The Cold War in Asia

The Cold War in Asia

The Battle for Hearts and Minds

Edited by

Zheng Yangwen
Hong Liu
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Sinicisation of Ballet in China" in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet* (Cambridge University Press, 2007). She co-edited *Negotiating Asymmetry: China's Place in Asia* (with Anthony Reid. National University of Singapore Press and University of Hawaii Press, 2009), *Personal Names in Asia: History, Culture and Identity* (with Charles J-H Macdonald. National University of Singapore Press, 2009), and *The Body in Asia* (with Bryan S. Turner. Berghahn Books, 2009).

INTRODUCTION

NEW APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF THE COLD WAR IN ASIA

Michael Szonyi and Hong Liu

To speak, as the title of this work does, of the Cold War in Asia is to hold that the history of Asia can be productively related to the complex rivalry between the two superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union—and their allies in the second half of the twentieth century. It is to argue that what has conventionally been seen as a peripheral theater of the Cold War actually played an important role. To speak of a battle for hearts and minds as part of the Cold War in Asia is to presume, further, that this relationship should be explored not just in its political and diplomatic aspects but also as social and cultural phenomena. In this brief introductory essay, we lay out our arguments for these linked positions. While some leading historians continue to see the Cold War primarily as a conflict between the two superpowers, fought primarily in a European theater, other scholars increasingly recognize that the Cold War was fought in multiple theaters, and that developments in the Third World were not simply a sideshow to the main event, but central to the Cold War itself. On the other hand, while the history of Asia in the late twentieth century cannot simply be subsumed within a Cold War narrative, the global geopolitical struggle profoundly shaped the context in which regional and national change unfolded, and the choices that were available to local actors. These choices went well beyond decisions about diplomatic and geopolitical orientation or about the most appropriate system to organize the national economy. Rather, they could touch on virtually every aspect of culture and society. Asians also had their own concerns—nationalism, revolution, independence, ethnic integration and nation-building—and the relationship between these and the ideology of the superpowers is another important issue for study. The ideological dimension of the superpower rivalry, and the ways in which it was perceived by leading protagonists at least in part as a struggle for the hearts and minds of the peoples of the world, make propaganda, public diplomacy and the media particularly fruitful areas for research.

Study of the Cold War in Asia is not simply helpful because it allows us to better understand the history of the region itself. It is also crucial to a global comparative history of the Cold War, one that situates the Cold War in relation to other global processes and explores similarities and differences across countries and regions. While the more traditional approaches of international and diplomatic history continue to find adherents, not least in the general reading public, many historians now call for a broadening of approaches to fully understand the Cold War as a global history of diplomatic, military, social and cultural conflicts and realignments. This volume is intended as a contribution to this broadening of approaches.

The existing English-language historiography of the Cold War is conventionally divided into three broad phases.[1] At the height of the Cold War itself, the dominant or orthodox interpretation laid the blame for the conflict squarely on the Soviet Union and Stalin. The Soviet ideology was seen as intrinsically expansionist; the authoritarian system meant there were no checks and balances on expansionism, and Stalin himself was as ruthless, immoral and self-aggrandizing as the regime he led. Perhaps unsurprisingly, by the 1960s this orthodoxy had begun to be challenged. With the US increasingly embroiled in Vietnam, historians, mostly on the political left, argued that the causes of the Cold War lay as much in the US as in the Soviet Union. The US too had been an expansionist power in the years after WWII, creating its own informal global empire. At least some Soviet action could be seen as legitimate defense of national interest in the face of the threat posed by the US. According to this revisionist approach, the locus of responsibility for the outbreak and persistence of the Cold War lay with the United States.

Challenges to the revisionist approach soon appeared. Exemplified by the work of the dean of Cold War studies, John Lewis Gaddis, the post-revisionist scholarship shifted primary responsibility for the Cold War back to the Soviet Union, whose fundamental expansionism the US had sought to contain. The unexpectedly sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War seemed to lend

[1] There are of course alternative periodization schemes. See for example David Reynolds, ed., *The Origins of the Cold War in Europe: International Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

support to the post-revisionist argument; the gradual, and in some cases temporary, opening of crucial archives in the former Soviet Bloc yielded empirical evidence that further reinforced it. Post-revisionist lines of argument and the new archival research converged into a body of material and interpretations that has been called "the new Cold War history."[2] But while some of the new Cold War history strives to transform the study of the Cold War into an international history by including other geographic theaters besides Europe, its focus remains largely bipolar.

In the overall English-language historiography of the Cold War, we can thus trace three main phases: orthodox, revisionist and post-revisionist. Despite their differences, there are considerable commonalities across the three approaches. In none of these narratives does Asia, or the rest of the Third World for that matter, figure with much significance. The Cold War was fought between the US and the Soviet Union, and it was fought primarily in Europe. Each narrative explains the "coldness" of the Cold War with reference to nuclear weapons. Since nuclear weapons made direct military conflict between the principals undesirable, even unthinkable, the conflict had to be played out chiefly in the diplomatic realm. Whether they interpret it as a clash of ideologies or a clash of national interest, or both, all three narratives see the Cold War as bearing little connection to other global processes such as decolonization, nation-building and economic globalization.

What happens to these narratives if we begin to take the Asia region more seriously? One answer comes from scholars of China. China's complex role has received increasing attention in the English-language literature, evidenced by the works of Chen Jian, Zhai Qiang, Shuguang Zhang, and some monographs in the "New Cold War History Series" edited by Gaddis and published by the University of North Carolina Press, to name just a few. In the People's Republic of China

[2] In Gaddis's view, "the new Cold War history" is characterized by, among other things, the centrality of "ideas, ideologies, and morality" and the employment of multi-archives in an attempt to go beyond "Americocentrism." See John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Melvyn Leffler argues in a review essay that in his more recent work, Gaddis has abandoned post-revisionism and returned to a more traditional interpretation. Melvyn Leffler, "The Cold War: What Do 'We Now Know'?" *American Historical Review* 104, 2 (1999), 501–24. For a review of criticisms on the new Cold War history and its intriguing links with the post-revisionist paradigm, see Odd Arne Westad, "Introduction: Reviewing the Cold War," in idem, ed., *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 1–23.

(PRC), over the last decade, archives in both Beijing and provincial capitals have been partially opened, the new Cold War History paradigms have been introduced and new institutions devoted to Cold War studies established.[3] PRC scholarship on the Cold War in Asia has highlighted a number of different characteristics from those in Europe. For instance, both the Cold War and hot wars occurred simultaneously in Asia, and global ideological struggles interacted with the rise of Asian nationalisms. The predominant focus of this research, however, remains on the histories of Sino-American relations, Sino-Soviet relations, and the various military confrontations, namely the Korean War and the Indochina wars.[4] In other words, while the new Chinese language scholarship devotes much more attention to Asia, the perspective remains centered on nation-states and their diplomatic and military interaction.

Situated at the intersection of a geographical domain of Asia and thematic interrogations on the roles of culture, public diplomacy and ideas in the making of the Cold War, this volume seeks to move beyond the existing main approaches to the study of the Cold War in Asia. Taken together, the essays in this volume undermine each of the central points of earlier historiography. The understanding of the Cold War as a basically bipolar conflict; the understanding of the Cold War as a conflict waged primarily in the field of diplomacy and international relations between nation-states; and the understanding of the Cold War as discrete from and unrelated to the larger global processes of the twentieth century all become unsustainable if Asia is brought into the picture. On some issues, research on the Cold War in Asia converges with new research on the conflict in the First and

[3] The Center for Cold War International History at East China Normal University in Shanghai, established in 2001, is the first and most important institute in the PRC devoted solely to the studies of the Cold War and has published *Cold War International History Studies* since 2004.

[4] See Yafeng Xia, "The Study of Cold War International History in China: A Review of the Last Twenty Years," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 10, 1 (2008), 81–115; Cui Pi, "Zhongguo Xueshujie dui Guoji Lengzhanshi Yanjiu de Xianzhuang yu Keti [The Study of Cold War International History in China: Conditions and Agendas]," *Lengzhan Guojishi Yanjiu* [Cold War International History Studies] 6 (2008), 1–23. A major text on China's foreign relations in the Cold War, with contributions from leading Chinese scholars of the Cold War based in both the PRC and the USA such as Shen Zhihua, Cai Jiahe, Chen Jian, Niu Jun, Li Danhui, and Zhai Qiang, is Yang Kuisong, ed., *Lengzhan Shiqi de Zhongguo Duiwai Guanxi* [China's Foreign Relations during the Cold War] (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2006).

Second Worlds; on other issues, it raises new questions and offers new and divergent interpretations.

A bipolar view of the conflict may have been shared by the two superpowers, but it was not accepted by other participants. For most political actors, be they states or political movements, the bipolar Cold War was the context in which they acted, not the cause of their actions. It was the backdrop in front of which their own strategies and issues were staged. For them, a key element in the significance of the Cold War was that the superpowers perceived the world in a specific way, and assigned roles accordingly. The superpower perception of the conflict in bipolar, zero-sum terms implied, for the superpowers, certain logics—ways of apprehending the world and formulating policy. So too did their perception that the conflict was not just between two powerful nation-states, but between two conflicting ideologies. Other actors could make use of those logics to force the superpowers to act in service of local interests. This is a dramatically different vision of the geopolitical framework from the conventional one.[5] Several of the chapters in this volume, especially that by Wallerstein, show how local actors could force superpower responses, how "tails could wag dogs." As Odd Westad argues, perhaps somewhat exaggeratedly, "…the most important aspects of the Cold War were neither military nor strategic, nor Europe-centered, but connected to political and social development in the Third World."[6] There remains much scope to explore the story from non-Western perspectives and to take into account the strategies of non-Western actors in shaping the global Cold War.

A number of the chapters in the collection also join in a larger movement of historians, including not only historians of "the periphery" but also scholars of the United States, the (former) Soviet Union and the countries of Europe, to expand the thematic scope of Cold War studies. In their introduction to a previous collection of studies, Patrick Major and Rana Mitter call on historians to consider the sociocultural aspects of the Cold War "systematically and paradigmatically, rather than as an afterthought to the analysis of high politics."[7]

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[5] This approach finds its most full elaboration in Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[6] Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 396.

[7] Rana Mitter and Patrick Major, "East is East and West is West? Towards a Comparative Socio-Cultural History of the Cold War," in *Across the Blocs: Cold War Cultural and Social History*, eds. idem (London and Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass, 2004), 1–22.

There has been a spate of works in recent years responding to this call, including analysis of the Cold War's role in shaping the history of popular culture, gender relations, ethnic relations, social and political discourses and processes of the "Asian Sixties"—a reference to the critical years 1954–1976 (from Dien Bien Phu to the death of Mao) which coincided with the height of the international Cold War and helped define it.[8]

The shift away from diplomacy toward culture allows for the exploration of Cold War history from a transnational as well as a comparative perspective. The predominant concern with geopolitics in Cold War studies has been partly shaped by the analytical paradigm developed at the time of nation-state supremacy, which is built upon "methodological nationalism": "the assumption that nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world."[9] The Cold War in the social and cultural arenas, by nature and by design, was waged in transnational fields and intimately linked to socio-political changes within specific locales. A transnational perspective draws attention to the fluidity, mobility and mutability of ideologies, as people interpreted them and used them strategically in their own cultural and social context.

This approach further demonstrates that the Cold War is not reducible to bipolar competition. Asians developed their own formulations of ideas and also appropriated and adapted the ideas disseminated by the superpowers and their agents. In this process, new (and sometimes conflicting) ideas and visions about Asian futures emerged. These in turn shaped the domestic social and political transformations of individual countries. The political history of Indonesia during the Sukarno era (1949–1965), for instance, was characterized by a persistent search for

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[8] See for example Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: New Press, 1999); Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert, eds., *Rethinking Cold War Culture* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001); and Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945–1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). For a review, see Robert Griffith, "The Cultural Turn in Cold War Studies," *Reviews in American History* 29, 1 (2001): 150–157. For historians of Asia adopting these approaches, see Charles Armstrong, "The Cultural Cold War in Korea, 1945–1950," *Journal of Asian Studies* 62, 1 (2003): 71–99, and the special issue on "The Asian Sixties," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 7, 4 (2006).

[9] Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-state Building, Migration and the Social Sciences," *Global Networks: A Journal of Transnational Affairs* 2, 4 (2002): 301–334.

political and social formats suitable for the newly-independent nation. Against the backdrop of Cold War confrontations, China emerged in the late 1950s as a major model of Indonesia's political system and social engineering. This subsequently intensified the polarization of political forces within the nation and finally led to the showdown of 1965, fundamentally changing the course of postcolonial Southeast Asia.[10]

A transnational and comparative perspective also further illustrates how the history of Asia must be situated in a globalized Cold War context. 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 struggles for women's liberation, revolution, nationalism, decolonization and postcolonial experience, new regional groupings and the deterritorialization of ethnic populations. While shaped by the political and military powers outside the region, Asia nevertheless had its own internal dynamics and trajectories, and it evolved in ways that were not entirely the making of the big powers.

Part I of the volume consists of two chapters by senior scholars in the field. Immanuel Wallerstein proposes an alternative to the dominant historical narratives of the Cold War. In his account, the periphery becomes the center, with local actors pursuing their strategies and forcing the superpowers to support them. While Wallerstein challenges the utility of the idea of a Cold War in Asia, we think that the disagreement is largely terminological, and that ultimately he would agree that superpower rivalry played an important role in conditioning local and regional politics. Takashi Shiraishi and Carol Hau suggest that the very different endings to the Cold War in Europe and Asia—the collapse of the socialist states in one and their survival in the other—can tell us something important about the history of the last half-century. They argue that the shape of Asia today is largely a legacy of Cold War strategic choices. In both Asia and Europe, US interests and decisions were crucial to the shaping of regional systems, but US interests differed, so the resulting systems were different. The Western European system was based on military and political integration, namely the creation of a superpower-led security system; the Asian system on economic integration. In the early Cold War years,

[10] This issue is fully explored in Hong Liu, *China and the Shaping of Indonesia, 1949–1965* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2010).

Asia was organized into a triangular economic system linking the US, Japan and Southeast Asia. In the later phases of the Cold War China, the largest power of the region, was brought into this system. Meanwhile leaders around the region adopted a similar "politics of productivity" to legitimize their political system to their nascent middle class. This enabled the regional systems to function across the boundaries of the Cold War blocs.[11] Both of these chapters thus decenter the superpowers and Europe, and then ask how the Cold War looks different with this reframing. Together they illustrate that only by considering the role both of the superpower centers and the periphery can we develop complete, satisfactory and convincing explanations for the development of the Cold War in Asia and globally.

Part II consists of five chapters on issues of public diplomacy, flows of ideas, and propaganda work. Michael Charney considers Burma, a country that has so far received little attention in Cold War studies. He shows how political actors in Burma created their own cartographies, or imaginaries, of the global order and Burma's place in it. These challenged superpower-driven cartographies in which the world was divided into two blocs, or two blocs plus the non-aligned. Addressing the interplay between politics and ethnicity, Meredith Oyen looks at public diplomacy efforts by the PRC, the Republic of China and the United States to enlist the Overseas Chinese into the Cold War conflict. Lu Yan shows how superpower influence and ideology shaped but did not dictate media operations in Hong Kong. Like Charney, Zheng Yangwen considers propaganda work "on the home front" by exploring how geopolitics and the battle for women's liberation were intertwined in the production of propaganda posters in the People's Republic. Hong Liu's chapter also invites comparison with those of Charney and Oyen in that he too is concerned with the intriguing linkages between perceptions, power and flows of ideas across the political boundaries. Liu explores both how an imaginary of China figured in Indonesian political and intellectual life, and the internalization of the China metaphor during the Sukarno era whose cultural and political

[11] Their discussion of the redefinition of the region during the Cold War can fruitfully be compared to the work of Bruce Cumings. See, among his many other works, "The Origins and Development of the Northeast Asian Political Economy: Industrial Sectors, Product Cycles, and Political Consequences," *International Organization* 38, 1 (1984): 1–40.

trajectory was profoundly shaped by competing ideas linked with but ultimately beyond Cold War confrontations.

In the third part of the book the geographic focus widens beyond Asia but deals with ideas that originated from it, with two chapters that explore the global circulation and adaptation of Maoism. The Cold War was at one level a struggle over mass utopias, that is, between competing visions of how society should be organized.[12] Post-Cold War Western triumphalism that celebrates the victory of one utopianism over another obscures the reality that there were more than two choices. By looking at how a third alternative, a Maoist Third Way, was understood in two very different locations, Mexico and Sweden, Matthew Rothwell and Perry Johansson illustrate the complexities of Cold War ideological competition. Neither is a scholar of China *per se*; their focus is on the transmission and reception of ideas from China, thus contributing to an understanding of the role of ideas and their trans-continental circulation.[13] Such trans-regional dialogue, while perhaps challenging from the perspective of the necessary research and linguistic capabilities, should be an important part of the future development of global studies of the Cold War.

Several of the essays in this volume suggest that the importance of China to the Cold War needs to be more thoroughly understood. The centrality of China is increasingly recognized in the more traditional field of international relations history and theories.[14] This is due in part to the gradual and selective opening of Chinese archives for the period between 1949 and 1965. The work of Chen Jian has been very important in this, as has the work of a number of scholars within the People's Republic.[15] But China was also important more broadly. It was closer geographically to the peripheral states of the region, and

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[12] Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000).

[13] One of the most recent attempts in addressing the role of ideas in the Cold War is "*Special Issue*: Ideas, International Relations, and the End of the Cold War," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7, 2 (2005).

[14] For some recent efforts to bridge China studies and international relations (IR), see Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross, eds., *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh, eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006); and Wang Gungwu and Zheng Yongnian, eds., *China and the New International Order* (London: Routledge, 2008).

[15] See Yafeng Xia, "The Study of Cold War International History in China" for relevant examples and citations.

thus more potentially threatening to American policy makers. Its semi-colonial history made it in some ways a more suitable and attractive source for modelling than either the West or the Soviet Union. It was the source of Maoism, a potential alternative to the dominant utopian possibilities offered by the superpowers. And it was the homeland of the diasporic Chinese, who were important targets of public and economic diplomacy. For all of these reasons, study of China and its complex interactions with neighboring countries will no doubt loom large in the further development of Cold War history in the future. In this regard, the emerging scholarship, published in Chinese and other vernacular languages by scholars based in the PRC and other Asian countries, will become increasingly instrumental in forging true global perspectives of the new Cold War history.

It is worth mentioning some of the areas of research that are not discussed in this volume. We have already noted that the direct military confrontations of the period are not addressed. Two of the leading societies of East Asia, Japan and Korea, are not examined in this volume (except for the chapter by Takashi Shiraishi and Caroline Sy Hau which discusses Japan in the regional context). The omission is, we hope, justified since these are two countries for which a considerable Cold War scholarly literature already exists.[16] Some other lacunae of this volume also suggest areas for further research. To return to Major and Mitter's call for a "socio-cultural" agenda for Cold War research, our contributors focus mainly on the cultural half of the term. There is still far too little research on the social dimensions of the Cold War, on how the Cold War was experienced by individuals and communities, on how it shaped social relations.[17] No chapter is explicitly comparative, either within Asia or beyond the boundaries of Asia, and this is surely a rich field for further study. Third, closer attention to the Cold War in Asia will likely complicate our current understandings of the overall chronology of the conflict, which like

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[16] Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*; Gregg Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans and the Making of a Democracy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Naoko Shibusawa, *America's Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese Enemy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); and Simei Qing, *From Allies to Enemies: Visions of Modernity, Identity, and U.S.-China Diplomacy, 1945–1960* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Nicholas J. White and Shigeru Akita, eds., *International Order of Asia in the 1930s and 1950s* (London and New York: Ashgate, 2008).

[17] A recent book by one of the editors seeks to address this lacuna. Michael Szonyi, *Cold War Island: Quemoy on the Frontline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

so many other areas remains rooted in a superpower, and to a lesser degree European, perspective. For example, the familiar three-stage periodization of the Cold War, in which the first Cold War of the 1950s gives way to a détente that persists until it in turn yields to a second Cold War beginning in 1979 with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, surely underestimates the importance of the Sino-Soviet split and later Sino-American rapprochement to the overall trajectory of the global Cold War.

In conclusion, from a variety of perspectives and with contributions from senior and junior colleagues, this book makes several moves. The first is to argue that attention to what has been conventionally considered the periphery is essential to a full understanding of the global Cold War. Foregrounding Asia necessarily leads to a re-assessment of the dominant narratives of the high politics of the period. Some specialized works have already tried to do so with respect to specific issues and personalities, notably the Korean War and Mao Zedong. But in Part I of this work, this approach is extended into two general theories in an attempt to establish the internal dynamics and structures of the Asian Cold War. Second, many of the chapters of this book argue for a shift in focus from diplomacy and high politics alone towards research into the culture of the Cold War era and its public diplomacy. Ideology was an important element in the Cold War due to the very nature of the conflict. The role of ideology in popular mobilization was especially important where the Cold War remained cold and new nation-states of Southeast Asia sought to build their political and cultural identities. Third, the Cold War must be considered in relation to other global and regional processes: decolonization, feminism and world revolution. Doing so will draw attention to the differences and similarities in how the Cold War was experienced around the world. Last but not least, in one way or another all of the chapters of the volume do implicitly what Wallerstein does explicitly. They propose and evaluate alternative narratives of late twentieth century history, in which the Cold War between the superpowers is one of a complex of historical processes. The result of these various moves is to undermine widely-held, long-standing and nation-state-centric perceptions of the bipolarity of the Cold War. Just like recent scholarship on Cold War society and culture in what used to be understood as the Cold War centers, the two superpowers and Europe, this research adds granularity and complexity to our understanding of the story, and thereby also transforms it.

PART ONE

WORLD SYSTEM AND ASIAN ORDER

CHAPTER ONE

WHAT COLD WAR IN ASIA? AN INTERPRETATIVE ESSAY

Immanuel Wallerstein

The phrase "the Cold War" refers to a narrative that was intended to and is supposed to summarize how we are to understand a geopolitical reality over the period of time running approximately from 1945 to 1991. This narrative is today very widely accepted. It originated with political leaders. It was adopted by scholars. And it was intended to influence the thinking of everyone else. It has been the dominant narrative, although there have been some dissenters.

In this essay I would like to review this narrative and what it is supposed to tell us. It tells us that the Second World War was a war that was started by Germany and Japan as aggressor nations that sought to conquer other nations. They did fairly well at first, but then resistance to them grew stronger. In 1941, both the Soviet Union and the United States entered the war against Germany, and the coalition took on the name of the United Nations. The three countries in this alliance that were most significant militarily were the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union. They were called the "Big Three," and together they won the Second World War.

During the Second World War, the United Nations did not have a single unified military structure. Rather, there was on the western and southern fronts a joint military structure of the United States and Great Britain, in which a number of other countries joined, while on the eastern front there was a separate Soviet military structure. In order to work together, the leaders of the "Big Three"—Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin—met several times to coordinate the conduct of the war and to discuss postwar arrangements.

Perhaps the most famous meeting was the one that occurred just before the end of the Second World War, in February 1945, at Yalta. The three countries made, in effect, a kind of deal that involved a division of the postwar world into two spheres of influence. In Europe, the line of division was specific and was drawn across the middle of Germany. At the end of the war, the Soviet Union's sphere covered

approximately one-third of the world, running from the Oder-Neisse line in Germany to the northern half of Korea. The American sphere covered the other two-thirds of the world. The Big Three were supposed to cooperate in the new institutions that were being established—the United Nations as the overall world political structure, the so-called Bretton Woods financial institutions (which were eventually called the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) and a series of other specialized agencies.

According to the narrative, this agreement, in the views of the participants, quickly became less amicable. Each side accused the other almost immediately of bad faith. As a result, there began a conflict which we call the Cold War. The Cold War was more or less officially launched in a speech given by Winston Churchill in Fulton, Missouri in 1946. He chose Missouri because it was the home state of Roosevelt's successor, President Truman. In this speech, Churchill said that an Iron Curtain had descended over Europe, "from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic."

This conflict was defined in the West as a struggle between the "free world" and the "totalitarian world." George Kennan wrote a famous article in 1947 calling for the "containment" of the Soviet Union. John Foster Dulles subsequently argued that containment was not enough. He called for the "rollback" of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union had its own language to describe the Cold War. It saw it as a struggle between the bourgeois or capitalist world and the socialist world.

What was common to both discourses was the argument that there was an irreconcilable ideological gulf between the two camps, and that it was incumbent on everyone to choose sides. In Dulles's language, "neutralism was immoral."

According to the narrative, each side then began to build appropriate institutions to carry out this struggle. There were military institutions. On the Western side there was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and in Asia, the US-Japan Defense Organization and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization. Australia, New Zealand and the United States were joined together in ANZUS. There was an attempt to establish a parallel institution in the Middle East, but it failed and the US made do with a de facto alliance with Israel.

The Soviet Union established its own military structures—the Warsaw pact in Europe and a treaty with the People's Republic of China (PRC), which was a kind of equivalent of the US-Japan defense pact.

Since the United States and the Soviet Union after 1949 both had nuclear weapons, these institutions faced each other in what was called a "balance of terror." This phrase refers to the presumption that neither side would be the first to launch nuclear weapons, because a response was certain, and the damage to both sides would be too dangerously high.

Besides military structures, economic institutions were also established. On the US side there was the Marshall Plan. Later, a whole series of economic institutions was created in Western Europe, which ultimately led to the European Union of today. On the Soviet side there was the Comecon, which was supposed to be a kind of counterpart to the Western institutions. In Asia there were less formal institutions, but there was a good deal of US economic assistance of various kinds to Japan, Taiwan and South Korea in particular.

According to the narrative, this situation continued for some time with ups and downs. At some point in time it became less intense, during a period that was called détente, but then tension became more serious again. In the 1980s, Reagan became the President of the US, calling the Soviet Union an "evil empire." In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev became the leader of the Soviet Union. He tried to reform the Soviet structure with perestroika and glasnost.

One outcome of all of this was a series of largely bloodless revolts in 1989 in the erstwhile Soviet satellites in east-central Europe, and finally in 1991 came the collapse of the Soviet Union. So, in this narrative, we say that in 1991 the US won the Cold War. It was the end of a bipolar situation; we had entered into a unipolar world. The US had now become the "indispensable nation," in the language of Madeleine Albright. Some even dared to suggest that this was the "end of history." But this view didn't last too long because it didn't conform to reality.

Throughout this narrative, there is one underlying assumption: that anything important that happened in all those years was initiated either by the US or by the Soviet Union. So if one wanted to explain what was going on anywhere at all, one had to look at what the US and/or the Soviet Union were doing and why they were presumed to be doing it. Once one knew that, one could explain why X or Y or Z had happened.

This narrative is in my view largely a fantasy. There exists an alternative or counter-narrative, though it was never as widespread as the

narrative of the Cold War. When, after independence, India proclaimed itself neutral in the Cold War and began to vote in the United Nations in ways that reflected this position, its policy was based on this alternative narrative. This other narrative denied the basic premise of the Cold War narrative, namely that there were only two sides, and that every country was either on one side or the other.

The proponents of this alternative narrative began to construct various institutional structures. In 1955, the Bandung Conference gathered the independent states of Asia and Africa. It was convened by five South Asian nations—India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Burma and Indonesia. It is well known that the People's Republic of China was invited and came to that meeting, and played a very important role at it. It is less well remembered that the Soviet Union formally requested of the organizers that they invite the Central Asian republics of the Soviet Union on the grounds that they too were independent states of Asia, but the organizers refused.

Shortly thereafter the prime ministers of Yugoslavia, Egypt and India met and decided to convene a meeting of "non-aligned" nations. There came to be various other institutions as well—a tricontinental structure (of Asia, Africa and Latin America), originally convened by Cuba, and several non-governmental structures comprised of so-called Third World countries.

All these structures were based on a rejection of the validity of a bipolar division of the world. In 1968, there occurred what I think of as a world revolution. It was a world revolution in the sense that it occurred virtually everywhere. I myself was at Columbia University at that time and witnessed it there. It occurred throughout the pan-European world, in many parts of the so-called socialist bloc, and throughout the Third World. The year 1968 is useful as a symbol but the events actually occurred over a longer period, roughly 1966–1970. I consider the Cultural Revolution in China to be part of this world revolution of 1968.

At that time the Chinese put forward a third geopolitical narrative. They asserted that the world was divided between the two superpowers and everybody else. That is, rather than being divided between the US bloc and the Soviet bloc, or between the North and the South, the world was divided between the US and the Soviet Union on one side and everybody else on the other side. As Rothwell and Johansson show in their chapters of this volume, this narrative took root in such surprising places as Latin America and Sweden. For a time, this third

narrative had wide acceptance, especially among those who participated in the various movements that were part of the world revolution of 1968. To be sure, the exact terminology varied a bit in different parts of the world. The basic idea, however, of those that accepted this third narrative was that the US was a hegemonic imperialist power—this was the era of the Vietnam war—and that the Soviet Union was collusive with the US as a hegemonic imperialist power.

This third narrative—a division between the two superpowers and everyone else—did not survive the 1970s. But the second narrative, that of a North-South division, continued to gain adherents. I believe that it provides a better intellectual framework to understand what went on between 1945 and 1991 than the more dominant narrative of the Cold War. Far from the United States and Soviet Union being the primary agents of almost everything, everywhere, such that one could explain almost anything that went on as result of Soviet or American wishes, the reality was almost the opposite.

The Soviet Union and the US had made an arrangement at Yalta which was a status quo arrangement. But they ran into constant problems in enforcing the status quo all over the world. What happened is that many countries and movements that rebelled against the status quo used the language of the Cold War to force the US or the Soviet Union to support them in what they were doing.

The so-called Cold War ended, according to all accounts, in 1991. But it didn't "end" in the same way everywhere. In Europe, all the so-called communist states collapsed. However, in the three principal communist states in Asia—the People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Vietnam—the communist parties remain in power, even if the economic policies of at least two of the three have changed radically. (In Cuba as well, the Communist Party of Cuba remains in power.) Why this difference with the European states?

There is a second difference between Europe and Asia. The cold war was "cold" in Europe, but it was quite "hot" in Asia. Why? I don't think that was accidental. First of all, what we mean when we say that it was a "cold" war is that neither the US nor the Soviet Union used its military in combat against the other at any time. That is of course true. One would be hard-pressed to think of a moment in which there was actually an exchange of shooting between the US and the Soviet Union. If the Yalta agreement was an agreement that there would be no shooting, that neither side would attempt to change the frontiers

that were established in 1945, then in this sense the Yalta agreement was a great success. It achieved its primary objective. But it achieved it primarily in Europe.

Let me review the history. There were of course repeated political "crises" in Europe. The first was the Berlin crisis, which derived from the complicated boundaries in Germany, such that the city of Berlin was surrounded by the Russian zone of East Germany. The Western powers sent supplies to their occupation zones in West Berlin by land transport across the Soviet zone. In 1948, the Soviet Union closed the land route, which effectively meant that the western (US, British and French) sectors of Berlin were blockaded. The US decided to fly in planes to feed and otherwise re-supply the people of its Berlin zones. The reason the Soviets did not shoot down those planes as they traversed East Germany without authorization, which of course they could have done, was because of the key rule of Yalta: that there would be no shooting. Eventually, the Soviet Union lifted the land blockade, and the world was back to status quo ante.

The first of the uprisings in Eastern Europe took place in 1953—in the Soviet sector of Berlin. This was a popular rebellion against communism. Did the West come in to support the rebels? They uttered not a word, not a sound. In 1956, there were more serious uprisings in Poland and in Hungary. These were suppressed brutally by the Russians. Did the West do anything about it? There were broadcasts on the Voice of America and reports about what was going on in Hungary. But were troops sent in? No. In 1968, there was a further series of uprisings in Poland and Czechoslovakia. Again the Soviet Union sent in troops to Czechoslovakia to put down this uprising. Did the US do anything about it? Absolutely nothing. 1980 saw the Solidarity Movement in Poland. This movement evolved and gained strength for over a year. At one point, the Soviet Union threatened to send in troops again. But the Polish communist Prime Minister, General Jaruzelski, told the Soviets that they did not have to send in troops, because he would handle it internally. He did. Did the US do anything? Absolutely nothing.

The Cold War was cold in Europe because the US and the Soviet Union had an agreement that it would be a cold war, that neither side would do anything to change boundaries. The one attempt to change the boundaries was when the Greek Communist Party resumed the Greek Civil War in 1946. The Greek communists were at one point winning, and might have come to power. They did not do so because

the Soviet Union, in accord with the agreement made in Yalta, pulled the plug on them and refused to support them. The Soviet Union cut off their supplies and the Greek Civil War came to an end in 1949.

This is what happened in Europe. Yalta was an agreement primarily about Europe. It was a little vague at the time of Yalta what the agreement implied for Asia. The first problem was China. When the Second World War came to an end, the civil war between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Kuomintang (KMT) resumed. It had been partially suspended during the war with the Japanese, but after the defeat of Japan it began again. The Chinese Communist Party was doing well in 1945 and seemed to think that they should continue to do well. But Stalin strongly recommended to Mao Zedong that the CCP not march on Shanghai. Rather, he suggested that the CCP make some kind of deal with the Kuomintang, to split power in some way.

This was Stalin's attempt to enforce a version of the Yalta arrangement on China. Mao Zedong decided to ignore him. The hot war in China continued because the Chinese decided not to pay any attention to the wishes of the Soviet Union. The Kuomintang was pushed out of the mainland. It is an accident of geography that there happens to be an island that is part of China called Taiwan. The Chinese army was not strong enough in 1949 to conquer Taiwan. Had Taiwan been part of the mainland, today it would undoubtedly be a part of the PRC just like the rest of China. But at that time, the US stepped in and proclaimed the Taiwan Strait the new boundary line. They insisted that neither side could cross this new boundary, seeking thereby to freeze the situation. It was not, however, the initiative of either the US or the Soviet Union that had led to the hot war that culminated in the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The CCP had called the shots.

The next hot war that occurred was in Korea. There is a lot of debate among scholars as to what actually happened in 1950 and who started what. One thing that I don't think happened is that Stalin got on the telephone in the Kremlin and told Kim Il Sung to invade South Korea. While there may be debate about who took the first step, we are clear about what happened militarily. North Korea sent troops into South Korea, where they did quite well. Then General MacArthur was able to turn the tide, push back the North Koreans, and march north. At one point, he seemed ready to march all the way to the Yalu River and beyond. Before MacArthur was able to do this, the Chinese government sent in troops and pushed back. MacArthur wanted to use

nuclear weapons at that point. What happened? The President of the United States fired him. MacArthur was a very popular man within the United States, so this was politically very difficult to do. But it was part of the agreement that had been made at Yalta—the US felt it couldn't risk going to war with the Soviet Union over this. So where did the Korean War end? It ended just where it began. The boundary line was kept exactly where it had been before the war.

The next development of great significance in Asia was Vietnam. The Japanese had occupied Vietnam during the Second World War. Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh had led an important political guerrilla movement against the Japanese. At the end of the war, they wanted to negotiate with France (still juridically the colonial power), seeking at a minimum autonomy and at a maximum full independence. The French, intent on restoring colonial rule, refused. So war broke out between the French and the Viet Minh. The French did not do well in that war and ultimately were defeated at Dien Bien Phu.

A multi-state meeting was then convened in Geneva to settle the situation. The United States was very reluctant to go to Geneva. The French Government was at that point led by Pierre Mendès-France and he wanted to withdraw French troops, so the Geneva conferees partitioned Vietnam into north and south, creating a new line. The United States refused to sign the agreement. Part of the arrangement was that free elections throughout Vietnam would be scheduled, and the US feared that the supporters of the South Vietnamese government would lose those elections. The war resumed and US troops replaced the French in fighting the Viet Minh. Did the Soviet Union send in troops? No. They did not. Did they help militarily with supplies? Yes, because the Vietnamese made use of the fact that Cold War rhetoric required the Soviet Union to do so. But Soviet aid was very limited.

Ultimately the US lost that war. This was very important. It had an enormous geopolitical impact. First of all, it was hugely expensive for the United States, which was forced to change its monetary system as a result. It was also extremely expensive politically. Internally, a large segment of the US population rebelled against US policy. The combination of actual defeat and widespread dissent in the US led to what we call the Vietnam syndrome—a popular reluctance in the United States to engage in wars in the global South. To deal with this political problem within the US, the government eliminated the draft, but this of course put a crimp in future military possibilities.

In the Vietnam War, was the Soviet Union a prime mover? Not at all. Was the United States a prime mover? Only secondarily. Did either move in such a way that there was a risk of nuclear war between the Soviet Union and the US? No.

There was in the 1980s the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan, which seemed to violate the spirit of Yalta. But it never involved a direct military confrontation with the United States, which participated only through proxies. In any case, the Soviet incursion turned out to be a disaster for the Soviet Union, akin to the defeat of the US in Vietnam, and eventually the Soviets withdrew, ending up at the frontiers from which they started.

The case of Cuba is similar. Fidel Castro came to power as the leader of a guerrilla movement that was in total political disagreement with the Cuban Communist Party, which had been supporting the Batista regime. Castro nonetheless ran into great difficulty with the US government, which sought to overthrow his regime. So Castro announced that he had been a communist all his life. This was perhaps true in some student-Marxist sense, but he was not a member of the party. The Fidelistas then took over the Cuban Communist Party, and this forced the Soviet Union, in the logic of the Cold War, to defend the Cuban regime against any US invasion. When the Cuban Missile Crisis occurred, the US did not send troops to Cuba. Rather, the US and the Soviet Union negotiated a de facto truce, thereby avoiding military conflict.

Thus the Chinese and the Vietnamese and the Cubans all used the Soviet Union to achieve the political changes to the status quo which they desired. It was not the other way round. It was not the Soviet Union that used the Chinese, the Vietnamese or the Cubans. Indeed, the Soviet Union was the reluctant ally.

Let us now look at the events of 1989–1991 in Europe. According to the Cold War narrative, the world moved from a bipolar situation to a unipolar one, in which the United States was for the first time the unquestioned supreme power. According to the counter-narrative, things look quite different.

The collapse of the Soviet Union was, from the US point of view, an absolute geopolitical catastrophe, because it eliminated two things. It eliminated the Cold War arguments that the US had used to insist that its immediate allies and the rest of the non-communist world follow the political lead of the United States, because they were arrayed against an enemy called the Soviet Union. Secondly, it eliminated the

role of the Soviet Union in restraining people who were more or less on its side from engaging in actions that might possibly lead to military confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union.

I would argue that Saddam Hussein dared to invade Kuwait precisely because the Soviet Union was collapsing. He would never have dared to do it five years earlier, because the Soviet Union would have said that this would cause a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union could not permit that. It was the collapse of the Soviet Union that lifted the constraints on Saddam Hussein.

If you look at the Cold War as a narrative, I think it fails as an explanation of reality. I think what was going on was rather an attempt by the United States to maintain and ensure its hegemony by making a deal with the only other country in the world that had a comparable military structure, the Soviet Union. The deal was a status quo deal. But neither side was able to enforce it in the long run. The slow collapse of the Soviet Union began with the 1956 Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and the split with China in 1960. From that point on the Soviet Union grew weaker and weaker. The same thing was happening to the US, as Western Europe began to liberate itself beginning in the 1970s. The Western Europeans no longer wished to be treated as satellites and the US was forced to make a series of concessions. Nothing accelerated that process more than the collapse of the Soviet Union. Actually, there was one thing that accelerated it still more, and that was the attempt by George W. Bush to restore US hegemony through unilateral macho militarism, which backfired enormously and accelerated US decline precipitously.

The relations of the United States and the Soviet Union in Asia, as well as the policies each pursued, were quite different from their relations and their policies in Europe. It is probably not very useful to speak of the Cold War in Asia.

CHAPTER TWO

ONLY YESTERDAY: CHINA, JAPAN AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF EAST ASIA

Takashi Shiraishi and Caroline Sy Hau

As far as we are aware, two wonderful books have been published with the same title, *Only Yesterday*. The first *Only Yesterday* was written by Lewis Allen and published in 1931. In his informal history of American society in the 1920s, Allen charted the emergence of the first 20th-century middle-class society in the US, one in which middle-class people did not define themselves as a class vis-a-vis the upper classes, but rather in terms of a generic lifestyle characterized by the kinds of consumer goods that they owned and used, items such as specific brands of canned food, cosmetics, radios, cars and so on.[1]

The second *Only Yesterday* came out in Japan in 1977. Its author, Yamazaki Masakazu, is a literary critic and playwright who went on to become Japan's leading public intellectual of the last thirty years. His *Only Yesterday* is about the Americanization and creation of middle-class Japan amidst the political and intellectual ferment of the 1960s and 1970s.[2]

The third *Only Yesterday*, our forthcoming book, hopes to follow in the footsteps of these giants by telling the story not of one country, but of the region we now call "East Asia." Encompassing both Northeast and Southeast Asia, the region has been characterized by rapid region-wide economic development that has led to the emergence of increasingly urbanized and middle-class societies, as well as the deepening and widening of gaps between urban centers and rural areas, and between urban middle classes and the urban poor.

What we would like to do here is dwell on the end of the Cold War in Asia and lay out the context of what took place in East Asia "only yesterday."

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[1] Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday: An informal history of the 1920's* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1931).

[2] Yamazaki Masakazu, *Only Yesterday '60s* (Tokyo: Chukoronsha, 1977).

If we define the end of the Cold War in terms of global political structure, we might do so in a very straightforward way by saying that the end of the Cold War meant the end of bipolarity and onset of unipolarity. This is the perspective that Walter LaFeber takes in his majestic book *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945–2002*, which as the title suggests examines the entire history of the Cold War in terms of US relations with the Soviet Union. Hardly a page is devoted to developments in Central and Eastern Europe and East Asia in the late 1980s.[3] We would argue that this is what the end of the Cold War meant from an Americanist perspective, even though we are aware of the inadequacy of unipolarity as an index of geopolitical reality. After all, the world was never truly pacified by Empire. We now know that George W. Bush's project of empire building has failed, and given the fact of uneven development, as seen in the economic rise of China and India, it is reasonable to expect that an American-centered unipolar world will be transformed, if it is not already in the process of doing so, into a multipolar world in years to come.

But the point is that with the end of the Cold War, this transformation of the global political structure from bipolarity to unipolarity and then to multipolarity was fueled not simply by the collapse of the Soviet Union but by a congeries of events, some of which were partly related to, but many of which were autonomous from, the Soviet collapse. These events differed as well in their impact from one region to another. This is the reason that Americanist and Europeanist perspectives on the end of the Cold War are inadequate, and in fact more harmful than pertinent to our understanding of the transformation of East Asia. The kinds of questions that these perspectives seek to answer often result in wrong explanations when they train their lenses on East Asia.

Let us recall what happened in Europe, just to illustrate the difference in how the end of the Cold War was experienced in East Asia.

Toward the end of the 1980s, democratic revolutions took place in Eastern Europe, from one country to another, culminating in the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the unification of Germany and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and leading to the expansion of NATO as well as the deepening and expansion of European integration and the bloody civil wars in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Although

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[3] Walter Lafeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War: 1945–2006* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006).

we now talk about Vladimir Putin's Russia in terms of the resurgence of authoritarian power, it is but a pale shadow of its former self, and in any event the fact remains that the geopolitical map in Central and Eastern Europe as well as Central Asia has changed radically and perhaps irreversibly.

Nothing of this sort took place in East Asia. Democratic transformations did take place in the 1980s, not in socialist countries but rather in American client states such as the Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan. There are three crucial factors that account for this phenomenon. One is that the middle classes and political activists in the Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan came of age in America's "Free [and Capitalist] Asia," and have come to share political norms of democracy, rule of law and human rights. An equally important factor is that the US had political leverage in these countries owing to their respective elites' junior-partnership and dependence for their security and market on the US. Third, the Americans themselves intervened at critical moments in these countries' histories (the Philippines in 1986, South Korea in 1987 and Taiwan under Chiang Ching-kuo) as part of what is now known as the US "democracy project" which began under Ronald Reagan.

