American Women: Narratives of Gender and Nation in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011).

80. Mark, "The 'Problem of People,'" 1163–73; and Oyen, *The Diplomacy of Migration*, 178–80.

of stricter controls on migration from China, especially after the mid-1950s, and the increasing militarization of the border separating Hong Kong from the PRC brought a greater sense of demarcation, not just physically and spatially but also psychologically, between Hong Kong and the mainland.[81]

The new migrants provided the labor force that fueled Hong Kong's industrial boom. Gradually, too, they forged a sense of a specifically Hong Kong identity by regarding the territory itself as their chosen community and home. Prasenjit Duara highlights here the degree to which the Hong Kong film industry helped to create a new sense of identity in Hong Kong, one that had a distinct moral ethos that helped to fuel demands upon the colonial government for public accountability and social equity. And, as Stacilee Ford points out in this volume, movies aimed primarily at local and overseas Chinese and Asian audiences often conveyed messages far more complicated than those in Hollywood films. Just as the tourist industry made opportunistic use of the trope of the world of Suzie Wong, when dealing with Westerners female Hong Kong movie stars often presented themselves in traditional Asian costumes, epitomizing Cold War visions of Asian women as graceful, gentle, docile ladies who recognized they had much to learn from more worldly-wise and assertive Western female role models. Yet, in at least some movies produced by Hong Kong studios for predominantly Asian audiences, the roles these Hong Kong film actresses played challenged many existing attitudes and expectations about women, in terms of marriage, careers, and family relationships. In this respect, they were far more innovative than American Cold War movies and television shows of the 1950s, which largely reinforced social messages that women could and should find true satisfaction and happiness only in domesticity and family life. American women who had other ambitions or questioned established gender expectations were liable not simply to be criticized as selfish, unfeminine, and quite possibly psychologically unbalanced but accused of being unpatriotic. In the early Cold War, American women who refused to accept conventional female roles were depicted as undermining the American family, which would in turn weaken American society and thereby detract from US efforts to win the Cold War.[82] On occasion, Hong Kong filmmakers also critiqued Western mores and values.

The rejection by Cold War Hong Kong filmmakers and writers of exclusively Western norms in favor of a more nuanced adaptation or appropriation was perhaps one sign of the degree to which Hong Kong, despite being in many respects a Cold War symbol, also escaped from Cold War constraints. It was a place where ideologies

81. Laura Madokoro, "Borders Transformed: Sovereign Concerns, Population Movements and the Making of Territorial Frontiers in Hong Kong, 1949–1967," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 25 (3) (September 2012): 410–25.

82. On expectations of American women in the 1950s, see William H. Chafe, *The Paradox of Change: American Women in the 20th Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 175–82; and Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, rev. and updated ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

and interests supposedly in total conflict with each other managed to coexist, if not always entirely peacefully or harmoniously, at least with antagonisms sufficiently muted that Hong Kong was able to survive as a separate and functioning entity. The British authorities running Hong Kong managed to work out a de facto relationship with the People's Republic of China. At times, indeed, their interests coincided, as when Britain repeatedly declined to allow Soviet organizations of various kinds to establish a foothold in Hong Kong. In so doing, the Hong Kong government was driven in part by its own Cold War hostility to Soviet Russia. Once the Sino-Soviet split became apparent, however, another reinforcing factor was the British desire not to antagonize China by giving the Soviet Union a base from which it might be able to gather intelligence on mainland China.[83]

Hong Kong was also a locale where mainland Chinese and US interests encountered each other on a daily basis. Had the PRC been sufficiently forceful in its objections to American activities in the colony, in terms of intelligence gathering, anti-Communist propaganda, covert operations, and, during both the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, procurement of war supplies, servicing US warships, and hosting American military personnel on leave, Britain would have had few alternatives but to ask the Americans to leave. This did not happen. In practice, China and the United States reached a tacit understanding as to just how much China might tolerate American usage of Hong Kong as a Cold War base and symbol. At some level, both sides knew that they could work together and recognized that in practice, even in times of outright war in Korea or Vietnam or great political turmoil in China, accommodation between them was feasible, a lesson that must have played some part in setting the scene for the eventual resumption of formal Sino-American relations from the early 1970s onward.

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