Although there were democracy movements in China and Burma, no socialist state in East Asia collapsed, and the Americans had no opportunity, and were powerless, to intervene.[4] Instead, China and Vietnam transformed themselves from socialist states into socialist market economy states, while Burma (now called Myanmar), which used to walk the Burmese way to socialism, has remained under a military regime that no longer espouses socialism but is as reclusive and oppressive as it had been under Ne Win. North Korea is struggling to survive under a dynastic party state while trying to cut a deal with the US by threat of acquiring nuclear weapons.

The question—naturally—is why what happened in Europe did not happen in East Asia. Why have socialist states survived in one form or another, however flexible the definition of socialism has become? Some scholars may be tempted to conflate all these developments—the collapse of the Soviet Union, the democratization of former Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe and American satellites in East Asia, and the transformation of East Asian socialist states along capitalist lines—into

[4] See for example the account of the Tiananmen crisis in George H.W. Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf, 1998), ch. 4.

a single narrative of the triumph of global capitalism. We do not deny the importance of global capitalism as a subject of analysis, but states matter, societies matter and in any case, global capitalism develops unevenly.[5] Rather than pitch our discussion at such a general level, we would do well to focus on how regions such as East Asia emerge out of specific interactions between states, societies and markets.

In this spirit, let us look at the evolution of an East Asian regional system which had been initially built under American hegemony in the early years of the Cold War but which was to undergo significant transformation over the past two decades.

We begin with China. On the surface, the story seems quite straightforward. China's market transition accelerated after 1978 when, led by Deng Xiaoping, the party decided to shift gears from self reliance (*zili gengsheng*) to opening up to the international economy and mutual interdependence with the capitalist world. In the early 1980s China dismantled the communes; reduced the scope of collective institutions; relaxed controls on the movement of villagers; welcomed substantial foreign investment, aid and loans; promoted domestic markets; and embarked on a national development strategy that was instrumental in advancing regional integration. Since then China has posted high economic growth rates every year. There was a setback in 1989 when the movement for democracy was quashed by the return of conservatives, and the economy grew at a mere 2.9 and 5.3 percent in 1989 and 1990 respectively. But with Deng reconfirming his commitment to the country's modernization in 1992, China quickly regained its momentum of economic growth, and we all know what has happened since. The growth rate of the Chinese economy averaged about 9.7 percent from 1981 to 2000, a feat that outshone the performance of Japan in the 1960s.

No doubt domestic political and economic factors have been crucial for this transformation—and since we are not China specialists, we have little to add to the excellent scholarship on this subject. What we would like to highlight, however, are two especially crucial factors.

The first is Japan's economic cooperation with China. Scholars have already underlined the importance of Japan's role—in terms of trade, technology, loans and investment—in China's market transition from

[5] As Trotsky argued in exile in Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, trans. Max Eastman (New York: Pathfinders Press, 1932).

the 1970s to the 1990s.[6] For two decades, from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s, Japan was one of China's two most important economic partners, while China was only one of approximately a dozen roughly comparable trade, loan and investment partners or recipients for Japan. Japan was also a significant source of technology, investment and loans for China. Japan was not only the first country to offer China bilateral aid, but with four major assistance packages involving loans totaling $10 billion (1.6 trillion yen) in the years 1979–1995, it has provided more than three-fourths of China's total bilateral loans. Only the World Bank, with total disbursed loans of $9.6 billion between 1983 and 1993, offered financing on a comparable scale.

The massive capital infusion into China was a product of China's changed development priorities and economic performance, but it was also a product of the politics of integration—part of the invitation for China to develop—supported by the US.[7] Shortly before Japan normalized its diplomatic relationship with China, Japan's minister of foreign affairs underscored the same point, stating that Japan's economic cooperation with China was part of a US-led global initiative. And indeed, it was cemented by China's decision to join the IMF and World Bank in 1980.

The second factor is ethnic Chinese capital, the importance of which can be gleaned from the fact that it was the southern region of China that became the most important engine of overall economic development. If we look at the regional distribution of foreign direct investment (FDI), we see that northern China, or Huabei, (which includes Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Liaoning and Shandong) received $804 million in 1990 and $8,545 million in 2000. Eastern China, or Huadong, (Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang) received $350 million in 1990 and $1,199 million in 2000. The southern China, or Huanan region, (Fujian, Guangdong, Hainan and Guangxi) obtained $2,041 million in 1990 and $15,669 in 2000. To explain this phenomenon, we need to look at the way in which the regional order was organized in East Asia.

The East Asian regional system was organized under American hegemony in the early Cold War years in a way that was comparable

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[6] Mark Selden, "China, Japan, and the Regional Political Economy of East Asia, 1945–1995," in *Network Power: Japan and Asia*, eds. Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 306–340.

[7] Ibid.

to, but different from, Western Europe.[8] In the early Cold War years, the US was confronted with a set of strategic questions in both Europe and Asia. The strategic challenges faced by the US in Western Europe were: first, how to counter the communist threat and contain the Soviet Union, and second, how to rebuild West Germany economically and make it a US ally, while ensuring that it would never again be a threat to the United States and its allies. The solutions it found to these challenges are well-known. It resulted in the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a collective security institution, and in economic terms, the formation of a European common market built on the partnership between France and West Germany, which has since evolved into the European Union.

As Wallerstein also shows in his chapter, a similar set of questions was posed in Asia. The first question was how to contain the threat of international communism emanating from Soviet Russia and communist China—and here, we should recall that the Communist Party took power in China in 1949 and war broke out in the Korean peninsula in 1950. The other question was how to revive Japan but make sure that Japan would never again be a threat to the US. The answers the US came up with are, again, well-known. One was double containment: containing the Soviet Union and communist China on the one hand while containing Japan on the other—or to use George Kennan's graphic metaphor, putting the American hand on Japan's jugular—was done first by integrating Japan's military power into the regional security system created and led by the Americans, and second by American control over Japan's energy supply.

The other element was the fashioning of a US, Japan and Southeast Asian triangular trade system. Before the war, Japan's two most important trading partners were the US and China. Japanese business naturally hoped to trade with China, as well as with the US, after the war, but in the early years of the Cold War in which China had to be contained, the US could not afford to allow Japanese business to trade with China and undermine its containment policy. Instead, the Americans encouraged the Japanese to "go south" and normalize diplomatic relations with Southeast Asian countries in "Free Asia," and

[8] Peter Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi, eds, *Network Power: Japan and* Asia, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997) and Peter Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi, eds, *Beyond Japan: the Dynamics of East Asian Regionalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

when necessary provided aid to those countries in an effort to encourage the formation of triangular trade.

The fact that the US made different strategic choices in East Asia and Western Europe had a profound impact on the structure of the two regional systems. In Western Europe, France and Germany came to the conclusion that they could not afford to fight another devastating war and therefore embarked on a joint project that was deeply informed by a Europeanist ideology based on a sense of collective identity as Europeans (however fictive that identity is). This Europeanism underpinned the political will to build a peaceful and prosperous Europe and led to the formation of a community anchored in the larger North Atlantic collective security system. In other words, *regionalism* has been the driving force in the making of Western Europe.

In East Asia, by contrast, there was neither the political will to create a security community nor a sense of identity as Asians to serve as the basis for "Asianism" as a regionalist ideology. Instead, East Asia has emerged as a region through a process of economic integration supported by the tremendous economic development of the region's countries, which was substantially powered by foreign direct investment from Japanese, South Korean and overseas Chinese businesses. In other words, it was market forces and not political will informed by Asianism that led to the *regionalization* of East Asia in the 1980s and 1990s.

The regional structure fashioned by the US in the early Cold War years provided the framework for this development. The regional security system persists as a hub-and-spoke system in which the US functioned and still functions as the hub, while the junior partners such as Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and Thailand were, and are still, linked with the US through security treaties and base agreements. The regional trade system that we now know has evolved out of the original triangular trade system with the integration of China and other countries into the system since the late 1970s.

Postwar Japan basically charted its re-integration into Asia and the world with the US as its patron. In line with the American policy of making Japan the workshop of Asia, a politics of productivity informed the overall vision of the postwar coalition of state bureaucracy, big business and finance, and the Liberal Democratic Party which has dominated postwar Japanese politics and defined Japanese national interests. This was a politics aimed at transforming political issues into problems of output and containing class conflict by forging

a consensus on growth.[9] In postwar Japan, where this politics began in earnest in the mid-1950s, it was predicated on a conservative, pro-business conception of the national interest. Central to this conception were the twin goals of economic growth and industrial transformation, with the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) as key movers.

Foreign economic policies were integral to this overall growth. In the 1960s and 1970s Southeast Asia became a major target of Japan's foreign economic policies. The key word was economic cooperation, which meant trade promotion and resources procurement with MITI in charge. Institutions such as the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (now the Japan Bank for International Cooperation), the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Institute of Developing Economies were created. Close cooperation between government and the private financial and commercial sectors became the hallmark of economic cooperation. In the early years war reparations were combined with soft loans, both private and official. Over time, however, Japan's economic cooperation also came to be deployed for geopolitical and geo-economic objectives.

China was closed to Japan in the 1950s and 1960s, but with its diplomatic normalization with the US and Japan in the 1970s, it became open again. From 1978 onward, China also changed gears and embarked on its own version of the politics of productivity, largely inspired by the successful development of newly industrialized economies like Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore. This was welcome to Japan. By the time Japan normalized its diplomatic relationship with China, the Japanese government had come to deploy its economic cooperation strategically by combining official development aid (ODA) and foreign direct investment.

Then-Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo undertook two diplomatic initiatives in 1977 and 1978. One was Fukuda's ASEAN initiatives. In Manila in 1977, he announced the principles of Japan's Southeast Asia policy, now remembered as the Fukuda doctrine, which basically held that Japan's ODA to China would not exceed its aid to ASEAN as a whole, thus making ASEAN Japan's strategic partner along with the US. The other was the conclusion of a treaty of peace and friendship

[9] Charles S. Maier, "The politics of productivity: Foundations of American international economic policy after World War II," *International Organization* 31, 4 (1977), 607–633.

in 1978 and the start of economic cooperation with China in 1979. This was meant to integrate China into the triangular regional trade system and to provide assistance for China's politics of productivity. As we mentioned earlier, Japan's total ODA to China amounted to more than 3 trillion yen ($19 billion) from 1979 to 2002.

The thinking behind Japan's economic policy is not hard to understand. The more China becomes committed to economic development and the more Chinese expectations rise, the more China will accept the current international order, and the more inclination China will have to collaborate with Japan, both government and business.

Let us now turn to the second factor, ethnic Chinese capital. The enormous importance of ethnic Chinese capital for China's development is generally accepted, but nevertheless we would like to underline two points. First, ethnic Chinese business, either in Taiwan and Hong Kong or in Southeast Asia, could only go transnational in the 1980s because they had grown big enough, starting in the 1960s, to be able to do so. In many cases they were nurtured by nation-building from above, as in such Southeast Asian cases as the Salims of Indonesia, the Kuoks of Malaysia, Chearavanont of the Charoen Pokphand Group of Thailand and Lucio Tan of the Philippines, who amassed riches—in some cases as cronies, and often in partnership with multinational companies. Second, as Meredith Oyen shows in her chapter, China actively courted these people. Xu Jiatun, Hu Yaobang's proconsul in Hong Kong in the 1980s, tells us in his memoirs that China's most important concern was to make sure that capital would not flee from Hong Kong.[10] To this end, he regularly met with big tycoons in Hong Kong and relied on Chinese state corporations to enter into joint ventures with overseas Chinese to retain their investment in Hong Kong and vicinity.

Needless to say, neither Japan's economic cooperation with China nor ethnic Chinese FDI could happen without the shift in US geopolitical strategy of aligning China as a counterweight against the Soviet Union. But it is just as important to note that from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s, the period crucial for China's transformation from socialism to socialist market economy, the region boomed economically.

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[10] Xu Jiatun, *Hong Kong Kaishu Kosaku* [Xu Jiatun Xianggang Huiyilu / Xu Jiatun's Hong Kong Memoir], trans. Aoki Masako, Kosuda Hideyuki and Zhao Hongwei (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1996).

The Plaza Accord in 1985 marked the beginning of this boom era. The yen appreciated enormously, forcing Japanese firms, above all electronics, machinery and automotive firms, to move abroad and to deploy their production facilities regionally to remain competitive in the world market. Korean, Taiwanese, Hong Kong and Southeast Asian ethnic Chinese business also went transnational and became regionalized. This expansion and deepening of business networks led to de facto economic integration.

It was in this context that politicians like Mahathir Mohamad and Takeshita Noboru, economists and other academics began using the term "East Asia" as we do now to refer to the region from Japan and South Korea, to China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, to Southeast Asia. During these years, Japan reached what we now see in retrospect as the height of its power—Japan's 1991 GDP of $3.4 trillion, by World Bank reckoning, was nine times greater than China's $370 billion GDP and approximately twice that of the combined total of China, the four newly industrializing economies (NIEs—South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore) and the five ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand).

When the Tiananmen protests and crackdown took place, Japan did not want its engagement with China via economic cooperation to be jeopardized by economic sanctions imposed on China by the US and EC countries. Japan criticized China for clamping down on the democracy movement but did not suspend its aid. China had weathered its brief isolation by 1992, when Deng Xiaoping reaffirmed his commitment to modernization.

China's continued development was an important part of Japan's economic cooperation, which by then no longer meant trade promotion and resources procurement but rather the encouragement and promotion of Asian economic dynamism through Japanese direct investment, Japanese aid for infrastructural and human resources development and Japanese imports from Asian NIEs, ASEAN countries and China. In other words, by the end of the 1980s Japan had come to see its economic cooperation as an extension of its politics of productivity beyond Japanese borders into Asia.

That China successfully transformed itself from socialism to socialist market economy turned out to be crucial for the survival of other socialist states in its vicinity. Both the dynastic party state regime in North Korea and the military junta in Burma/Myanmar survived while becoming increasingly dependent on China. Vietnam followed China's footsteps in transforming itself from socialism to a socialist

market economy through its Doi Moi economic reform package. And the region, once bisected in the 1950s and 1960s along communism-vs.-free Asia ideological lines, became increasingly integrated in economic terms in the 1980s and 1990s, thereby preparing the ground for institution-building in the post-Asian crisis years.

In sum, it should be clear that the Cold War came to an end in Asia in a way that was very different from the way it happened in Europe. It was not just that China had transformed itself into a socialist market economy. Equally important, China had become increasingly integrated into the postwar triangular trade system while at the same time remaining outside the US-led hub-and-spoke security system.

It should also be clear that China, by being integrated into the regional economic system, has in turn transformed that regional system by greatly expanding intra-regional trade and, in so doing, effectively decentering the US. Hence, we now witness the current anomaly in which the US has been increasingly decentered economically while remaining the hub of the security system from which China is still excluded. This explains why many countries in this region, such as South Korea and the ASEAN countries, engage in soft balancing politics simultaneously with a politics of regional integration when dealing with the rising China. On the one hand, the states in this region try to balance the rising power of China with other powers: for example, Vietnam is trying to balance China and South Korea; Myanmar: China and India; South Korea: China and the US; Thailand: China, the US, South Korea and India; and Indonesia: China, South Korea, the US, India, ASEAN and Australia. On the other hand, the politics of integration consists of creating a consensus on common norms and rules of conduct—for example in the areas of trade, investment and territorial disputes—while promoting market forces driving economic integration.

The kind of regional structure that now informs these two different but concurrent types of politics—soft balancing and regional integration politics—is likely to remain in place for quite some time, and will change only if there are profound domestic transformations in one or more of the major player countries, especially China, Japan and the United States. One can easily imagine that a major structural change will follow if China becomes a liberal democracy, or America shifts to offshore balancing in the wake of isolationists coming to power, or domestic political realignment leads Japan to disengage from the Japan-US alliance.

What we can say for now is that with the rise of China and the change in the regional and global distribution of power, the regional order is destined to change, hopefully in an evolutionary way. We of course do not know how it will change, so we will content ourselves with pointing out one significant byproduct of the region-in-the-making—namely, the rise of middle-class Asia.

Over two decades, from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s, real GNP grew by a factor of twelve in the NIEs, eleven in Japan, and six in China and the ASEAN countries. (By comparison, the US expanded by a factor of 2.5 and the world economy by a factor of three.) This led to the emergence of middle class societies in the region—first in Japan in the 1950s and 1960s; then in South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore in the 1970s and 1980s; then in the other four original ASEAN member countries in the 1980s and 1990s and in China in the 1990s onward.

Region-wide middle classes constitute expanding regional markets for multinational corporations. A recent study by Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) estimated the regional middle class population (outside Japan) with per capita income of at least $3,000 to be over 300 million in 2005, over 350 million in 2010 and over 600 million in 2015. If it was Japanese, South Korean, Taiwanese and ethnic Chinese foreign direct investment, geared to a significant extent to the markets outside the region, that drove East Asian regionalization in the 1980s and 1990s, multinational corporations now target the middle-class markets within the region. The purchasing and consumption power of the middle class is borne out by a *Financial Times* report of April 22, 2002, which pointed out that in 2002 personal consumption in East Asia stood at about $5 trillion, on par with the figure for the European Union, and not that far behind the $6.9 trillion figure for the US.

The METI survey shows the emergence of middle classes sharing a "regional" lifestyle. Defining middle classes in terms of the ownership of standard package items—TV, car, computer, cellular phone, DVD player etc.—the study found that the ownership patterns of standard package items among people in Manila, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taipei, and to a lesser extent Shanghai, have a lot in common, suggesting the existence of a shared sub-regional lifestyle among urban middle-class people, most of them ethnic Chinese. These people envision the future of their children regionally and globally and educate them for that.

The political consequences of the rise of East Asian middle classes vary from one country to another. Though created in one generation, they have evolved along different historical trajectories, occupy different social, political and cultural positions in their specific national contexts, and exercise varying levels of political influence. But one thing, it seems to us, is certain. East Asia has emerged as economically the most dynamic region in the world, and practically all the states have staked their future stability and legitimacy on the success of their respective politics of productivity. The middle classes, who owe their existence to postwar politics of productivity, are in turn now the most important subscribers to these politics. While international forces or events may impinge on or shape East Asian states' politics of productivity, these states are subject to the internal dynamics of their respective societies, and the challenges that their peoples confront and the future to which they aspire.

The politics of productivity, whether nurtured by so-called democratic states or by party states, as well as the middle classes' long-term cultural hegemony and political ascendancy, is largely dependent on the economic performance of their respective countries, because high economic growth means not only their survival, prosperity and expansion, but also the promise of social mobility and a life of plenty for the poor.

In the face of increasing urbanization in East Asia—the World Bank estimates that 62 percent of the population in the region will be urban by 2030—states and societies will also have to tackle the issue of impoverished people converging on so-called informal sectors in cities. As of 2004, according to the World Bank, 270 million people, or 33 percent, of East Asia's overall urban population lived in slums. Even if the ratio declines due to economic development, the absolute numbers will remain large. A projected 350 million people will be trapped in slums as of 2030. As in the case of China's "Three Issues Concerning Agriculture" (*sannong wenti*)—impoverished farmers, desolated rural areas and low agricultural productivity—many East Asian countries are now faced with the major political issue of overcoming the urban-rural divide. But they are certain to encounter a more serious political issue—the rich-poor disparity in urban areas—by 2030.[11]

[11] World Bank, East Asia and Pacific Region, *10 years After the Crisis, Special Focus: Sustainable Development in East Asia's Urban Fringe*. (Washington, DC, 2007).

The future of East Asia both nationally and regionally will depend very much on the sustainability of this politics of productivity. With the kind of geopolitical structure and economic, political and cultural networks now in place in this region, individual states cannot afford to embark on nation-building in isolation. We are likely to see not just middle classes across East Asia sharing a common regional lifestyle and perhaps even beliefs, but states with common political agendas based on common challenges. This will not mean the creation of an exclusivist "Asianist ideology" of the kind that Mahathir Mohamad and Ishihara Shintaro have been criticized for advocating.[12] Rather, it will entail a greater awareness of (and perhaps processes of identification with) East Asia as a region characterized by the growing density of economic, political and social links, through which exchanges take place and collaborations are made possible.

How then should we look at East Asia after the Cold War?

Two arguments that were often made about Japan in the 1980s and pre-crisis 1990s are now being made about China: first, that regionalization is essentially a process by which one single country—whether it is the US or Japan or China—creates a region in its own image; second, that regionalism must be led by one country, hence the idea that China now is poised to take over the leadership from slow-growing Japan and narrowly-focused America. While country-centric arguments may have some validity in understanding the Cold War era, when applied to the present situation they are misplaced and untenable. As much as Japan is deeply embedded in East Asia, so are other countries in the region, and so is China, above all its coastal provinces.

In the meantime, interactions among states, markets and societies are laying the social foundations of an East Asian regional integration that is both rooted in specific national formations yet at the same time capable of promoting horizontal solidarity across national borders. Regional integration and growing regional identification are changing the parameters of state initiatives toward region-making while redefining nations, nationalisms and national projects. This process had its roots in the Cold War years in the late 1970s and 1980s, but it greatly accelerated only yesterday, namely, the mid-1980s and 1990s. Its economic, political and social consequences cannot be grasped within the original Cold War framework that informed its creation but can no longer contain its evolution.

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[12] As will be addressed in our forthcoming book, *Only Yesterday*.

PART TWO

THE PROPAGANDA WAR

CHAPTER THREE

U NU, CHINA AND THE "BURMESE" COLD WAR: PROPAGANDA IN BURMA IN THE 1950s

Michael Charney

The Nu regime (1948–1962)—threatened with intervention by both the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the United States—and its supporters successfully re-imagined the Cold War in ways that masked its concerns and sought to weaken the more direct threat of military intervention by the PRC. While the superpowers were able to configure conventional maps in ways that yielded propagandic value, Burma's Cold War terrain was more difficult to render cartographically in ways that would aid the Burmese government. The Nu regime thus turned to the project of creating, through a play, an "imagined" Cold War landscape. This imagined landscape made it possible to conceal the PRC threat from the Burmese people and isolate the government's domestic enemies from the global Cold War context. This Burmese version of the Cold War was so successful in doing so that it would continue to inform the military's policies after the latter took power in 1962.

Introduction

During the Cold War, Western political analyses and scholarship on Burma tended to dismiss the policies of the government (1948–1962) of U Nu (1907–1995) and his refusal to allow Burma to be drawn into the Cold War as indicative of incompetence, intimidation by the People's Republic of China (PRC) or Buddhist pacifism. The Western response was both contradictory and oversimplified, portraying Burma as merely a PRC sympathizer or, as newsman Edward Hunter urged, a brave state fighting on the front lines against communism. Since the end of the Cold War, scholars making use of previously unexplored sources have begun to reconfigure Burma's place in it from new angles,

whether through the prism of the rise of the military as an institution in the context of a failing democracy, or the continuity of pro-Western elites into the independence period.[1] As a result, our understanding of Burmese politics and culture during the Cold War is becoming more complex and problematic. One dimension that requires new exploration is how Nu and the Burmese not only understood the Cold War going on around them, but how they engaged with it through intellectual production.

Although the prevailing research locates a major watershed in 1962 when the military took power, the styles and means of disseminating propaganda, the policies of "nonaligned nonalignment" in the Cold War and the centrality of the reimagination of Burma's relationship with the PRC were all begun under the Nu government. At the center of these developments was mutual antagonism between Burma and the PRC over their shared border and the simultaneity in Burma of two ongoing domestic communist insurrections and a Kuomintang (KMT) army just inside Burma's frontier with Yunnan. Threatened with intervention by both the PRC and the United States, the Nu government and its supporters successfully reimagined the Cold War in ways that masked these concerns and made possible a number of seemingly contradictory policies, strategies and tactics that kept the Chinese, the Americans and the Soviets bewildered about what Burma's actual or potential place in the Cold War really was. It was the success of these approaches, however, that ensured the survival of the Burmese version of the Cold War after the Ne Win coup of 1962. This paper examines this reimagined Cold War.

The Nu Clique

From 1948 until 1962, with the exception of the 1958–1960 period, a clique of Rangoon University-educated civilian intellectuals commanded the Burmese state in the context of the emergence of the global Cold War. Nearly all had participated in the 1936 Rangoon University strikes which provided not only an early baptism in what

[1] An excellent representative of this new literature is Mary P. Callahan, *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

emerged as national politics, but also provided a training ground in how to fight political opponents and mobilize support through propaganda. Many had also joined the lower echelons of the collaborationist Ba Maw regime (1942–1945), which helped connect this training to actual administrative experience. Nu, for example, had been outspoken in the 1936 university strikes, but had shown that while he could harangue, his personality was too erratic to provide stable leadership, which he left to others. He held a minor post under Ba Maw during the Japanese occupation. When Aung San and his cabinet were assassinated in 1947, assassins had also been sent to find Nu, but failed; as one of the few survivors, he emerged as the leader of the nationalist front, known in English as the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL).[2]

Nu's main expertise was in translating and writing, especially plays, and he was a proponent of exposing Burmese to a wide range of Western literature, including leftist literature, which he distributed through the Nagani (Red Dragon) Book Club which operated in Scott Market in Central Rangoon. One of his best-circulated works was his translation of Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Although completed in the late 1930s, this translation went through various new editions published during the early 1950s.[3] Carnegie had an important influence on Nu's approach to politics, and many of the observations he made while on a tour of the US and the PRC—made to encourage an end to the Cold War, at least between those two nations—were clearly drawn from Carnegie's approaches. Almost as popular were various plays that Nu had written both before and during the War, and it would not go too far to suggest that Nu was among newly independent Burma's best-respected writers. Many of Nu's plays were political. *Yet Set-Pa-Be Kwè* ("Oh, How Cruel"), for example, had promoted the nationalist struggle against the British and highlighted Burmese anxiety as a result of the alleged excesses of colonial-era Indian landlords and moneylenders.[4]

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[2] These developments are discussed in Michael W. Charney, *The History of Modern Burma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[3] Dale Carnegie, *Meitta-bala-tiga* [How to Win Friends and Influence People], 2 vols., translated by U Nu (Rangoon: Burma Translation Society, 1938; reprint, 1954).

[4] Hugh Tinker, *The Union of Burma: A Study of the First Years of Independence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 182.

Nu's chief ally in government was U Thant (1909–1974), who would later become internationally known as the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Thant was more adept than Nu in the practicalities of official state propaganda. From September 1947, Thant served in the AFPFL's Directorate of Information and as Deputy Director, Press. When independence was achieved, Nu named him first as Deputy Secretary of the Information Ministry and then as Director of Broadcasting. From 1949 until 1954, he served as Secretary of the Ministry of Information, which included management of the *New Times of Burma* and the *Burma Weekly Bulletin*. During this period, he also delivered commentaries on domestic and international events on his weekly radio program and wrote many of Nu's political speeches. As he confided to at least one observer, he believed himself to have been "something of an expert" in psychological warfare as a result of earlier work in censoring Soviet and American comic strips.[5] In July 1950, Thant also founded the Society for the Extension of Democratic Ideals (*Dimogareisi Pyán-pwà-yè Athìn*) that sought to promote adherence to democracy regardless of political party affiliation. To achieve these goals, the Society aimed to teach Burmese the fundamentals of a democratic society, which included the publication of propaganda that promoted this goal.[6]

Mapping Territorialized and Imagined Space

At the end of the first year of independence, the Nu government found itself in a situation not unlike that of other areas of the emerging postcolonial third world. Nation-building in colonial times had been a project directed more at promoting ethnic or religious divisions rather than integration and uniformity, thus reversing processes present throughout Eurasia for at least the previous millennium. Special treatment reserved for the minorities identified as "martial races" by

[5] June Bingham, *U Thant: The Search for Peace* (London: Victor Gollancsz Ltd, 1966), 168–70, 174.

[6] Michael W. Charney, "Ludu Aung Than: Nu's Burma and the Cold War," in *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1945–1962*, edited by Christopher Goscha and Christian Ostermann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, forthcoming).

the British gave way to fears of being suppressed by the formerly disenfranchised majority populations. In Burma, the Rohingyas, Karens and Mons rebelled, seeking to secede. In later years, they would be followed by numerous other groups, including the Shan. In this sense, Burma followed a pattern common on the periphery of the main Cold War turf. While the Cold War suspended the breakup of multinational states in Europe, on the periphery, primary ethnic separatism continued unabated and contributed to the growing connection between ethnic identity and cartographic boundaries.[7]

Even within the majority population, ideological differences that were voluntarily suppressed in order to gain independence resurfaced once that goal had been achieved. The Nu government thus faced two communist rebellions that would outlive it, as well as less articulate but equally powerful rebellions by the ideologically confused Peoples Volunteer Organizations (PVO). Further, remnants of the KMT armies cut off in Yunnan by the People's Liberation Army (PLA)'s great counteroffensive of 1948–1949 moved their operations inside Burma, without the agreement of the Nu government, and conducted war directed not against Rangoon, but against the PLA in Yunnan. They were soon supported unofficially by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Very quickly, the Nu government controlled only pockets of territory within Burma's official borders and it seemed likely that the regime would collapse.

The situation of the Nu government in 1949 is a good example of how the Cold War challenged geopolitical representations reliant on territorialized notions of cartographic space. The overlapping treaties of alignment that led Europe into the First World War and the division of the world between Axis and Allies in the Second World War could and were represented in various color schemes demarcating which countries were on one side or the other. In its postcolonial context, outside of Europe and North America, contests could not be accurately represented by these means. As American experience showed in South Vietnam and Cambodia, demarcations of "national" boundaries did not reflect stable political realities, but masked them, creating

[7] Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, *The Power of Projections: How Maps Reflect Global Politics*, with a foreword by Harvey Scherman (London: Praeger, 1996), 126.

imagined political spaces that were useful for propaganda purposes, but were otherwise meaningless.

The most important difficulty was in making meaningful national boundaries when much of the country was in the hands of the White Flags and the Red Flags (separate communist groups), the KMT (whose areas of operation overlapped parts of Burma and Yunnan and who were blind to Burma's national questions), or in those of the ethnic rebels mentioned above. Then there was also the very real possibility that a PRC invasion to evict the KMT was imminent. Finally, external intervention by the US, realized by their (and Taiwan's) active supply of KMT forces in Burma, and suspected Soviet support for Burma's communist rebels entered into Nu's imagination. The complexity of Burma's civil/Cold War situation and the fluidity of power flows into and within the country could not be represented on maps in a meaningful way, at least not one that could bolster the regime. Nu's policy of international neutrality (including nonalignment with the proposed Non-Aligned Movement) was aimed as much at attempting to simplify, intellectually, Burma's situation as it was to break this fluidity, and thus bifurcate into distinguishable categories Burma's domestic and international political terrain.

The Story of a Play I

As a translator, Nu would have been familiar with the disparity in equivalencies, the kinds of problems that Alton L. Becker would later term euphemisms and deficiencies—that is, the meaning that is added to a word or phrase when it is translated to another language or the meaning that is lost in the same process.[8] Concepts can likewise be enhanced or, conversely, not fully rendered in translation. As a writer, Nu was also used to creating people, places and events that exist in an imagined world firmly controlled by the writer and visited and accepted by the reader. Unlike the territorialized maps that failed to represent the realities of the Cold War, novels or plays were not bounded by such conventions.

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[8] Alton L. Becker, "Introduction," in *Writing on the Tongue*, edited by Alton L. Becker (Ann Arbor: Centers for South and South-east Asia Studies, 1989), 1–5.

Nu applied his skills in creating imagined spaces to propaganda directed at Burma's problems very quickly after fighting broke out. The initiative, however, appears to have come from Thant. On 18 June 1950, Thant arrived at Nu's home with a small committee of important writers and scholars of literature or stage, all of whom had some experience with the public dissemination of information. The purpose of the committee was to compose a play that would make the public aware of the dangers involved in taking power by force and not through a democratic election. Communists would only be one among many groups portrayed as being in the wrong. The film and stage director (and former Director of Information) on the committee, U Nyana, was at that time selected to write the play, but his draft was rejected at a second meeting of the committee on 5 August 1950. Nu was then asked to write a different version of the play, to be entitled *Ludu Aung Than* (frequently translated as *The People Win Through*). This was not the only change; the story would now focus on a man who joined the communists and lived to regret the decision during 1949, the worst year of the ongoing civil war. Nu wrote the play during his spare time between 16 August and 4 November 1950, with occasional meetings with the committee in between to discuss stylistic and plot points.[9]

Nu focused the revised play on the period from March 1948 to March 1950, considered the worst years of the civil war. While the original intent of the committee was to have a play that promoted Democracy and admonished those who attempted to take power by force, Nu's final version of the play reflected additional themes that he elaborated in many of his public speeches. The most important of these, indeed the central theme of the play, was to warn the Burmese not to allow themselves to be fooled by self-interested foreign countries, in particular the Soviet Union and the US.[10] The completed manuscript for *Ludu Aung Than* was submitted to the Society for the Extension of Democratic Ideals for publication in early 1951, which was soon followed by the performance of the play on the radio, on a one act per week basis, as well as a serialized comic strip.[11]

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[9] Charney, "Ludu Aung Than: Nu's Burma and the Cold War."
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

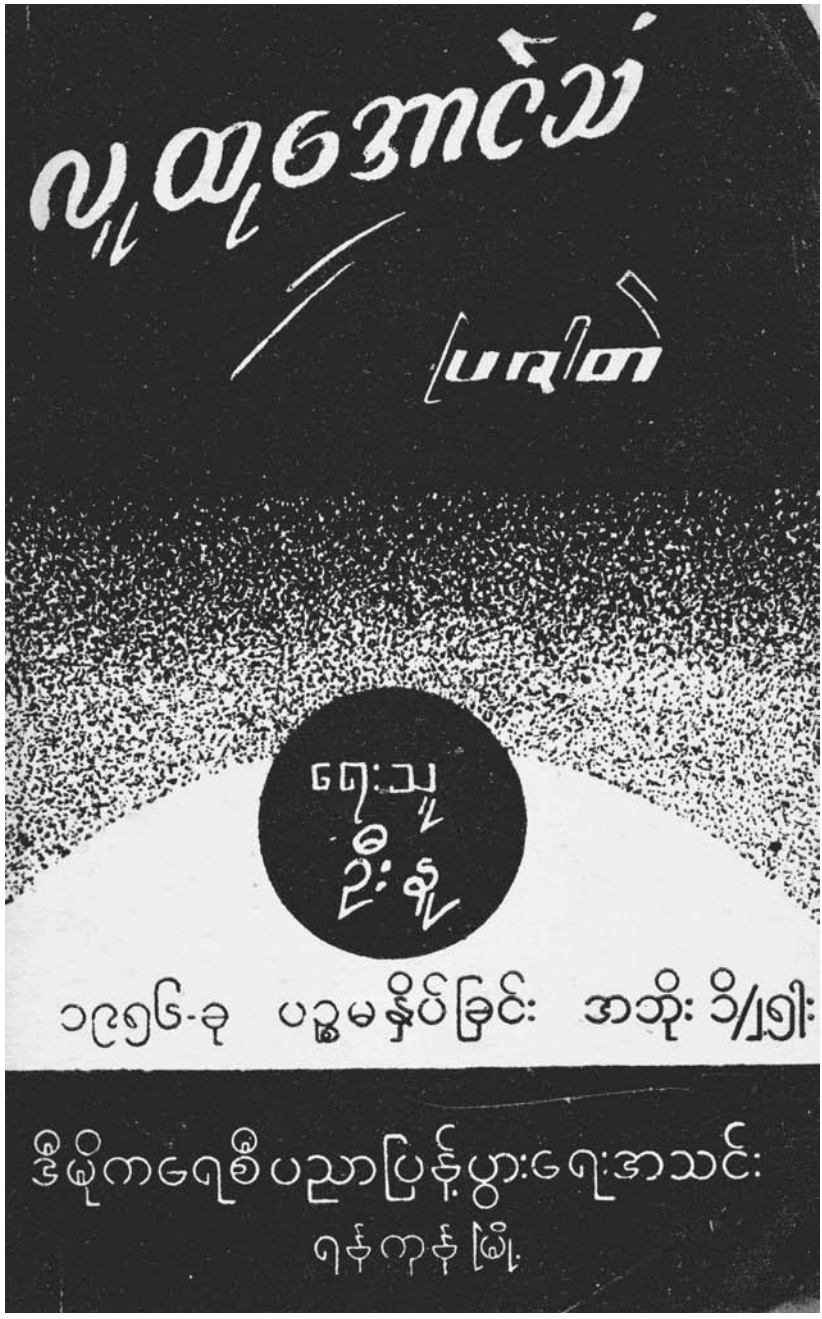

Figure 3.1 Cover: *Ludu Aung Than* or *The People Win Through*

During the years in which the play was written and first disseminated, Nu suspected that the Soviet Union had instigated and supported the communist revolts. The Soviet Union, after all, did not warm up to the Nu government until after Joseph Stalin's death in 1953.[12] While Nu identified the Soviet Union and the US as sources of intervention that had to be opposed, *Ludu Aung Than* was silent on the PRC's possible intervention. This silence was not new. While the Nu government, through its ambassador to the United Nations, James Barrington, had joined with other countries in that body in condemning the North Korean invasion of South Korea, it refused to cooperate in condemning the PRC for its support of North Korea.[13]

Nu, understandably, also had to consider Burma's vulnerability to invasion from the PRC. The PRC had resumed claims made earlier by the KMT government regarding the unfair imposition by the British of their own territorial claims at the expense of China. The PLA briefly invaded in 1956 and occupied parts of the Burmese border, but withdrew shortly after. The treatment of this border incursion was in sharp contrast to the ways in which the Nu government handled the KMT presence. During the latter crisis, the regime launched a full battery of propaganda, particularly in a giant 1953 portfolio of evidence, policy statements and photographs, circulated at home and abroad and intended to demonstrate that the "imagined" invasion was in fact real.[14]

The importance of the danger posed by the KMT was emphasized by a strategic positioning of the title against the backdrop of a map of the country. Burma is presented as an undivided entity bordered by a white, politically undivided zone of territory (for the coasts are included) suggesting the lack of an immediate external threat, notably from India and the PRC. Overlapping the Burmese and Chinese border are the words of the title: "Kuomintang Aggression Against Burma," the word Burma itself bounded in a dark-coloured box, again emphasizing unity. In this rendering of territorial and political space, a

[12] Richard Butwell, *U Nu of Burma* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), 185.

[13] John Seabury Thomson, "Burmese Neutralism," *Political Studies Quarterly* 72.2 (June 1957): 273.

[14] Burma Information and Broadcasting Department, compiler, *Kuomintang Aggression Against Burma* (Rangoon: Information and Broadcasting Department, 1953).

unified Burma stands alone facing a KMT transgressor, the seriousness of whose threat to the Nu government is spelled out boldly.

By contrast, the PRC invasion, arguably much more serious though shorter lived, as it included the realization of longstanding Chinese territorial claims made against Burma, was treated with a combination of relative silence and denial (by the Burmese) that any invasion had taken place.[15] This was partly due to embarrassment because it occurred after years of Nu publicly taking the PRC's side on a number of international issues. Another factor was the scale of the threat, for the Burmese Army was a match for the KMT, even when supplied by the CIA, whereas the conclusion of a land war with the PRC would have predictably negative results for Burma. Further, the invasion confirmed Nu's earlier warnings that the KMT presence would provide an excuse for intervention by the PRC. Thant shared this perspective. Commenting in 1965 on the Vietnam War, Thant suggested that if US troops had not entered South Vietnam, the latter could have followed the Burmese model for handling communist insurgents. This would have led to better results, he argued, for unlike South Vietnam's Viet Cong insurgents, in Burma "there has not been a single instance of outside help to the Burmese Communists."[16] For all of these reasons, and perhaps others, Nu chose not to include the PRC invasion in his imagined space of the Cold War and thus decided not to mobilize his propaganda machine against Burma's gargantuan neighbor.

Hollywood Comes to Burma

Nu's personal conflict between his role as a national political leader and as a popular writer probably had much to do with the mobilization of *Ludu Aung Than* by US interests as a propaganda piece that worked for the US rather than against it. When an obscure man attached to the US Embassy in Rangoon, George Edman, offered his services in bringing *Ludu Aung Than* to the US, Nu initially offered little resistance. Edman also knew another American, a Hollywood scriptwriter named Paul Gangelin (1898–1961), who happened to be in Rangoon at the

[15] Butwell, *U Nu of Burma*, 179–180.
[16] Bingham, *U Thant: The Search for Peace*, 38.

time on another project discussed further below.[17] Gangelin was fifty-four at the time and had been writing Hollywood scripts for thirty years, including the story or screenplays for *My Pal Trigger*, *The Daltons Ride Again* and *When Husbands Flirt*, and would present his final script in 1957, the *Giant Claw*.[18]

Gangelin was a staunch anti-communist who had participated as a witness before the House of Representatives Un-American Activities Committee and testified against his colleagues with alleged communist sympathies. Gangelin had been hired in April 1951 by the Ministry of Information's Special Films Production Board to make two films, which Gangelin would write and produce. The first would deal with Democracy in Burma and the second with the labor problem in Burma. In writing the labor script, Gangelin admitted that he had international communism on his mind. As he explained:

> The lawlessness of … [the] KNDO's [Karen National Defence Organisation] and PVO's I could say little about. This is an internal problem with which Burma could cope on her own. But Communism is the universal enemy of sanity and civilization, in Burma as here in Hollywood, where I was one of those who opposed it and helped thwart its attempt to control the motion picture industry. Communism is a running force, wherever it is found, constantly and deliberately exacerbated from external sources. However it may disguise itself its aim is the re-enslavement of man to the state under proletarian tyrants as he was through history enslaved to the state under his monarchs. In my opinion, the Burmese communists' monstrous perfidy lies at the heart of the country's difficulties.[19]

The *Ludu Aung Than* play committee had earlier considered a film version of the play for Burmese as well as an English version for international audiences. With Gangelin and Edman's encouragement, Nu gave the go-ahead for the transition of *Ludu Aung Than* from play to film and Gangelin was hired to write the new script. Now, Gangelin, Edman, Thant and Nu met together in Thant's office at the Secretariat One in November 1951 and they agreed to work together to get the film production in motion. Thant, as Honorary Secretary of the

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[17] Paul Gangelin, "How 'The People Win Through' Became a Film: A Whale of a Tale," *Guardian* 1.5 (March, 1954): 19–20.

[18] "Paul Gangelin," Internet Movie Database, http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0304321/

[19] Gangelin, "How 'The People Win Through' Became a Film: A Whale of a Tale," 20.

Society for the Extension of Democratic Ideals, the play's copyright holder, would get the Society's cooperation. Edman promised, vaguely, US assistance. Gangelin would write the screenplay. Gangelin returned to the US with a translation of the play and photos Thant had given him of Burmese houses and costumes. It remains unknown who made the particular translation that Gangelin would work with. However, since the Society for the Extension of Democratic Ideals published in 1952 an English version of the play translated by Thant's colleague in the Burma Broadcasting Service, U Khin Zaw,[20] Gangelin may simply have been handed Khin Zaw's yet-to-be-published draft.[21]

Gangelin began working on the transition of the play from stage to screen in the US. In the process, he completely changed the script. He claimed afterwards that he had not intended to present Nu's story as an anti-communist homily, which he admitted it was not. Gangelin saw its value as a "grave, trenchant call to the Burmese people to understand the value of true Democratic responsibility, to learn that in our time force and conspiracy must give way to the common will, freely expressed." However, when he changed the script, with the exception of a handful of paragraphs, he increased the threat of communism through the voices of the main characters: that is, Gangelin did indeed turn it into an anti-communist homily. Nu had Gangelin fly to Bassein to discuss the script and was unhappy about some of the changes, including one story development. We are not told which part of the script he did not like, only that after an hour of argument, Gangelin and Nu agreed to compromise. After that, Gangelin agreed to Nu's objections about at least one other change and on this occasion Nu reportedly told him: "This time, Mr. Gangelin, you're not going to change my mind."[22]

While progress had been made on the script, the question of how to fund the project remained, for it was not something that the cash-strapped Burmese government could afford on its own at the height of the civil war. As mentioned above, Edman had made a vague promise of American help. The reasons for Edman's interest in the play and the nature of the suggested American help remain unclear. There are

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[20] U Nu, *The People Win Through* (Rangoon: Society for the Extension of Democratic Ideals, 1952).

[21] Gangelin, "How 'The People Win Through' Became a Film: A Whale of a Tale," 20.

[22] Ibid.

some clues. Bobker Ben Ali, a director at Gilmor Brown's Pasadena Playhouse, where many future stars of American cinema had their first break, remembered that the State Department had received Nu's help at this time in securing the release of nine US airmen who were being held prisoner by the PRC. Interestingly, this led a few months later to a translation of the play being passed to Brown, who agreed to produce the play, but had difficulty finding a director. After being rejected by three or four directors, Brown turned to Ali. As Ali remembered, the main obstacle to doing the play was the enormous size of the script, for it was "a manuscript of newsprint paper…about the size of the LA phone book." As Ali further complained:

> I took the play home and read it and it was about the Communist insurrection in Burma where there are something like sixty political parties that are identified by colors—there are red PVO's, the yellow PVO's or the white PVO's. It had a cast of thousands, it was already this thick, and I read it and I just knew it could never be done.[23]

Nevertheless, Ali soon managed to produce a severely truncated version of the script and put on a much less grand version of the play. The US showed increasing interest in attracting attention to Nu's story. The Voice of America (VOA, then part of the State Department before the 1953 creation of the US Information Agency) became involved and broadcast the 1952 Pasadena Playhouse performance of the play internationally, while the United Nations Newsreel made a documentary of the production of the play. This documentary was then screened "all over Asia and Europe."[24] Soon after, in November 1952, money also turned up to turn the Gangelin script into a feature film. Cascade Pictures had somehow gotten financing for the play, for which it wanted nothing in return, not even for the costs of filming it, and all proceeds were to go to the Society for the Extension of Democratic Ideals. At Nu's request, the Society agreed to turn this money over to religious and other organizations pursuing popular welfare in Burma. Gangelin then made arrangements by flying to New York and meeting several times with Thant, who was then at the United Nations.[25]

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[23] Diane Alexander, *Playhouse* (Los Angeles: Dorleac-Macleish, 1984), 111.
[24] Ibid., 112.
[25] Gangelin, "How 'The People Win Through' Became a Film: A Whale of a Tale," 20.

Cascade Pictures sent a film crew and its own equipment to Rangoon to begin shooting the play, with an all-Burmese cast including both professional and amateur actors. They then took everything back to Hollywood for editing and sent the finished film, with English subtitles, to Burma in late 1953. The film was previewed in Rangoon on 26 December 1953, but was scheduled for general release in Burma almost two months later, with simultaneous screenings in Rangoon and Mandalay on 12 February 1954, Union Day.[26]

For Burmese audiences, there were mixed reactions. Some saw it, in cinematic terms, as the best movie ever made in Burma. As one reviewer claimed, "*The People Win Through* is that rare Burmese film in which artistic merit is matched with technical excellence."[27] Others, apparently upset at its anti-communist theme, torched a theater running the film. And the film had become decidedly more anti-communist, but with an ambiguous tone. As U Kyaw Tun explained in his review published in the official *Burma Weekly Bulletin*,

> *The People Win Through* is not a propaganda film. It is more like a documentary. It reflects…what is actually happening today to the Communist rebellion. It portrays…the good and the bad men who fight under the Communist flag.[28]

The reworked message of the film was not clear to everyone. Some Burmese viewers only recognized the moral messages originally intended when *Ludu Aung Than* was first written, some commenting that its messages were 'do not wrest power by force' and 'do not forsake religion.'[29] But for Kyaw Tun and likely many others the film had achieved Gangelin's goals. As Kyaw Tun recommended, "special efforts should be made to show it in the United States where it can do a lot to dispel the popular misconception that the Burmese government is pro-communist."[30]

California would again see the staging of the *Ludu Aung Than* play in 1955, when Nu and other Burmese dignitaries made a tour of the US, including visits not only to California, but also to President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Vice President Richard Nixon in Washington,

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[26] "The People Win Through," *Burma Weekly Bulletin* 2.39 (30 December 1953): 310.
[27] U Kyaw Tun, "A Review," *Burma Weekly Bulletin* 2.39 (30 December 1953): 310.
[28] Ibid.
[29] "The People Win Through," 310.
[30] Kyaw Tun, "A Review," 311.

DC. This visit was intended not only to repay Nixon's earlier visit to Burma aimed at securing Burmese participation in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), but also to explain to the American people Nu's reasons for refusing to join that organization and to make some contribution in fostering better relations between the US and the PRC. While in California, Nu insisted on seeing the play performed and State Department officials once again encouraged the Playhouse's cooperation. Given the short notice and the fact that the sets had been dismantled long before, Ali, the director of the original 1952 production at the Playhouse, was only able to put on a reading by six actors at the Shakespeare Club. Nu, pleased to see the performance, suggested that he would seek Southeast Asia Foundation funding to bring the ad hoc troupe to Burma and put on a performance in Rangoon. Nothing appears to have come from these plans.[31]

The Story of a Play II

Thus far, *Ludu Aung Than* had emerged as a Burmese-language play, a Burmese-language cartoon, a Burmese-language (perhaps with English subtitles) film, and as an English-language play performed at the Pasadena Playhouse. In the process, the play was transformed from Nu's earlier vision—of bifurcating for Burmese audiences the Cold War and the domestic civil war into two intelligible and separable entities—into a story for the same audiences of the negative impact of the civil war in which communists were emphasized as especially notorious. While Thant and Nu introduced the play as a text for use in Burmese schools, efforts were underway in the US to increase the exposure of American audiences to the play. This led to *Ludu Aung Than*'s final incarnation in 1957, with the publication by Taplinger Press in New York of Khin Zaw's 1952 English translation. This edition was intended primarily for American audiences.[32]

What was unusual about the Taplinger edition was not the play itself, but its lengthy introduction. This introduction, almost as long as the play itself, was contributed by Edward Hunter. Hunter was a former propaganda specialist for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS,

[31] Alexander, *Playhouse*, 112.
[32] Charney, "Ludu Aung Than: Nu's Burma and the Cold War."

the forerunner of the CIA) who became a freelance journalist wandering about Asia wherever communist movements had broken out, writing books to warn Western readers about the growing communist threat to the Free World. Hunter was also noted for his testimony before the House of Representatives Un-American Activities Committee on 13 March 1958, where he unveiled his thesis that on the basis of absolute population and territorial loss, the Free World was losing the Cold War to the communists.[33]

Although Nu saw himself as a neutralist leader in the Cold War facing serious domestic rebellions, Hunter's introduction to the play casts Nu mainly as a defender of democracy on the frontlines of international communist aggression. It would be going too far to suggest that this represented mere twisting of the truth by Hunter. In actuality, the Burmese version of Thant's original introduction presented for Burmese audiences and the English version presented for foreign, particularly American, audiences, differ in their description of the aggression faced by Burma. In the Burmese version, Thant describes the context of the play as follows: "The main aim in writing this play was that we wanted to reveal the wrongs that occur because of evil plans to take national power by force without asking for it from the people by means of Democracy."[34] In the English version published in 1952 and republished in the Hunter edition, the same paragraph reads: "*The People Win Through* shows what actually happens when Burmese communists decide to stage an insurrection."[35]

The reasons for the different characterization of the threat in the two versions of the introduction are not explained. It may be possible that with the American interest in the play and the dogged nature of the Republic's domestic opponents some leaders, perhaps Thant in particular, felt that appealing for American sympathy was a sensible step to take if some turn in events necessitated changing course and appealing for outside aid. The English version of Thant's introduction

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[33] Ibid. Committee on Un-American Activities, *Consultation with Edward Hunter, Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, 85th Congress, Second Session, March 13 1958*. Washington DC: United States Printing Office, 1958. Full text: http://www.crossroad.to/quotes/globalism/Congress.htm.

[34] U Thant, "Pyazat-baw-bauk-la-poún," in *Ludu Aung Than Pyazat*, by U Nu (Rangoon: Dimoga-yei-si-pinya-byán-pwà-yè-haùng, 1958), 78.

[35] Nu, *The People Win Through* (1952); Edward Hunter, "Introduction," in *The People Win Through: a Play by U Nu*, edited by Edward Hunter (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1957), 49.

to Nu's play was certainly consistent with the view Hunter took of Nu's struggle, and he would build upon this theme in 1958 in *The Continuing Revolt: The Black Book of Red China*, claiming that the play "expos[ed] the foreign allegiance of the leaders in [Nu's] country's Red Revolt."[36]

Hunter's forte was "Red China," which he accused of softening the intellect of Asians to make them succumb to communist ideology, and he even coined the term "brainwashing" in one evocatively entitled book on the PRC.[37] With the help of two anti-communist bodies, International Research on Communist Techniques Incorporated and The Committee of One Million (Against the Admission of Communist China to the United Nations), Hunter published his aforementioned *The Continuing Revolt*. In this virulently anti-PRC book, Hunter elaborated further on his assessment of Nu's situation: "Burma, the first Asian country to recognize Red China…was rewarded with uninterrupted guerrilla warfare."[38] In Hunter's view, the PRC's support of communist insurrection in Burma forced Nu to write *Ludu Aung Than*.[39]

Through his various works, Hunter helped contribute to the evolution of *Ludu Aung Than* into its final form in the view of American audiences. The Nu government was a democratic state fighting on the frontlines of the Cold War against international communism directed and supported by both the Soviet Union and the PRC. This reworked the mental map of the Burmese position in the Cold War, removing the KMT as 'hostiles' in the country and suggesting by silence that they were a kindred force, and erasing the United States' intervention in the country.

Conclusion

This discussion has focused on the efforts of Nu to reimagine the Cold War in ways that would help Burma survive the extreme challenges of

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[36] Edward Hunter, *The Continuing Revolt: The Black Book on Red China* (New York: The Bookmailer, 1958), 15.

[37] Edward Hunter, *Brain-washing in Red China: The Calculated Destruction of Men's Minds*, revised and expanded edition (New York: Vanguard Press, 1953).

[38] Hunter, *The Continuing Revolt*, 15, 17.

[39] Ibid., 15; Charney, "Ludu Aung Than: Nu's Burma and the Cold War."

fighting both numerous domestic ethnic and ideological insurgencies and to prevent their intersection with the intervention of the major Cold War powers. Primary to these efforts was the attempt to discourage PRC intervention. Nu, reflecting the intellectual origins of his governing clique, used literature to create this imagined space, which would have been difficult if not impossible to do with traditional cartographic approaches. This politicization of literature shows interesting similarities with developments in Indonesia, discussed in the chapter by Liu Hong, though the resulting outcomes were very different.

What Nu was not prepared for was the manipulation of the resulting play by US interests who turned the play into a documentary, a VOA broadcast, a film and an English-language publication distributed in the US. As a result of the manipulation of the play, encouraged by certain interests in Nu's own government, Nu was transformed from a neutralist leader attempting to keep his country out of the Cold War into a Cold War warrior fighting against communist penetration into Burma. His main antagonists were also transformed from the KMT and domestic rebels into international communists, directed especially by the PRC. Nu was turned into a victim of an alleged PRC campaign to win Asia by subverting it. Ultimately, he found that by creating an imagined Cold War he also presented an opportunity for Western propaganda to engage on the same ground and reconstruct this imagined space for its own purposes.

Despite Nu's best efforts to keep Burma out of trouble with the PRC and to present to the Burmese an imagined Cold War that did not involve a PRC threat to Burma on the one hand, and a separation of domestic and international power flows on the other, these efforts were undone under the Ne Win regime that took power in 1962. Ne Win and the Revolutionary Council turned to Soviet cooperation and assistance from 1963. As relations between the Soviet Union and the PRC cooled and the PRC's aid to Burma's communists became clearer thereafter, the Ne Win regime would keep its eyes transfixed on the northeast. PRC-Burmese relations then transformed from pretended intimacy to open antagonism. Burma's place in the Cold War thus changed considerably from the 1950s to the 1960s. This also marked the beginning of nearly three decades of PRC support, the much-feared foreign intervention that Nu had tried to prevent, for the "domestic" communist rebels fighting the Burmese state.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMMUNISM, CONTAINMENT AND THE CHINESE OVERSEAS

Meredith Oyen

After 1949, the emerging Cold War imposed global strategic importance on Southeast Asia. The communist revolution in China, followed by the United Nations and Chinese interventions in the Korean War brought the struggle between spreading communism and containing it into the heart of Asia. The countries of Southeast Asia actively sought independence as the Western powers discovered that their continued cooperation remained vital to the reconstruction of Japan and Western Europe, raising anti-colonial, nationalist and communist movements in these countries to international attention.[1]

As a result of these developments, the existence of a large ethnic Chinese population in Southeast Asia took on a new importance. In 1950, the "overseas Chinese (*huaqiao*)," as the population was generally called,[2] made up six percent of the population of Southeast Asia, for a total of approximately 9.6 million people (see Table I). This not only made them a significant minority, but they also controlled a disproportionately large segment of the local national economies. The economic power of the Chinese diaspora was profoundly important to both the Republic of China (ROC) and the People's Republic of China (PRC), where it represented remittances, investment and a source of foreign exchange. Added to this were the diaspora's cultural, linguistic and familial ties to China, which together raised alarm about the loyalties of the overseas Chinese in the 1950s.

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[1] The link between Japanese reconstruction and the US policy of containment in Southeast Asia is demonstrated in Michael Schaller, "Securing the Great Crescent: Occupied Japan and the Origins of Containment in Southeast Asia," *Journal of American History* 69, 2 (September 1982): 392–414.

[2] The term "overseas Chinese" is notoriously problematic. The term as it was used in the era under consideration generally included anyone of Chinese heritage living outside of China, regardless of local citizenship. Host governments, however, frequently objected to either Chinese government "claiming" their citizens as Chinese nationals, and arguments over citizenship and dual nationality were not infrequent. In this essay, I use the term the way the government organizations involved used it, but acknowledge that different groups count the population in different ways.

Table I: Estimate of Overseas Chinese Population in Southeast Asia, Dec. 1950[3]

Country	Chinese Population	Total Population	% Chinese
Thailand	3,000,000	18,000,000	16.7
Malaya	2,008,000	5,235,000	38.4
Singapore	790,000	1,011,000	78.1
Indonesia	2,100,000	72,000,000	2.9
Vietnam	750,000	24,000,000	3.1
Cambodia and Laos	250,000	3,500,000	7.1
Burma	300,000	17,500,000	1.7
Philippines	230,000	20,000,000	1.2
Sarawak and Brunei	162,000	550,000	29.4
North Borneo	70,000	320,000	21.9
Total	9,660,000	162,116,000	6.0

The previous half-century had proven that when aroused, the diaspora could be active in its support of the ancestral homeland; it had also created a solid precedent for activist government work on behalf of Chinese interests abroad. Trying to win the hearts and minds of the overseas Chinese therefore became instrumental to the achievement of foreign policy goals for the United States, ROC and PRC, and to how they related to one another. Recent work in the history of the Cold War has turned to the issue of public diplomacy as a major source of inquiry; both historians and international relations theorists are examining the campaigns that were conducted primarily through information operations and what came to be known as "psychological warfare." Although the battle for the loyalties and attentions of the captive peoples of Eastern Europe has received the most scholarly attention, there was also an ongoing propaganda battle in Asia.[4] The struggle for the support of the overseas Chinese is particularly interesting because the audience was pulled at least three ways; though

[3] G. William Skinner, *Report on the Chinese in Southeast Asia* (New York: Cornell University Department of Far Eastern Studies, 1950), 79.

[4] See Yale Richmond, *Practicing Public Diplomacy: A Cold War Odyssey* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008); Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945–1961* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Nicholas Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945–1989* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Alexander Stephen, *The Americanization of Europe: Culture, Diplomacy, and Anti-Americanism after 1945* (Boston: Berghahn Books, 2005).

technically allies, US and ROC goals and priorities in the region were not always the same, and host governments often added their voices in opposition to both communist and containment themes.[5] In other words, as noted by other scholars in this volume, the conflict in Asia was far from bipolar.

The propaganda war that raged through the 1950s finally began to decline as the United States and People's Republic found that their attention to the Chinese diaspora began to damage their respective relations with the Southeast Asian governments, and as Southeast Asian governments pursued policies to promote Chinese assimilation in their territories. In the turn toward promoting assimilation into local societies in the late 1950s, US and PRC goals were suddenly far more compatible than those of the United States and the ROC. Moreover, American and mainland Chinese organizations realized they could not continue to address the overseas Chinese as a unified diaspora with shared interests and goals or easily manipulated ties to either Chinese government.

Competing Propaganda Themes

At the outset, the United States, PRC and ROC all based the attention they directed at the overseas Chinese during the early 1950s on the fundamental idea that the Chinese abroad maintained a connection with the Chinese homeland—that whether for ethnic, cultural, familial or financial reasons, the overseas Chinese cared enough about China to act in a way that would support whatever was best for the country. The policies the three governments stressed and the themes they promoted in pursuit of this population differed and reflected broader issues in each nation's foreign policy during the decade.

Immediately after its victory in 1949, the government established by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was widely celebrated within the overseas communities. A strong China, a China that had "finally stood

[5] As noted by Hong Liu in "The Historicity of China's Soft Power: The PRC and the Cultural Politics of Indonesia, 1945–1965" (in this volume), propaganda efforts originating from PRC bureaus were sometimes aimed at both local Indonesian audiences and overseas Chinese simultaneously, complicating the picture of a simple fight for diaspora loyalty.

up" and which was prepared to fight back against national humiliations and defend the interests of overseas citizens had long been a dream for maligned nationals abroad. The People's Republic lost some of the initial support from the diaspora, however, during the crises of faith caused by land reform policies that categorized returned overseas Chinese and overseas Chinese families as landlords or rich peasants; rumours of efforts by local officials in Guangdong Province to use captive relatives to extort funds from those residing abroad; and anti-communist efforts to capitalize on PRC mistakes. In the wake of these events early in the decade, PRC propaganda policies focused attention on regaining overseas Chinese confidence and enthusiasm.[6] It also aimed at re-establishing the role of the Chinese Communist government as the protector of the Chinese abroad, the guardian of the Chinese culture and language worldwide and the only true government of China.

PRC overseas Chinese policies as articulated by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission (OCAC), a bureau within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Central People's Government, fell into two categories: internal and external. Internal information campaigns were directed at returned migrants, families with members living abroad, and students returning for study; external work focused on Chinese communities overseas. In 1951, broad themes for both internal and external work included opposing the United States in the Korean War, explaining land reform, and extolling the success of efforts to suppress counterrevolutionaries. The first two years of internally-directed propaganda work also focused on incorporating family members and returned overseas Chinese into the socialist project; advertising the

[6] Scholars divide the development of the PRC's overseas Chinese policy into four periods: the years from 1949 to 1955 (when the Sino-Indonesian Treaty on Dual Nationality was signed) were marked by the competition with the ROC for diaspora loyalty; 1955–1966 was the era of peaceful co-existence; from 1966 to 1972 the Cultural Revolution drove the Chinese Communist Party to make attempts at exporting revolution; finally, after 1972 focus returned to accommodation, though efforts increased again to promote investment. For a complete discussion of way overseas Chinese policies were formed and carried out in the People's Republic, see Stephen Fitzgerald, *China and the Overseas Chinese: A Study of Peking's Changing Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 1–11. See also Milton Easmen, "The Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia," in *Modern Diasporas in International Politics*, ed. Gabriel Sheffer (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 130–163; and Theresa Chong Carino, *China and the Overseas Chinese of Southeast Asia* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1985).

ways remittances could be made; explaining investment opportunities; providing relief for poor returned overseas Chinese and refugees; improving education for people with overseas Chinese ties; working with local gazetteers to get news circulated through the villages; and establishing domestic overseas Chinese service offices. Meanwhile, overseas information work in the same period focused on five points: unifying the patriotic overseas Chinese; exposing attacks on the overseas Chinese by Chiang Kai-shek's government; protecting the rights of the Chinese living abroad (including their ability to send remittances, but also protecting them against local discriminations and violence and opening immigration opportunities); promoting cultural and language education abroad; and improving relations between the overseas Chinese and the local societies in which they lived.[7]

As the PRC focused on these points, the United States and ROC suspected the CCP of attempting to utilize the overseas Chinese as a fifth column for communism in the region. A combination of this evidence of interest in the overseas Chinese, the extortion problem and international events such as the Chinese intervention in the Korean War in 1950 only served to feed this perspective. The ROC's own history of relying upon the overseas Chinese for support in both the 1911 revolution and the War of Resistance against Japan affirmed the potentially vital role the overseas Chinese could play in the struggle between the ROC and the PRC.

After the release of National Security Council Paper 68 in 1950, US foreign policy became focused on preventing the spread of communism. This policy of containment provided the foundation upon which the US built up propaganda efforts to discredit communism and the PRC while promoting the ideology of the Free World and support for the ROC. As early as 1946, the US government took an interest in potential difficulties related to the Chinese minority in Southeast Asia. An intelligence report stated that the overseas Chinese "represent an important tool that China might use in extending its economic and

[7] 235/2/3–125, Zhongyang renmin zhengfu huaqiao shiwu weiyuanhui cheng li yi lai de gongzuo zong jie yu dang qian qiaowu gongzuo de fangzhen, Renwu yu jihua, Zhongyang renmin zhengfu huaqiao shiwu weiyuanhui di yi ci qiao wu kuoda huiyi [Documents sent over on the guiding principles, mission and plans of recent overseas Chinese work since the founding of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission of the Central People's Government; First mass meeting of the Central People's Government's Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission], 26 June 1951, Guangdong Provincial Archive, Guangzhou, PRC [hereafter, "Guangzhou"].

political influence in Southeast Asia," and expressed concern that the issue of overseas Chinese dual nationality might eventually require United Nations intervention.[8] If these Chinese were turned into a fifth column to advocate local communist revolutions, or convinced to use their economic power to support the communist machine, then the entire region would fall, endangering US security and foreign policy interests, not to mention weakening US allies in the region like the ROC, Japan and South Korea.

The United States government developed its perception of the kinds of opportunities for winning the Cold War that existed in the Chinese communities of Southeast Asia from several sources, including the experiences noted by the ROC, the dispatches from US Embassies and Consulates, and the writings of scholars who worked on the region. Cornell University anthropologist G. William Skinner travelled through Southeast Asia in early 1950, and his report concluded that:

> The average Nanyang [Southeast Asian] Chinese with political consciousness is a fence-sitter who tends to consider the Chinese People's Republic his government (insofar as any non-local government is 'his'), and who hopes and expects that the strong and united regime in [Beijing] will give him more protection and cause for pride than any other Chinese government of his time. He is not Communist, however, not even pro-Communist as contrasted with pro-[Beijing]. Enlightened policies and practice on the part of non-Communist forces can still induce the vast majority of Southeast Asian Chinese to travel the roads toward freedom and democracy.[9]

Skinner discussed his findings with the Office of Chinese Affairs in the US State Department, and the report was also considered by the United States Information Agency (USIA) when it was established in 1953 to help these US government entities decide what kinds of propaganda would be most effective for combating the communist threat in Chinese communities. In his report, Skinner suggested three themes as particularly important for the overseas Chinese audience:

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[8] Central Intelligence Group, "Chinese Minorities in Southeast Asia" (ORE-7), 2 Dec. 1946. Records of the United States Central Intelligence Agency, Freedom of Information Act Reading Room, [on-line], www.cia.gov: accessed 12 Nov. 2004, 7.

[9] Skinner, *Report on the Chinese in Southeast Asia*, 88. Skinner's report was commissioned by the Department of Far Eastern Studies at Cornell University, then reproduced for the benefit of "other interested parties," which included the Office of Chinese Affairs in the US Department of State.

the situation of business in China and the incompatibility of the new society on the mainland with capitalistic ventures, the lack of democracy in the new China and the question of Russian infringement over Chinese territorial and sovereign rights.[10] As the American Embassy in Manila noted, "The Chinese communists, through terrorism at home and subversive activities abroad, are organizing all Chinese in support of their regime and they are increasingly successful in this because they meet no organized opposition." It would be incumbent upon the US and ROC to work to combat these activities, "unless we are willing to see the Chinese of Southeast Asia mobilized as a Communist fifth column."[11] The way to prevent this potential future was through a large-scale and well-coordinated information program.[12]

State Department ideas about the overseas Chinese were based on a few stereotypes about the population, including the idea that everyone shared certain important characteristics: they all experienced discrimination in their places of residence that required assistance to combat, they would always consider China their true home no matter how many generations removed from the mainland they were and they desired a strong Chinese government to act on their behalf.[13] Beyond the obvious issue that there was quite a range of opinions on these points—even within families, much less the worldwide population—convincing the overseas Chinese that the ROC could fulfill these particular needs would be a major challenge. By May of 1952, the United States Information Service (USIS) had developed a general plan for reaching the overseas Chinese which incorporated Skinner's ideas and suggested that the short-term goal be convincing the overseas Chinese that support of the Beijing government would not benefit them and

[10] Memo of Conversation, 2 Feb. 1951, Reel 24, Frames 293–5, MF C0012, Archives II.

[11] [signature illegible] to Dean Rusk, 9 Aug. 1951, Reel 22, Frames 746–7, MF C0012, Archives II.

[12] The US propaganda program in the 1950s is addressed more broadly in Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2006); Richard J. Aldrich et al., eds., *The Clandestine Cold War in Asia: Western Intelligence, Propaganda and Special Operations* (London: Frank Cass, 2000); a contemporary assessment of the importance of propaganda in the Cold War comes from Richard L. Brecker, "Truth as a Weapon in the Free World," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 278 (Nov. 1951), 1–11.

[13] "China in Relation to Southeast Asia," memorandum, Office of Chinese Affairs contribution to policy paper, 20 Feb. 1951, Reel 17, RG 59, Archives II.

that the free world was strong and would ultimately triumph.[14] The long-term goal would be convincing the overseas Chinese to integrate fully into their societies of residence. This theme of promoting assimilation became the baseline of all US policies concerning the Chinese diaspora, though the American agencies charged with applying the policy constantly struggled with how to implement it.[15]

The USIS formalized its ideas about the potential value of the Chinese diaspora to create an overseas Chinese policy, which sought to deny the overseas Chinese to the Chinese communists; encourage the diaspora to identify their interests with those of their countries of residence; and ensure that they look to the ROC on Taiwan for leadership and sources of cultural or ethnic pride. By 1953, the US was receiving reports from the region that the combination of the extortion scandal, dissatisfaction over land reform, and local government controls designed to limit the spread of communism had stemmed the tide of rising pro-PRC sentiment. The challenge emerging for the US and the ROC in the years that followed was to prevent it from surging again, and if at all possible to diminish support for the communist government.[16]

The ROC government naturally also ran its own propaganda machine, though American partners criticized their productions as tending to be "more concerned with denouncing enemies than persuading friends."[17] As time wore on without the ROC launching a major offensive to retake the mainland, its very legitimacy in the eyes of both the overseas Chinese and the outside world was called into question. Because American support and recognition of the ROC as the true Chinese government was vital to its very existence, for much of the decade the ROC directed a significant proportion of its information work at the people of the United States.[18]

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[14] The USIS was established in World War II as the overseas branch of the Office of War Information; after the establishment of the USIA in 1953, it became the overseas branch of that organization. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 2.

[15] "USIS Plan for Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia," 28 May 1952, Folder: Book Translation Program, Box 1, USIS HK 1951–55, RG 84, Archives II.

[16] "US Problems among Overseas Chinese in East Asia," 29 Sept. 1953, Reel 34, Frames 196–202, MF C0012, Archives II. There is also a short treatment of overseas Chinese propaganda efforts in Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 121–123.

[17] Arthur Hummel to Saxton Bradford, 3 Aug. 1954, Folder: Far East—Research Needs, Box 1, FE 1954–56, RG 306, Archives II.

[18] 707.5/0015, Inspection Report USIS Taiwan, 3–7 April 1956, Folder: Taiwan, Box 9, FE 1954–56, RG 306, Archives II; Haiwai xin zhan xiao zu, di ba ci huiyi

For the Republic of China, the period from 1949 to 1953 was one of regrouping, adjusting past policies to changed circumstances. The ROC Constitution contained three major themes related to overseas Chinese, including the idea that their protection was a major function of the government's foreign policy; that providing encouragement and assistance in their education was a responsibility of the government; and that the state should assist overseas Chinese in their efforts at economic development where necessary. In 1951, the ROC revised its formal overseas Chinese policy to meet the new demands of the times. The new "Oppose Communism, Resist Russia (*fan gong kang e*)" policy included calling upon overseas Chinese in those countries that had recognized the PRC (Burma and Indonesia) to devise ways to protect their legal rights, granting the right of return to "Free China" if abused by communists in their land of abode, and promising to restore the faith of the overseas Chinese in the ROC government. In 1952, the Legislative Yuan added further measures, such as encouraging overseas Chinese students to go to Taiwan to study and take part in anti-communist training activities and implementing relief measures for refugees in Hong Kong and Macao. Actually, the ROC was not alone in linking the emerging refugee crisis in Hong Kong with the overseas Chinese; the USIS also considered a variety of ways to make the exodus from China influence the opinions of the overseas Chinese, including refugee interviews for radio broadcasts and relocating refugees to act as teachers and leaders in existing overseas Chinese communities.[19]

In 1952, the ROC convened the Overseas Chinese Affairs Conference. The Conference brought together 240 delegates from overseas Chinese communities around the world to discuss the situation of both the diaspora and the ROC government. The fiery rhetoric at the conference highlighted an early goal of utilizing overseas Chinese resources (both finances and manpower) to facilitate an early return to the mainland. The OCAC Chairman, Cheng Yen-fen, acknowledged to his audience that the difficult circumstances following the civil war

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yicheng, Zhongyang weiyuanhui di er huiyi yishi [Overseas psywar small group, the 8th meeting agenda, central committee second meeting], 24 Dec. 1955, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Taipei, Taiwan, ROC [hereafter "MOFA Taipei"].

[19] 462.2 (part of File 460.1/0002), Xingxian yi lai de huaqiao shizheng [Overseas Chinese administration since the promulgation of the constitution] Taipei: Qiaowu weiyuanhui, 1954, MOFA Taipei; "Escapee Program Submission, FY1954," Reel 25, Frames 224–257, MF C0012, Archives II.

meant that the government was forced to rely on its overseas citizens more than usual, but that did not mean that services in the areas of education and economic power would be curtailed.

Beyond declaring each October 21st "Overseas Chinese Day," the conference adopted a four-point program designed to promote closer ties between overseas Chinese and the ROC: the government vowed to protect overseas Chinese interests (including in countries recognizing the PRC), to encourage unity and anti-communist work, to promote education and increase opportunities for students to return home to study and to assist overseas Chinese with investing in Free China. The conference concluded with pledges to enforce economic sanctions against the communists, start fundraising for the planned counterattack against the mainland and increase cooperation with governments of residence.[20] Information programs were at the heart of all of these goals. As an overseas Chinese correspondent from New York wrote to ROC Foreign Minister George Yeh, "In the cold and hot war in which we find ourselves, diplomacy has become nine parts propaganda, goodwill cultivation and resort to psychological measures."[21]

The Information War in Southeast Asia: News and Media

Though specific goals differed for the governments, all three nations spent much of the 1950s flooding the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia with books, movies, radio shows, comic books, photographs and news stories, spreading the gospel of the communist or free world agenda in the Cold War.

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[20] The conference also created a new organization, the Overseas Chinese National Salvation Association, which would use both overt and covert operations to gain support for Free China, though British observers noted the following year that the only known branch was in New York. See "Overseas Chinese Affairs Conference," Chinese Secretariat, Singapore, 25 March 1953, Foreign Office [hereafter FO] File 371/105340, Public Records Office, Kew, London, UK [hereafter, "PRO"]. On the conference itself, see Telegram, American Embassy Taipei to Secretary of State, 24 Oct. 1952, Folder 360.01 Overseas Chinese, Box 9, Taipei Embassy General Records, 1950–1952, RG 84, Archives II; 462.2 (part of File 460.1/0002, Xingxian yi lai de huaqiao shizheng [Overseas Chinese administration since the promulgation of the constitution] (Taipei: Qiaowu weiyuanhui, 1954), MOFA Taipei, 4–5.

[21] Letter, N.C. Nyi to Minister George K.C. Yeh, 28 Dec. 1954, File 707.5/0059, MOFA Taipei.

Planting unattributed news articles and information in popular newspapers was one of the primary methods of spreading propaganda messages abroad for all three governments. This method was particularly effective because it promoted desirable themes without automatically revealing the political motivations behind them. In 1950, the total circulation of Chinese language newspapers in Southeast Asia added up to around 325,000–340,000. According to Skinner's survey, "for every reader of Communist organs or pro-Communist dailies, there are two readers of papers which are less rabidly communist but still ardently pro-[Beijing], three readers of neutral papers with a pro-[Beijing] slant, two readers of really neutral papers, one reader of neutral papers with a pro-KMT slant, and three readers of KMT organs and ardently pro-KMT papers." In terms of circulation, there were 65,600 copies of truly neutral papers in circulation, 102,700 copies of papers slightly or completely supportive of the ROC, and 162,500 copies of papers slightly or completely in support of the Chinese communists. Skinner suggested that although newspaper editorial policy was not a perfect indicator of political views, it did seem that pride in the new government swayed many opinions.[22]

Pro-communist and progressive newspapers naturally looked to fill out their news pages with stories from Hong Kong newspapers like *Ta Kung Pao* (*Da Gong Bao*) and *Wen Wei Po* (*Wen Hui Bao*), which as Lu Yan has shown were solidly left-leaning in tone in the years following 1949.[23] In spite of the sometimes-controversial nature of their editorial lines in Hong Kong, however, both papers were sometimes less controversial news sources in non-communist areas overseas than the mainland party organ, the *People's Daily* (*Renmin Ribao*). As a result, as long as information placed in these Hong Kong newspapers catered toward the center and did not sound too revolutionary in tone, it could potentially reach audiences across the overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia and the Americas. By focusing the materials on patriotism and a shared love of the Chinese homeland and not addressing internal campaigns at all, the PRC could avoid having internal

[22] These Chinese could still be "turned" to support the Free World, but the loss of the mainland and the squandering of political capital through corruption and bad governance had weakened the Nationalist position. Skinner, *Report on the Chinese in Southeast Asia*, 87–88.

[23] See Lu Yan, "Limits to Propaganda: Hong Kong's Leftist Media in the Cold War and Beyond," in this volume.

Chinese politics being misunderstood by those living abroad. Similarly, articles did not oppose capitalist thought outright, because most overseas Chinese lived in countries with capitalist economic systems and many were involved in entrepreneurial activities. It was not important to get the entire diaspora behind every domestic policy; as long as it was opposed to Chiang Kai-shek and willing to support Chairman Mao Zedong that was enough.[24]

The PRC's Overseas Chinese Broadcasting and Editorial Department (*Huaqiao guangbo bianji bu*—a division of Xinhua News Agency in the Propaganda Department of the CCP) reported great success in getting its articles into left-leaning or "progressive" (*jinbu*) and centrist (*zhongjian*) overseas Chinese newspapers. During a two-month period early in 1954, the Department put out a total of 648 articles. Examining 29 overseas Chinese newspapers, 623 or 95.6 percent of the articles were used. Centrist newspapers used about 30 percent of the articles (186), and progressive papers used the other 70 percent (434). Newspapers in Indonesia, Burma and Hong Kong made the greatest use of the articles, but editors in India, South Africa and Malaya printed them as well. Two newspapers in North America, the *Chinese Times* (*Da Han Gong Bao*) and the *China Daily News* (*Huaqiao Ribao*), used a combined total of 68 pieces. The articles covered a diverse range of issues, but most dealt with either the development of the mainland (labor, transportation, farming, etc.) or the current conditions in the overseas Chinese areas of China. Of the 257 articles dealing with politics and development of these areas, 208 found placement in one or more of the surveyed newspapers. A smaller number of more general pieces on the war in Korea, China's foreign relations and party elections also found placement abroad.[25]

Meanwhile, USIS also worked to counteract this success rate by placing articles supporting its own ideology in sympathetic newspapers. Because Chinese-language newspapers in the region often operated on a low budget, well-written articles on issues of interest to the

[24] 204/3/16–113, Zhong xuan bu, Zhong qiao dui Xiang Gang xuanchuan gongzuo fang zhen zhengce de zhishi [Central propaganda bureau, Central Overseas Chinese section instructions on guiding principles of policy for propaganda work in Hong Kong], August 1952, Guangzhou.

[25] Huaqiao baozhi he Xianggang baozhi caiyong huaqiao guangbo gao qingkuang de diaocha baogao [Investigation Report of the Use of Articles by the Overseas Chinese Broadcasting Agency in Overseas Chinese Newspapers and Hong Kong Newspapers], Nov. 1954, National Library of China, Beijing, PRC.

Chinese audience abroad were quite welcome. USIS focused on articles that addressed the nature of communist rule in China, though it also included articles that dealt with the overseas Chinese across the region and education for Chinese students.[26] In 1959, the USIS office in Hong Kong reported that 90 percent of the articles it had a hand in creating for distribution through news services were being picked up by Chinese-language newspapers.[27] That number sounds impressive, but the success of the placements depended largely on the needs of the individual country. In Singapore, the press was sophisticated enough not to require pieces offered by USIS, though that post's inspection report for 1959 credited the USIS dispatches for the only information available locally that presented the non-communist perspective on world events.[28]

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the struggles in non-communist regimes in Indochina (South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos) captivated the attention of US officials, so USIS began making extra efforts to reach the Chinese community in these countries. In 1959, USIS reported that Saigon newspapers picked up about 25 percent of the articles they made available, that they were feeding information to the only non-communist newspaper in Cambodia and that they were fighting to keep a new Chinese daily in Vientiane out of communist control.[29] Rather than limiting their project to the placement of articles, in some places USIS became actively engaged in founding non-communist newspapers. Overtly anti-communist or pro-KMT papers quickly folded in some communities, so in those areas newly-created newspapers "made no overt attempts to beat the drums for the GRC cause, or to indulge in local 'name-calling,' which was the weakness

[26] Arthur W. Hummel to Saxton E. Bradford, 3 August 1954, Folder: Far East—Research Needs, Box 1, Area Project Correspondence, Records of the United States Information Agency (hereafter USIA), RG 306, Archives II.

[27] Inspection Report, USIS Hong Kong, 3 Nov. 1959, Folder: Hong Kong, Box 4, Inspection Reports, USIA, RG 306, Archives II.

[28] Inspection Report, USIS Singapore, 2 May 1959, Folder: Singapore, Box 8, Inspection Reports, USIA, RG 306, Archives II.

[29] Foreign Service Despatch, Saigon to Washington, 20 April 1959, "USIS Program on American Aid to Vietnam," Folder: Asia (2 of 4), Box 2, Foreign Service Despatches, USIA, RG 306, Archives II; Foreign Service Despatch, Phnom Penh to Washington, 15 Oct. 1959, "Country Plan for Cambodia FY1960," Folder: Asia (1 of 5), Box 3, Foreign Service Despatches, USIA, RG 306, Archives II; Foreign Service Despatch, Vientiane to Washington, 31 July 1959, "Country Plan for Laos FY1960," Folder: Asia (1 of 5), Box 3, Foreign Service Despatches, USIA, RG 306, Archives II.

of [KMT] papers in Cambodia in the past." In more receptive places, USIS built overtly pro-KMT papers, such as one in Phnom Penh that it celebrated as a risk "amply rewarded when the anti-communist elements were galvanized into providing concrete, financial support for [the] paper." The articles in that paper came almost entirely from the USIS news service.[30]

The ROC had its own news service as well, and it also engaged in efforts to establish and support sympathetic newspapers in Southeast Asia though its own Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission and the Central Propaganda Department of the KMT. Both entities had less money to spare for such efforts after 1949 but still devoted what money they could to support party newspapers in the region and establish new papers in cities where it did not yet have an established voice.[31] When important events occurred, the KMT overseas news service distributed outlines explaining what happened and how newspapers should present the information to adhere to the party line. In 1954, they distributed such outlines 72 times, in addition to the regular work of making draft articles and photographs available. Additionally, the KMT took other measures to ensure the quality of overseas newspapers, including providing new sets of typeface to papers experiencing a decline in print quality and sending party editors to struggling papers to educate the local staff.[32]

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[30] Foreign Service Despatch, Phnom Penh to Washington, 28 Jan. 1961, "Country Assessment Report—1960," Folder: Asia (4 of 5), Box 3, Foreign Service Despatches, USIA, RG 206, Archives II.

[31] In 1955, a KMT meeting on Southeast Asian overseas Chinese resulted in a plan to establish a party newspaper in Bangkok, a project to which the committee allocated $11,000 and budgeted an additional $15,000 to support existing newspapers over the course of the next twelve months. Hui 7.3/190, Zhongguo Kuomintang di qi jie zhongyang weiyuanhui changwu weiyuanhui di yisiliu ci huiyi jilu, "Zuijin Dongnanya qiaoqing baogao" [Chinese Kuomintang Seventh Central Committee, business committee 146th meeting record: "Report on the recent circumstances of overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia"], Archives of the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party), Taipei, Taiwan, ROC [hereafter Kuomintang]. One of the greatest liabilities for ROC propaganda work in the diaspora was its inability to either retake the mainland or set a reasonable date for when the conquest might begin. Loyal supporters of the KMT treated the Communist government as a temporary inconvenience, and expected the ROC government to make plans and arrangements to return.

[32] Hui 7.3/227, Zhongguo Kuomintang di qi jie zhongyang weiyuanhui changwu weiyuanhui di yibaling ci huiyi jilu, "Jiaqiang haiwai xuanchuan gongzuo zhibanli qingxing yu jinhou jihua" [Chinese Kuomintang Seventh Central Committee, business committee 180th meeting record, "Improving overseas propaganda work current situation and future plans"], Kuomintang.

News clippings services were an important way for both sides of the Cold War to publish their perspectives on world events, but in some countries Chinese-language newspapers were only read in major cities, and then only by community leaders. Other strategies were necessary to reach the wider audience. Both sides employed a wide variety of information materials such as radio broadcasts, films, magazines and novels to spread their messages in the overseas Chinese communities.

By the mid 1950s, the central function of the USIS in Hong Kong (and, to a lesser extent, USIS Taiwan) was to produce print materials to influence and "win" the overseas Chinese audience. One major project was the commissioning or optioning of novels with a subtly anti-communist theme from Hong Kong authors (the Hong Kong staff declared themselves "quite genuinely" proud to have had connection with one such novel, Eileen Chang's *The Rice-Sprout Song*).[33] Another great pride of the service was the creation of the widely-read magazine *World Today*, which had the "largest circulation of any Chinese magazine outside of Communist China."[34] Arthur Hummel, the Public Affairs Officer at the Hong Kong post from 1952 to 1955, called *World Today* "our greatest coup," noting it was so well-received it paid for its own production out of sales.[35] As Michael Charney has noted in the case of *The People Win Through* in Burma, anti-communist propaganda projects were not limited to print materials.[36] One report mentions the Hong Kong post having produced an entire Chinese opera with an interwoven propaganda theme for broadcast in Vietnam. Special projects like the opera combined with screenings of carefully-selected films from Hong Kong and Taiwan.[37] The ROC had a healthy propaganda department as well, as a central committee meeting of

[33] The novel is also referred to as "another USIS baby." Letter Richard M. McCarthney to B. Frank Steiner, 12 July 1954, Folder: Book Translation Project, Box 1, USIS HK 1951–55, RG 84, Archives II.

[34] Inspection Report, USIS Hong Kong, 3 Nov. 1959, Folder: Hong Kong, Box 1, Area Project Correspondence, Far East, 1954–63 (FE 1954–56), Box 1, Folder: Hong Kong, Records of the United States Information Agency RG 306, Archives II.

[35] ADST Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, interview with Arthur Hummel by Charles Stuart Kennedy, 13 April 1994, transcript in Lauinger Library Special Collections, Georgetown University, Washington, DC.

[36] See Michael Charney, "U Nu, China, and the 'Burmese' Cold War: Propaganda in Burma in the 1950s," in this volume.

[37] Foreign Service Despatch, Saigon to Washington, 24 August 1955, Country Plan for Vietnam, Folder: Asia (2 of 4), Box 2, Foreign Service Despatches, USIA, RG 306, Archives II.

the KMT reported that in addition to publishing a monthly magazine, in 1954 alone it produced 82 separate films that were shown 221 times, 156 radio shorts broadcast 715 times, and distributed more than 670,000 books to overseas Chinese organizations.[38]

Americans engaged in overseas Chinese propaganda work noted with some degree of envy the success of pro-communist comic books. Having been, in many cases, born and raised abroad, often in locations where restrictions existed on the availability of Chinese schools, overseas Chinese literacy levels were sometimes too low to make novels and newspapers an attractive way of reaching deep into the community. This problem led to efforts to develop "Story Papers," illustrated stories in a tabloid format with no obvious propaganda themes or USIS attribution.[39] At the same time, comic book libraries were an established tradition—the shop owner bought an entire series, and then individuals came in and paid by the hour or the volume to read them on-site. Comics originating with the PRC in the early 1950s included interesting stories and well-integrated propaganda themes, and therefore achieved popularity. American attempts to match their success were often inadequate—too "Western" in appearance, too heavy-handed in their message. Part of the problem was that the US had a tendency to translate comics intended for European audiences into Chinese, but the traditional formats in Europe and Asia were quite different.[40]

In addition to standard information work, the PRC held one profound advantage over the combined efforts of the ROC and the United States, as it could make use of the personal testimony of individuals in China writing letters to friends and family abroad. Letters could work both ways, of course. They could be filled with praise for equality, democracy and a better life under the new government, but they could also contain tales of extortion, hardship and misery. Chinese documents from the Overseas Chinese Affairs branch office in Guangzhou in the 1950s make frequent reference to letter-writing as a part of their

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[38] Hui 7.3/227, Kuomintang. In addition to Southeast Asia, the KMT broadcast Cantonese radio programs in North America and distributed books and pamphlets in the United States.

[39] Inspection Report of USIS Hong Kong, 6–9 June 1955, Folder: Hong Kong, Box 4, Inspection Reports, USIA, RG 206, Archives II. The ROC also decided to get into the comic contest in mid-1955.

[40] Evaluation Memorandum, "Cartoon Books in Hong Kong," distributed 5 Nov. 1951, Folder: Book Translation Program, Box 1, Records of the United States Information Service (hereafter USIS), Hong Kong Consulate, RG 84, Archives II.

propaganda plan, and as an overseas Chinese host government, US officials noticed two incidences of what they suspected were specific, organized campaigns in letter writing—the first was a call for remittances linked to the blackmail scandal circa 1950–1952. The second was a part of what the US Immigration and Naturalization Service dubbed the "Re-defector Program" around 1955–1956, in which letters focused on encouraging Chinese residing in the United States, often students, to return to China. These two campaigns aside, letter-writing was an ongoing practice, and by 1955 officials in Southern China estimated that friends and family members and overseas Chinese exchanged 500,000 letters a month. For the CCP Propaganda Department, making use of this correspondence to promote the government's agenda and draw in foreign exchange via remittances was both a political necessity and a unique opportunity.[41] This was one major reason why propaganda outlining the government's ideas and merits had to be aimed at both communities abroad and the overseas Chinese areas in Guangdong and Fujian provinces.

In spite of this PRC advantage, both the ROC and the PRC tried to make use of personal contacts, often by promoting visits from Chinese abroad to see the quality of life under their respective regimes. The PRC's OCAC arranged tours for Chinese returning for visits or vacations, set up special hotels and receiving centers for Chinese visiting from abroad, and in countries where the PRC had established diplomatic relations, used its Embassy and Consulates to arrange events or activities like celebrations of National Day on October 1. In some cases, Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai and party cadres traveled to visit the overseas Chinese, and this way they could create another avenue for bringing messages about China to citizens abroad.[42] In the wake of the refugee movements of 1949–1950, the ROC was closed to visitors, but as officials there realized the propaganda value of inviting in overseas Chinese leaders, they worked to make visits to Taiwan easier as well. In countries recognizing the ROC, Nationalist Chinese

[41] 204/3/59–129, Zhonggong zhangyang hua nan fen ju xuanchuan bu zhishi, Guanyu jia qiang dui huaqiao, Qiaojuan xuanchuan gong zuo de zhishi [Chinese Communist central south China branch propaganda department instructions, instructions related to improving propaganda directed at overseas Chinese and overseas Chinese families], 19 March 1955, Guangzhou.

[42] Fitzgerald, *China and the Overseas* Chinese, 45–50.

and ROC consulates celebrated the October 10th or "Double Tens" national holiday across Asia.[43]

The PRC seemed to be making such inroads in terms of its propaganda program that a tour of Southeast Asian nations by a US official in 1956 yielded a report that claimed the region was "flooded with Red Chinese literature and consumer goods."[44] To combat PRC efforts to gain overseas Chinese investments and curry favor through cheap manufactures, the US Government's International Cooperation Administration (ICA) began helping the ROC to develop its own commodity exports and economic programs to increase overseas Chinese interest and investment (both personal and financial) in the Taiwanese economy.

In 1956 the ROC government approached the US with its own economic strategy, including both plans for combating communist control of Asian economic life and specific proposals involving overseas Chinese, like the establishment of a banking corporation to help them invest wisely at home and abroad.[45] The economic offensive included support of the US-led embargo against communist China, encouraging overseas investments in Taiwan, promoting trade between overseas

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[43] Foreign Service Despatch 242, American Embassy Taipei to Secretary of State, 27 Oct. 1953, "OCAC Accomplishments During the Past Year," Folder 360.01 Overseas Chinese, Box 18, Taiwan Embassy General Records, 1955–1964, RG 84, Archives II; and Foreign Service Despatch 231, American Embassy Taipei to Secretary of State, 22 Oct. 1953, "Overseas Chinese Celebrations of Chinese National Day," Folder 360.01 Overseas Chinese, Box 18, Taiwan Embassy General Records, 1955–1964, RG 84, Archives II.

[44] Bert Fraleigh, "A Report on Observations of the Overseas Chinese Situation in Hong Kong, Thailand, Cambodia and South Vietnam," 30 April 1956, Folder: Chinese Nationalist Propaganda Program, Box 20, Records of the Office of Chinese Affairs, 1954–56 (CA 1954–56), Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Archives II. The American Embassy in Taipei notes some inaccuracies in the Fraleigh report, particularly in his claims that there is not nearly enough propaganda reflecting the Free World side, but it did concur in his assertion that the Chinese Communists were making great inroads with their propaganda. See Foreign Service Despatch 601, American Embassy Taipei to Department of State, 24 April 1956, Folder: Overseas Chinese—extortion, remittances, attraction of capital, Box 10, CA 1954–56, RG 59, Archives II.

[45] "Overseas Chinese and US Policy," 6 Sept. 1956, OBCF-28–091 China (#4) (9), Eisenhower Presidential Library; "A Regional Economic Plan for Free Asia to Counter Communist Penetration," 9 April 1956, Folder: Overseas Chinese, Box 1, CA 1954–56. RG 59, Archives II; and "A Joint US-Free China Program to Organize Overseas Chinese Against Communism," 9 April 1956, Folder: Overseas Chinese, Box 1, CA 1954–56. RG 59, Archives II.

Chinese communities and the ROC, and (to a lesser extent) soliciting voluntary contributions for both the information and military offensives against the mainland. Beyond promoting the development of Taiwan, such programs served to draw overseas Chinese funds and assets away from the PRC.

The sheer size of the Chinese population in Southeast Asia and the emergence of the region as a contested space in the Cold War battle for ideological superiority ensured that it would be at the heart of the overseas Chinese propaganda battle. But there was another Chinese population abroad that was equally strategic from the point of view of the competing PRC and ROC governments: the Chinese in the United States.

Chinese Americans and the Propaganda War

There were substantially fewer Chinese in the Americas than in Southeast Asia, but those who were in the United States combined economic power with potential access to an influential and important government. The overseas Chinese offices of both the ROC and the PRC kept an eye turned on this population, looking for ways to influence it. At the same time, the United States did not recognize this population as a true part of the Chinese diaspora, but it did see in it a means for promoting US goals among the Chinese in Southeast Asia.

The PRC had less direct access to Chinese in the United States than the ROC due to the lack of formal diplomatic ties, but that did not prevent it from exploring and exploiting the plight of Chinese in the US. The mainland Chinese office of overseas Chinese affairs published a lengthy report from a Chinese man in San Francisco in its *Overseas Chinese Bulletin* (*Qiao Xun*) publication in 1951. It described Chinese Americans as facing a unique dilemma, as US rhetoric of having a "special friendship" with China rarely extended to Chinese bound for the United States. American immigration laws and the harsh inspection system for new arrivals brewed frustration and bitterness, so Chinese born in the US (what he calls *Mei ji huaqiao*, or "American citizen overseas Chinese") ended up far more approving

of the US government than immigrants. After all, "Every Chinese in America has experienced mistreatment by the American Imperialist Immigration Authorities."[46] At the same time, he suggested that the combination of local discrimination and a strong system for Chinese language and cultural education meant that the majority of Chinese Americans—American citizens or not—still dearly loved their Chinese homeland. Politically, he explained that most were centrists—frustrated with the Kuomintang but wary of the communists. The Kuomintang partisans controlled the major Chinese organizations in San Francisco, and they had used this position to manipulate, abuse and blackmail the general Chinese population for years; to demonstrate his point, he referenced the problem of Nationalist organizations forcing Chinese Americans to make contributions to the war fund or buy ROC war bonds during the war against Japan.

He found that there were several ways for the residents of Chinatown to be uncommitted. There were those who despised the Kuomintang but were still uncertain that the communists would represent an improvement, and had personal reasons (holding war bonds or plans to retire on the mainland) that made them prefer to see the ROC retake China. Additionally, some American overseas Chinese opposed the Kuomintang but did not embrace the communists and were very susceptible to rumors; for this group, the most reliable source of information was family letters, so if these letters praised the PRC they would support it, and if they reviled the new government, they would oppose it. This group, the author noted, dominated the San Francisco Chinatown. Another subset of Chinese in the US despised the Kuomintang for its corruption, greed and mismanagement and felt that the best thing would be for the ROC to give way and let the new PRC attempt to govern. These individuals had no real confidence that the communists would do a better job, but they believed that they should have the chance to try. This group was not interested in whether or not the new government was communist, just that it was different from the old one. They too could be easily persuaded by family letters. Finally, there were those who embraced the new government and did not believe rumors about misrule or problems under the

[46] "Jiujinshan huaqiao qingkuang [The situation of overseas Chinese in San Francisco]," *Qiao Xun* [Overseas Chinese Bulletin] 45–6, 28 July 1951, Beijing, 365.

PRC. These people were not communists themselves, but they supported the government.[47]

The author of the report expressed concern that prominent Kuomintang members were taking tours of American cities and drumming up support among the overseas Chinese—naturally by way of trickery and blackmail, but gaining influence all the same. He noted the establishment of the so-called "Overseas Chinese Anti-communist Association (*Huaqiao Fangong Zonghui*)," which he claimed existed to extort money from Chinese Americans to prop up the Chiang Kai-shek government. This same government, he claimed, sent thugs into Chinatown on 1 October 1949, to prevent patriotic Chinese from celebrating the establishment of the PRC. He described how the Kuomintang reactionary forces shut down opposition newspapers like San Francisco's *Chinese Western Daily News* (*Zhongxi Ribao* or *Chung Sai Yat Po*) but also how the average Chinese Americans preferred non-partisan schools and newspapers to the ROC-affiliated ones; in all, he painted a picture of a community very open to the right kinds of influence from China. Given US government restrictions on materials sent directly from the PRC, family letters would have to play a prominent role in winning the support of the Chinese in America.[48]

The ROC did not have access to the families and friends of overseas Chinese who remained in Guangdong or Fujian Provinces, so it had to rely on more overt forms of information work. This is done in two directions, with efforts to engage the Chinese of the United States on the one hand, and to use that population to work on the rest of the overseas Chinese on the other. In 1952, the overseas Chinese affairs office of the ROC supported a broadcast by Chinese Americans directed at "Chinese all over the world." Some of the issues the broadcast raised were rebuttals to PRC propaganda; for example, the broadcast celebrated the closing of the *Chinese Western Daily News*, which it claimed failed because Chinese Americans were not interested in communist ideas. It also heralded the efforts of the individuals who shut down the initial attempts to celebrate the founding of the PRC in Chinatown, remarking proudly that the Chinese communist flag has not flown since in San Francisco, and it commented on the

[47] "Jiujinshan Huaqiao Qingkuang [The Situation of Overseas Chinese in San Francisco]," 363–8.
[48] Ibid.

way the Chinese in each American city were uniting to form anti-communist organizations to support the ROC in its efforts to combat communist propaganda and retake the mainland.[49] In 1957, Chinese in the United States gathered at a mass meeting in Washington, DC convened by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, during which the representatives from across the nation endorsed an anti-communist agenda.

Prominent Manila overseas Chinese Alphonso Z. Sy Cip became heavily involved with the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in promoting information work in the United States. He had traveled in the US in 1953 and was appalled by how many people he met in American Chinatowns who did not have a full understanding of the ROC government. In one letter, he offered a possible solution:

> If they [Chinese in America] know more about Formosa and the Nationalist Government there, they themselves would do something toward making the American public realize and wake up to the importance of the Far East, particularly Formosa, in the preservation of peace and order not only in this sphere but for the whole Free World. We do not have as much funds [sic] as the British and other nationalities to spend on publicizing their cause in the US, but we could just as well reach our goal by utilizing our own nationals in the US and Hawaii to educate the American public in the importance of the Far East.[50]

MOFA itself frequently reminded its consuls in the United States to make sure that Chinese Americans were fully aware of the progress in "Free China" so that they might throw the full weight of their support behind it. The OCAC also engaged in placing sympathetic, unattributed news articles in American Chinese newspapers (a strategy they, the PRC and the US used to great effect in Southeast Asia). It identified key sympathetic but not overtly KMT newspapers in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Chicago and worked with the editorial staff to promote the government's agenda.[51]

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[49] "Meiguo Huaqiao de Fangong Yundong [American Overseas Chinese Anticommunist Activities]," *Qiaowu Yue Bao* [Overseas Chinese Affairs Monthly] 5, Nov. 1952, Taipei, 39–40.

[50] 706.2/0014, Alphonso Z. Sy Cip to George K.C. Yeh, 2 Feb. 1954, MOFA Taipei.

[51] 707.6/0014, Gaijin Dui Mei Xuanchuan Gongzuo Jiantao Hui Jilu [Record of the Self-Criticism Meeting on Improving Propaganda Work Directed at the United States], 19 Feb. 1957, MOFA Taipei.

The US State Department officials charged with this work also considered how they might use America's own "overseas Chinese" population to its advantage, recognizing that doing so would be difficult. Years of Chinese exclusion, not to mention persistently harsh and suspicious examination of new immigrants in the post-exclusion years, had created a pool of resentment among the American Chinese. USIS could not legally spread propaganda towards its own citizens located within US borders, but it did manage to make use of friendly voices within its Chinese population in propaganda directed at Southeast Asia. One suggestion was to facilitate Chinese American radio broadcasts over the Voice of America—if the broadcasts were undertaken through some sort of "front" organization not easily attributable to USIS, then the message would not be propaganda from the US government, but a message from one group of overseas Chinese to another.[52] One of the major USIS publications, *Free World Chinese* magazine, frequently printed news on the many successes of Americans of Asian descent. For example, it told the stories of a Chinese American Korean War veteran who was blinded in the war but opened a successful shop in San Francisco; the "Mother of the Year" for the United States in 1952, a Chinese woman who raised her eight children alone after her husband died; and a Chinese American police officer in New York attending night school to become a lawyer. In mid-1952, the magazine had a circulation of 43,000 across Southeast Asia, Hong Kong and Taiwan.[53]

In 1952, the consulates in Singapore and Hong Kong were discussing the publication of a Chinese translation of the memoir *Fifth Chinese Daughter* by Chinese American writer Jade Snow Wong; in connection with the release of the book, they decided to fund a speaking tour by Ms. Wong throughout the major overseas Chinese areas of Southeast Asia. The idea was that she would encourage the overseas Chinese to support the United States and the free world, and at the

[52] When it came to influencing the overseas Chinese of Southeast Asia, Chinese Americans suddenly became "overseas Chinese" in North America; the rest of the time, the US government tended to deny that they were a true part of the diaspora, but instead Americans who happened to be of Chinese descent. "Suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of our propaganda campaign," memorandum to F.E.P. Connors from C.A. Stuart, 5 Jan. 1951, Reel 24, Frames 574–5, RG 59, Archives II.

[53] *Free World Chinese* 1.8; 1.9; 4.2. Publications about the United States, *Free World Chinese*, Box 113, Records of the USIS, RG 306, Archives II.

same time, "the appearance of a Chinese American whose artistic achievements have been recognized by the American public would be a much-needed testimonial to the opportunities our society offers to citizens of so-called 'minority races'."[54] Wong's itinerary for the trip included Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Bangkok and Rangoon. The consuls gave her tour mixed reviews; though they reacted differently to her personality, they shared the concern that the audience seemed to resent her success and thought her too assimilated into American culture for them to be proud of her as a Chinese woman. The Hong Kong consul noted that the population in Hong Kong thought of itself as "true" Chinese living across an arbitrary border, but the Chinese of America were "White Chinese." In the context of the documents, it seems the consuls interpreted this as a racial claim—that the Chinese of America were too much like white people and had lost their culture. In fact, there may have been an element of politics involved as well. The leaders of the Chinese American communities were overwhelmingly supporters of Chiang Kai-shek. More than one Chinese author compared these Nationalists to the "White Russians" living abroad after the 1917 revolution, calling them the "White Chinese" to differentiate them from supporters of the communist government.[55]

In spite of some misgivings about the success of the Wong tour, in mid-1954 the Hong Kong consulate was still anxious to continue to bring prominent Asian Americans over for speaking tours. As one report noted, "Although such grantees present some possible pitfalls—local Chinese for example are inclined to view with some disdain their more 'foreignized' Overseas brethren—they still are living refutation of hostile claims that Asians are maltreated in the United States." The problem, naturally, was finding Asian Americans willing to suggest that their successes emerged out of the lack of anti-Asian discrimination in the United States, rather than in spite of it.[56]

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[54] "Leader Specialists Program: Jade Snow Wong," Operations Memo to State from Hong Kong Consul General, 17 July 1952, Folder Visiting Persons, Box 3, USIS, Hong Kong, RG 84, Archives II.

[55] Foreign Service Despatch 1680, Hong Kong to State, 26 February 1953, Folder Visiting Persons, Box 3, USIS Consular Records, Hong Kong, RG 84, Archives II.

[56] Julian F. Harrington, "Semi-Annual Report on Educational Exchange Program," Hong Kong to State, 21 July 1954, Folder Educational Exchange, Reports; Box 5, USIS General Records, Hong Kong Consulate, RG 84, Archives II.

Exchanges worked both ways; in addition to sending Chinese Americans to Asia on speaking tours, the US State Department brought Chinese to the United States for short-term grants. The problem was that sometimes these individuals still ran afoul of US immigration officials long suspicious of Chinese arrivals, and the results had the potential to do serious damage to US goals. USIS reported on one grantee with strong ties to the Nationalist government who returned "complain[ing] that he had been 'hounded' by immigration and naturalization officers and that he had been subjected to racial discrimination." Reports suggested that far from becoming an advocate for the "Free World," he and his family soon moved to communist China.[57] The US had adjusted its immigration laws to serve the foreign policy goals of the Cold War, but the lingering cases of prejudice continued to work against it.

Overseas Chinese Education

Education was such a cornerstone of Chinese family life at home and abroad that it became a vital element in the effort to win the support of the Chinese abroad. Overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia had long been accustomed to sending their children to Chinese schools. There were several reasons for this: discriminatory local policies that did not make local schools available to Chinese, cultural pride in being Chinese and community insularity that meant speaking and reading Chinese was a vital skill. Though Chinese primary and middle schools were prevalent throughout the region, there were no Chinese universities, and in some places only limited high schools.

Between 1949 and 1952 at least 12,000 overseas Chinese students returned to the mainland, and the PRC "made 'systematic efforts'" to attract students from Southeast Asia to mainland schools and universities. These efforts included paid passage to the mainland, free education and the promise of good jobs upon graduation. As one American report noted, "Through the whole area, Communist activities in relation to schools, students and textbooks are the most dangerous activities

[57] Inspection Report of USIS Hong Kong, 6–9 June 1955, Archives II.

from [the] USIS point of view."[58] The stated purpose of the PRC program was to recruit talent to help build up economic strength, but a number of Southeast Asian nations would become so concerned about the students being indoctrinated into communist revolutionary techniques and then sent back home that they passed measures preventing students from returning to Southeast Asia after graduation.[59] Nevertheless, in 1953 returnee numbers were at their highest level since the founding of the PRC, with an estimated 10,086 students returning to China in that calendar year alone. That year the PRC also reserved 7,000 (or 10 percent) of all admission slots to mainland universities for overseas Chinese students.[60]

Part of the effort to win students to either side of the Cold War conflict included both recruiting students to either the mainland or Taiwan to complete their educations and supporting Chinese schools scattered throughout Southeast Asia. When visiting the Far East in 1953, Vice-President Richard Nixon became very concerned with the number of Chinese students "returning" to China for schooling, and he requested information from USIS and American Embassies in Southeast Asia about the problem. The US policy ultimately included provisions to work with the ROC to reverse this trend.[61] In 1954, the US Consulate at Hong Kong proposed a full-fledged "Educational Program for Overseas Chinese." The document noted that students were willing to go to the mainland because the communist recruiters in their home countries were well-organized, the PRC had a high level of prestige in some communities, they were assured of employment (notably, employment in the construction of a "New China") after graduation and mainland education was free to overseas Chinese students. Free education was very likely the least influential of these four factors, in part because the students able to return also had families capable of paying their tuition. It concluded that the way to prevent

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[58] Report on the Public Affairs Officers' Meeting on Overseas Chinese, Hong Kong, 12 May 1954, Folder Overseas Chinese, Box 2, USIS, Hong Kong Consulate, RG 84, Archives II.

[59] Not all SEA countries took extraordinary measures to accomplish this; Indonesia, for example, had in place a legal provision divesting individuals of the right to re-entry once they had been out of the country for more than 16 months. J.F. Brewis to J.M. Addis, 18 Nov. 1953, FO File 371/105340, PRO.

[60] Memo, Donald V. Jacobson to Walter P. McConaughy, "The Chinese Communist Educational Program for Overseas Chinese," 14 Dec. 1953, Reel 34, Frames 318–321, MF C0012, Archives II.

[61] Ibid.

the numbers of students returning from increasing was to make education in Taiwan a more attractive alternative.[62] The first concrete action in support of this plan was to provide funds (in conjunction with the ROC government) to improve educational facilities in Taiwan, including building new dormitories and classrooms. By late 1955, discussions were underway to expand the program from targeting just college students to including some high school-level students who did not have access to non-communist facilities in their own countries.[63] University-level alternatives to mainland Chinese or Taiwanese schools for Chinese-educated students in Southeast Asia included Nanyang University, established in Singapore in 1956, and the University of the Philippines.

One way to prevent students from returning to the mainland was to publicize tales of horror from overseas Chinese students who returned to China for schooling then managed to "escape." In one collection of such tales published by the ROC's Overseas Press, a Chinese student from Thailand named Yi Tiepeng recalled how he "came out of hell." Yi told of underground communist cells operating in Thailand that convinced thousands of Chinese students that their only hope for their futures would be "returning" to China for additional education. After arriving in China, Yi claimed he never had enough to eat, but that the OCAC officials did not listen to student complaints. He was sent to Guangzhou to attend the top overseas Chinese school and drilled with communist theory and praise for Stalin and Lenin. Yi claimed that one subject that received special attention was overseas Chinese remittances. He and his classmates were taught of the importance of remittances to New China and cajoled to write home and ask that their families increase their contributions. When they wrote home, he reported, the letters were only ever received by their families if the contents were full of praise for the PRC; if they complained of any ill-treatment or discomfort, the letters simply never arrived. The students eventually learned to ask classmates from Hong Kong to write letters on their behalf when they went home, asking their parents to write or cable urgent messages of family problems requiring the students to depart immediately for home. Cables, he noted, more often resulted

[62] Foreign Service Despatch, Hong Kong to Department of State, 26 April 1954, Folder: Educational Exchange, Box 5, USIS HK 1951–55, RG 84, Archives II.

[63] "Education of Overseas Chinese Students in Taiwan," 29 August 1956, Reel 41, Frames 567–571, MF C0012, Archives II.

in the students receiving exit permits. He also recalled students being beaten by cadres for demanding assistance, forced to undergo thought reform, sent into the army, starved to death, overworked and generally abused. It was, in other words, hell.[64]

ROC publications contained such horror stories for overseas Chinese students from every possible background, and USIS publications printed their own tales as well. The US materials included propaganda tracts listing the reasons for choosing schools in Taiwan over China, and serialized autobiographical accounts like *Why I gave Up My BS at Beida*, by Chang Ch'ing, in periodicals like *World Today*. In addition, USIS commissioned an original full-length novel, Chung Yun's *Two Loves*, which was "built around the misadventures of four overseas students enrolled in a mainland university. Attracted to the mainland for various reasons, these students suffer the same disillusionment and one escapes to Hong Kong to tell his girlfriend that he should have listened to her when she attempted to dissuade him from going." Eileen Chang's novel *Farewell to the Korean Front* (later re-titled *Naked Earth*) was also used in this capacity.[65] Another highly valuable autobiography from a propaganda standpoint was a book by Indonesian Chinese student Soo Yu-Chen, who was first "duped" into attending school on the mainland, but later became the first overseas Chinese student to graduate from the National Taiwan University.[66]

The students created propaganda openings for both sides, however. Even in the face of the student horror stories circulated by the US and the ROC, there were always students willing to return. For every tale of a student who had made his way "out of hell," there was another of a student who returned to discover a communist paradise. One unique opportunity that emerged for the PRC from the returning students was the presence of almost a thousand students with Hong Kong or Macanese citizenship in Guangzhou high schools, and another 650 in Guangzhou universities. All of them had family

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[64] Yi Tiepeng, "Wo cong diyu li chu lai, [I came out of hell]," in *Zhonggong zenme duidai qiaosheng* [How the Chinese Communists treat overseas Chinese students] (Taipei: Haiwai Chuban She, 1956), 16–33.

[65] Foreign Service Despatch 33, Hong Kong to USIA, "USIA Materials for Overseas Chinese Students," 16 June 1954, Folder Overseas Chinese Education, Box 6, USIS Hong Kong 1951–55, RG 84, Archives II.

[66] Foreign Service Despatch 3, USIS Taipei to USIA, "Autobiographical novel by Soo Yu-Chen," 14 July 1954, Folder Overseas Chinese, Box 2, USIS Hong Kong 1951–55, RG 84, Archives II.

abroad, either in these territories or, more extraordinarily, in Taiwan under the rule of the Republic of China. Each winter break, the vast majority of these students applied to return home to see their families. Using these students to launch information and investigation work in "enemy" territory presented a unique opportunity, though it had to be done quietly so that the Hong Kong and Macau governments did not start preventing their return. If these students spread a positive image of China among their family members (and through letters to family and other contacts in Taiwan), they could fight against the misconceptions and lies spread by the ROC government. In some cases, even the willingness of the PRC to let them visit at all (and ideally, to do so by providing their train tickets and holding assemblies to "send them off") would combat the international image of China as a closed state.[67]

The other side of the student battle was the effort to win over Chinese schools across Southeast Asia. The philosophy behind such action was simple: children once convinced would grow up to become ardent supporters. Working through schools also provided access to overseas Chinese communities in those countries where either the ROC or the PRC did not have diplomatic relations established. The OCAC offices of both governments produced textbooks for use by overseas Chinese schools, and both ran teacher training programs. The US program called for cooperation with local governments and overseas Chinese to fight communist infiltration and to develop extra-curricular activities "conducive to non-communist orientation."[68]

Winning the Chinese Overseas, Losing the Host Governments

By 1954, the overseas Chinese had become a major strain in China's relations with the nations of Southeast Asia, and the US began to

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[67] 204/3/59–121, Zuzhi Guangzhou Shi gao deng xuexiao xuesheng hangjia fan Gang Ao qi jian jinxing xuanchuan he diaocha gongzuo de chubu zongdian [Initial points on the propaganda and investigation work directed at organizing Guangzhou City high school students in winter vacation returning to Hong Kong and Macau], 1955, Guangzhou.

[68] The proposal mentioned sports, crafts and music, but does not indicate which types of sports, etc. can be considered appropriately "non-Communist." Memo, Norman J. Meiklejohn to James L. Meader, 25 Oct. 1955, "Overseas Chinese School Children," Folder: Overseas Chinese Education, Box 6, USIS HK 1951–55, RG 84, Archives II.

notice resentment of its policies that singled out an ethnic minority for special treatment. Moreover, both countries faced the growing realization that it was not necessarily the elaborate propaganda campaigns that won over the loyalties of the population. Generally speaking, the attitude of the host government and how it treated the overseas Chinese was a far more decisive factor in propelling the politically uncommitted into the grasp of either the Nationalist or the communist government. As one American observer noted, "It is clear that the attitudes and loyalties of the OC will be greatly affected in the future, as in the past, by the treatment accorded them by the countries in which they live."[69] Recognizing this fact, many of the Southeast Asian governments began pursuing new policies to aid in Chinese assimilation and acculturation, treating their Chinese residents not as an extension of another country but as a component of their own.[70]

At the Bandung Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference in 1955, the PRC indicated that it would be willing to consider giving up dual-nationality, a major gesture toward improved relations with the region. In a speech by Zhou Enlai, China suggested that it negotiate formal agreements which gave overseas Chinese the opportunity to choose which nationality they would prefer to keep. This way, the Chinese government would continue to protect those choosing to maintain their Chinese nationality, but it would be understood that they were giving up political rights in their place of abode.[71] This method of ending dual-nationality was important: it demonstrated that the effort was undertaken for the sake of diplomatic gains. The discussions would start with the Indonesian government, but the PRC expressed willingness to consider the issue in other countries on a case-by-case basis.[72] The offer was part of the

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[69] Harold Hinton, "Communist China and the Overseas Chinese," report printed in IS-49–55, Intelligence Bulletins, Memos, and Summaries, Box 5, USIS, RG 306, Archives II.

[70] Such policies were pursued at different times by different governments; whereas Malaysia never implemented discriminatory policies directed only at the Chinese, China was helping to repatriate citizens from Indonesia who had been subjected to local abuses as late as 1966. C.P. Fitzgerald, *China and Southeast Asia Since 1945* (Hong Kong: Longman, 1973), 81–94.

[71] The British Embassy in Jakarta noted that, "Except for vocal [Beijing] sympathizers, the Chinese population dislike the recent agreement on dual nationality," because they lost the flexibility of dual citizenship, the "best of both worlds." See O.C. Moreland to A.J. Gilchrist, 15 July 1955, FO File 371/115192, PRO.

[72] F. Brewster, "Termination of Dual Nationality," 31 Jan. 1955, FO File 371/115191, PRO; Fitzgerald, *China and the Overseas Chinese*, 14–16. Note that China did not completely end dual nationality until 1980.

policy of "peaceful coexistence" between the PRC and its neighbors, and demonstrates the difficulties China experienced in reconciling its overseas Chinese policies and goals with its relations with Southeast Asia. After years of trying to influence overseas Chinese through political propaganda activities, "for the first time, China had relinquished her traditional claim that all persons of Chinese descent remain Chinese citizens even when they acquire another citizenship—the principle of 'once a Chinese: always a Chinese' which had aroused such fears of Chinese expansionism during the KMT period and had caused such resentment in Southeast Asia."[73]

British and American representatives in Southeast Asia had mixed feelings about the dual nationality treaty. By the mid-to-late 1950s, both governments appeared convinced that the best solution to ongoing conflicts with the Chinese minority in the region was assimilation and naturalization: to the extent that Straits Chinese considered themselves first and foremost Singaporeans or Malaysians, or Thai Chinese considered themselves Thai nationals, there would be a diminished desire to maintain close ties to communist China and work on its behalf. For British officials in Malaya and Singapore, however, the issue was a double-edged sword: in 1956, Zhou Enlai made a statement encouraging Chinese in these areas to become local citizens. But the statement was accompanied by a rumor that the PRC might be able to stop the ongoing communist insurgency in Malaya, which was led by ethnic Chinese, in exchange for recognition. The fear, then, was that China maintained a certain level of control over the overseas Chinese in the British territories, and therefore wanted those Chinese to naturalize so that they could better promote communism from within the country as citizens, rather than as aliens.[74]

American officials observed the efforts of the newly-independent nations of Southeast Asia to encourage the overseas Chinese to seek naturalization and to assimilate with their own interests in mind. Malaysia and Singapore had large Chinese populations and could not consider them as separate from the rest of the population, but

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[73] Victor Purcell, *Chinese in Southeast Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 486.

[74] Telegram from Singapore Consulate, 10 Oct. 1956, Folder 510.1, Box 2, Hong Kong Classified General Records, 1951–63, RG 84, Archives II; Foreign Service Despatch, 9 Oct. 1956, Folder 510.1, Box 2, Hong Kong Classified General Records, 1951–63, RG 84, Archives II.

countries like Thailand and Vietnam that had long had separate policies and laws for the Chinese worked to promote local language education, naturalized citizenship and intermarriage. From the perspective of these governments as well as the United States, if overseas Chinese naturalized and developed strong loyalties to their local governments, there would no longer be an ethnic minority capable of acting as a region-wide fifth column on behalf of China. By 1957, the Chinese residents of Southeast Asia appeared to have very limited usefulness as a positive force acting on behalf of the Free World, but they continued to be a potential boon to a communist Chinese government successful in exploiting them. Denying the PRC the support of the diaspora required the elimination of dual nationality and total integration at the local level. At the same time, some of the assimilation policies pursued by the Southeast Asian governments seemed too abrupt and drastic, and served only to "stiffen Chinese resistance to integration and engender resentments which [Beijing] could exploit."[75] The forced naturalization of Chinese in Vietnam for the purpose of conscripting Chinese into the military created new resentments against the government. In the 1950s, at least, even those Chinese who had taken local citizenship in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines still faced inequalities and did not have the same rights as the majority population.[76] Meanwhile, PRC propaganda claimed that the difficulties over dual nationality in the region were the creation of the Western colonial powers, and that the British and American governments used the citizenship issue to stir up difficulties between the nations of Southeast Asia and the PRC.[77]

In response to the PRC move to end dual nationality, in October 1954 Chiang Kai-shek publicly expressed hope for the loyal support of the overseas Chinese in his efforts to regain China. Soon after Chiang's speech, the Nationalist Ambassador to Canada, Liu Chieh, made a statement at the United Nations that overseas Chinese were not considered nationals of the Republic of China if they were citizens of another country. If true, this would have been revolutionary; in fact,

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[75] Guidelines for United States Programs Affecting the Overseas Chinese, 17 Oct. 1957, Folder 570.2, Box 8, Records of the Office of Chinese Affairs, 1957, RG 59, Archives II.

[76] C.P. Fitzgerald, *China and Southeast Asia*, 92.

[77] Humphrey Tevelyan to Harold Macmillan, 13 May 1955, FO File 371/115192, PRO.

it appears that Liu was ahead of his government on this issue, as the ROC was not at all prepared to give up its rights to the diaspora.[78] Unlike the PRC, the ROC never attempted to end its claim to the overseas Chinese. It updated its nationality law in 1951 by reaffirming the dual nationality of overseas Chinese, so that Chinese living in nations that had recognized the PRC could acquire local citizenship and not be forced to register at PRC embassies or face statelessness. In taking on local citizenship, they would not lose Chinese citizenship; in fact, the ROC made no provision for the divestment of Chinese citizenship at all.[79]

It is in this reluctance to give up the overseas Chinese as citizens that the greatest divergence in ROC and US overseas Chinese policy is found. Over the course of the 1950s and into the 1960s, the various branches of the US government poured an impressive amount of resources into the campaign to deny the overseas Chinese to the communists. No matter how much material they produced intended for this distinctively Chinese audience, the long-term goal was always the assimilation of the overseas Chinese into their host governments. Obviously, this policy was undermined by the fact that the short-term efforts worked in contradiction to long-term goals, and of course an American government that had not come to terms with its own minority population could hardly be successful implementing integration and assimilation in a foreign land. Even so, as the US Ambassador to the ROC would note in 1956, for the sake of the future stability of the region, the overseas Chinese needed local political rights and citizenship—a situation that would be good for the US, good for the overseas Chinese, but bad for the ROC.[80] The unique historical position of the Republic of China on Taiwan would ensure that they would always seek out the overseas Chinese as, first and foremost, Chinese nationals and citizens of their nation. If all of the overseas Chinese and refugees emerging out of China through Hong Kong were loyal to the ROC, then they would form two-thirds of the country's strength. In the 1950s especially, when the dream of returning to retake the mainland

[78] Nor would it, until the 1990s and the independence movement, which has moved to claim only "overseas Taiwanese" as its nationals. Purcell, *Chinese in Southeast Asia*, 483.

[79] George K.C. Yeh to Karl L. Rankin, 14 April 1955, File 426.6/0010, MOFA Taipei.

[80] Everett Drumright to Karl L. Rankin, 19 June 1956, Folder: Overseas Chinese, Box 1, CA 1954–56, RG 59, Archives II.

was still alive, this population was especially important because it was not assimilated.[81]

Ultimately, the overseas Chinese would not prove to be the "key to Southeast Asia" that all three governments had thought them to be in 1949. By 1957, a shift in the situation of the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia was apparent. The PRC was developing its policy of disengagement, and although many of the efforts designed to win overseas Chinese loyalties—including work in schools, propaganda, and economic incentives—would continue on some scale, the combination of internal campaigns and a desire to improve relations with the countries of Southeast Asia seeking to better incorporate their Chinese minorities into their national citizenry began to trump the importance of the diaspora. Overseas Chinese policy would no longer be part of its broader Cold War contest against the US and Chiang Kai-shek, but would be a part of its long-term relationships with its neighbors. Not only were the overseas Chinese not mobilized as a communist fifth column, but during the Cultural Revolution the far-left faction of the CCP dismantled the OCAC and purged its leadership for its years of failing to make revolution among the Chinese abroad (a policy which Zhou Enlai defended and which ultimately prevailed at the end of the turmoil).

US officials reached similar conclusions. Although some level of US efforts at bringing the overseas Chinese to the side of the Free World would continue, observers would start to reassess the importance of the overseas Chinese to Southeast Asia: the earlier theory that they held the "key" to the important region through economic power and political influence was not accurate, and policies had to change to reflect that. Additionally, the vast differences in circumstances between the countries of Southeast Asia would lead the information experts to seek a more nuanced, country-by-country approach, treating the overseas Chinese as a part of the domestic politics of the host countries. This indicated a fundamental shift of overseas Chinese policy, out of the realm of China policy and into the realm of US-Southeast Asian relations. Quite apart from the notion of a US foreign policy utterly at odds with that of the communist world, then, by the late 1950s the

[81] A forceful discussion of these and other contrasts between American and ROC overseas Chinese policy can be found in "Lun Dangqian de Meiguo Huaqiao Zhengce [Discussion of Current US Overseas Chinese Policies]," *Weiqing Guobao* 128, 21 Nov. 1955, File 462.6/0009, MOFA Taipei.

United States and the PRC were working along similar lines toward essentially the same goals for the Chinese of Southeast Asia, both in opposition to the efforts of the ROC.

For the ROC, by contrast, the issue of overseas Chinese support would remain an important issue in their quest for government legitimacy. Though the ROC would need to try to find a way to improve its relations with its nationals abroad without sacrificing its often precarious relations with the host nations in the process, its position in 1957 was closer to that of the CCP as a revolutionary party than its own history as a Chinese government. For the time being, it could discount the larger diplomatic issues in the name of gaining the vital base of support.

Although it emerged steeped in Cold War rhetoric, the contest for the loyalties of the overseas Chinese during the 1950s better demonstrates just how problematic the bipolar construction of the conflict can be in Asia. From the simple idea of containing versus spreading communism emerged a far more complicated project of finding a home for ethnic Chinese minorities that would no longer require them to take any side in the conflict other than their own.

CHAPTER FIVE

LIMITS TO PROPAGANDA: HONG KONG'S LEFTIST MEDIA IN THE COLD WAR AND BEYOND

Lu Yan

In the highly ideologized Cold War era, mass media was frequently a useful tool to pursue political ends. The use of mass media by the communist powers to propagate their ideology has been a subject of English-language scholarship almost since the start of the Cold War itself.[1] A more recent trend in scholarship examines the parallel use of mass media and the dramatic expansion of the propaganda apparatus in Western democracies.[2] Rather than continuing this line of argument on the connection between mass media and ideological warfare, this chapter examines the actual operations of leftist media in a locale where the divide between the communist and non-communist was complex and ambiguous. I argue that the connection between ideology and mass media propaganda may not be as straightforward as many studies on Cold War propaganda suggest, and that the functioning of mass media as a propaganda instrument had to be modified to suit local conditions.

Hong Kong, a colony under British rule for about a century when the Cold War began, might be seen as a sort of Cold War gray zone, where certain communist activities were tolerated but rigidly confined by the colonial legal frame. Cold War ideology influenced but did

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[1] See, for example, Frederick Charles Barghoorn, *Soviet Foreign Propaganda* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964); J.A.C. Brown, *Techniques of Persuasion: From Propaganda to Brainwashing* (London: Harmondsworth Penguin, 1963); Frederick T.C. Yu, *Mass Persuasion in Communist China* (New York: Praeger, 1964); Evron Maurice Kirkpatrick, *Target the World: Communist Propaganda Activities in 1955* (New York: Macmillan, 1956).

[2] See Andrew Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda, 1945–53* (New York: Routledge, 2004); see also Brett Gary, *Nervous Liberals: Propaganda Anxieties from World War I to the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945–1961* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Philip M. Taylor, *Global Communications, International Affairs and the Media since 1945* (London & New York: Routledge, 1997).

not dictate mass media operations in this British colony. The assumption of a direct connection between propaganda and the mass media is inadequate to understand the actual operation of leftist media in Hong Kong: even at a time when ideological conflict was pronounced, media operations were not always determined by ideology. As all international affairs are local in their implementation, ideological forces can become active and potent in media operations only when they are meaningful in the local context. The scope for propaganda was limited in Hong Kong, where political goals were not a priority for either the powerful or the powerless, and the two global powers with direct influence over the territory preferred appeasement to confrontation.

Hong Kong's Local Issues in Cold War Geopolitics

A strategically vulnerable place, Hong Kong under British rule occupied a special niche in the geopolitical configuration before and during the Cold War. It had been abandoned by the British to the Japanese after the latter's military success in the Pacific War. Only through tenuous negotiation and great power maneuvers did Britain take it back at the war's end.[3] With an open border to the mainland during the first century of its colonial history, the island had been inundated repeatedly by waves of refugees whenever there was rebellion or war. In the years of rising communist power on the mainland, Hong Kong was once again deemed "indefensible" due to the declining military might of the British Empire, as well as the refusal of the United States to commit any force to help Hong Kong's defense in the event of communist attack. The awareness of Hong Kong's vulnerability to its strong neighbor in the north at a time of social restlessness in the colony was evident in the words of Sir Alexander Grantham, Governor of Hong Kong (1947–1957):

> The attitude of the Chinese authorities towards Hong Kong was a combination of passive hostility with occasional outbursts of active unfriendliness: rather like a pot on the kitchen stove; the pot being Hong Kong. Normally the pot would be kept at the back of the stove gently simmering, but every now and then the cook—the Chinese government—would

[3] Chi-kwan Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War: Anglo-American Relations, 1949–1957* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).

> bring it to the front of the stove when it would boil fiercely. After a while he would move it to the back of the stove again. We never knew when the pot was going to be brought to the boil.[4]

This image of a malicious, spiteful "cook" also appeared frequently in dispatches by American intelligence analysts based in Hong Kong. The American Consulate in Kunming had begun daily translation of local Chinese press reports in 1947, the year Grantham arrived in Hong Kong as Governor. When communist victory became imminent, the consulate moved its operation to Hong Kong. Published as *Review of Hong Kong Chinese Press*, the translations included digests of editorials and news summaries from half a dozen or so major papers in Hong Kong. Dictated by the US government's need to discern the political climate and public (or publicly articulated) opinions concerning mainland affairs, the *Review*'s coverage was highly political and very narrow. The editors categorized Hong Kong newspapers as "pro-communist," "pro-KMT," "independent" or "conservative."[5] Though these labels would be modified in the following decades, the vocabulary used by American analysts gained currency in public discourse in Hong Kong. Newspapers associated with the mainland began to earn the reputation in Hong Kong of being "leftist." Although connection to the mainland had little ideological coloring in much of the history of the Hong Kong press,[6] the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 ushered in an age when association with the mainland evoked suspicion and fear of a controlling hand extending from Beijing.

In the 1940s and early 1950s, Hong Kong was a place of great flux, uncertainty and anxiety. The wartime and postwar years witnessed wild fluctuations in population: from 1.6 million in 1941, to 1 million in 1942, down to 0.5 million in 1945, then up sharply to 2.4 million

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[4] Alexander Grantham, *Via Ports: From Hong Kong to Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1965), 179–180.

[5] At least for a while between 1948 and 1949, American consulates in Shanghai, Hankou and Hong Kong published local newspaper digests simultaneously, all under the title *Review of Chinese Press*.

[6] Yang Guoxiong, "Xianggang Baoyeshi Shang de Zhengui Tekan [Precious Special Editions in Hong Kong Press]," in *Xianggang Zhanggu* [Annecdotes about Hong Kong], ed., Lu Yan (Hong Kong: Wide Angle Press, 1984), vol. 7, 102–112; Elizabeth Sinn, "Emerging Media: Hong Kong and the Early Evolution of the Chinese Press," *Modern China Studies* 36, 2 (2002): 421–465.

in 1950.[7] Among the increased population in postwar years were returnees who had lived in Hong Kong before the war as well as refugees fleeing from the civil war on the mainland. Like those who fled to Hong Kong from past violent conflicts on the mainland, the new refugees arriving in the years after 1949 regarded the territories under British jurisdiction as a way station towards greater safety, a transit to a more permanent abode. Unlike earlier refugees, these newly arrived brought with them a heavier load of ideological baggage: the defeated Kuomintang (KMT) troops and their families, many in extreme poverty, cursed the failed government under Chiang Kai-shek but still supported the KMT's anti-communist agenda; industrialists, who came with huge financial assets and managerial skills, distrusted both the rising communist power and the bankrupt KMT; and liberal intellectuals likewise found themselves unable to commit to either side politically. There were also radical intellectuals and workers among the returnees, already settled in Hong Kong before this great wave of new immigration, who now enthusiastically embraced the new communist China. The great chaos of war and dislocation as well as the dramatic turns of fortune between the communist and Nationalist powers on the mainland deepened conflicting political and intellectual allegiances, laying down soil in Hong Kong for ideologies to take root and grow.

Ideological divides in the emerging Cold War notwithstanding, British policy in Asia aimed primarily not at confrontation with the new communist power on the mainland, but accommodation. This choice was consistent with the pragmatism historically pursued by the colonial authorities, which encouraged business and discouraged political activism. Wartime exigencies had already opened new space for communist activities in Hong Kong. In the 1930s, when Japanese military expansion loomed in Asia, British authorities tacitly agreed to allow Chinese communists to set up a liaison office under the guise of the Yuehua Trading Company. After the fall of Hong Kong, the Chinese communists used Hong Kong as a base of resistance for guerilla warfare in southern China.[8]

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[7] *Hong Kong Annual Report 1952* (London: 1953), 27; figure for 1942 cited in Alan Smart, *The Shek Kip Mei Myth: Squatters, Fires and Colonial Rule in Hong Kong, 1950–1963* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), 43.

[8] Liang Shangyuan, "Balujun Xianggang Banshichu Jianli Neiqing [Internal Story of the Founding of the Eighth Route Army's Office in Hong Kong]," in *Xianggang Zhanggu* vol. 12, ed., Lu Yan (Hong Kong: Wide Angle View, 1989), 62–75. For wartime military cooperation between the East River Column, a guerilla force under com-

In the postwar years, control of Hong Kong meant tangible economic value and political prestige to the British Empire as its global status dwindled. But British rule of this colony could continue only with the consent of the mainland. Britain's desire to retain Hong Kong led to a less ideological approach to the communist power on the mainland. Britain was among the first countries that recognized the People's Republic of China in January 1950, a move that was justified as simple acceptance of reality. Even as Britain collaborated with the United States in the embargo against China after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, London's pragmatic attitude toward Beijing persisted. The words of Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, uttered a few months after the United States plunged headlong into the Asian battlefield and redefined its "defense perimeter" to include Taiwan, reconfirmed Britain's position toward communist China: "[T]he Peking Government is without any shadow of a doubt the Government of China and . . . the Nationalist representatives in the United Nations represent nothing but a small clique in Formosa which in itself represents nothing."[9]

While policy from London adapted nimbly to the geopolitical reconfiguration in Asia caused by the rise of communist power in China, implementation of this policy in Hong Kong did not always follow the course charted by the center. Two specific problems confronted the Hong Kong government and challenged its ability to deal with the entanglement of ideological conflict and social tension. A severe housing shortage, caused by an unprecedented influx of refugees to a place where the Japanese occupation had caused terrible destruction, was perhaps the most urgent social problem in the early postwar years. "[T]here was widespread destruction of property of rich and poor, private and public alike in Hong Kong," noted S.B. Sidebotham, assistant secretary and head of the Hong Kong and Pacific Department at the Colonial Office, comparing it to the situation in Singapore where

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munist leadership, and the British, see Zhou Yi [Chau Yick], *Xianggang Yingxiong Ernu: Dongjiang Zongdui Gangjiu Dadui Kangri Zhanshi* [Heroes and Heroines of Hong Kong: A History of Hongkong-Kowloon Brigade in the Dongjiang Column during the Resisting Japan War] (Hong Kong: Liwen chuban, 2004), especially chapters 6 and 11; and Philip Snow, *The Fall of Hong Kong: Britain, China and the Japanese Occupation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), especially 76–77, 176–185.

[9] Bevin to Sir O. Franks, 11 August 1950, cited in Sean Greenwood, *Britain and the Cold War, 1945–91* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 87.

"such destruction was virtually negligible."[10] Complicating the social distress was the politicization of Hong Kong's laboring class, many of whom were in dire need of shelter. Hong Kong workers were divided in their affiliation with pro-mainland or pro-Taiwan labor unions. In the late 1940s, pro-communist workers joined unions under the Federation of Trade Unions (FTU), while pro-Kuomintang unions founded the Trade Union Council (TUC).[11] The dozen or so local newspapers took divergent ideological stances and framed local problems in terms of pro-communist or pro-Kuomintang positions. This convergence of social and ideological forces, like a stockpile of dry logs ready to be lit by a spark, caused great anxiety to the local British authorities.

In order to put a lid on suspicious and subversive elements in the territory, British authorities in Hong Kong targeted labor unions and mass media in different ways. The seemingly milder approach to unions took the form of supervision through the colonial Labor Department. For the first time in its history, the Labor Department now began energetic efforts to organize labor activities; it kept track of the activities, membership and affiliation of individual labor unions; and it made regular contact with labor unions through frequent visits to their headquarters.[12] Press regulation was more draconian: between the founding of the People's Republic and the outbreak of the Korean War, the British authorities issued and reinstated several restrictive ordinances. The Sedition Ordinance, first established in 1938 and amended in 1950, made speech or publication against the colonial authorities a crime. Words in speech or in print that "raise discontent or disaffection amongst His Majesty's subjects or inhabitants of the Colony," or "promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between different classes of the population of the Colony" were punishable by fine and imprisonment.[13] Moreover, the Emergency Regulations Ordinance of 1949 and the Control Publication and Consolidation Ordinance of 1951 placed

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[10] "S.B. Sidebotham's notes on housing, education and social policy in Hong Kong, December 1949," in Colonial Office, *CO 129/629/8*, reprinted in David Faure, *Colonialism and the Hong Kong Mentality* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 2003), 95–104; citation on 98.

[11] Tai-lok Lui and Stephen W.K. Chiu, "Social Movements and Public Discourse on Politics," in *Hong Kong's History: State and Society under Colonial Rule*, ed. Tak-wing Ngo (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 102.

[12] HKRS843–1-52, "Monthly Reports," Public Record Office (Hong Kong).

[13] "Sedition Ordinance," chap. 217, 1950, in J.B. Griffin et al. (comp.), *The Laws of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Government Printers, 1950), 5: 117.

the Hong Kong press under the rigid control of the government. Two requirements in particular made the Hong Kong press subject to government censorship: mandatory registration and mandatory submission by every newspaper of a copy of every issue to the Registrar for inspection upon publication. Violators of these regulations could be fined and imprisoned. In one legal critic's view, the press laws of Hong Kong laid out a systematic foundation that gave the Governor a "very wide, arbitrary power" that was to be exercised with the assistance of the police and the Registrar.[14]

Across the border, the newly-founded People's Republic pursued a policy toward Hong Kong that paralleled London's pragmatism, as it gave priority to political consolidation and economic recovery at home and dealt cautiously with the outside world. No less nationalistic in their outlook than the defeated Kuomintang and equally indignant about the national shame brought by the unequal treaties, the communist leaders in Beijing nonetheless realized that reclaiming Hong Kong immediately would not serve the best interests of the new China. Already in 1946, Mao Zedong, the chairman and principal foreign policy maker of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), had expressed the intention to leave Hong Kong in British hands. The same intention was reiterated by Qiao Guanhua, the CCP's de facto representative in Hong Kong on the eve of the communist national victory.[15] Policies regarding Hong Kong in the formative years of the People's Republic sought to balance the colony's economic and strategic values with the larger interests of the newly-founded People's Republic. In the view of Beijing, the colony could serve as a crucial point to break the ever-tightening military encirclement and economic embargo set up by the United States against China. Hong Kong was defined as China's "window to Southeast Asia, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Western world." It would function as China's "watch tower, weather station, and beachhead." It would become "a frontline . . . to break the

[14] "Sedition Ordinance," ch. 217, 1950; "Emergency Regulations Ordinance," ch. 241, 1949; "Control of Publications Consolidation Ordinance," ch. 268, 1951, in J.B. Griffin et al. (comp.), *The Laws of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Government Printers, 1950).

[15] Mao's talks with foreign journalists in 1946, cited in Steve Yui-sang Tsang, *Hong Kong: an Appointment with China* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 1997), 69–70; also see Jin Yaoru, *Zhonggon Xianggang Zhengce Miwen Shilu* [Records of Secretly Transmitted Chinese Communist Policies toward Hong Kong] (Kowloon: Tianyuan shuwu, 1998), 1.

embargo by [the] US-led Western camp against us [China]."[16] Later on, these instructions would be summarized in a catchphrase: "Make maximum use under long-term planning [*changqi dasuan chongfen liyong*]." In accord with this policy of moderation, the specific task assigned to the mainland-leaning press would be to assimilate themselves into, but not antagonize, the existing system of the colony.

In a compromise between pragmatism and China's stated anti-imperialist principle, which refused to recognize the treaties signed with Britain by previous regimes that ceded Hong Kong and leased the New Territories, Beijing designated the Hong Kong branch of the Xinhua News Agency, founded in 1947, as the liaison office between Beijing and the Hong Kong authorities. This arrangement avoided formal recognition of the colonial authorities in Hong Kong while keeping communication channels open. In its routine operation, the Hong Kong branch of Xinhua News Agency was coordinated by the party leadership in Guangdong Province and received orders from the Hong Kong-Macau Work Group [*Gang-Ao gongzuo lingdao xiaozu*], directed by Liao Chengzhi within the Foreign Affairs Office of the State Council.[17] The essential task for the communist-led activities in Hong Kong and Macau, as recalled by Jin Yaoruo, one of the high-ranking leaders within the Hong Kong branch of Xinhua, was to win friends, "including past enemies."[18]

Among its many efforts to form a "patriotic united front" within the legal framework in Hong Kong, Beijing viewed the mass media as instrumental in winning hearts and minds of people across the political and economic spectrum. This work, however, could not be carried out directly by the Hong Kong branch of Xinhua, for it operated no publishing business apart from a small section that functioned as a real news agency, nicknamed "little Xinhua." Nor could it be done through newspapers directly owned and operated by the communists in Hong Kong, for these had moved to the mainland after 1949. Therefore, the

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[16] Jin Yaoru, *Zhonggong Xianggang Zhengce Miwen Shilu*, 4–5. Jin was a high-ranking leader in the Hong Kong branch of Xinhua between 1948 and 1968.

[17] Xu Jiatun, *Xu Jiatun Xianggang Huiyilu* [Memoirs of Hong Kong by Xu Jiatun], 15th ed. (Hong Kong: Xianggang lianhebao, 2005), 67. The Hong Kong branch of Xinhua took the name of "Hong Kong-Macau Work Committee [Gang-Ao Gongzuo Weiyuanhui, shortened as Gang-Ao Gongwei]" in intra-party communication.

[18] Jin Yaoru, *Zhonggong Xianggang Zhengce Miwen Shilu*, 2–3.

influence of the mainland was extended not through direct operation of newspapers but indirectly, through editors and journalists who were either supporters of the CCP or were themselves communists.

Among the more than eighty newspapers in the colony, two daily newspapers, both of which originated on the mainland and began Hong Kong editions during or after the war, became the voice of the People's Republic. *Wen Wei Po*, founded in Shanghai by progressive elements in 1938, had taken a pro-communist position in news reporting during its early years under Editor-in-chief Xu Zhucheng. After it was shut down by the National Government in 1947, *Wen Wei Po* issued a Hong Kong edition in 1948. After reorganization, it became the organ of the Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang, one of the eight authorized minor political parties on the mainland. The leftist Kuomintang leaders Li Jishen and Cai Tingkai, as well as Xu Zhucheng, sat on *Wen Wei Po*'s five-member trustee board, while Xu, who was not a member of either party, took the position of editor-in-chief. His close relationship with underground communist leaders such as Xia Yan and Pan Hannian and his enthusiasm for the People's Republic decisively shaped the orientation of *Wen Wei Po*. At the suggestion of Pan Hannian, *Wen Wei Po* under Xu's editorship assumed a "left-leaning centrist" position. It published news about the People's Republic and disseminated views from the mainland.[19]

Another widely respected liberal newspaper, *Ta Kung Pao*, became a leftist newspaper in Hong Kong at the historical juncture of 1949, when its managing founder Hu Zhengzhi died of illness in Shanghai. *Ta Kung Pao*'s management and staff had already abandoned its traditional position of supporting the Kuomintang government, due to their disillusionment with its policy of eliminating the communist opposition through civil war. After turning to the communist side, *Ta Kung Pao*'s operation on the mainland was nationalized in the early 1950s. In line with Beijing's policy of moderation toward Hong Kong, however, *Ta Kung Pao*'s Hong Kong branch remained in shareholders' hands. Nonetheless, many of the reporters and editors working in the Hong Kong office were either underground communists or communist

[19] Xu Zhucheng, "Xianggang *Wenhui Bao* Chuangkan Qianhou [Events around the Publication of the Hong Kong Edition of *Wenhui Bao*]," in *Xianggang Baoye Chunqiu* ed. Zhong Zi [Chronicles of Hong Kong Newspapers] (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1991), 268–274.

sympathizers. Despite calls from Beijing for neutrality and centrism, the eagerness of *Ta Kung Pao*'s managers and editor-in-chief to show support to the People's Republic added a distinctive "red" color to this once-neutral newspaper in Hong Kong.[20] Informally, these two major papers and papers affiliated to them formed the bloc of leftist media in Hong Kong.

The Ta Kung Pao *Trial: a "Pot" Boiled on Local Fire*

The policy of non-confrontation held by both London and Beijing faced its first widely-publicized challenge in 1952, entangling the two unwilling parties in a fight that each wanted to avoid. A convergence of local social and political forces, rather than directives from Beijing, set off the clash. Two incidents, the Tung Tau Fire in November 1951 and the March First Incident in 1952, led to the infamous *Ta Kung Pao* trial of May 1952.

On 21 November 1951, a fire at Tung Tau Village in Kowloon destroyed 3,000 huts and rendered more than 25,000 squatters homeless.[21] Many asked what had caused the fire. Communist leaders in Hong Kong and the pro-communist Federation of Trade Unions (FTU) suspected arson by agents of Hong Kong's British authorities. In their view, the fire allowed the government to reclaim valuable land occupied by squatters, and forced pro-communist FTU activists, who were the overwhelming majority among the Tung Tau Village squatters, to leave.[22] In the wake of the fire, leaders in media and labor circles decided on mass mobilization to expose this conspiracy by the British authorities. Both *Ta Kung Pao* and *Wen Wei Po* took up the issue of the colonial authorities' neglect of the poor and carried frequent,

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[20] Fang Hanqi et al., eds., *Dagong Bao Bainianshi* [A Hundred-year History of Dagong Bao] (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2004), 350, 381–382, 385, 390–392; Li Gucheng, *Xianggang Zhongwen Baoye Fazhangshi* [A History of Chinese Newspapers in Hong Kong] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995), 327–332.

[21] Special report, "Jiulong Cheng Zuoye Kongqian Dahuo, Jiucun Huiwu Sanqian, Zaimin yu Erwan Wu [An Unprecedented Fire Last Night in Kowloon City, 3,000 Huts Destroyed in Nine Villages, Affecting more than 25,000," *Sing Tao Daily*, 22 Nov. 1951, 5. The *Hong Kong Annual Report*, *1952*, issued by the government, cited the much lower figure of 10,000; see page 5.

[22] Even today, some among the leftist leaders still hold a firm belief in government-planned arson: Lo Fu, former Editor-in-Chief of *New Evening Post*, interviewed by author, Hong Kong, July 2007.

Figure 5.1 FTU distributing food relief on November 23, 1951, to victims of the Tung Tau fire.
Photo courtesy of Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions

in-depth reports. In contrast, politically-neutral papers such as *Sing Tao Daily* were far less belligerent in their occasional reports.[23] Five major unions within FTU threatened to strike. Several pro-communist middle schools stepped up pro-PRC anti-imperialist education.[24] In coordination with the leftist press in Hong Kong, the neighboring province of Guangdong, home to many of the fire victims, quickly extended a helping hand. On the urging of the communist leaders in Hong Kong, the Southern China Bureau in Guangzhou decided to send a relief delegation with funds and goods for the fire victims in Tung Tau.[25]

The alacrity of the mainland in response to the fire was in sharp contrast to the foot-dragging colonial authorities in Hong Kong. In the early 1950s, Hong Kong authorities under Governor Grantham took a position quite different from that of the Colonial Office in London regarding the issue of housing the poor. Already in 1948 the Colonial Office had taken an interventionist approach, urging the Governor to change the traditional laissez-faire policy on housing and social welfare. Records of meetings between Sir Alexander and officials from the Colonial Office in June 1950 show that the Governor resisted significant reform. A colonial officer in Hong Kong before the Japanese occupation, Sir Alexander defended the traditional policy of depending on the voluntary association of *Kai Fong* [neighborhood] to fulfill the task of social welfare provision. Repeatedly, he emphasized that the problems in Hong Kong which London wished to fix "[were] an inevitable state of affairs in any territory with such a large migrant population as in Hong Kong . . . and he did not see that anything could be done to alter this state of affairs." He agreed reluctantly that "the matter [of providing housing for the low-paid manual workers] should

[23] By my count, *Sing Tao Daily*, during the remaining days of 1951, carried six reports on the fire and subsequent follow-up, whereas *Wen Wei Po* had a dozen such reports.

[24] Fang Hanqi et al., eds., *Dagong Bao Bainianshi*, 404–405.

[25] Zhou Yi [Chau Yick], a veteran journalist at *Wen Wei Po*, a union leader, and a witness of the March 1st Incident, has done more research on local newspapers and presents a most detailed narrative in his *Xianggang Zuopai Douzhengshi* [A History of Struggle by Hong Kong Leftists] (Hong Kong: Liwen chubanshe, 2002), 83–84; see also Jin Yaoru, *Zhonggong Xianggang Zhengce Miwen Shilu*, 25–26.

be pursued with urgency and felt that what was needed in the first instance was a small pilot scheme."[26]

Studies on the Tung Tau Fire have shown that the charges from the pro-mainland newspapers were not groundless. Hong Kong authorities were insensitive to the needs of fire victims, and the resettlement plans designed by government often moved the dislocated victims to faraway places not connected to public transport.[27] When fire victims visited the office of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs on 27 December 1951, asking for relief, the reply was that the office would organize a "Committee on Social Donation" to handle regulations on charity activities initiated by society.[28]

On 1 March 1952, the day of the anticipated arrival of the Guangdong Relief Mission for the Tung Tau Fire victims, leftist unions organized a mass gathering in the area of Tsim Sha Tsui train station to welcome the delegation. The crowd, estimated at between 10,000 and 20,000, dispersed peacefully after being informed that the arrival of the delegation had been postponed. But a traffic accident caused by a police vehicle driving into the crowd and hitting a girl set off clashes between the crowd and the police. One witness saw several workers charge at the police, shouting: "We've been abused enough!"[29] Only after the authorities mobilized more police was the demonstration finally put down. One worker died and two were injured after the police opened fire.[30]

While no evidence indicated premeditation of the rally organizers to cause trouble, the clash triggered crossfire between the right and

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[26] "Notes of a meeting with Sir Alexander Grantham, governor of Hong Kong," 21 June 1950, CO 129/629/8, reprinted in Faure, *Colonialism and the Hong Kong Mentality*, 112–116, citation on 113, 114, 116; The Governor retained his view in another meeting on housing and social welfare issues, see "Notes of a meeting with Sir Alexander Grantham, Governor of Hong Kong," 26 June 1950, *CO 129/629/8*, reprinted in *ibid*, 117–119.

[27] Smart, *The Shek Kip Mei Myth*, especially chapter 5, "Tung Tau."

[28] Zhou Yi, *Xianggang Zuopai Douzhengshi*, 84.

[29] Zhou Yi, *Xianggang Zuopai Douzhengshi*, 87.

[30] Special Report, "Jiulong Zuowu Sanchu Dachongtu; Qunzhong Jincha Fasheng Jiufen [Big Clash between the Masses and the Police in Three Places Yesterday Afternoon]," *Sing Tao Daily*, 2 March 1952, 5; Special Report, "Jiulong Zuotian Fasheng Shigu: Jincha Qunzhong Dachongtu [Accident in Kowloon Yesterday; Police and the Masses Clash]," *Ta Kung Pao*, 2 March 1952, 4; Zhou Yi, *Xianggang Zuopai Douzhengshi*, 87–89.

the left, all framed in ideological terms. The Commissioner of Police viewed it as a "trial of strength between the Government and the Left-Wing trade unions."[31] His view was shared by Governor Grantham.[32] The voices from the conservative end of the ideological spectrum in the local press also viewed the clash on 1 March as a deliberate confrontation by the "Communist-led students and workers" against law and order (*Hong Kong Standard*),[33] or even "a planned and organized political action of the Chinese Communists" (*Hong Kong Times*, a Kuomintang organ).[34] The clash in Hong Kong also forced Beijing to respond. *People's Daily*, the official organ of the government, issued an editorial on 4 March, protesting against the British authorities in Hong Kong for the "planned, coordinated massacre of our countrymen." The next day, both *Wen Wei Po* and *Ta Kung Pao* (and its affiliated *New Evening Post [Xin Wan Bao]*), reprinted on their front pages the editorial from Beijing, though all took precaution by redacting the word "massacre" to avoid violating the Sedition Ordinance.

The colonial authorities, which had put down with bullets and tear gas a "riot" just days before, took pro-mainland newspapers' projection of the voice of communist China in the Crown Colony as a battle cry for another uprising. In a move to pre-empt further trouble, the government sued all three papers on the grounds of "untrue accounts of the disturbance… [that would] raise discontent and disaffection amongst the inhabitants of the Colony."[35] Between April and May, the court, citing the Sedition Ordinance, tried the case of *Ta Kung Pao* and sentenced its proprietor and publisher, Fei Yiming, and its editor, Li Zongying, to nine and six months imprisonment respectively. The two were also fined $3,000 and $4,000 each. The newspaper was ordered to suspend publication for six months.[36]

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[31] Steve Yui-sang Tsang, *Democracy Shelved: Great Britain, China, and Attempts at Constitutional Reform in Hong Kong, 1945–1952* (Hong Kong and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 177–179.

[32] Lee Ming-kwn, "Hong Kong Identity—Past and Present," in *Hong Kong Economy and Society: Challenges in the New Era*, eds. S.L. Wong and T. Maruya (Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies, 1998), 158–159.

[33] *Hong Kong Standard*, 2 March 1952; cited in Smart, *The Shek Kip Mei Myth*, 76.

[34] *Hong Kong Shi Bao*, 2 March 1952, in *Review of Hong Kong Chinese Press*, *Nov. 41/52*, 1–3 March 1952.

[35] *Hong Kong Annual Report 1952*, 215.

[36] Anonymous, *Dagong Bao Tingshen ji* [Witness's Records to the Trial of Ta Kung Pao] (Hong Kong: Lianyou chubanshe, n.d.); Liang Weixian and Chen Wenmin, eds.,

The trial in Hong Kong stirred up wider ripples that went as far as Beijing and London. It provoked the mainland to respond immediately with more dramatic gestures. Zhou Enlai, the premier of the People's Republic, issued a statement of protest that demanded British authorities withdraw the suit. Guangdong Province organized a mass demonstration at Shamian, threatening to take severe measures against British properties there. A few days later, Hong Kong authorities received instruction from London to rescind the court sentence against the *Ta Kung Pao* personnel and withdraw the accusation against the other two papers. Instead of a six-month suspension, *Ta Kung Pao* resumed publication on 18 May after only twelve days.

By wrestling with the belligerent local forces, the centers in London and Beijing prevailed to end the local conflict. Both Beijing and London took extraordinary steps to steer affairs in Hong Kong back to a course of moderation. In fact, an urgent order from Zhou Enlai had stopped the Relief Mission even before it crossed the border into Hong Kong territory.[37] Although local functionaries such as the Police Commissioner instantly saw signs of an organized communist plot and the Governor of Hong Kong wanted to get tough on the leftists, London was quick to back down once Beijing sent signals of protest. In this episode of unrest in Hong Kong, those at the centers saw no need to escalate conflict but preferred to let local problems remain local.

The swift waxing and waning of this incident in Hong Kong nonetheless revealed the potency of the combined force of Cold War ideology and latent social discontent. The Governor and the Police Commissioner, the newspapers on the right and on the left, union leaders and the Xinhua News Agency in Hong Kong were all under the sway of the Cold War rhetoric and interpreted the unfolding event through that rhetoric. Each saw conspiracy in accidents and reacted accordingly. Both the Xinhua News Agency and the Southern China Bureau that directed the Hong Kong-Macau Work Committee saw the Tung Tau Fire as an opportunity to fight, not to reconcile, with an imperialist enemy. Mainland-leaning newspapers in Hong Kong, despite repeated instructions from the center, took an overtly propagandist role and spoke in a nearly identical voice to the mainland press.

Chuanbofa Xinbian [A New Discourse on Press Law] (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1995), 359–361.

[37] Jin Yaoru, *Zhonggong Xianggang Zhengce Miwen Shilu*, 27.

And the sudden rise of antagonism revealed underlying problems of the inadequacy of colonial governance when facing social duress. The bureaucratic tardiness of the colonial authorities in dealing with fire victims' plea for help; the use of police force to destroy the fire victims' temporary shelter in the cold winter of January; and the deportation of union activists, explain the sudden burst of mass anger on 1 March and the brief confrontation.[38]

The trial nonetheless forced leftist media in Hong Kong to reflect on their ideologized and confrontational approach. Local communist leaders in Hong Kong realized that they would fail in the mission of "making use of" Hong Kong and lose its leftist media voice should the papers be shut down by the authorities. They therefore decided to decrease the leftist papers' ideological belligerence. This became noticeable in late May. By October, *Hong Kong Commercial Daily [Xiang Gang Shang Bao]*, originally published as *Standard Commercial Information [Biaozhun hangqing]* and affiliated with the pro-communist *Commercial Herald [Jingji daobao]*, was in print.[39] Departing from *Wen Wei Po* and *Ta Kung Pao's* long-established practice of focused reporting on mainland news, *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* turned to the local audience and emphasized local news. Published as an economy daily, it took the popular *Sing Pao Daily News* as a model and emphasized entertainment. This reorientation eventually reaped fruit in the early 1960s, when the paper began turning a profit. It almost caught up with its model, the *Sing Pao Daily News*: by 1966, it reached a circulation of 120,000 copies, only 10,000 shy of *Sing Pao*'s. The growing popularity made it one of the two most widely circulated dailies.[40]

Adopting the goals of better assimilation and gaining recognition in Hong Kong, the pro-mainland newspapers also redefined their content.

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[38] Zhou Yi, *Xianggang Zuopai Douzhengshi*, 82–85, 89.

[39] For reasons not clear to me yet, neither paper was listed in Laibing Kan and Grace H.L. Chu, *Newspapers in Hong Kong, 1841–1979* (Hong Kong: University Library System, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1981), the standard reference for Hong Kong press. *Commercial Herald* began publication on 1 January 1948; the first issue date for *Standard Commercial Information* was not clear. See Lin Ling, "Xianggang *Jingji Daobao* de Chuankan Jiqi Zuoyong [The Creation and Function of *Commercial Herald* in Hong Kong]," in *Xianggang baoye chunqiu* [An Annual of Hong Kong Press], ed., Zhong Zi (Zhanjiang: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1991), 286–294.

[40] Lin Ling, "Zai Xianggang Baofengyu zhong Dansheng de *Shang Bao* [The *Commercial Daily* was Born in a Storm in Hong Kong]," in *Xianggang Baoye Chunqiu* [An Annual of Hong Kong Press], ed., Zhong Zi (Zhanjiang: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1991), 295–298. Also see, Jin Yaoru, *Zhonggong Xianggang Zhengce Miwen Shilu*, 29.

New Evening Post, which was accused along with *Ta Kung Pao* and *Wen Wei Po* of sedition in 1952, initially aimed to become "an evening edition of *Ta Kung Pao* with a different name."[41] Before the March First Incident, *New Evening Post* in fact followed closely Beijing's directive to assimilate; it pitched itself so well to Hong Kong's media market that the *Hong Kong Yearbook* issued by the conservative *Wat Chiu Yat Po* listed it among "independent" newspapers. Although printing the statement from Beijing after the March First Incident on its front page exposed *New Evening Post*'s identity as one of the "three papers of the Chinese people" and caused a temporary decline in its circulation, *New Evening Post* quickly recovered its "gray" color by returning to a focus on entertainment.

In 1953, *New Evening Post* added innovative content to its entertainment pages in hopes of boosting its market share. The experiment became so popular that it did not just increase the circulation of the paper but also created a new branch of Hong Kong's culture industry. Noticing the huge appeal of a match between two famous masters of martial arts in Macau, *New Evening Post* began to publish a serialized martial arts fiction, *The Dragon and Tiger Match in the Capital [Longhu dou Jinghua]*, in tandem with the match.[42] This step broke new ground in media practice. The vogue it created became so legendary that a 2006 film by Hong Kong director Wong Kar-wai chose to cast the protagonist as a martial-arts fiction writer in the 1960s.[43] Chen Wentong, who authored this first "new martial arts novel" under the pseudonym Liang Yusheng, was then an editor at *New Evening Post*. The instant popularity of his pioneering work and dozens more that eventually followed would make him, along with Jin Yong, one of the most widely-read and admired martial arts novelists worldwide.[44] The benefit for *New Evening Post* was instant. Before the late 1960s, when it was forced again to serve as a vehicle for propaganda during the

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[41] Luo Chengxun [Lo Fu], "Dagong Bao de Wanbao [The Evening Edition of *Ta Kung Pao*]," in *Dagong Baoren Yi Jiu* [Reminiscences about Ta Kung Pao by its Staff], ed., Zhou Yu (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 1991), 151–158.

[42] Lo Fu, "Xiaying xia de Liang Husheng [Liang Yusheng in the Shadow of Righteous Masters]," in *Nandou Wenxing Gao* [Higher up is the Literary Star of Nandou], ed., Lo Fu (Hong Kong: Cosmos Books Ltd., 1993), 54–55; Fang Hanqi et al., eds., *Dagong Bao Bainianshi*, 415.

[43] Wong Kar-wai, *2046* (Hong Kong: Jettone, 2006), feature film.

[44] Zha Liangyong, pseudonym Jin Yong, was then a fellow editor and colleague of Liang. He also started writing martial arts novels serialized on *New Evening News* in 1955. See Lo Fu, ibid.

Cultural Revolution, *New Evening Post* caught up with the then most popular evening paper, *Sing Tao Evening News*, and became one of the two most widely-circulated evening papers.[45]

By the mid-1960s, mainland-leaning newspapers were successful in gaining a significant share of Hong Kong's media market. While continuing positive reports on mainland news, these papers provided more coverage on local news and greater emphasis on entertainment, with columns on sports, dog racing and horseracing. Information collected by the authorities in Hong Kong shows that the nine "leftist newspapers" together had a circulation around 400,000 to 450,000.[46] According to one estimate, six of these papers together held a 50 percent share of Hong Kong's Chinese newspaper market, an unmistakable indication of their success in localization and assimilation.[47]

Phoenix Reporting from Hong Kong: The End of Leftist Media in Hong Kong

The success of leftist newspapers in Hong Kong's media market does not simply demonstrate the de-ideologization of CCP propaganda instruments in this Cold War gray zone. It also reveals the power of Hong Kong readers and the media market to remake these newspapers. For much of the second half of the twentieth century, leftist media in Hong Kong fine-tuned their operations to suit local conditions and developed along the paths of localization and commercialization. This pattern, established by leftist media in the Cold War years, would be replicated by other business operations with mainland connections after the end of the Cold War. Despite the continued presumption that they were a propaganda instrument for the communist regime in the PRC, media institutions with mainland ties in post-Cold War Hong Kong were in essence business undertakings. Although it lies outside the strict temporal limits of the Cold War, the case of Phoenix Television provides a useful illustration of the parallels between the leftist media in the 1950s and mainland-linked media in the 1990s in terms of ideologized public perceptions. It also shows how a Hong Kong-based television station could make use of political

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[45] Fang Hangqi et al., eds., *Dagong Bao Bainianshi*, 416–417.

[46] Police report, 26 Oct. 1967; cited in Fang Hanqi et al., eds., *Dagong Bao Bainianshi*. 433.

[47] Jin Yaoru, *Zhonggong Xianggang Zhengce Miwen Shilu*, 33.

divisions between China and Taiwan—a Cold War legacy—to serve its commercial ends.

In 1996, about fifteen months before Hong Kong's reintegration into China, the arrival of Phoenix Satellite Television stirred up alarm in the territory. Phoenix's founder, Liu Changle, had worked for years as a journalist at the state-owned Central People's Broadcasting Station in Beijing and because of his assignments in reporting military news had held the rank of colonel in the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Eight years before the founding of Phoenix, Liu left his journalism job on the mainland and became a globe-trotting businessman, making wide-ranging deals in oil products, real estate, and highway and harbor construction in the United States, Singapore and mainland China.[48] In setting up Phoenix in Hong Kong, Liu also staffed the managerial team with his friends from media circles on the mainland, who in turn drew much from their past experiences in operating the new station in Hong Kong. The resulting similarities between some Phoenix programs and those of the state-owned China Central Television (CCTV) led some to call it "CCTV Channel-9" in its early years of operation.[49] Around the sensitive moment of Hong Kong's political transition, Phoenix became the subject of much speculation in the local press; many insinuated that Liu was a tool of the PRC to control Hong Kong's media.[50] But these speculations, framed in Cold War perceptions about the divide between a communist mainland and a capitalist Hong Kong, ignored the motivations and actual operations of Phoenix in Hong Kong.

Like many of his contemporaries who changed career paths and turned to business, Liu was in fact driven by the desire for financial fortune and social fame. His experiences in journalism as well as his business acumen convinced him, in the early 1990s, that there was massive advertising revenue potential from the global Chinese-speaking

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[48] Li Bing and Zhou Panfeng, "Fenghuang Weishi de Fenghuang Gushi [The Story of a Phoenix from the Phoenix Satellite Television]," *Shangjie* [Business Circles] 1, (2001): 7–11; Allen T. Cheng, "Phoenix Rising: a Former Propaganda Chief is Changing the Pace of Chinese TV," *Asiaweek*, 9 March 2001, 38–39.

[49] Chen Jiang, interviewed by author, Shanghai, summer 2003; also see Yu Wenhua et al., *Fenghuang Kao* [Examining the Phoenix] (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2004), 139.

[50] Matt Pottinger, "TV Entrepreneur Chalks up Victories in China," *Wall Street Journal*, 28 August 2002, B-5C; Allen T. Cheng, "Phoenix Rising," *Asiaweek*, 9 March 2001, 39.

audience.[51] Hong Kong attracted him with its laissez-faire approach to business regulation in comparison to the mainland or other possible locales such as Singapore. Formed as a joint venture with global media mogul Rupert Murdoch, Liu's company Today's Asia and Murdoch's Satellite Television Asia Region Operation (Star TV) each held a 45 percent share of Phoenix, with China Wise International Ltd., a mainland advertising company, holding the other 10 percent.[52] It was a more "Chinese" media institution, though, as Liu had full responsibility for Phoenix's broadcast operations.[53] Like many other media companies in Hong Kong, Phoenix was registered in the British Virgin Islands, where no tax is levied on offshore businesses.[54]

Operating on a shoestring budget, Phoenix made an impressive start.[55] By securing the right to broadcast in Guangdong and in high-end hotels across the mainland, within two years it became a recognized brand name, on par with McDonald's, according to a Gallup survey of Chinese consumers.[56] Phoenix established branches in Europe in 1999 and in the United States in 2002. Its signals also covered much of Southeast Asia, aiming at the Chinese-speaking population there. In 2001, it was listed by *Forbes* as one of the "200 Best Small Companies" worldwide.[57]

Part of Phoenix's business success was Liu's ability, in common with many overseas Chinese, to leverage his marginality as a man who could cross national and cultural borders.[58] Liu knew how to avoid restrictions that could limit his operation and how to utilize his mainland connections to advance his business interests. Better-positioned

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[51] Liu, while using Singapore as his business base in the early 1990s, observed that television channels using the Chinese language generated far more advertisement revenue than Channel 5, which broadcasted in English in this city where 77 percent of the population were Chinese. See Yu Wenhua et al., *Fenghuang Kao*, 11.

[52] Yu Wenhua et al., *Fenghuang Kao*, 12.

[53] Phoenix news editor, who requested anonymity, interviewed by author, Hong Kong, summer 2004.

[54] Phoenix Satellite Television Holdings Limited, compiler, *Phoenix Satellite Television Holdings Limited Annual Report, 2000–2001* (Hong Kong: Kowloon, 2001), 64. This is the earliest available annual report issued for the public after the company went public on Hong Kong Stock Exchange in 2000.

[55] Mark Landler, "Entrepreneur Walking Fine Line at a News Channel for China," *New York Times*, 8 Jan. 2001, B14.

[56] Brian Palmer, "The Wealth of a Nation," *Fortune* 140:7, (11 Oct. 1999): 229–234.

[57] "Think Small and Growing," *Forbes Global*, 29 Oct. 2001, 36–37.

[58] Philip Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others: Emigration in Modern Times* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 10.

as a free agent in an age of globalization than the leftist media that navigated through the ambiguous terrain of Hong Kong in the 1950s, Phoenix exploited political divides inherited from the Cold War and made them a source of profit. Taking advantage of the PRC's long-held position that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait belonged to one China and of Hong Kong's unique status of borderland between the two, Phoenix labeled itself as a station that bridged "two coasts and three locales [*liang'an sandi*]." From the beginning of its operation, it hired Taiwan-born announcers to anchor its major news program when such practice was not imaginable on the mainland. It ran mainland-related programs, not available on local television in Hong Kong, during highly-charged media events such as the entry of the People's Liberation Army to Hong Kong when the colony was reintegrated into China, and the death of Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping.[59] Crossing the political divide, Phoenix secured a neglected niche in Hong Kong's media market while gaining positive impressions on the mainland.

Despite local fears about a former PLA soldier's take-over of Hong Kong media, Phoenix did not capture a major share of the local media market. This was mainly due to the fact that it broadcast in Mandarin in a place where the majority spoke Cantonese. Instead, it competed for audience and revenue on the mainland, where the media was undergoing a profound transformation from providing "cultural services" for the party into a "culture industry." As the state withdrew its subsidies and forced media to become financially self-sufficient, profit-making became as important, if not more so, than propaganda for the more than five hundred television stations in China.[60] By 1998, state-owned CCTV, historically the principal instrument of propaganda in China, took one third of the national total of 13.6 billion *yuan* of commercial

[59] Zhong Danian and Zhu Bing, *Fenghuang Xiu: Fenghuang Weishi Shinian Jiemu Huigu* [Phoenix's Show: A Ten-year Review of Broadcasting Programs at Phoenix] (Beijing: Zhongguo youyi chuban gongsi, 2006), 10, 17.

[60] The commercialization of Chinese media has been analyzed by scholars within China and around the world; see especially Yuezhi Zhao, *Media, Market, and Democracy: Between Party Line and Market Line* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998); Chin-chuan Lee, ed., *Power, Money, and Media: Communication Patterns and Bureaucratic Control in Cultural China* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2000); Stephanie Hemelryk Donald et al. eds., *Media in China: Consumption, Content, and Crisis* (London: Routledge/Curzon, 2002); Zhao Yuming, *Zhangguo Guangbo Dianshi shi Wenjxujui* [A Collection of Articles on the History of Chinese Broadcasting and Television—a Sequence] (Beijing: Beijing guangbo xueyuan chubanshe, 2000), 193.

revenue in the television industry.[61] Phoenix's main advantage against this media colossus was its marginality. Its borderland identity in Hong Kong freed it from regulations that still restricted the news reporting of its mainland counterparts.

Phoenix's leveraging of marginality to gain profit and expand market share on the mainland can be illustrated by its reporting on a major international event, the NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade during the Kosovo War. On 8 May 1999, the Chinese embassy building was hit by bombs dropped by NATO aircraft; three Chinese journalists died and more than twenty others were wounded. Mainland television stations—the news source for a majority of Chinese on the mainland—were restricted by a regulation that international news reporting must use the script provided by the official Xinhua News Agency.[62] While mainland television stations waited, Phoenix canceled a two-hour entertainment program and replaced it with live reporting. The shortage of footage was made up for by news commentary, a format never used by CCTV for ongoing events. For seven days, Phoenix ran special programs on the NATO bombing. Mainlanders watched it as the only Chinese-language news program which dared to project a bold voice while all other television stations meekly read the script handed down from Xinhua. A huge billboard was erected in Shenzhen with the characters, "The Chinese Today Can Say 'No'," taken directly from the title of the special news program on Phoenix.[63] The same refrain also appeared on placards held by students who took to the streets to protest the NATO bombing. These dynamic interactions between Phoenix and the mainland audience caught the attention of the *New York Times*, which noted that Phoenix was "walking a fine line" between what was tolerated by Beijing and what was desired by the audience.[64] Phoenix's special program on the 1999 Belgrade bombing became a turning point for its survival and expansion. As Phoenix gained greater audience share on the mainland, Liu Changle was named one of the thirty people who most influenced China's

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[61] Tsan-kuo Chang, *China's Window on the World: TV News, Social Knowledge and International Spectacles* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2002), 14, 27–49.

[62] Xu Zhiwei, director of Shanghai Television, interviewed by author, Shanghai, summer 2003; Phoenix news editor who requested anonymity, interviewed by author, Hong Kong, spring 2003.

[63] Shi Yonggang, *Jiemi Fenghuang*, 49.

[64] Landler, "Entrepreneur Walking Fine Line at a News Channel for China," B-1, B-14.

media transformation, recognized for his success in border-crossing by creating a broadcasting style that can be labeled neither Hong Kong, nor Taiwan, nor mainland, but combining them all.[65]

Conclusion

Although separated by four decades, the leftist media in 1950s Hong Kong and the story of Phoenix Satellite Television in the 1990s shed light on similar structural forces that limit ideological propaganda. As a Cold War borderland, Hong Kong was conditioned by a pragmatism supported by the two major powers that had vested interest in or direct control of the territory. From the Cold War through the end of the century, China and Great Britain carefully and consistently pursued accommodation to protect their respective interests. Their collaboration gave Hong Kong a quality that muted the sharp conflict of ideologies in the leftist or presumed leftist media. The local capitalist market, another structural force, was enabled by China's policy of keeping Hong Kong as a "window to the world" and functioned to de-ideologize the operations of leftist media in Hong Kong. Despite the leftist label, Hong Kong's leftist media during the Cold War was much less of an ideological vehicle than its counterparts on the mainland or in other communist and even non-communist states. In the post-Cold War era, the Hong Kong-based and mainland-connected Phoenix Satellite Television's exploitation of Hong Kong's marginal advantage in the pursuit of profit again highlights the structural forces—particularly the media market—that had limited ideological propaganda in Hong Kong during the Cold War. Ideologically-charged labels such as "propaganda officer in the Chinese military" and "cog in China's propaganda machine" were used frequently in news reports about Phoenix and Liu, but media observers also noticed that Liu's main goal was

[65] Wang Yongtao, Zhang Lei, and Wang Yanning, "Liu Changle," in *Yingxiang Weilai: Zhongguo Chuanmei Sanshiren* eds. Xu Hong and Chen Binghua [Influencing Future: Thirty Leaders in Chinese Media], (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2005), 166–176, citation on 176. The book resulted from interviews conducted by more than one hundred graduate students of the Media and Communication Graduate Program at Beijing University in 2003–2004.

to make profit, while the actual operation of Phoenix was "new in China" but "familiar in the West."[66]

In the context of the global Cold War, the de-ideologized operations of the leftist media in Hong Kong may have been a deviation from the norm of the media serving political ends. As a Cold War borderland, Hong Kong was not immune to ideological conflict. Structural forces in Hong Kong—the colonial administration, the politicized local population and the social problems revealed in the disastrous fires in squatter areas—created a hotbed for the spread of communism and anti-communism. But these forces were balanced by power from the center and the constraints of the local economic system. In the end, ideology's potency for shaping reality in Hong Kong was diminished by its dynamic interactions with forces from multiple centers and through changes worked out locally.

[66] Alkman Granitsas and Loretta Ng, "Liu Changle Balances Business, Politics in China," *Wall Street Journal*, 4 Sept. 2002, B5C; Allen T. Cheng, "Phoenix Rising," *Asiaweek*, 9 March 2001, 38–39; James Borton, "Phoenix TV Spreads Its Wings in China," *Asia Times*, 9 Dec. 2004, accessed at http://www.atimes.com/atimes, on 9 Nov. 2005.

CHAPTER SIX

WOMEN'S LIBERATION IN CHINA DURING THE COLD WAR[1]

Zheng Yangwen

Conceived by reformers like Liang Qichao in the late nineteenth century and born with the Nationalist Revolution in 1912, women's liberation grew during the May Fourth or New Culture Movement in the late 1910s and throughout the 1920s. The ideas of female liberation appealed to the Westernizing elite, the aspiring urban middle classes and the female-dominated textile workforce. But progress was slow in the country as a whole, as many families continued to bind the feet of their daughters and men continued to take multiple wives. "Common prostitution" exploded during the warlord-divided and war-torn Nationalist era.[2] The young Chinese Communist Party (CCP) saw the power of women in the labor movement and experimented with women's liberation in the 1930s and 1940s in the hope of enhancing the legitimacy of the communist revolution. The CCP's women's platform would become more systematic after they assumed power in 1949, when they set Chinese women free—in some cases forced them—from the practices of foot-binding, polygamy and prostitution. Cold War geopolitics challenged the newly-founded People's Republic of China (PRC); it also gave the CCP leadership an opportunity to re-define their policies and push women's liberation to new heights.

The study of Chinese women has emerged as a thriving and contested sub-field of its own. While some scholars have turned their fire

[1] I'd like to thank two colleagues at the University of Manchester: Till Geiger for his help with the book proposal and Natalie Zacek for polishing up my English.

[2] Jung Chang, *Wild Swan: Three Daughters of China* (London: Flamingo, 1993). Born in 1909, Jung's grandmother had bound feet and was one of many concubines of a warlord. Both my paternal and maternal grandfathers took multiple wives whereas my two grandmothers (paternal, born in 1908, and maternal, born in 1911) had bound feet. For "common prostitution," see Christian Henriot, *Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai: a Social History 1849–1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 73–98.

on the oppressive culture and feudal practices such as foot binding, others derived new insight from the same subject material and found space for female agency.[3] The debate over women's liberation has evolved along similar lines. Whilst some believe that the CCP has to a large extent liberated Chinese women, others disagree. Scholars of the 1980s generation who witnessed the Mao to post-Mao transition dismissed the CCP undertaking as a failure. Judith Stacey argued that the revolution was patriarchal in nature; Phyllis Andors believed liberation was "unfinished," whereas Kay A. Johnson stressed that liberation manifested in family reform was "an uncompleted task."[4] What was undertaken during the Mao era, drastic for many Chinese women themselves, was not radical enough for some feminist scholars in the West. As the debate intensified in the post-Mao era, when a backlash arose against the women's liberation movement, new perspectives have emerged. While the post-Mao generation, detached from earlier revolutionary fervor, saw new light in the old material, the Mao generation themselves or those who grew up during the Mao era have come forward with a "counter-narrative," on which I shall elaborate later in the chapter.

The study of women's liberation in China cannot be divorced from the study of the body. The emancipation of Chinese women manifests itself first and foremost through their bodies. The study of the Chinese body has also emerged as a distinct scholarly field, as we can see from the works of Angela Zito, Tani Barlow, Fan Hong and Susan Brownell. The study of the body in Asia and China will reinforce as well as challenge the main theoretical frameworks derived

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[3] Rubie S. Watson and Patricia B. Ebrey, eds., *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Patricia B. Ebrey, *Women and the Family in Chinese History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 194–219. In this chapter Ebrey elaborates on "Gender and sinology: shifting Western interpretations of footbinding, 1300–1890." See also Wang Ping, *Aching for Beauty: Footbinding in China* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Fan Hong, *Footbinding, Feminism, and Freedom: the Liberation of Women's Bodies in Modern China* (London and Portland, Ore.: Frank Cass, 1997); Dorothy Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters: a Revisionist History of Footbinding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[4] Judith Stacey, *Patriarchy and Socialist Revolution in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Phyllis Andors, *The Unfinished Liberation of Chinese Women, 1949–1980* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 173–74; and Kay A. Johnson, *Women, the Family and Peasant Revolution in China* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 215. See also Elizabeth Croll, *Feminism and Socialism in China* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

from research on Western bodies.[5] This chapter draws attention to a significant but ignored aspect of the Cold War—propaganda warfare at the home front. The battle for hearts and minds was a crucial one. The U Nu regime in Burma saw the importance of psychological warfare, as Michael Charney argues in Chapter Three of this volume; so too did the Nationalist regime—exiled to Taiwan after 1949—in their effort to win the overseas Chinese, as Meredith Oyen analyses in Chapter Four.

How did the CCP redefine and push women's liberation to new heights after 1949? In what ways did the Cold War complicate the business of liberating women? How was the idea disseminated and the practice delivered? My research into Mao Zedong-Era ballet, such as the "revolutionary model play" *Red Girl's Regiment*, suggests that the CCP prescribed militant feminism as the female body became the battleground of revolution and an instrument of liberation.[6] In this chapter, I investigate another genre—Mao Zedong-Era fine art. I analyze propagandistic art work from a socio-political and cultural perspective, rather than the artistic perspective used by art historians. A close examination of these artworks will help us gauge how the conflict that loomed large over and around China helped the CCP regime to re-strategize national security in conjunction with the women's platform.[7] It will reveal how women's liberation was articulated, publicized and possibly delivered. This chapter does not assess the degree to which emancipation was actually accomplished: that would demand another kind of research, for the experience of women themselves differed depending on their background, profession and locality.

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[5] Bryan S. Turner and Zheng Yangwen, "Piety, Politics and Philosophy: Asia and the Global Body," in *The Body in Asia*, eds. Bryan S. Turner and Zheng Yangwen (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 1–21.

[6] Zheng Yangwen, "Swan Lake to Red Girl's Regiment: Ballet's Sinicisation in China," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, ed. Marion Kant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 256–62; and Zheng Yangwen, "Women's Revolution Embodied in Mao Zedong Era Ballet," in *The Body in Asia*, eds. Bryan S. Turner and Zheng Yangwen (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 183–202.

[7] Guangdong Art Museum and Zhou Yuejin, compiler and ed., *Mao Zedong Shidai Meishu: 1942—1976* (Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 2005). Stefan Landsberger, a sinologist based in Leiden University collects Chinese propaganda posters. See his collection at http://www.iisg.nl/~landsberger/. Two major exhibitions of Mao era art were mounted at the Asia Society in 2008. See Melissa Chiu and Zheng Shengtian, eds., *Art and China's Revolution* (New York: Asia Society, Yale University Press, 2008), published on the occasion of the exhibition organized by the Asia Society 5 Sept. 2008–4 Jan. 2009.

Women's Liberation Caught Up in the Cold War

A very brief history can help situate women's liberation in the grand scheme of communist revolution and how it arrived at the junction of the Cold War. Humiliation at Western hands since the Opium War made China's political and intellectual elite aware of China's backwardness; what they saw was a traditional China in the background of a modern and progressive West. Many blamed China's cultural practices—foot-binding, polygamy and opium-smoking among them—for China's backwardness. The enduring tradition of foot-binding suddenly looked inhumane in the eyes of reformers as a new era with its own cultural values descended upon China. To save China from being carved up like a "melon" by Western and Japanese imperialism, China needed to get rid of these backward practices. The natural foot movement began with the Nationalist Revolution in 1912, but it was moderate and limited in scope, as the Nationalist regime did not extend its rule, let alone its ideals, to the entire country, divided by warlords and later occupied by the Japanese. Traditions die hard, as foot-binding, polygamy and prostitution persisted, and in some cases thrived, along with—or as a result of—progress and modernity.

The young CCP experimented with women's liberation in the Jiangxi Soviet from 1927 to 1934 and in Yan'an during the Japanese War. They were moderately successful, as the ideal of the natural foot and free love and marriage was appealing to both educated and poor women: some of them joined or supported the CCP revolution.[8] This experience was instrumental, as the young CCP learned how far they could push in a socio-cultural environment that was not ready for radical change, and realized that fundamental socio-political changes were hard to sell when old institutions and mentalities remained in place. On the one hand, they could not afford to antagonize uneducated men, their main support, who still expected women to function in the traditional way even though they might be open to the idea of liberation; on the other hand, many women themselves were just not ready for such unconventional ideas as liberation. The CCP could and did push harder from 1949.[9] Mao Zedong compared his new China to a

[8] Agnes Smedley, *Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution* (Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1976).

[9] Claudie Broyelle, *Women's Liberation in China*, translated from the French by Michèle Cohen and Gary Herman and with a preface by Han Suyin (Atlantic Highlands, NJ:

blank piece of paper, upon which one could paint the most beautiful pictures: men and women as equals was one of these pictures. Equality in the eyes of the communist regime meant that women should learn and labor in the same fashion as men, in theory and practice.

The CCP encouraged, and in some cases forced, women to go to school and join the workforce, as they set women free from what Mao called the "three big mountains": familial, social and feudal oppression. Law, school education and workplace enforcement were not enough to battle feudal tradition and the old mentality. To drive the message home and ensure the deliverance of women's liberation, the CCP maintained an active platform of exposure; the platform was creative while the regime itself was vigilant. Many propaganda works were produced to disseminate the idea of women's liberation. They included literature, artwork, films, musicals, operas, ballets, radio programs and posters. As the CCP's program of "socialist construction" developed from the Five-Year Plans to the Cultural Revolution, war broke out in Korea and Vietnam. Instead of distracting the CCP, these wars and the geopolitical shifts that they brought along actually helped strengthen communist rule. The threat of nuclear war and invasion threatened national security; it also enabled the CCP regime to tighten its grip on the Chinese people—especially women—and the young nation.

The "hot wars" that raged in Korea and later in Vietnam, the perceived threat from Taiwan and America, and the split with the Soviet Union injected new thinking into Mao's mind as he hammered out the CCP's strategy. He could kill two birds with one stone, as the new tactic was "prepare for war" and "everyone is a soldier." The CCP regime expanded its military and turned many ordinary men and women—by then labeled "half of the sky" by Chairman Mao—into militia or auxiliary soldiers. How was this communicated to women?

Humanities Press, 1977); Marilyn B. Young, ed., *Women in China; Studies in Social Change and Feminism* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1973); Ono Kazuko, *Chinese Women in a Century of Revolution, 1850–1950*, edited by Joshua A. Fogel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989); Shuei-may Chang, *Casting Off the Shackles of Family: Ibsen's Nora Figure in Modern Chinese Literature, 1918–1942* (Peter Lang, 2004); Jinghao Zhou, *Remaking China's Public Philosophy and Chinese Women's Liberation: The Volatile Mixing of Confucianism, Marxism and Feminism* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006).

A few of the millions of easy-to-understand propaganda artworks can provide a visual answer.[10]

Against the dark and stormy sky, a female soldier climbs high up an electric pole: she is speaking into a phone, saying "I am *Hai Yan* [Petrel]"—a code which only she and her listeners—presumably her superiors or fellow comrades—would understand (see Figure 6.1). She wears the People's Liberation Army uniform and rain coat, with her short hair tucked back in the red-star army cap. Her upper body is strapped to the pole by a heavy belt on her waist, while her feet rest on temporary footholds. Judging from the background of treetops and water below, she stands at a height that is dangerous should she slip. With her left hand touching the electric wire, she faces the imminent danger of being electrocuted. Yet she looks fearless and deeply involved in her work. "Petrel" is working to safeguard her motherland should the enemy invade. Like men, women are defending the country. Her body takes up nearly the entire picture; it is robust and shapeless.

Standing on a boulder pounded by waves from the sea, a female soldier aims a gun with her right hand while holding another in her left; she is ambidextrous (see Figure 6.2). Men and women are drilling together and preparing for war with the enemy, who might come from the sea. Her wind-blown uniform, informal in this case except for the belt which has become a symbol of militia women, indicates that she is an auxiliary soldier, whereas her short hair, blown wayward by the wind, lends style and character: how accomplished and breathtaking she seems—women of Mao's China can do better than men. The enemy will never land when women like her help patrol the long coastline. Admiring her in the background are her male as well as female comrades: the men appear to be more central. Although this poster is meant to show that women can shoot with both hands—a hard enough achievement even for men—the patriarchy and male chauvinist element is implicit, as the central male character looks over and judges her performance.

High up on a cliff, and above a blue sea turned yellow by roaring gunpowder, the female cannon squad is busy in action (see Figure 6.3). Led by their leader, who has a flag in her hand and binoculars on her

[10] Guangdong Art Museum and Zhou Yuejin, *Mao Zedong Shidai Meishu: 1942–1976*, 360–413. See also Scott Watson and Zheng Shengtian, *Art of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1966–1976* (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, 2002); and Richard Vine, *New China, New Art* (Munich and New York: Prestel, 2008).

Figure 6.1 "I Am Petrel" [我是 "海燕"]

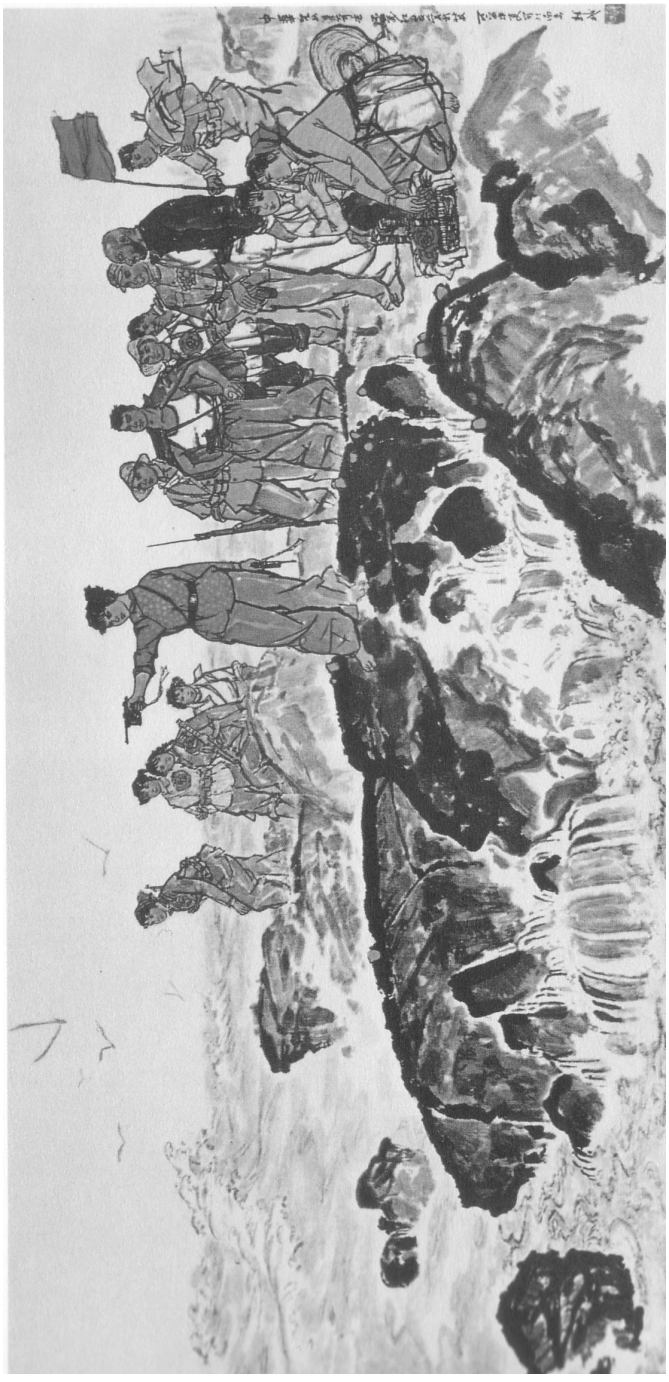

Figure 6.2 "Hate Cosmetics Love Army Uniforms" [不爱红装爱武装]

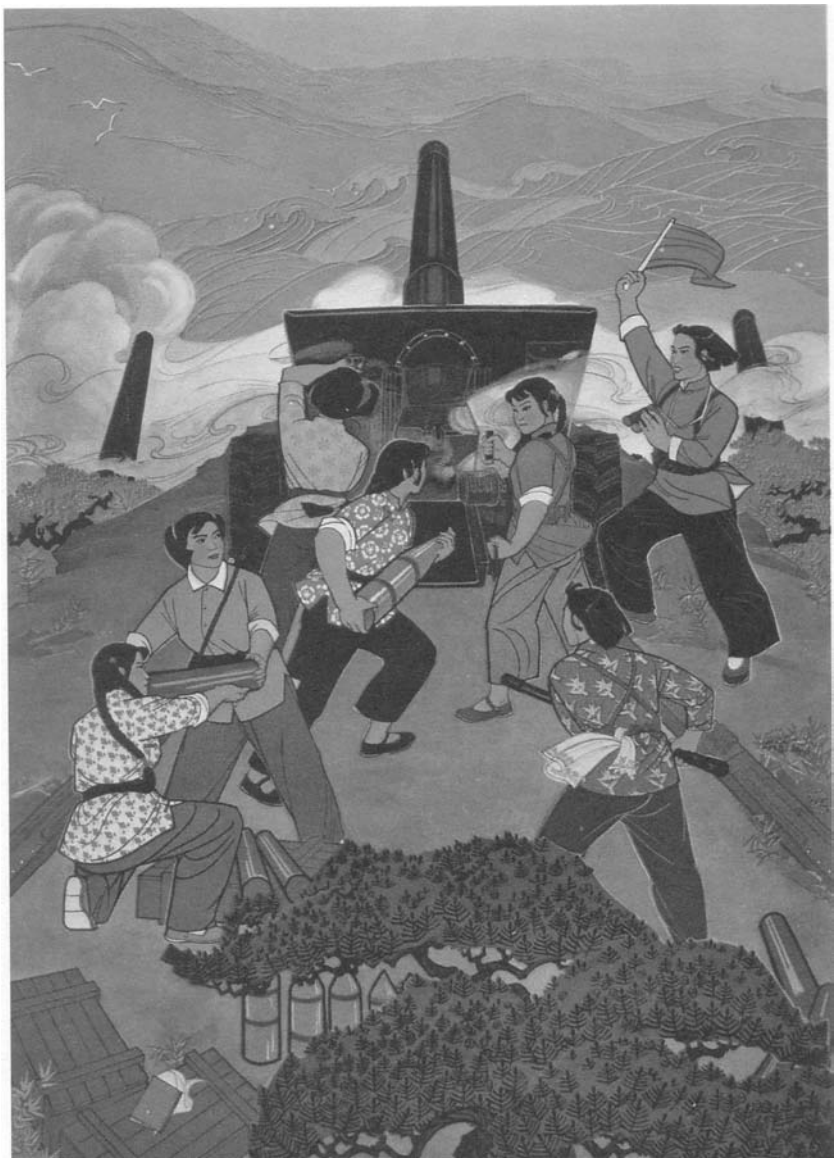

Figure 6.3 "Female Cannon Squad" [女炮兵班]

neck, one female soldier carries a big shell by herself to the cannon, while two other comrades are preparing to lift and hand her another. A stack of ammunition is on hand, which means the drilling will last a while; a hard day ahead. All seven women are in different bodily positions, two operating the cannon, one loading a shell into the cannon, two lifting another, and one presumably guarding the entire operation, with their leader in the front giving orders. Their outfits are informal again except for the belt; their hair, be it long or short, seems to dance with the strong wind and swing with their bodily movement. Individually or collectively, women of Mao's China can now handle and fire cannons, which used to be deemed a male job. How powerful women can be once they are liberated.

The sea is omnipresent in the three pictures. As a matter of fact, the sea appears in many Mao-era literary and artistic works, the film Sea Shine (海霞) and the Peking opera The Harbor (海港) being good examples. The reason for this is obvious—the danger of enemy invasion from the sea, hence the importance of guarding the long coastline that stretches from the Korean peninsula through the Taiwan Strait and down to the South China Sea. Ever since the Opium War, enemies and threats have come from the sea. Another common background is the treacherous frontier and ragged mountains to the west of China, where hostile forces reside and surround the country. Buttressing the frontier with garrison troops and towns and fortifying the mountains with a natural Great Wall which would be difficult to surmount were essential to secure national defense and self-sufficiency. Women became key players in this security effort, as can be seen from the following two pictures.

A group of soldiers are gathered around a bonfire for what looks like a rest in the middle of heavy construction, which can be seen in the background (see Figure 6.4). It looks like a bridge or dam at high altitude, judging from the vast virgin land surrounding them and the padded winter hats and clothes the soldiers are wearing. This is one of the "Man will triumph over nature" [人定胜天] projects in frontier areas buttressed by garrison troops and supported by garrison farming. Frontier and garrison life is harsh and unfriendly to women, yet women have come to enliven life and work there. A female soldier is at the center of the canvas, speaking or singing. She seems to be entertaining, as others look at her while drinking or polishing their rifles. What is she saying that is so interesting to the male soldiers who surround her? Maybe she is reciting Chairman Mao's works from the

Figure 6.4 "We are Glorious Garrison Soldiers" [我们是光荣的兵团战士]

Little Red Book or singing a revolutionary song? Flying in the wind, her red scarf seems to complement her beauty and character.

The color red symbolizes the CCP and China. From the Red Army and the red star on the cap to the Red Flag and the Red Guards, the color acquired a new meaning in the hands of the communists. Color can set the stage and produce background effects on the one hand; it can also dramatize little details that often transcend the story. Colors are indicative of character, too; red for heroes and dark for danger and the enemy. Red appears in many other Maoist literary and artistic works. The red scarf lends a revolutionary rather than a feminine touch to revolutionary women. Another accessory is the belt, which can be found on the waist of nearly all the women in the pictures here. An essential component of the male military uniform, the belt now lends revolutionary fervor to Chinese women. It has come to symbolize women in combat and action. This can be seen from the following picture, in which a scarf serves as a belt because a leather belt is hard to come by in times of economic embargo and in a remote area like this; this seemingly invisible detail and spontaneity only serves to further demonstrate the spread and scale of emancipation. Leather or cloth, the belt stands for liberated women.

High up in the mountains, two women are hacking at a big rock, really an integral part of the mountain seen in the background (see Figure 6.5). One squats, holding the big iron chisel pointed at the rock, while the other lifts the big hammer above her head in order to bring it down with force. The painter, who is apparently female, chose to feature this moment when the hammer is swung high in the air, just before it lands on the chisel. It draws attention to the vigor needed to hoist the hammer, and hence the woman's strength. Why are they smashing a mountain? Are they building a reservoir, a road, or opening new land for cultivation? What can be sown and grown at such a high altitude? Anything is possible, as Mao's slogan was "Man will triumph over nature." The stance in which the female worker positions her body in order to lift the hammer and the ways in which her hair and shirt are blown by the wind at this high altitude, contrasted with the massiveness of the mountain chain behind, celebrate the power of women in Mao's China.

The many other jobs that the women of new China are engaged in can be seen from this cluster of posters (see Figure 6.6). They include a miner, a peasant worker, a Red Guard and a tractor driver. Whether wearing specialized gear or informal uniforms, they all look profes-

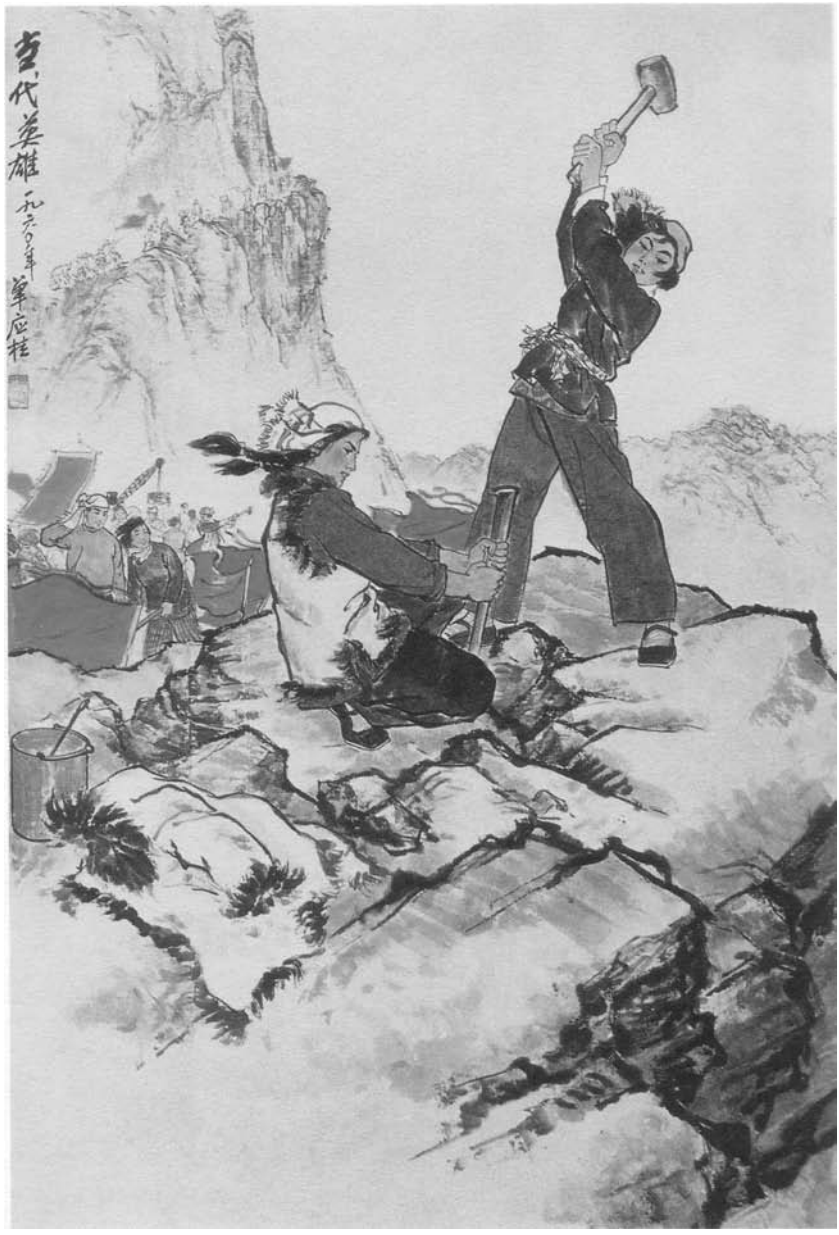

Figure 6.5 "Contemporary Heroes" [当代英雄]

Figure 6.6 "Women of New China" [新中国的妇女]

sional, dedicated and deeply involved in their work. The miner tries to catch up with the latest politics by reading during a break; the Red Guard looks determined as she takes Iron Blossom (铁梅), a young revolutionary woman in the Peking opera The Story of the Red Lamp (红灯记), as her role model. While the slogan "To reform oneself and the environment through labor" inspires a good-looking young woman to become a peasant worker, a tractor driver looks triumphant with her new machinery that most have never seen before. Women of new China have abandoned their old mentality and lifestyle; they have been set free from feudalism and become revolutionary workers, peasants and soldiers. They are liberated, as they are doing jobs that only men used to be allowed and able to do. This indeed is a new era, where women hold up "half of the sky," as Mao declared.

The female body and body language are prominent and essential in all these pictures. The threat of war and need for national security gave the CCP an justification to turn everyone, especially women, into soldiers and patriots, while its army of propaganda artists used the female body to articulate and advance women's liberation. Why the body? Women's oppression in China was best exemplified by foot-binding; women's liberation had to start from this backward practice that broke their bodies and limited their mobility. To liberate them, the CCP had first and foremost to set free their feet, then the entire body, from the captivity of family, society and feudalism, which are vividly portrayed in these colorful and dramatic pictures. While Cold War geopolitics battled over ideologies, women's liberation in China battled over the female body. To fully understand the dynamics of women's liberation manifested through their bodies, it is necessary to situate the Chinese body in the larger debate.

Cold War Habitus *and* Hexis *for Chinese Women*

The study of the body has flourished since the early 1980s. The field has seen the publication of definitive works, many influenced by Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu. Three main conceptual frameworks have emerged from the research and debate over the body.[11] Social

[11] Bryan S. Turner, "Introduction—Bodily Performance: On Aura and Reproducibility," *The Body and Society* 11, 4 (2006): 1–17.

constructionists have regarded the body as a system of cultural representation. The body can be used to project power which then can be used to regulate the body; martial arts and diet regimes are examples. The phenomenologist school has focused on the "lived body": that is, what the body actually experiences in everyday life, as these experiences dictate self-perception and social interaction. A third framework, interested in embodiment rather than the body itself, has been inspired by the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu argues that the body reveals one's social status and cultural capital. Sports and dance scholars find this approach especially useful, as politics is often embodied in corporal movements and deportment. The following discussion approaches the Chinese female body primarily using the framework of embodiment, though it also supports the arguments of social constructionists. It touches briefly on the phenomenologist approach, but a substantial discussion of this approach would demand a different kind of research. The "lived" experience of liberation must have varied depending on individual experience, which differed greatly.

The CCP and its army of propaganda artists introduced a new female body and body language, as the above pictures testify. They prescribed a new code of conduct for Chinese women in the era of socialist construction which coincided with the Cold War and its geopolitics. This code fits in perfectly with the argument of social constructionists, who believe that the body can be both used to project power and turned into a system of cultural representation. Female power was vividly projected onto these rough and tough bodies; this power represented a new female culture in Mao's China. Freed from the old feudal mentality and practice, Chinese women had become revolutionary soldiers, workers and peasants. Alongside their male comrades, they helped defend and build the new China by undertaking what used to be men's jobs. This code laid down the rules of a new value system and social behavior for Chinese women; it dictated and constrained the ways in which they should think for themselves and behave.

This new code of conduct also speaks to Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus*: "an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted."[12] Richard Jenskins

[12] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, translated by Richard Nice (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 95.

paraphrased this as a "habitual or typical condition, state or appearance, particularly of the body."[13] Bourdieu's definition of and Jenkins' insight into habitus can help us decipher the new code of conduct for women in Mao's China. This new code is "an acquired system," although prescribed or imposed would be more precise, as women's liberation was launched and maintained, and in some cases policed, by the CCP regime. The system, in other words, was "objectively adjusted": that is, forced from the outside world. But it can be "generative," as the "acquired" or prescribed system began to act upon individual women when the idea of women's liberation sank in and began to work on them. Bourdieu himself was concerned with the relationship between subjectivism and objectivism. Subjectivism refers to the individual and private world, which we are born into with all the prejudices and preferences that come with it, whereas objectivism means the outside world, which we are thrown into and share with others, whose rules and norms we need to learn and accommodate. The "particular conditions in which it is constituted" refers in this case to the history of women's oppression and the CCP's perceived need to liberate women in Mao's China. This new code of conduct was introduced to or imposed on Chinese women, who might not have been subjected to a practice so radical had it not been for the communist revolution that now coincided with the Cold War, but it could become "subjectively" adjusted as individual women came to accept the "system" and began to conscientiously practice it.

Bourdieu himself acknowledged the limitations of habitus.[14] First, the habitus only exists inasmuch as it is "inside the heads" of actors. The CCP-prescribed habitus, in other words, would work best when Chinese women understood and made conscientious efforts to pursue their own liberation. This motivation can initially be external, but through constant exposure and enforcement it can also be internalized. Continued education and socialization are therefore crucial. Habitus only exists in, through and because of the practices of actors and their interaction with each other and with the rest of the environment. The milieu in which the habitus functions is therefore very important. There must be an agreed set of norms to which everyone in the milieu subscribes to and consequently lives up to. In other words, a new

[13] Richard Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu* (London: Routledge, 1992), 74–75.
[14] Ibid.

habitus cannot function without the sanction of the milieu and the authority that governs the milieu. The CCP controlled and patrolled schools, workplaces, public places and even homes, where these propaganda art works were posted for the indoctrination of the society at large and women themselves in particular. The cause of socialist construction and national security justified the CCP's intervention in both public and private spaces, as many of these propaganda artworks were distributed freely so that they would be posted not just at schools and workplaces, but more importantly in homes and in neighborhoods.

The post-Mao generation, with their slogan of *Love Cosmetics Hate Army Uniforms*, represents an interesting case in contrasts. In many cases these women are the daughters of that generation of women who were raised under the slogan *Hate Cosmetics Love Army Uniforms*. Growing up in the period since China embarked on reform, the Cold War militant feminist ideal, rhetoric and practice have not been part of their political diet and cultural upbringing. Their mother's habitus is not "inside their heads"; they do not today operate and socialize in the Mao-era revolutionary milieu as their mothers did or had to. As a matter of fact, many do not want to understand their mothers. The daughter generation has a new habitus which is in some ways anti-feminist in nature: a backlash against militant feminism, essentially consumerism. "Generative schemes," in other words, work best and manifest themselves on the body once they take root in the hearts and minds; this is Bourdieu's third and most revealing point. In a nutshell, education and the environment are key to the formation and function of habitus; the changing nature of women's liberation from Mao to the post-Mao era is a sound example of that.

Bourdieu broke down habitus in order to discern the most subtle and barely visible deportment in the particular environment in which the body operates, and the value system that dictated such bodily movement. He used *hexis* to describe and discuss the embodiment of the habitus. Hexis refers to "deportment, the manner and style in which actors 'carry themselves': stance, gait, gesture, etc."[15] Hexis aims to capture how a person gazes, stands, walks, talks and signals; it is really aimed at understanding what dictates a particular bodily disposition. This could not be illustrated more clearly than by the women in the above pictures. The new hexis of Chinese women can be seen plainly

[15] Ibid.

by the intensity with which the female soldier gazes into the distance (Figure 6.1), by the style in which the female soldier stands and aims (Figure 6.2), by the posture of the women who carry and load the cannons and the gestures of their leader (Figure 6.3), by the ways in which the female worker positions her feet in order to raise the hammer (Figure 6.4), by the deportment of the woman who is speaking/singing and her gestures (Figure 6.5), and by the fiery eyes of the Red Guard (Figure 6.6).

Bourdieu paid special attention to what he called the politics of gender shape; he believed that this is revealed through "walking, looking, even standing still." For example, female modesty and restraint orients a woman's body downwards, towards the ground, whereas the male is oriented upwards and outwards. His observation was based on the Kabyle people but its implication goes beyond North Africa; it can be applied to China, where one of the most basic codes of conduct for women had been 温良恭谦让 (*wen, liang, gong, qian rang*) which can be translated as being gentle, virtuous, reverent/submissive, modest and giving/sacrificing. In addition to the bound feet which limited mobility, these virtues further dictated the ways in which women should carry and move themselves. This fostered a completely different body and body language than the ones we have seen in these pictures here. Besides their natural feet, which allow China's new women to place themselves firmly on the ground, these women look rough and tough, energetic and formidable. Many are big-bodied with big hands and big feet, as can be seen in the pictures, while the gender-blind uniforms make them look shapeless. These pictures have completely replaced the old image of Chinese women with a new one.

The CCP's political machine and its army of propaganda artists fashioned a new set of habitus and hexis for Chinese women; they transmitted the image of a new female body and body language through their artistic works. These works taught women the manner in which they should carry and move themselves, and—more importantly—think for themselves. This was a body and a language that their mothers didn't understand and one that their daughters would not appreciate; this was the body and language of women's liberation at the particular junction of Mao's China. The Cold War that loomed large had contributed to this, as it legitimized many CCP endeavors in the name of national defense and women's liberation. Arming women would help mobilize the entire populace and guard the nation, as women are pillars of family; this also helped the CCP to spread the

gospel of female emancipation. How Chinese women perceived and digested the gospel will always be subject to debate, but there is little doubt that this saw the zenith of militant feminism in China.

Yet these propaganda artworks raise many questions. Are they realistic depictions of women's liberation during the Mao era, or were they the imagination of CCP artists? What can the artistry tell us? Did they produce the intended effects, spreading the gospel of feminism and liberating Chinese women? How did women themselves feel about their new bodies and body language? Did they like the shapeless uniforms that symbolized equality, and the belt that possibly delivered liberation?

Artistically, these colorfully painted pictures and their highly politicized substance constituted a revolution in Chinese art. First of all, they are oil paintings rather than the traditional ink painting; this was part of a new style called "socialist realism" introduced from the Soviet Union, with the help of Pavel Chistyakov and Konstantin Maksimov in particular.[16] Ink painting was considered feudal, like other forms of traditional Chinese artistic heritage which the Cultural Revolution aimed to replace in order to build a new China, whereas oil painting was considered progressive, like the ideals of communism and feminism. A new China needed new genres that could express the characteristics of an unprecedented era. The new oil style encouraged Chinese artists to prioritize ordinary people and their centrality with theatrical application of color and light, a hallmark of oil painting; it also allowed them to use ink-painting skills which emphasized brush work. Chinese artists embraced and indigenized a European art genre and fashioned a style of their own. This is not a unique case; ballet is another example.[17] The indigenization of ballet and oil painting took only a few decades. The endorsement of the political regime was key to the rapid rebranding and naturalization of foreign artistic genres.

What of the artists who created these pictures? Are they mere bystanders of the unprecedented events depicted, or movers and shakers of an era gone by? According to the research of leading art historians, who mounted major exhibitions and interviewed some of

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[16] Zheng Shengtian, "Art and Revolution: Looking back at Thirty Years of History" and Ralph Croizier, "Politics in Command Chinese Art, 1949–1979," in *Art and China's Revolution*, eds. Melissa Chiu and Zheng Shengtian, 19–40, 57–74.

[17] Zheng Yangwen, "Swan Lake to Red Girl's Regiment: Ballet's Sinicisation in China," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, ed., Marion Kant, 256–62.

these artists, now in their 60s, many of them were active participants in the monumental happenings. In other words, these works are self-portraits of a sort. Other artists were sent to live and work with the subjects of their artistic creation for months and even years in order to learn and be "realistic" in their socialist art.[18] Eminent art historian Jerome Silbergeld interviewed one of the most prominent Mao-era artists, Li Huasheng, who painted oil propaganda works including the famous *Mao Inspects the Rivers of Sichuan*, and whose artistic style has reverted to traditional styles in the post-Mao era. Li's understanding and Silbergeld's conclusion was that these artists practiced "revolution by day and tradition by lamplight."[19] The CCP's socialist construction coincided with the Cold War on the regional-global stage; this not only lent legitimacy to its radical platform of women's liberation, it also led to artistic creativity of a kind which Chinese art historians have labeled "Mao Zedong Era Fine Art."

Were there limitations to these powerful images? Undoubtedly there were (Lu Yan has probed the same question with regard to the leftist media in Hong Kong in Chapter Five). It would be impossible to assess the effectiveness of these propaganda artworks and measure the extent of women's liberation without substantial research—interviewing women who lived through that revolutionary era and those who were brought up during this era on a diet of such propaganda. Even then, it is hard to distinguish the individual from the collective experience, as this varies depending on family background, profession, geographic location and more importantly personal conviction. However, some preliminary answers can be put forward.[20]

Marching at the front of an army made up of young women like them, the triplet sisters look confident and competent (see Figure 6.7). They are pretty; this would have earned them good marriages and rich husbands in the old days. They look healthy too; perhaps this demonstrates that they ate well despite the food shortages. What is most revealing is the way the photographer catches their left arms in

[18] Kuiyi Shen, "Propaganda posters and art during the Cultural Revolution", in *Art and China's Revolution*, eds. Melissa Chiu and Zheng Shengtian, 149–64.

[19] Jerome Silbergeld and Gong Jisui, *Contradictions: Artistic Life, the Socialist State, and the Chinese Painter Li Huasheng* (Tokyo: University of Washington Press, 1993), 35–54. See also Julia F. Andrews, *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

[20] Guangdong Art Museum and Zhou Yuejin, *Mao Zedong Shidai Meishu: 1942–1976*, 360.

Figure 6.7 "Triplet Sisters Take Up Arms for the People" [同胞三姐妹扛枪为人民]

action. Although they are not moving in unison, suggesting a certain voluntarism, the photographer captured them raising their arms, a body language of purpose and strength. The triplet sisters do not look so different from the women portrayed in the propaganda; they are living examples of what was depicted in the propaganda artworks. Whilst it is true that photographs can be choreographed, this photograph, one of millions that are now being collected, exhibited and printed as a result of artistic fascination with the Cultural Revolution, testify that these propagandistic artworks were not merely propaganda.[21] They exposed many to militant feminism, educating some and inspiring others. A more compelling answer can be found in the increasing number of memoirs and interviews that have poured out since the end of the Mao era.

Some of Us: Chinese Women Growing Up in the Mao Era is authored by a group of Chinese women who lived through the period and who are

[21] Collecting Mao-era photographs, like that of Mao-era art, has also become a growing industry. See Yang Kelin, *Wenhua da Geming Bowu Guan* [The Cultural Revolution Museum] (Hong Kong: Dongfang chubanshe, 1995); Rae Yang, *China: Fifty Years inside the People's Republic* (New York: Aperture, 1999).

now academics in the United States.[22] Unsatisfied with popular works like *Wild Swans* and *Red Azalea*, they challenge the all-too-familiar representation of "persecution, violence, victimization, sexual repression, and so forth" of Chinese women during the Mao era.[23] By telling their own diverse experiences, they aim to produce what they call a "counter narrative." Maoist propaganda literature and artworks educated Chen Xiaomei so effectively that she remembers "I could sometimes become quite embarrassed by my mother's colorful, shapely dress and high heel shoes, which were regarded as 'bourgeois' trappings in a socialist China."[24] Xiaomei's mother, an actress, looked different from the female figures that she learned about in school and saw in propaganda. Many of the other authors were proud of their mothers and the women around them, who dressed and behaved in the same way that they recognized from movies and artworks. They looked up to them as role models at home, in school and in workplaces. In the words of Jiang Jin, "the rhetoric of women's liberation and a state policy that fostered gender equality informed my growing-up experience in the Mao era and, to a large extent, shaped my identity and the life path I have chosen."[25]

Mao-era propaganda works, be they literary or artistic, did have an effect on some, if not all, young women who were brought up in that revolutionary era. The sense of optimism and adventure gave them the enthusiasm and fortitude needed to grab opportunities later in life, as in the case of Chen Xiaomei and Jiang Jin, who journeyed to the United States at a mature age and began a new career in a very different culture. This kind of "counter narrative" will help galvanize the academic debate on women's liberation in China and may well

[22] Xueping Zhong, Wang Zheng, and Bai Di, eds., *Some of Us: Chinese Women Growing up in the Mao Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001). See also Woei Lien Chong, ed., *China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: Master Narratives and post-Mao Counternarratives* (Lanham, Md. and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002).

[23] Xueping Zhong, Wang Zheng, and Bai Di, eds., *Some of Us: Chinese Women Growing up in the Mao Era*, Introduction.

[24] Xiaomei Chen, "From 'Lighthouse' to the Northeast Wilderness: Growing up Among the Ordinary Stars," in *Some of Us: Chinese Women Growing up in the Mao Era*, edited by Xueping Zhong, Wang Zheng, and Bai Di (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 53–76.

[25] Jiang Jin, "Times Have Changed; Men and Women are the Same", in *Some of Us: Chinese Women Growing up in the Mao Era*, edited by Xueping Zhong, Wang Zheng, and Bai Di, 100–19.

shed light on why the movement seemed to have vanished in the post-Mao era.

Another comment on the internalization of militant feminism can be found in the personal names of Chinese women during the Mao era. When many were given or chose names emphasizing beauty, flowers and feminine virtues, some were given or chose masculine or gender-neutral personal names. The long list of the 1956 Representatives of the National Advanced Workers (1956 年全国先进生产者代表) testifies to that:[26]

徐体茂 *Xu Timao* or Xu Body thrive
吴宏伟 *Wu Hongwei* or Wu Grand great
李宏林 *Li Honglin* or Li Grand forest
孔宪任 *Kong Xianren* or Kong Constitution responsibility
刘振堂 *Liu Zhentang* or Liu Strengthen hall
张军 *Zhang Jun* or Zhang Army
陳自強 *Chen Ziqiang* or Chen Self strong

These names seem to speak to the propaganda pictures. These Advanced Workers, like thousands of others, had personal names that contained characters which were usually given to men. Personal names can identify an era and reveal its politics; they also lay bare inspiration and aspiration of a kind.[27] Naming practices and changes can also shed light on the psyche and culture of Chinese women, many of whom were consumed by the fervor of the socialist construction and national defense, which extended to their names. Women's liberation in its militarist form dictated the work and life of Chinese women during the Mao era; they themselves also contributed to their own emancipation, as can be seen from the personal names given to them or that they chose for themselves. These masculine names indicate their own aspiration to attain liberation, a form of what Michel Foucault calls the "technologies of the self."

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[26] Huaxia Funu Mingren Cidian Bianweihui, compiler and editor, *Huaxia Funu Mingren Cidian* (Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 1988), 13–16.

[27] Zheng Yangwen, "From 居正 Live Righteously and 小蘭 Small Orchid to 建華 Construct China: a Systematic Enquiry into Chinese Naming Practice," in *Personal Names in Asia: History, Culture and Identity*, eds., Zheng Yangwen and Charles J.-H. Macdonald (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2009), 52–76.

Women's Liberation as Governmentality and "Technologies of the Self"[28]

The propaganda posters speak the language of women's liberation in Cold War China; they also speak to Foucault's ideas—governmentality and "technologies of the self," or discipline regimes. Governmentality refers to a state's ability to adopt various discipline regimes in its efforts to regulate human behavior, whereas discipline regimes are control mechanisms that governments and individuals can adopt in order to police society and individuals themselves. Women's liberation was both a control mechanism and the CCP's governmentality. While the regime provided political leadership and a social framework for liberation, some women were themselves staunch supporters of and active participants in their own emancipation. In other words, women's liberation was also a grassroots movement. This made it even more necessary for the CCP to step in and take control. Women's liberation provided a modern nation-state like CCP China with the most legitimate excuse to intervene in the name of advancing the welfare of both the state and womankind. Maintained by the CCP and supported by women themselves, women's liberation was also a powerful disciplinary regime.

The ideal that men and women were equal was attractive to many, but attaining this ideal demanded change on the part of Chinese women: change in this case demanded action. Women's liberation hence became "technology of the self" for Chinese women. Both the theory that advanced the ideal of gender equality and the practices that served as control mechanisms helped to discipline Chinese women. Going to school or joining the workforce and women's militias were in many cases important discipline regimes that would help women to achieve liberation. They required women to acquire a different mentality, body language and lifestyle. These pictures served to visually familiarize them with all three. This new mentality and body language would also dictate their social life, as society at large came to accept their new beliefs and behavior, which was sanctioned by the regime and followed by all women. The regime's sanction and social

[28] Michel Foucault, *Technologies of the Self: a Seminar with Michel Foucault*, edited by Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988); and *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, translated by Robert Hurley and others, 3 vols. (London: Penguin, 2000–2002), 1: 223–52, 3: 201–22.

acceptance, even their children's expectations as can be seen in the case of Xiaomei above, served as another discipline regime in the sense that they also constrained women, who now had to think and behave in a different way.

To take Foucault's line of thought further, I would argue that the uniform is the most immediate discipline regime. The specialized gear was literally the most obvious "technology of the self" that disciplined women and gave them a professional aura. They were liberated, constrained to be more precise, by these specialized outfits and gear, the belt being a perfect example. Many women are particular about their dress, appearance, accessories and color; these professional outfits must have excited some and frustrated others. The women might be thin, but they looked heavy in this shapeless operational wear; they might like green, but they only came in red. They may have wanted to liberate themselves, but they may also have wanted to retain their femininity. From head to toe, these liberating uniforms and accessories restrained Chinese women; they dictated the habitus and hexis of women's liberation in Mao's China. On the one hand, Chinese women were disciplined by an ideology and the mechanisms put in place to deliver their liberation; on the other hand, they themselves also adopted measures to discipline themselves in their efforts to attain liberation. In doing so, Chinese women seemed to have gained three new "big mountains," as they faced new challenges from their family, workplace and society.

These propaganda artworks in some ways capture the essence of an era gone by; they did serve an important political purpose, even though the extent to which they did so remains contested. But they raise at least one more question: did Chinese men and children undergo such bodily transformation during the Cold War? China's quest for hosting the Olympic Games offers one explanation.[29] From the "sick man of Asia," China has emerged to be a gold-medal champion. The journey from backwardness to modernity, from humiliation to the "peaceful

[29] J.A. Mangan, "Prospects for the New Millennium: Woman, Emancipation and the Body," in *Freeing the Female Body: Inspirational Icons*, eds., J.A. Mangan and Fan Hong (London and Portland, Ore.: F. Cass, 2001), 237–250; Xu Guoqi, *Olympic Dreams: China and Sports, 1895–2008* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008); Fan Hong, Duncan Mackay and Karen Christensen, eds., *China Gold: China's Quest for Global Power and Olympic Glory* (Great Barrington, Mass.: Berkshire Publishing Group, 2008); Susan Brownell, *Beijing's Games: What the Olympics Mean to China* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

rise," can be seen through the history of the Chinese body, dramatically transformed during the Mao era for men, women and even children. The CCP used the governmentality of the body to promote physical education and maintain many of its socio-political programs, including vigorous sports curricula which were introduced at all levels of educational institutions. This bore fruit, as the Olympic medals and today's sports fever testifies; the transformation of the Chinese body demands more study.

Conclusion

Would women's liberation in China have been more moderate had it not been for the Cold War? Mao Zedong-Era fine art offers rich insight into the making of militant feminism in Maoist China, but the subject matter needs far more study than it has received here. The conflict seemed to have not just militarized but also masculinized the female body. Women had to become masculine or undertake men's jobs in order to achieve liberation. Did thinking, working, walking and moving like men put women on an equal footing with their husbands at home and their male comrades at work? Like communism, women's liberation was a beautiful idea that fascinated many, but the beautiful idea was not sustainable. The masculinization and militarization of the female body hastened the dramatic decline of women's liberation in the post-Mao era.

At the same time that the CCP launched and policed women's liberation, women in the West fought for their rights as well.[30] Just as revolutionary fervor devoured Chinese artists and women inside Maoist China, militant feminism thrived in the Free World, and even in Third World countries like Mexico, as Matthew Rothwell will demonstrate in Chapter 8 of this volume. Militant feminism seems to have faded away in the 1980s in the West and in the rest of the world just as it did in China. Is this a coincidence? While the two camps of the Cold War differed in their political trajectory and economic policy, they produced something similar in the end. Does this mean that the

[30] Daniel Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of the Feminine Mystique: The American Left, the Cold War, and Modern Feminism* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachussetts Press, 1998).

two world systems have something in common or is it the invisible hand of female modernity? How can we explain the heterogeneity of the rise of militant feminism during the Cold War and its subsequent demise? The study of women's liberation on both sides of the Cold War divide calls for interdisciplinary analysis and global synthesis.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE HISTORICITY OF CHINA'S SOFT POWER: THE PRC AND THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF INDONESIA, 1945–1965*

Hong Liu

In China I saw the practice of a guided democracy (demokrasi terpimpin), and only this democracy with guidance can bring people into a new world, a truly just and prosperous new world… I came back from my visit to the People's Republic of China with a tremendous sense of amazement.… I no longer dream… I propose that the leaders of the people confer and decide to bury all parties. —Sukarno (1956)[1]

"It is necessary to establish a conception of national culture at the top and then to spread it downwards," [said Achmad]. "This is why I agreed with brother Yasrin's plan to study the development of the people's culture in RRT [the People's Republic of China]. He will probably learn a lot and be inspired by their example."… "Look at RRT," [said Suryono]. "How tremendous the progress which has been initiated by Mao Zedong in all fields—the liberation of the people from the oppression and corruption of Chiang Kai-shek's clique. If it can be done there, why not here?" —Mochtar Lubis[2]

A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries admire its values, emulate its example, aspire to its level of prosperity and openness. This soft power—getting others to want the outcomes that you want—co-opts people rather than coerces them… Soft power is more than just persuasion or the ability to move people by argument, though that is an

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* Some of the materials and arguments of this chapter have previously appeared in Hong Liu, "The Transnational Construction of 'National Allegory': China and the Cultural Politics of Postcolonial Indonesia," *Critical Asian Studies* 38, 3 (2006): 179–210. Research at the Archives of the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing was first conducted in September 2005. By then only the documents up to 1956 were partially declassified. Subsequent research trips for declassified documents covering years 1957–1965 at the same archives were undertaken in October 2007 and December 2008, with funding from the Universities' China Committee in London and the University of Manchester, which is gratefully acknowledged. I am also indebted to the two anonymous reviewers of this chapter for their comments.

[1] *Harian Rakjat* (Jakarta), 17 Oct. 1956.

[2] Mochtar Lubis, *Twilight in Djakarta*, trans. Clair Holt (New York: Vanguard Press, 1964), 51 & 57.

> *important part of it. It is also the ability to attract, and attraction often leads to acquiescence. Simply put, in behavioral terms, soft power is attractive power.*
> —Joseph S. Nye Jr.[3]

With China's growing influence in global affairs at the turn of the 21st century, academics and politicians in both the PRC and abroad have increasingly been drawn to its "soft power," a concept first coined and made popular by Joseph S. Nye Jr. in the late 1980s. A number of studies have been published to identify the sources, manifestations and limitations of China's soft power.[4] Nevertheless, little effort has been undertaken to examine the historical capital of China's soft power, especially its recent experiences of extensive and systematic deployment of "attractive power" in winning the hearts and minds of people in newly-independent countries.

Indonesia during the Sukarno era (1949–1965) provides an illuminating case pertaining to the historicity of China's attractive power. As a newly-independent country, it experienced heightened sociopolitical confrontations in which the very issue of cultural and national identity was at the heart of contestations. Taking place against such a backdrop, Sukarno's claims about the centrality of the Chinese model and conversations between two young intellectuals from Mochtar Lubis' acclaimed novel *Twilight in Jakarta*, cited at the beginning of this chapter, call attention to the hitherto-overlooked questions about the intensity and multi-dimensionality of interactions between Indonesia's search for new national and cultural identities and the making of the People's Republic of China (PRC)'s soft power in its neighboring region. While this chapter is not a study of the Cold War in Asia *per se*, a close analysis of China's cultural and public engagements with

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[3] Joseph S. Nye Jr., "Soft Power and Leadership," *Compass: A Journal of Leadership*, Spring 2004. http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/4290.html (accessed on Oct. 30, 2008).

[4] See for example, Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Xiaoling Zhang, *China as an Emerging Soft Power: Winning Hearts and Minds through Communicating with Foreign Publics* (China Policy Institute Discussion Paper No. 35, University of Nottingham, October 2008); Hongying Wang and Yeh-Chung Lu, "The Conception of Soft Power and its Policy Implications: A Comparative Study of China and Taiwan," *Journal of Contemporary China* 17, 56 (2008): 425–447; Joseph S. Nye Jr., "The Rise of China's Soft Power," *Wall Street Journal Asia*, 29 Dec. 2005. The concept of cultural soft power was also used by the Chinese President Hu Jintao in his official report to the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) held in October 2007 and the official Xinhua news agency. See also for example, "Booming Confucius Institutes Enhance China's Soft Power" (2 Nov. 2008), http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90782/6525685.html (accessed on 12 May 2009).

Southeast Asia's most populous country in the context of the global Cold War would, I hope, contribute to the growing literature in the new Cold War history that has been characterized by its attention to the significant role of ideas and ideologies.

This essay examines the production and reception of the China imaginary in Indonesia by focusing on the PRC's cultural diplomacy and venues through which Chinese literary principles were appropriated and domesticated, and subsequently constituted an integral component of Indonesian cultural politics. I argue that the narratives about China (both as a sociopolitical entity and a cultural symbol)—thanks in no small part to Beijing's skillful deployment of soft power—served as an important transnational inspiration to public deliberations and cultural polemics in Indonesia, thus precipitating the polarization of political forces in the closing years of the Sukarno regime and the final showdown in the 30 September 1965 Movement which led to the establishment of the pro-Western Suharto regime. This essay may therefore also be seen as an exercise in going beyond the nation-state-centric historiography that has been the defining characteristic of Asian studies[5] and pointing to the need to study Sino-Southeast Asian relations from the angle of cultural politics and its intertwining ambiguities with conventional diplomacy.

Prelude to the Making of China's Soft Power in Indonesia

Both domestic and external environments shaped the form and structure of China's soft power in Indonesia. Internally, it was a byproduct of Indonesian intellectuals' dissatisfactions and increasing frustrations with post-Independence development, which led to the "crisis in literature" discourse in the early 1950s. This discourse was characterized by critical self-(re)examinations of cultural and national identity and the desire to seek inspiration from non-Western societies for a viable model of socio-cultural transformation. Externally, China's cultural

[5] See for example, Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Simon Philpott, *Rethinking Indonesia: Postcolonial Theory, Authoritarianism and Identity* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Hong Liu, "Sino-Southeast Asian Studies: Toward an Alternative Paradigm," *Asian Studies Review* 24, 3 (2001): 259–283; Hong Liu, *China and the Shaping of Indonesia, 1949–1965* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2010), and the introduction in this volume.

diplomacy, which effectively projected a positive and dynamic image of the PRC as a successful nation-state in the family of newly-independent nations, became a vital source of literary production and cultural consumption in the Southeast Asian country.

"Crisis in Literature" Discourse and the Search for Indonesian Cultural Identity

Indonesia became a sovereign nation in December 1949, and formal independence was accompanied by high expectations among the (educated) public, who believed that independence would automatically lead to "a golden bridge to a just and prosperous society." These ideals, however, were not materialized in the turbulent postcolonial transformation, manifested unmistakably by economic stagnation and a high frequency of changes of power: there were six prime ministers between 1950 and 1957; a new cabinet was formed every 12.4 months.[6] Feelings of discontent gradually surfaced, as evidenced by Prime Minister Mohammad Natsir's 1951 Independence Day speech:

> When we look around, we see very few joyful expressions. It is as if the independence we have obtained had brought but few benefits. It would seem that expectations have not been fulfilled. The gain is like a loss… There is a disappointment, ideals have been lost sight of. Everywhere there prevails a feeling of dissatisfaction, a feeling of frustration, a feeling of hopelessness.[7]

This sense of frustration was further intensified in 1957, as illustrated in the responses to an essay contest on the question of "what are we as a nation and as a country?" The 355 entries were submitted by individuals from all walks of life, including students, teachers, journalists, writers, civil servants and white-collar workers.[8] One of the recurrent themes among these entries was that: "We do not yet enjoy the fruits of our

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[6] Herbert Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962).

[7] Mohammad Natsir, "Lassitude and the Display of False Glitter," in Herbert Feith and Lance Castles, eds., *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945–1965* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 72.

[8] These entries have been analyzed by Guy Pauker in his "Indonesian Images of Their National Self," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 22, 3 (1958): 305–324. An Indonesian specialist, Pauker was a consultant for the CIA-sponsored RAND Corporation and was directly involved in decision-making of the CIA, the Pentagon, and the State Department regarding Indonesia. See Budiawan, "Seeing the Communist Past through the Lens of a CIA Consultant: Guy J. Pauker on the Indonesian Communist Party Before and After the '1965 Affair'," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 7, 4 (2006): 650–662.

independence." Metaphors were used to express their despair: "We are like mushrooms which grow and die in the same spot, leaving no trace of what they accomplished while alive." "Now the road is winding, the goal is unknown, I lost my way and drift." The sentiment of pessimism was prevailing. "My sun no longer shines," one essay contestant lamented. "My feet are wounded, and so is my soul."

One further indication of this public discontent was the emergence of the theme of "crisis" in political and cultural discourses. In late 1950 the writer Rivai Apin proclaimed, "We are now in a crisis, which is a reality." Suparna Sastradiredja wrote that Indonesia was facing "one thousand and one crises."[9] Between 1953 and 1955, "crisis in literature" (hereafter without quotation marks) became a dominant theme in much of the nation's intellectual discourse, which led to the emergence of three major themes in this polemic.

The first theme pertained to the origin of the crisis in literature debate, which was widely held to have come about because of a "failed revolution." G. Siagian, for example, charged that "the élan of the 1945 Revolution dwindled before a national spirit had taken shape and direction." Another writer, Boejoeng Saleh, contended that the so-called crisis in literature was merely a sign of widespread structural crisis, symbolizing the failure of the Revolution.[10] The second theme was the conviction that the crisis was in part precipitated by the West's "negative influence." According to H.S. Gazalba, "this crisis is generated by Western culture, which has brought about new ways of thinking and feelings that are totally in contrast to ways of thinking and feelings of our own society." Consequently, "the modern arts, which stem from Western influence, have become alien to the majority of people."[11] Politicians and intellectuals commonly held that the continuing presence of "decadent" Western influence hindered the creation of national culture and national education.[12] The third theme was that intellectuals had been isolated from the people, and that this

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[9] Rivai Apin, "Berdasar Pada Krisis," *Siasat* 4, 192 (29 Nov. 1950): 9; Suparna Sastradiredja, "Mengatasi Krisis," *Pikiran Rakjat*, 5 March 1951.

[10] A. Teeuw, *Modern Indonesian Literature* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1979), 1: 141; Boejoeng Saleh, "Latarbelakang Kesedjarahan Krisis Indonesia," *Siasat* 8, 387 (7 Nov. 1954): 24–25.

[11] H. S. Gazalba, "'Ada Krisis' Dalam Kesasteraan Indonesia Modern: Pembakangan Terhadap Jassin," *Siasat* 9, 398 (23 Jan. 1955): 22–23.

[12] Lee Kam Hing, *Education and Politics in Indonesia, 1945–1965* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1995), 165–168.

disassociation between men of thinking and men of action led to the estrangement of intellectuals and the crisis in literature. Gazalba pointed out, "the more advanced our writers' thinking becomes, the greater the distance between their feeling and that of the people. Therefore, the masses have a hard time in understanding them; our writers have not fulfilled their responsibilities to the society." In a similar vein, Pramoedya Ananta Toer was critical of the nation's "Salon-intelligentsia, who have been detached from the truly revolutionary cause of the Indonesian people."[13] The uneasy views concerning the relationship between the arts and the masses reflected an ongoing dispute about the direction of Indonesian culture in general.[14]

In an attempt to get out of this (perceived and real) crisis, one of the main proposals was to return to the nation's own tradition and to foster a new cultural identity that was to be located in a broadly defined Asian tradition. According to Gazalba, "the starting point for overcoming our cultural crisis is a recognition that in terms of spirit, logic, rationale and objective, Western culture is different from ours." Therefore, Indonesian culture needed to be brought back to its own tradition. Some were convinced that "Indonesia's traditional Oriental characteristics have been polluted by the materialist spirit of the West." Their proposed solution was that "Western culture must be discarded in favor of traditional culture in order to avoid divisive and debilitating cultural clashes."[15]

As Teeuw has suggested, debates over the crisis in literature was part of an attempt "to discover the Indonesian identity, to give shape to the ideals of the revolution, and to determine the Indonesian place in the modern world."[16] It is also apparent that the themes in the debates were centrally concerned with the fate of the new nation and with societal transformations at large. The quest for a national identity in the framework of the Oriental tradition was the context within which the perceptions of China were constructed and the literary production of China imagining was undertaken.

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[13] H.S. Gazalba, "Krisis Indonesia Dewasa ini," *Indonesia* 5, 12 (1954), 696; Teeuw, *Modern Indonesian Literature*, 1: 140.

[14] For more details about issues under debate in this congress, see Tod Jones, *Indonesian Cultural Policy, 1950–2003: Culture, Institutions, Government* (Ph.D. dissertation, Curtin University of Technology, 2005), 103–105.

[15] Pauker, "Indonesian Images," p. 310.

[16] Teeuw, *Modern Indonesian Literature*, 1: 139.

Two factors explain Indonesians' attraction to the Chinese experience. First, prior to 1945 some Indonesian nationalists had already expressed their belief that their country and China shared similarities in their historical development and natural endowments. For instance, Sukarno wrote in 1928 that there was "a sense of unity and a feeling of brotherhood between the Chinese people and the Indonesian people: that is, that both are Eastern people, both are people who are suffering, both are people who are struggling, demanding a free life." The Indonesian and the Chinese peoples, he insisted, were "comrades-of-one-fate, comrades-of-one-endeavor, comrades-of-one-front."[17] This theme of identification continued in the postcolonial era. "As soon as I arrived at Peking," wrote the veteran journalist Tabrani in 1951, "I was immediately reminded of Yogyakarta in the early days of our revolution, where everybody was heroic."[18] Prime Minister Wilopo said in 1953: "There are profound commonalities between our two nations, which are both at the time of transformation. This is the reason why I am coming to China to study at a close distance how the Chinese people have solved the problems arising from the transition." After recounting past friendship and common struggles against colonialism and imperialism, Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo proclaimed in 1955 that Indonesia and China shared similar aims in nation-building, which "have brought us nearer together."[19]

Second, despite the fact that the PRC was a communist state, many Indonesians continued to regard China primarily as an Asian nation belonging to the Oriental tradition. Shortly after independence, a number of liberal intellectuals lamented that Indonesia had paid too much attention to the West and that it was necessary to redress the balance by looking to its Eastern neighbors, and China was singled out as the example of this Oriental tradition.[20] At the Indonesian Cultural Conference held in August 1950, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, one of the main speakers, charged that all cultural exchanges in the past were via the Netherlands and that Indonesia had neglected cultural relations with

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[17] Sukarno, "Indonesianism and Pan-Asianism," (1928), in idem, *Under the Banner of Revolution* (Jakarta: Publication Committee, 1966), 1: 67.

[18] *Hsin Pao* (Jakarta), 6 Nov. 1951.

[19] *Renmin Ribao* [People's Daily], 30 June 1957; Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, compiler, *Indonesia: A Feature Bulletin* (Peking: the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, 1955), 31.

[20] Adinegoro, *Tiongkok: Pusaran Asia* (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1951), 7–10; and Wojowasito, *Tiongkok* [Pembangoenan Politik] (Yogyakarta: Badan Penerbit Nasional, nd), p. 2.

her immediate neighbors in Asia. His view was echoed by other participants.[21] Similarly, Minister of Education Prijono spoke in 1955 of the need to seek inspiration from the East instead of continuing to look to the West. Advocating close cultural ties with the PRC, Adam Malik reminded his readers at home that "Indonesians and Chinese belong to the same race."[22] A number of political and cultural intellectuals pointed out during their visits to China in the 1950s that because both Indonesians and Chinese were Orientals, it was quite easy for them to establish mutual understandings and to learn from one another.[23]

In short, the discourse on crisis in literature demonstrated the prevailing sentiment of confusion and discontent among intellectuals and the educated public. In a broad sense, the crisis in literature themes reflected a wide range of problems. As Gazalba observed, the crisis in literature "reflected real crises in economy, politics, society, science, the arts, philosophy and religion."[24] Even General Nasution spoke of "moral crisis" in 1953: "The happy and hopeful atmosphere, prevailing at the transfer of sovereignty, has turned into one of demoralization, with crises developing in all fields because the responsible leaders have failed in their duty."[25] It was by no means a coincidence that Usmar Ismail (1921–1971)—considered to be the father of modern Indonesian cinema, whose films "have artistic integrity and reflect a national identity"[26]—entitled two of his films as "Crisis" (1953) and "Crisis Again" (1955).

This Indonesian scene provided a context for the introduction, appropriation and selected acceptance of Chinese practices. This process was further facilitated by the improvement of Sino-Indonesian diplomatic relations after 1955 and a radical turn in Sukarno's

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[21] Jones, *Indonesian Cultural Policy, 1950–2003*, 102.

[22] "Tentang Persahabatan Indonesia-RRT," *Republik* 1 (1950), 3–6; *Pikiran Rakjat*, 15 April 1955.

[23] Yao Zhongming, et al. *Jiangjun, Waijiaojia, Yishujia—Huang Zhen Jilian Wenji* [General, Diplomat, and Artist—A Collection of Essays in Commemorating Huang Zhen] (Beijing: Jiefangjun Chubanshe, 1992), 367. Interview with Chen Lishui who was personal assistant and chief interpreter to Chinese ambassadors between 1950 and 1960.

[24] Gazalba, "'Ada Krisis' Dalam Kesasteraan Indonesia Modern," 697.

[25] Cited in Robert Elson, *The Idea of Indonesia: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 163.

[26] H. Misbach Yusa Biran, "Brief History of the Indonesian Film," *Journal of Film Preservation* 69 (2005): 2–6; Krishna Sen, "Politics of Melodrama in Indonesian Cinema," in *Melodrama and Asian Cinema*, ed., Wimal Dissanayake (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 205–217.

domestic and foreign policies between 1959 and 1965 (the so-called Guided Democracy); this process *per se* was partly a result of Indonesian selective use of China's political model.[27] Putting our case in a broader global context, the turbulent decade of the 1960s saw the "liberation of new forces in the Third World" and prompted the spread of Maoism as a specific cultural ideology in both the First and Third worlds.[28] Unlike China's imperial past, when it looked at Southeast Asians as uncivilized subjects, China in the twentieth century encountered its postcolonial southern neighbors for the first time as equal nation-states in the international family of newly-independent countries.[29] This encounter was an integral part of the international communist movement, through which China was linked with global ideological confrontations that were central to the global Cold War and Southeast Asia's turbulent political evolutions. China's domestic and foreign policies alike profoundly affected the region.[30]

China's Cultural Diplomacy

Before discussing the substance, variations and impact of China perceptions, it is necessary to review the working principles and operational strategies of China's cultural diplomacy in Southeast Asia, for this cultural diplomacy supplemented and reinforced conventional diplomacy and played a significant part in the making of China's soft power in the region.

After the PRC's founding, policymakers came to believe that Southeast Asia's anti-colonial and nationalist movements were "influenced and inspired by the Chinese revolution," which according to an editorial of the *People's Daily*, "provides the people in the East with extremely

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[27] For details, see Hong Liu, "Constructing a China Metaphor: Sukarno's Perception of the PRC and Indonesian Political Transformation," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 28, 1 (1997): 27–46.

[28] Fredric Jameson, "Periodizing the 60s," In *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader*, 3rd ed., edited by Philip Rice and Patricia Waught (London: Arnold, 1996), 292–322. See also the chapters by Matthew Rothwell and Perry Johansson in this volume.

[29] Hong Liu, "Beyond Orientalism and the East-West Divide: China and Southeast Asia in the Double Mirror," *Stockholm Journal of East Asian Studies* 13 (2003): 45–65.

[30] Jay Taylor, *China and Southeast Asia: Peking's Relations with Revolutionary Movements*, revised edition (New York: Praeger, 1976); Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World* (London: Verso, 1998); and Hong Liu, "Sino-Southeast Asian Studies."

valuable lessons."[31] The belief that China's experiences could be reproduced in Southeast Asia was so prevalent that some CCP leaders were convinced that "China's today is Southeast Asia's tomorrow." Minister of Foreign Affairs Chen Yi stated in 1960:

> Chinese success in revolution and construction was…tremendous encouragement to all the oppressed nations and peoples of the world fighting for their liberation. In the Chinese people they see their own tomorrow. They feel that everything the Chinese people accomplished they too should be able to accomplish. They draw unlimited confidence and courage from the victory of the Chinese people…The Chinese people see their yesterday in all oppressed nations.[32]

Not surprisingly, as the largest and most populous nation in Southeast Asia, Indonesia received a significant degree of attention from the PRC authorities. Shortly before the founding of the PRC, Sha Ping [Hu Yuzhi], one of the CCP's leading specialists on Southeast Asia, remarked that the Indonesian people could draw necessary lessons from China's experience, including the essential role of a united front and correct leadership, armed struggle, and the Communist Party having a broad mass base.[33] Ambassador Huang Zhen elaborated the government's policy guideline as "striving to obtain Indonesia's cooperation

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[31] *Renmin Ribao* [People's Daily], 17 Feb. 1948; "Dongnanya Geguo de Minzu Jiefang Yundong" [National liberation movements in Southeast Asian countries], *Changjiang Ribao*, 3 May 1952.

[32] Quoted in A.M. Halpern, "The Foreign Policy Use of the Chinese Revolutionary Model," *The China Quarterly* 7 (1961): 10. The same message was also conveyed to Sukarno during Chen's visit to China in March 1961. See "Chen Yi fuzongli tong yindunixiya zongtong Sujianuo huitanjilu" [Records of discussions between Vice Premier Chen Yi and President Sukarno of Indonesia] (31 March 1961), file no. 111-00339-13. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing.

[33] Sha Ping [Hu Yuzhi], "Lessons from Indonesia," *China Digest* 5, 12 (April 1949): 5. Hu Yuzhi (1896–1986) was once the Deputy Chairman of China's National People's Congress. He joined the CCP in 1933 and was dispatched by Zhou Enlai to Singapore in 1940 to undertake anti-Japanese propaganda. He was the editor-in-chief of the *Nanyang Siau Pau*, a newspaper under patriotic entrepreneur Tan Kah-kee. He was in exile in Indonesia during the Japanese occupation and started learning the Indonesian language. He wrote widely about the issues of overseas Chinese and Southeast Asia, in addition to participating in China-oriented political activities such as organizing branches of Chinese Democratic Union (Ming-Men). He returned to China in 1948 and served as the director of CCP Publication Bureau and Deputy Minister of Culture after the founding of the PRC. See Liu Bing, "Hu Yu Zhi and the Nanyang Overseas Chinese," in *Tonan Ajia Kakyo to Chugoku: Chugoko-kizoku-ishiki kara Kajin-Ishikie* [Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia and China: Conversion of the Object of Their Identity from China to the Residing Countries], ed., Fujio Hara (Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies, 1993), 133–54.

in the anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism causes, pushing forward economic collaboration and cultural exchange, and promoting the development of Sino-Indonesian relationships in all fronts."[34] This stance put China in confrontation with the United States. As Secretary of State Dean Acheson cautioned Harry Truman in January 1950, "the importance of keeping Indonesia in the anti-Communist camp is of greater and greater importance. The loss of Indonesia to the Communists would deprive the United States of an area of the highest political, economic and strategic importance."[35]

The PRC placed a great deal of emphasis upon the theme of commonalties and actively propagated China's experiences in the attempt to achieve its goals in Indonesia. In a Ministry of Foreign Affairs directive sent to various ambassadors in Southeast Asian countries, the fostering of patriotism among overseas Chinese and publicizing China's successes were singled out as the key themes to be highlighted in the PRC's national day celebrations in these countries.[36] As Meredith Oyen has outlined in her chapter in this volume, the effort to organize overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia was a reflection of Beijing's competition with Washington and Taipei in winning the hearts and minds of diasporic Chinese. Zhou Enlai told visiting Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo in 1955:

> There exists between the Chinese and the Indonesian peoples a traditional friendship of long standing. In recent generations, we have had common experiences and lived through similar conditions. And at present, our countries not only have the same aspiration and need to defend peace in Asia and the world and safeguard our respective sovereignty and territorial integrity, but are both engaged in a struggle to further oppose foreign intervention to shake off economic backwardness and to

[34] Yao Zhongming, et al., *Jiangjun, Waijiaojia, Yishujia*, 334. Huang Zhen (1908–1990) was appointed major-general in 1946. After serving as ambassador to Indonesia for more than six years (1954–1961), Huang was promoted to Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs (1961–1964). In his capacity as the first ambassador to France (1964–1972), Huang conducted a series of secret negotiations with American diplomats on the establishment of diplomatic relations. Between 1973 and 1977, Huang was appointed as the head of the PRC Liaison Office in Washington and became Minister of Culture from 1977 to 1981.

[35] Robert J. McMathon, *The Limits of Empire: The United States and Southeast Asia since World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 49.

[36] "Waijiaobu jiu Dongnanya Huaqiao Guoqing Qingchu Huodong xiang youguan Shiguan Zhishi" [Directive of Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Concerned Embassies on National Day Celebration by Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia] (10 Sept. 1951), file no. 117–00081–08 (1), Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing.

> achieve complete national independence. All this constitutes a deep and broad basis for the development of friendship and co-operation between our two countries.[37]

The strategy of promoting China's accomplishments was carried out primarily within the framework of public diplomacy and cultural exchange, considered by the Chinese authorities to be "an important channel to establish and promote relationships between countries and an essential component of diplomatic activities."[38] The most effective way of influencing Indonesians' views about China was directly presenting positive and inspirational information regarding the PRC. Three institutional agencies were particularly suited to achieving this agenda: the Chinese Embassy in Jakarta, the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing, and Radio Peking. Periodic visits by Chinese delegations to Indonesia also helped further this agenda.

The Chinese Embassy in Jakarta and various consulates in Indonesia served as an information hub which was frequented by political and cultural intellectuals, obtaining the latest information regarding China, watching Chinese movies, or just having chats with Chinese officials.[39] In 1954 the embassy hosted 48 receptions for Indonesian guests, and Chinese officials undertook 1,835 instances of interaction with the locals.[40] In 1955 three movies (two of which were documentaries about China's economic progress and social movement) were shown 97 times in ten districts of Indonesia, with a total audience of 79,000.[41] The Medan Consulate held a total of twenty screenings of seven feature and documentary films, attracting an audience of 5,401.[42] In the mid-1950s, Sukarno regularly dispatched his personal

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[37] *Sino-Indonesian Relations, 1950–1959* (*Research Backgrounder*) (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1960), 51–52.

[38] Teng Yun, ed., *Dangdai Zhongwai Wenhua Jiaoliu Shiliao* [Historical Materials on the Cultural Exchanges between China and Foreign Countries in the Contemporary Era] (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1990), 1.

[39] Yao Zhongming, *Jiangjun, Waijiaojia, Yishujia*, 333–405.

[40] "Zhu Yindunixiya Shiguan 1954 nian Jiaoji Gongzuo Zongjie Baogao" [Report on the Work of Communications of the Indonesia Embassy in 1954] (10 Feb. 1955–10 Feb. 1956), file no. 117-00371-12, Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[41] "Zhu Yajiada Zong Lingguan 1955 nian Huaqiao Wenhua Jiaoyu Gongzuo Zongjie" [Report of Consulate General in Jakarta on Overseas Chinese Cultural and Educational Work in 1955] (1 Feb.–13 March 1956), file no. 118-00560-04, Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[42] "Zhu Mianlan Lingshiguan Guanyi Shukan Fenfa, Dianying Fangyi Ji Huaqiao Baozhi Gongzuo de Baogao" [Report by Medan Consulate on the Distribution of Books and Magazines, Showing of Movies, and Works relating to Overseas Chinese

assistant to the embassy to acquire Mao's writings and other publications about China.[43] The embassy's cultural section actively reached out to various circles of public intellectuals. Sima Wenshen, the cultural attaché, even went to the countryside to meet with local artists.[44] The embassy was responsible for making recommendations to the authorities regarding whom to be invited to visit China. In order to influence a wide spectrum of the reading public, intellectuals with rightist or centrist orientations were particularly targeted in the hope that their views (of China and Indonesia) could be subsequently altered or transformed.[45]

As the state's "unified publishing organization of books and periodicals in foreign languages," the Foreign Languages Press (FLP) was established in November 1949, first under the China Information Bureau of the Press Administration of the Central People's Government and, after 1952, under the State Administration of Publications. This official institution was responsible for translating and publishing materials regarding "China's successful revolution and construction." Indonesian-language books ranked second in the overall number of FLP's publications, surpassed only by English-language books. Most of them were Indonesian translations of political and cultural writings by the Chinese Communist Party leaders and favorable depictions of the new China. They included literary works as well, such as *The*

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newspapers] (24 Jan. 1956), file no. 118-00560-05, Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[43] Soeto Mei-sen, Sukarno's personal assistant and interpreter, interview by author, Hong Kong.

[44] Chinese official working in the Cultural Section of the embassy during the 1950s, interviewed by author. Sima Wenshen (1916–1968) was born in Fujian province and went to the Philippines in the 1920s. Upon returning to China in the 1930s, he actively participated in cultural movements under the CCP leadership by publishing novels and plays. He was the Cultural Attaché to Indonesia between 1955 and 1962. A number of prominent cultural and political intellectuals were present at his farewell party, including Promoedya, Prijono, Arifin, and so on. See Yang Yiqun and Sima Xiaomeng, eds., *Sima Wenshen Yanjiu Ziliao* [Research Materials about Sima Wenshen] (Beijing: Beijing Shiyue Wenyi Chubanshe, 1998), 3–4, 70–75.

[45] Huang Shuhai, an Indonesia-born Chinese official working in the Jakarta embassy in the late 1950s, interviewed by author. In a letter to the Chinese embassy in Jakarta dated 8 August 1958, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing asked for the nomination of prominent figures who were either on the right-wing or central-right wing in their political orientations, which would "significantly expand our influence [in Indonesia]." "Yaoqing Yindunixiya shehui mingliu fanghua shiyi" [Matters concerning invitation of prominent Indonesians to visit China] (8 August–27 Sept. 1958), file no. 105-00862-02, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing.

White-haired Girl, a story about rural class war that was translated by Pramoedya into Indonesian. The FLP also issued a few Indonesian-language periodicals, including the *Tiongkok Rakjat (People's China)*. At the request of D.N. Aidit, chairman of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), an Indonesian version of the *Peking Review* was published in 1963.[46]

Publications such as these were distributed through China's International Book Company, the PRC embassy and consulates, bookstores owned by sympathetic local Chinese and by PKI affiliates; some were given as gifts to the locals.[47] Take the activities of the Chinese Consulate in Medan in 1955 as an example: it distributed in northern and central Sumatra a total of 6,426 copies of regularly published magazines, which were composed of (1) *People's Pictorials* (Chinese version): 336 copies; (2) *China Pictorials* (Indonesian version): 3,578 copies; (3) *People's China* (English version): 607 copies; (4) *China Construction* (English version): 782 copies; and (5) *People's Literature* (English version): 114 copies. In addition, the Consulate distributed sixteen irregularly published magazines (a total of 1,846 copies) and donated 1,623 books. The recipients of this wide range of materials included: (1) key military, political and police officials in northern and central Sumatra: 127; (2) Indonesian news agencies: 16; (3) mass organizations and schools in the region; (4) Indonesian writers, physicians and other prominent persons: 48; (5) foreign consulates in Medan (those with diplomatic relations with China): 6; (6) other foreign organizations: 9; and (7) *Peranakan* (local-born Chinese) physicians and prominent figures, overseas Chinese associations and schools: 107.[48]

Radio Peking was another agency to transmit information about China. Its agenda fell within the government guidelines on external reporting, which was to "comprehensively and promptly present China's planned development and report the new progresses of the Chi-

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[46] Jiang Bolin, head of the Indonesian Section, Foreign Languages Press, interviewed by author. Aidit sent a number of Indonesians, including his younger brother Sobron Aidit, to Beijing to help with the magazine's editorial work.

[47] Chen Youli, head of the Indonesian Section of Foreign Languages Press in the 1950s, interviewed by author.

[48] "Zhu Mianlan Lingshiguan Guanyi Shukan Fenfa, Dianying Fangyin Ji Huaqiao Baozhi Gongzuo de Baogao" [Report by Medan Consulate on the Distribution of Books and Magazines, Showing of Movies, and Works relating Overseas Chinese Newspapers] (24 Jan. 1956). File no. 118-00560-05, Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, Beijing.

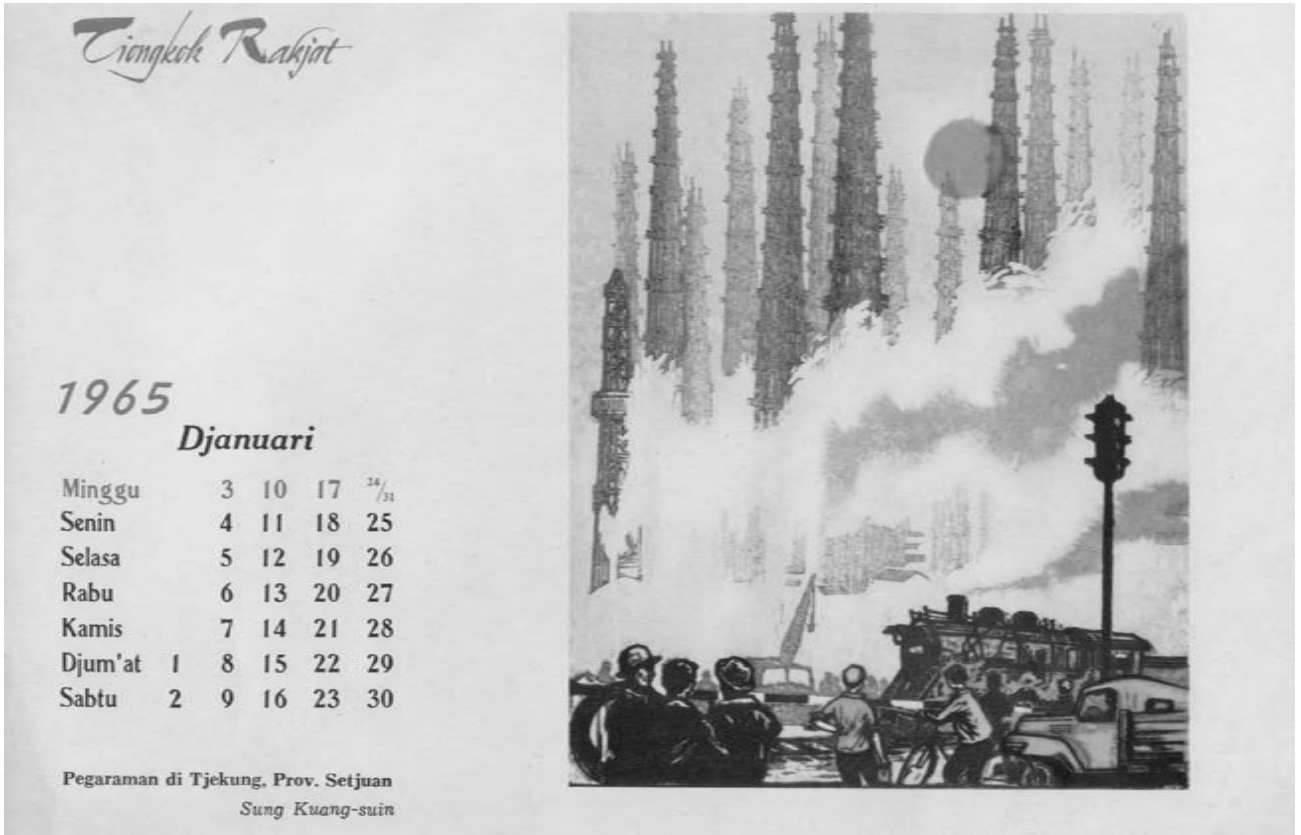

Figure 7.1 "Saltworks in Sichuan"—a calendar poster attached to the *Tiongkok Rakjat* (*People's China*) magazine

nese people in the process of building socialism."[49] The early 1950s saw a "spectacular increase" in its output, from 16 hours per week in 1948 to 116 hours in 1954.[50] As a major division of Radio Peking, the Indonesian Section was founded in October 1950 and was charged with the tasks of "propagating new China's accomplishments and explaining its foreign policy" to Indonesians. Both Zhou Enlai and Chen Yi were closely involved in the making of its strategic directions.[51] The section was equipped with advanced facilities and had two frequency channels. Some Indonesian reports claimed that Radio Peking was the most frequently-heard foreign radio in the country.[52] According to informal surveys, its audience was composed mostly of civil servants, teachers, students and workers—who were the core of the political public. Some officials were even able to recognize the voices of Chinese broadcasters when the latter visited Indonesia. It received more than 10,000 letters each year from its audiences in the early 1960s, and many expressed a strong interest in China's domestic socio-economic transformation, such as the People's Communes.[53]

China seemed to be making impressive inroads in terms of its propaganda program. After a tour of Southeast Asian nations by a US official in 1956, he produced a report that claimed the region was "flooded with Red Chinese literature and consumer goods."[54] These magazines and books were well-received and read by an important segment of educated Indonesians. In his meeting with the Chinese counselor in 1954, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secretary-General Roeslan Abdulgani requested publications from the PRC. He even borrowed some Chinese music recordings with the intention of copying and playing them to the youth, who according to him only

[49] Internal speech in 1953 of Wu Lingxi, director of the Xinhua News Agency, in Xinhua News Agency, compiler, *Xinhuashe Wenjiang Ziliao Xuanbian* [Selected Documents of the New China News Agency] (Beijing: Nd), 3: 7.

[50] John C. Clews, *Communist Propaganda Techniques* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1964), 123.

[51] Huang Aling and Lin Liushung: both were heads of the Indonesian Section of Radio Peking between the early 1950s and the end of 1980s, interviewed by author.

[52] J.J.K, "Siaran Gelombang Pendek: Radio Republik Rakjat Tiongkok," *Siasat* 9, 440 (16 Nov. 1955), 4–7; and "Siaran Gelombang Pendek: Presiden Sukarno di Peking," *Siasat* 10, 488 (17 Oct. 1956), 5–8.

[53] All this information is drawn from interviews with Huang Aling and Lin Liushung.

[54] Cited in Meredith Oyen, "Communism, Containment and the Chinese Overseas," in this volume.

listened to "decadent" Western music.[55] In 1955, the Medan Consulate received 311 requests from various Indonesian governmental officials and individuals for Chinese magazines and books. A Bureau director in the Medan municipality reportedly said that "everyone should be aware of China's progress." Another reader opined that China's rapid progress and patterns of development should be taken "as model."[56] *Song of Youth*, a novel about anti-Japanese and anti-KMT student movements in the 1930s and 1940s, was translated by Indonesian Chinese writer Shannu. Published as *Njanjian Remadja* in 1961, it instantly became a best-seller. The PKI central leadership designated this novel as required reading for its members. The movie based on the same novel was watched by large numbers of youths, especially those associated with the PKI.[57]

Chinese delegations to Indonesia were another channel through which promising images of the PRC were transmitted and circulated, and they frequently stressed the common interests shared by the two countries. A religious delegation called on the Indonesian Minister of Religions in 1951 and emphasized that "all Muslims under sky are one family."[58] In 1956 Soong Ching Ling (Sun Yat-sen's widow) spoke to a Jakarta mass rally, saying: "As newly-independent nations, our fundamental interests are analogous; we have identical views on many issues facing us today." The head of a Chinese journalist delegation proclaimed, "The Asian-African peoples' primary and most important task at present is to oppose imperialism and colonialism, old and new."[59]

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[55] "Wo Zhu Yindunixiya Shiguan Chanzhan yu Yinni Waijiaobu Mishuzhang Lushilan Adugani jiu Yinni Wengongtuan Fanhuashi Huitan Jiyao" [Minutes of Meeting between our counsellor and Roeslan Abdulgani, Secretary General of Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, pertaining to the upcoming visit of the Indonesian Cultural Delegation to China] (3 June 1954), file no. 105-00260-12, Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC.

[56] "Zhu Mianlan Lingshiguan Guanyi Shukan Fenfa, Dianying Fangyin Ji Huaqiao Baozhi Gongzuo de Baogao" [Report by the Medan Consulate on the Distribution of Books and Magazines, Showing of Movies, and works relating to Overseas Chinese newspapers) (24 Jan. 1956), file no. 118-00560-05, Archive of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC.

[57] Shannu and Huang Shuhai, interviewed by author; and personal correspondence from Chen Wenxian, who worked in the Jakarta embassy during the 1950s.

[58] "Zhu Yindunixiya Shiguan 1951 nian Waijiao Huitan Jiyao Huibian" [Compiled Records of Diplomatic Meetings of the PRC Embassy in Indonesia in 1951] (Feb. 1952), file no. 118-00399-01, Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC.

[59] *Xinhua Yuebao*, 18 (1956), 13; *Afro-Asian Journalists* (Jakarta), 1 (March 1964), 8.

One of the most successful of these visits was the 1955 cultural delegation led by Vice Minister of Cultural Affairs Zheng Zhenduo. The delegation toured the country for fifty-four days and was enthusiastically received. Its performance in Jakarta, for example, was reportedly watched by more than fifty thousand people.[60] These performance programs were filled with themes glorifying new China's progress and celebrating the integration of arts, life and the masses,[61] and they produced instant responses. Sukarno stated that he had received numerous letters from various parts of the country asking him to send this delegation to their areas.[62] According to an internal document prepared by the Chinese embassy in Jakarta, "this cultural delegation has left a significant impact upon the Indonesians in their endeavors to revitalize and develop their national arts. After this visit, Indonesian dancing arts, especially those reflecting the people's life, have been further advanced."[63]

The PRC's cultural diplomacy was simultaneously carried out in China proper. Unlike its endeavors in Indonesia, which were broadly targeted at influencing views of the "political public,"[64] activities within China were more narrowly focused, aiming at impressing select prominent Indonesians with the hope that their observations about China would shape the country's collective imagination.[65] Most Indonesian visitors did return with (more) favorable impressions of China. Journalist Sugardo wrote, "Crossing the border [from Hong Kong], everything appeared to be different. Here, every Chinese works under their own government, for their own well-being, and collectivism constitutes

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[60] *Guangming Ribao*, 12 August 1955; Zhou Erfu, *Dongnanya Sanji* [Reflections on Southeast Asia] (Beijing: Zhongguo Qingnian Chubanshe, 1956), 84–145.

[61] On the program guides, see *Pertundjukan Delegasi Kebudajaan Republik Rakjat Tiongkok* (Jakarta: the PRC Embassy, 1955).

[62] *Guangming Ribao*, 12 August 1955.

[63] Duiwai Wenhua Lianluo Weiyuanhui Ersi [Second Bureau of the Committee of Cultural Exchanges with Foreign Countries], ed., *Yindunixiya Wenhua Gaikuang* [A Survey of Indonesian Culture] (Beijing: Internal and Restricted Circulations, 1962), 54.

[64] On the definition and importance of the "political public," see Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, 108–113. According to him, the clearest indication of membership of the political public was "regular newspaper reading," see page 110. "Most of the nationally significant political action," Feith suggests, "took place within the political public."

[65] For a general and critical overview of China's general cultural diplomacy and its specific techniques, see Herbert Passin, *China's Cultural Diplomacy* (New York: Praeger, 1963); and Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1990 [1981]), 347–99.

the foundation of their work."[66] In the same vein, Zainul Arifin, second vice speaker of Parliament and vice chairman of the conservative Islamic party, Nahdatul Ulama [NU], commented that "China is characterized by discipline, order, and a hard-working people."[67] Editor-in-chief of the *Berita Indonesia* reported, "As soon as I entered the Chinese border, I saw signs of harvesting in the vast land; it is orderly, clean, and peaceful in both the city and countryside."[68]

While it is hard to accurately pinpoint the linkages between visitations and perceptions, Chinese officials did believe that these trips were at least partially responsible for changing not only Indonesians' attitudes toward the PRC, but also their views of development at home. According to an official memo, for instance, "Tirtodiningrat, President of Hassanuddin University, visited China in 1959 and praised China's rapid progress after his return. This trip has reinforced his confidence in strengthening Indonesia's national education."[69] Roeslan Abdulgani reported to the Indonesian parliament that his tour of China in 1956 had "corrected some erroneous impressions which I was bound to make because I only got them from textbooks."[70]

In brief, the skillful deployment of China's cultural diplomacy contributed significantly to the formation of Indonesians' favorable perceptions and to their knowledge about its literary principles. As will be documented later, literature came to be closely associated with nation-building and the creation of a new identity. The Chinese example of fusing culture with politics provided a viable model for Indonesian intellectuals beset by the imagined and real crisis at home. It was the interplay of these two forces—the domestic quest for establishing a cultural identity based upon an "Oriental" tradition and the extensive undertaking of China's cultural diplomacy—that set the stage for the transplanting of Chinese cultural and literary thought into an Indonesian environment, and this in turn led to the transnational construction of an imagined China and the latter's increasing soft power.

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[66] Sugardo, *Tiongkok Sekarang: Terra Incognita* (*Tanah tak dikenal*) (Jakarta: Endang, 1953), 69.

[67] *Hsin Pao* (Jakarta), 24 Oct. 1956.

[68] *Jinri Xinwen*, 16 Dec. 1963.

[69] Duiwai Wenhua, *Yindunixiya Wenhua Gaikuang*, 124.

[70] Roeslan Abdulgani, *The Foreign Minister's Report to Parliament on President Sukarno's Second Tour, August 26–October 16, 1956* (Jakarta: Department of Foreign Affairs, 1956), 93.

China as an Alternative Model of Cultural Development

Having discussed the context and mechanisms within which China established its cultural soft power in postcolonial Indonesia, we can now examine its workings through analyzing specific perceptions of Indonesian writers toward cultural and literary development in the PRC and their local relevance. I argue below that Indonesian writers were profoundly influenced by their understanding of Chinese literary practices and that this new awareness had an impact upon their views of the development at home.

Since the end of Suharto's New Order in 1998, scholars have reexamined the 1950s—a period that had previously been negatively portrayed by the official historiography. Ann Laura Stoler argues: "There was once another civil society in Indonesia [in the 1950s, which was characterized as] cosmopolitan, 'modern' and politically progressive."[71] Indeed, the 1950s was marked by a high degree of freedom of expression and the existence of a diverse range of writers, whose main audience was the "political public" who had a deep concern for the nation's political and cultural development. Their views of Indonesia—and China—were disseminated in the form of books, essays, commentaries and travelogues that appeared in influential cultural and literary magazines such as *Siasat* (*Literature*), *Indonesia, Budaja* (*Culture*), and *Mimbar Indonesia* (*Voices of Indonesia*). Together with some newspapers (such as *Pikiran Rakjat*, [*People's Thinking*]), these periodicals collectively created and presented three master narratives about culture and politics and the role of literature in nation-building in China:[72] namely, cultural renaissance, intellectual vitality, and literature as the mirror of social reality.

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[71] Ann Laura Stoler, "Untold Stories: On the Other Side of 1965 Lay a Vibrant Indonesia Worth Remembering," *Inside Indonesia* 68 (October–December 2001), 7. See also Vedi Hadiz, "The Left and Indonesia's 1960s: The Politics of Remembering and Forgetting," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 7, 4 (2006): 554–569.

[72] For a more detailed analysis of the substance and variations of these narratives, see Hong Liu, "Intellectual Representations and Socio-Political Implications: Comparative China-Imagining in Postcolonial Indonesia and Contemporary United States," *Asian Thought and Society* 26, 76 (2001): 29–50.

Cultural Renaissance

Indonesian writers were impressed by economic and cultural developments in the new China. After a visit to China in the early 1950s, an Indonesian cultural delegation composed of Barioen, an educator and writer from Sumatra, Armijn Pane, a prominent writer since the 1930s, and M. Tabrani, an ethnic policy advisor and journalist, returned with this enthusiastic and approving assessment: "In China, we have observed that great attention is paid to culture. There is a clear-cut mission for art and literature: namely, to serve society as a whole, especially workers and peasants. Art and literary workers stand in the ranks of national struggle and national progress."[73] Barioen also wrote: "Art and culture have certainly played a very important role in the development of society and the human beings in today's China."[74] To Prijono, a professor and later minister of culture and education, "Art in China is *art engagé*, which is for the enhancement of the people."[75]

Most Indonesian intellectuals, therefore, defined China's new culture as people-oriented and socially responsible, which presented a stark contrast to elite-oriented culture of the past. This new culture was different from the culture based upon abstract concepts; it reflected not only the people's aspirations, but also concrete social environments. The combination of this new culture's popular representation, vitality and realism led one observer to characterize Chinese cultural development of the 1950s as a "national renaissance."[76]

Intellectual Vitality

We have mentioned that one of the anguishing problems facing Indonesian writers was the intriguing relationship between literature and politics, and the place of writers in nation-building. The practice of their counterparts in the PRC inevitably invited attention and comparison. Some came to the conviction that Chinese intellectuals, the

[73] "Statment [sic] of the Indonesian People's Delegation" (Hanchow, 27 Oct. 1951), in Barioen, *Melihat: Tiongkok Baru* (Jakarta: Rada, 1952), Appendix 16.

[74] Barioen, *Melihat*, 111.

[75] "Kesan[2] Prof. Dr. Prijono tentang Kundjungannja ke RRT," *Merdeka*, 22 Oct. 1954.

[76] Suprapti Samil, *Laporan Kundjungan dua Utusan "Perserikatan Perhimpunan[2] Mahasiswa Indonesia"* (Np: May/June 1954), 25.

so-called "engineers of socioeconomic progress," were granted high status by the authorities and society at large on justifiable grounds. Pramoedya declared: "I am strongly convinced that to Chinese writers there exists no gap between ideals and realities…They live in an integrated world. I salute them with my highest regards; they are truly engineers of human souls." To him, Chinese writers "occupy a high place and this is why their voices are heard by the society. Together with politicians, they constitute the spiritual leaders whose role is very important in the nation-building process of this new nation. This also helps explain why writers are very well treated by the society.[77] Bagong Kussudiardjo was impressed that China's artists were treated much better than their Indonesian counterparts. Dancers in China "are provided by the government with milk, eggs, and regular food supplies." Artists at home, on the contrary, had "to strive for recognition."[78] Ramadhan K.H. marveled at the fact that a Chinese poet could earn 1,500 yuan per month by publishing a few poems, whereas Mao Zedong's monthly salary was merely 600 yuan.[79]

Literature as the Mirror of Social Reality

Many Indonesian writers admired their Chinese counterparts for their active participation in nation-building, which in turn shaped their literary works. According to Kussudiardjo, "In today's China, the arts are really from the people and for the people." Barioen agreed, "While artists have contributed their artistic products, writers and poets have been striving to produce creative works that could be understood by the people, needed by the people, and become completely people's arts."[80] The artist Wisnoe Wardhana stated that because arts in China were created from within the masses' real and colorful social life, they were "both dynamic and down-to-earth."[81]

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[77] Pulamudiya Ananda Duer [Pramoedya Ananta Toer], "Liangan Luqian," [In Front of a Melting Furnace], trans. Chen Xiaru. *Renmin Wenxue* 12 (December 1958): 16; Pramoedya Ananta Toer, "Sedikit tentang Pengarang Tiongkok," *Mimbar Indonesia* 7 (19 Jan. 1957): 21. For a more detailed discussion on Pramoedya's views of China and Indonesian Chinese, see Hong Liu, Goenawan Mohamad, and Sumit Kumar Mandal, *Pram dan Cina* (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2008).

[78] B. Kussudiardjo, "Kesan-kesan Perlawatan ke RRT," *Budaja* 4, 1 (January 1955): 8.

[79] Ramadhan K.H., "Serakan Bintang Sekitar Yang-Tse," *Konfrontasi* 4, 12 (1957): 62.

[80] B. Kussudiardjo, "Kesan-kesan Perlawatan ke RRT," 6; Barioen, *Melihat Tiongkok Baru*, 111.

[81] Wardhana, "Tari dan Opera di RRT," *Budaja* 4, 4/5 (1955): 187.

To be sure, there existed dissenting voices among China observers with respect to intellectuals' role in the society, and a small segment of Indonesian writers held critical views on the relationship between art and politics in China. Their criticisms were focused on two interrelated areas: the arts in China had become "pure propaganda," and by placing political loyalty and social commitments above aesthetic and artistic standards, intellectuals were degenerated to "tools of propaganda." But they were in the minority, and were effectively silenced in the late Sukarno era (1963–1965), which witnessed a radical turn in both politics and culture. It is also worthwhile noting that attraction to the Chinese model in the socio-economic and cultural arenas, particularly the former, sometimes cut across the political and religious divides. Mohammad Hatta, an ardent anti-communist and devoted Muslim, was a case in point. Upon returning from a month-long trip to China in October 1957, nearly one year after he stepped down as the country's Vice President, Hatta commented, "Any sane and objective person must admit that China has carried out massive nation-building…[China's] amazing economic growth was beyond my expectation."[82] He attributed the reason of this progress not to communism, but to "the Chinese people's own characteristic talent that made those achievements possible." "A people under a democratic system which possesses leadership and moral discipline can achieve the same results," he concluded with a hopeful note. "Indonesia, too, can practice this device without having to adhere to the communist ideology and system."[83] Sukiman, a staunch anti-communist and leader of the Masyumi Party (the main Muslim party), reported after visiting China that there were no strikes in China and urged his fellow countrymen to learn from this example.[84]

It is not the purpose of this essay to examine to what extent these views reflected Chinese realities. What is pertinent here is the high degree of resonance between narratives about China and themes emerging from the crisis in literature discourse, such as the relationship between writers and the masses, sources of literary creativity, and the intriguing role of intellectuals in the politics of nation-building. In

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[82] Mohammad Hatta, "Masalah Pembangunan dalam RRT," *Pikiran Rakjat*, 23–24 Dec. 1957; *Sin Min*, 14 Oct. 1957.

[83] Mohammad Hatta, "Not Communism but Chinese Qualities Made People's China Rise," *Indonesian Spectator* (1 Dec. 1957), 10–11.

[84] *Hsin Pao* (Jakarta), 18 Oct. 1956.

Nj. Jo Chaerul Saleh bergambar bersama dengan Nj. Chou En Lai (kanannja) dan nj. Tjen Ji. (no. 2 dari kanan).
Kesan Nj. Chaerul tentang beliau² ini ialah, kesederhanaan dan perdjoangan jang tidak mengenal lelah dalam membina masjarakat dan kaum nja sungguh patut ditiru.

TIONGKOK RAKJAT JANG KAMI LIHAT

KITA DATANG, KITA LIHAT, KITA BELADJAR.....

OLEH : NJ. JO CHAIRUL SALEH

(Seperti ditjeritakan kpd wartawan PW, Lies Said)

Figure 7.2 Indonesian Writing about China: "We Come, We See, We Learn…"

this sense, admiration for China mirrored Indonesian writers' dissatisfactions with their own cultural/literary development. China, therefore, represented an antithesis and an alternative model that could be selectively appropriated by Indonesians in their endeavor to create a new cultural identity conceived from an "Asian tradition." To some writers, however, the China example served as a source of criticism in reconstructing the relationship between literature and politics. As a metaphor and a point of reference, China thus had the potential of being internalized. This would lead in turn to the politicization of China as a symbolic entity.

Figure 7.3 Hatta in Xinjiang

Impact and Limitations of China's Soft Power

The process of "China imagining" took place against a backdrop of the emerging left-leaning trend in politics and diplomacy in the early 1960s, which also shaped the intertwining relationship between the literary scene and radicalism. While the main dynamics of this cultural and political transformation came from within Indonesian society, as a soft power resource, China was becoming increasingly internalized—the debates about whether or not some aspects of the China model in social, cultural and political developments could be utilized in Indonesia were invariably linked with different segments of a politically divided nation. This in turn contributed to the transnational appropriation of Chinese literary ideals and practices as well as their subsequent politicization. During the late 1950s and the first half of the 1960s, three patterns of interplay between Chinese literary

production and Indonesian cultural transformation were discernable: China as a model for the left-leaning cultural movement; China as a main factor responsible for the transition of some center-oriented writers to cultural radicalism; and China as a target of the criticisms by writers associated with the school of "art for the sake of art."

The Model: Lekra and Chinese Literary Thought

Founded in 1950, the Indonesian Institute of People's Culture (Lekra) was the most important cultural organization under PKI leadership. Its guiding principle, that the arts should be created for the people and writers should be politically active, contrasted starkly with the notion of "art for the sake of art," whose advocates were often associated with the "universal humanists" camp. While Lekra developed and evolved from the Indonesian soil, China's influence from the outside was evident from the organization's inception. As early as 1950, Njoto, a PKI Politburo member, introduced Mao's ideas concerning the social and political functions of art by writing approvingly: "Obviously, literature in China has become one of the real revolutionary instruments: for unifying the people, for educating the people, for attacking the enemy, and for wiping out the enemy's weapons."[85]

Throughout the Sukarno era, a number of Lekra leaders visited China and they all returned with positive impressions.[86] In addition to praising the country's socioeconomic progress, the Lekra delegates actively advocated the model of fusing literature with social reality and using arts as a weapon to transform society. Lekra's most important cultural doctrine, "politics is the commander" (*politik adalah panglima*), a principle dominating all of Lekra's artistic works, was modeled after Mao Zedong's famous assertion: "politics in command." Other doctrines and working methods included *turun ke bawah* (going to the lower level) and *meluas dan meninggi* (going wide and high). These sayings clearly paralleled the doctrines that Mao first elaborated in 1940, entitled *Talk at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art* (translated by Njoto and published in Indonesia in 1950). The expression "going wide and

[85] Njoto, "Literatur Baru: Bagaimanakah Pendapat Mao Tze-Tung tentang Literatur?" *Republik* 1, 4 (1950), 36.

[86] See for example, Agam Wispi, et al., *Dinasti 650 Djuta* (Jakarta: Lekra, 1961); Sitor Situmorang, *Zaman Baru* (Jakarta: Madjalah Zaman Baru, 1961); and H.R. Bandaharo, *Dari Bumi Merah* (Jakarta: Pembaruan, 1963).

high," for example, was a variation of Mao's formulation of "raising art's standard and at the same time promoting its popularization." "Going to the lower level," on the other hand, was the central thrust of socialist realism.[87] The notion of China-originated "revolutionary romanticism," which was gradually incorporated into the Lekra cultural movement, was evident in most of its members' literary and artistic works.[88]

Education played an important role in shaping Indonesian cultural politics. Between 1959 and 1965, the PKI's educational principles were known as *Panca Cinta* [Five Loves], the five principles that should be inculcated in all students: patriotism, the love of knowledge, world peace and international understanding, the study of the physical sciences, and appreciation of manual work. Lee Kam Hing has pointed out that there was a similarity between *Panca Cinta* and the educational principles of China, which included "love for the fatherland and the people, love of labor and love of science." "It is likely," he said, "that the PKI adopted the set of five loves contained in Chinese education and then employed the evocative Javanese term of *Panca*."[89]

The Transformer: Pramoedya and Cultural Radicalism

The incorporation of China's literary thought into the literary production of some Indonesian writers not only reinforced the existing left-leaning trend in modern literature, it also served as a push factor to the transition of some center-oriented intellectuals to cultural radicalism. A case in point is Pramoedya Ananta Toer, regarded as "one of the few Indonesians with a coherent and developed vision of the

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[87] As Mao wrote in 1953: "China's revolutionary writers and artists, writers and artists of promise, must go among the masses…go into the heat of the struggle,…in order to observe, experience, study and analyze all the different kinds of people, all the classes, all the masses, all the vivid patterns of life and struggle, all the raw materials of literature and art." Cited in Julie Shackford-Bradley, "Mao's Ghost in Golkar," *Inside Indonesia* 61 (Jan.–Mar. 2000), p. 27.

[88] Keith Foulcher, *Social Commitment in Literature and the Arts: the Indonesian "Institute of People's Culture" 1950–1965* (Clayton, Vic.: Monash University Center of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), 110–111. According to him, "Combined with 'politik adalah panglima' [Politics is the Commander] and turun ke bawah [Moving Down], this statement of ideology ['the two quality base']…remained the basis of LEKRA theoretical statements right up until 1965."

[89] Lee Kam Hing, *Education and Politics in Indonesia*, 220–222.

nation's history."[90] While complex reasons lay behind his transition from a detached writer espousing universal humanism to a political fighter fully committed to "socialist realism," China emerged as an important source of actual political influence and as an example of socio-cultural reengineering in his perception.[91]

Nationalism and universal humanism had been at the core of Pramoedya's cultural thinking prior to 1956. His novels published in that period were marked, in his own words, "by humanity [*humanitas*]—a utopian idealism that lives and dies by its rejection of existing reality." Although he himself did not belong to any political organization, Pramoedya was openly antagonistic toward the PKI. According to an official internal document compiled from materials provided by the Chinese Embassy in Jakarta, Pramoedya of the mid-1950s was classified as a "petit-bourgeois Centrist Writer" a type that accounted for the largest group among Indonesian writers. In the view of the PRC embassy, they were characterized by "their frustration and aimlessness. They were unwilling to throw in their lot with the imperialists; yet they did not have the courage to join in the struggle of the people and be part of the Indonesian revolutionary cause. They were dissatisfied with realities, corruption and the weakness of the capitalist regime; they demanded the change of the *status quo*."[92]

Pramoedya spent a month in China in 1956. In addition to visiting some industrial cities and witnessing the bustling sites of economic transformation, he held extensive discussions with a number of prominent writers (e.g., Zhou Yang, Mao Dun, Ba Ren, Yang Shuo, Liu Baiyu and Liu Zixia) about the relationship between literature and politics. Two major themes were constantly highlighted in these meetings and discussions. The first was the PRC literary doctrine of socialist realism, which originated in the Soviet Union but had been largely Sinicized by Mao Zedong and his cultural theoreticians—Lu Xun, for example, was hailed as "a great pioneer and representative of socialist realism." Central to this literary doctrine was the idea that artistic works should reflect social realities and people's life. The second theme, "art should

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[90] Adrian Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3; Benedict Anderson, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 10.

[91] Some of the biographical information can be found in Pramoedya, *The Mute's Soliloquy: A Memoir*, trans. Willem Samuels (New York: Hyperion East, 1999).

[92] Duiwai Wenhua, *Yindunixiya Wenhua Gaikuang*, 5–6.

serve the people," was first systematically elaborated by Mao Zedong in his 1940 *Talk at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art*. Like many of his peers, Pramoedya was impressed by China's social progress and the active role of writers in this process. This was reflected in his various speeches and writings during and after his China trip. In his view, Chinese intellectuals were true followers of Lu Xun, who was seen as the father of China's socialist realism. "Lu Xun was the voice of his nation and his people," Pramoedya declared. "He was an embodiment of the moral awakening which was full of the noble hopes for human beings. He did not merely hope; he took the best and most appropriate method—literature—in the struggle for the realization of his ideals."[93]

Prior to 1956, Pramoedya's view toward the two extremes of cultural perspectives—"art for the sake of art" and "art for the people"—had been ambivalent. After returning from China, however, he came to develop a clear preference for the latter: "Seen from the stand-point of international literature, China's literary works are somewhat formalistic. However, seen from the perspective of the [Chinese] state, there is no reason for much criticism, because China is now in the process of massive construction; writers write for the purpose of educating the masses rather than for money."[94] Before 1956 Pramoedya was convinced that the best way of achieving a just society was through cultural or social accommodation rather than through reforms in political institutions.[95] After 1956, he came to believe that political restructuring was essential not only for solving political problems, but also for coping with the cultural quandary. He thus developed a new view of Lekra: "With the founding of Lekra, it has become the dynamic in pushing forward the development of culture in society. The socialist stream has also gradually gained ground among writers." In January 1959, immediately after his second China trip, Pramoedya was elected to Lekra's central leadership and became editor of the *Lentera*, a literary forum of the daily *Bintang Timur* (published by Lekra).

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[93] Pulamudiya Ananda Duer [Pramoedya], "Zai Lu Xun Xiansheng Shishi Ershi Zhounian Jilian Dahuishang de Jianghua," [Speech before the Conference in Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Death of Lu Xun], *Wenyi Bao*, 20 (1956), 15–16.

[94] "Interview with Pramoedya," *Hsin Pao* (Jakarta), 17 Nov. 1956.

[95] Pramoedya wrote: "I had been fairly apolitical up until that time [1955]. In fact, I had consciously avoided involving myself in any activity that could be described as political." Pramoedya, *The Mute's Soliloquy*, 228.

In literary terms, Pramoedya's universal humanism was replaced by socialist realism. He no longer viewed "the people" as undifferentiated and passive little guys; instead, he saw them as workers and peasants who contributed greatly to society and should be portrayed positively in literature. The PRC cultural doctrine of "art should serve the people" reinforced Pramoedya's conviction that the people were not idle objects of oppression. This change was evident in the first novel written after his return from China, *Sekali Peristiwa di Banten Selatan* (*An event in Southern Banten*). Acknowledging the importance of "living with peasants and workers" in order to accurately interpret their life, he "went down" to live in the countryside of the Banten area. The novel that emerged from this experience had a strong political tone, depicting class confrontation between the oppressed and the exploiters. His subsequent writings continue to display such a clear tendency of mixing personal and the national, as he stated in 1999: "Writing is both my personal task and my national task. I believe that my books are part of the process of nation-building."[96]

The China connection, therefore, served as a key factor prompting the transition of Pramoedya in his political orientation, literary practice, and aesthetic understanding of society. By joining in the left-wing cultural movement, he became a prototype of the Indonesian intellectuals who tried to generate cultural and political change by way of a direct participation in this process. As a leading figure in the left-leaning literary movement of the late Sukarno era, Pramoedya's transition had far-reaching implications for the cultural politics of the time, and he received high praise from the Chinese embassy in Jakarta for defending the ethnic Chinese at the time of the anti-Chinese movement in 1959.[97]

The Target of Criticism: Limits of China's Soft Power

Analogous to the divisiveness of the political scene in the Sukarno years, images Indonesians had of China were equally diverse and contested, which helped explain the limitations of China's soft power. Indeed, a small number of writers were sharply critical of Indonesia's

[96] *Los Angeles Times*, 6 June 1999.

[97] See the report from the PRC embassy in Jakarta dated 3 June 1960 (file no. 105-00985-01), Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

left-leaning inclinations and the adaptation of the Chinese model. Their views about the relationship between the arts and politics in China were largely negative: art in China, they believed, had become "pure propaganda," and by placing political loyalty and social commitments above aesthetic sensitivity and artistic standards, the intellectuals had become "tools of propaganda."

Trisno Sumardjo, a noted writer, was one of the most outspoken critics. Hoping to find an answer for a vexing "moral code" question, namely how to forge a balance between "artistic creativity" and "social responsibility," he led a cultural delegation to China in 1957.[98] Although impressed by China's orderliness, discipline and the high spirit of the people, he was appalled by the apparent lack of intellectual freedom. Sumardjo reported that the Chinese writers he met only "talked about ideology and organization techniques [such as the practice of publication and paying honoraria]. They tended to avoid the question of individual freedom and free expression in the arts in particular and in society in general." His view of the "One Hundred Flowers" movement was marked by deep suspicion: "My impression is that a few flowers are allowed to blossom within the limits of the Constitution; anything beyond is considered to be reactionary and is to be wiped out." The lack of intellectual freedom was highlighted by the fact that there existed only one cultural and literary theory in the PRC, namely socialist realism. Defined as "something that is understood by the people, this doctrine," he observed, "was supported and promoted by the authorities and has replaced the classic Chinese literary principles." Claiming that socialist realism only produced "works of low value," Sumardjo faulted Chinese intellectuals for using literature to serve the agenda of "changing the spiritual sentiments of workers, peasants and soldiers." He was of the view that in the PRC "arts have degenerated to informational instruction and pure propaganda."[99]

Sumardjo's criticisms were shared by fellow writer Balfas, who was in the same delegation to China. Although he felt the country's economic construction was "amazing," he was critical of the practice of using arts as "a tool for development." He was discouraged to see only one topic in Chinese novels, that of "development."[100] Ramadhan, also a

[98] Trisno Sumardjo, "Sebulan di RRT," *Budaja*, 7 (1958), 15–25.
[99] Ibid.
[100] "Kesan[2] Sastrawan Indonesia tentang Tiongkok," *Sin Min*, 3 Dec. 1957.

renowned writer, was equally dismayed by the subordination of arts to power: "by equating art with life, work and development," he wrote, "Socialist Realism grossly simplifies the complexity and beauty of art." To him, the "One Hundred Flowers" movement had only "symbolic meaning," as restrictions were placed upon freedom of expression.[101] Convinced that the principle of "politics in command" in art had forced many writers to be self-censoring, Ramadhan also cast a doubtful eye on the Chinese cultural belief that "a work is valuable as long as it reflects development and the people's life."

The cultural polemics became increasingly politicized in the late Sukarno years—a time when the influence of the PRC on Indonesia's domestic transformation also increased remarkably. During the final years of Guided Democracy, for example, the official Indonesian news agency, Antara, used New China News Agency dispatches to not only convey information regarding China, but also for its coverage of Indonesia's domestic events.[102] Partly as a result of an accelerated process of polarization in the arena of politics and the adaptation of Chinese literary principles during the early 1960s, debates on culture in Indonesia were increasingly politicized and polarized. Pramoedya's high praise for the respected social status of Chinese writers, for example, was counterbalanced by the editor of *Siasat*, who charged that Pramoedya "overlooks the issue of intellectual freedom in the concerned countries."[103] It was partially in this context that H.B. Jassin reported that the importation of books from China caused "an ideological war" between writers associated with different political camps,[104] and that both the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and some local military authorities went on to ban publications from China in 1960.[105] Politically, Lekra writers were closely associated with the PKI and to a lesser degree with Sukarno, while many universal humanist writers aligned themselves with the right-wing army leadership and

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[101] Ramadhan K.H., "Kesan[2] Perdjalanan ke RRT, (IIX): Segala Mengabdi Pada Politik Negara," *Siasat* 11, 552 (8 Jan. 1957).

[102] Arnold C. Brackman, *The Communist Collapse in Indonesia* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), 146–47.

[103] *Siasat* 11, 506 (20 Jan.1957), 25.

[104] Jassin, *Surat-Surat, 1943–1983* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1984), 91.

[105] "Yindunixiya Jinzhi wo zai Yinni chuban faxin xuanchuanping qingkuan" [Current status of the banning of publication and distribution of our propaganda materials in Indonesia] (12 July–8 Sept. 1960), file no. 105-00986-02, Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

conservative Muslims. Culturally, these two groups held contrasting aesthetic views. Lekra writers firmly believed that art should serve the people and politics, while the universal humanist writers tended to insist that art should have its own aesthetic criteria and should be separated from politics. They also fiercely opposed to the inclusion of PRC cultural doctrines into Indonesia. Goenawan Mohamad wrote an essay in 1963 disputing one particular PRC cultural concept, the Chinese poet Feng Chih [Feng Zhi]'s belief that "a [political] slogan is a powerful poem." Goenawan rejected this interpretation and argued that poetry was a free statement and it was therefore impossible to compare poetry with political slogan.[106]

A similar trend of politicization was evident in the arena of education, with principles originating from China becoming a focal point of controversy. The contest for education during the first half of the 1960s was centered on *Panca Cinta* [Five Loves], which, together with land reform and the restructuring of the party system, constituted one of the three central issues that divided already-polarized Indonesia. On the one side were the PKI and its alliance. They argued that *Panca Cinta* served as the moral basis for implementing Sukarno's new vision for Indonesia. On the other side, non-communists, especially the Muslim groups, were critical of *Panca Cinta*'s atheistic stance. The two sides heatedly and emotionally exchanged views in the newspapers and through a number of well-publicized seminars. The debate led to Sukarno's intervention in June 1964. The outcome favored the *Panca Cinta*, as Sukarno declared:

> I want *ke-Binneka Tunggal Ika-an* [unity in diversity, the nation's motto] to produce as many ideas, conceptions, and creations as possible; and to produce youths, patriots, intellectuals, artists, writers, experts and indeed even craftsmen whom we can be proud of. In the People's Republic of China, Chairman Mao Tse Tung taught "Let a hundred flowers bloom together." Here I would use the slogan "Let the *melati* and the *mawar* and the *kenanga* and the *cempaku* bloom together in the Indonesian garden.[107]

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[106] Goenawan Mohamad, "Seribu Slogan dan Sebuah Puisi" (1963), in idem, *Potret Seorang Penjair Muda Sebagai Si Malin Kundang* (Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 1972), 31–32.

[107] Cited in Lee Kam Hing, *Education and Politics in Indonesia*, 332.

Concluding Remarks

In November 2001, the PRC prime minister Zhu Rongji paid an official visit to Indonesia which caused quite a sensation, with all major newspapers in the nation publishing editorials and commentaries about this first visit by the PRC premier in over a decade. In an editorial entitled "We Can Directly Listen to the Successful Stories of China's Development,"[108] the editors of *Kompas* stated that China's progress had been "spectacular and fascinating." With Zhu's visit, they wrote, "we can now listen to the successful stories concerning China's development over the last twenty years." They went on to say, "We should learn from China's example in development." Hailing Zhu's visit as "very special," a *Jakarta Post* editorial pointed out, "Indonesia would do well to take advantage of and explore the opportunities presented by this occasion." The editors reminded *Jakarta Post* readers that "this is a completely new, modern and very confident China that the rest of the world has to deal with."[109] Two years earlier (in December 1999), during a state visit to China, then-president Abdurrahman Wahid told his hosts that the two nations should be like "brothers" and that he was delighted in having a "Confucian brother."[110] Dahlan Iskan, CEO of the *Jawa Pos* Group, advocated in his 2008 book, *Lessons from China*, that not only should Indonesia learn from the Chinese model but that America could learn something from China too.[111]

At the regional level, China's development model (or the so-called Beijing Consensus) has become increasingly attractive in Southeast Asia as an effective alternative to the Washington Consensus, a series of neoliberal policies emphasizing fiscal discipline, trade liberalization, privatization and deregulation. Characterized as being "driven by a desire to have equitable, peaceful high-quality growth," China's new development approach "turns traditional ideas like privatization and free trade on their heads. It is flexible enough that it is barely classifiable

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[108] "Kita Bisa Mendengar Langsun Kisah Sukses Pembangunan Cina," *Kompas*, 7 Nov. 2001.

[109] "Welcome Premier Zhu," *Jakarta Post*, 7 Nov. 2001.

[110] *Lianhe Zaobao*, 6 Dec. 1999.

[111] Dahlan Iskan, *Pelajaran dari Tiongkok* (Surabaya: JP Books, 2008); Dahlan Iskan, "Amerika Harus Belajar Langkah-Langkah Tiongkok," *Jawa Pos*, 19 Nov. 2008. For a scholarly discussion of the Chinese model and the implications for Indonesia, see I. Wibowo, *Belajar dari Cina: Bagaimana Cina Merebut Peluang dalam Era Globalisasi* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2004).

as a doctrine. It does not believe in uniform solutions for every situation… Change, newness and innovation are the essential words of power in this consensus."[112] Apart from the resurfacing of catchwords widely used in Indonesia during the 1950s and 1960s such as pragmatism, equitable development, and newness, the past decade has also witnessed the rapid ascendance of China's soft power in its neighboring countries that is not dissimilar to its historical practices described in this study. For example, in Vietnam, where novels by Chinese writers now account for about half of all foreign literary books translated in the country, younger policy makers have adopted what they call a "Chinese model" of slowly opening the economy while retaining control of the political system. To Laotians, "China kind of symbolizes modernity," remarks an Australian anthropologist who has done fieldwork in the region.[113]

This recent wave of China fever and the manifestation of its soft power, it should be noted, have to be understood in a historical perspective that is sensitive to both contextualization and cultural politics. During the Sukarno era, the search for a new cultural identity constituted an integral component of social transformation, with intellectuals attempting to find viable inspirations from their own past and from experiences of their counterparts elsewhere. It is here that the advocacy for an "Oriental tradition" emerged as an attractive solution in the crisis in literature debates in the early 1950s. This process was facilitated significantly by the dynamic emergence of independent Asian and African nations as a new force in the international arena, symbolized by the 1955 Bandung Conference.[114] Sukarno, who had long believed in the ideas of Pan-Asianism and that Asian problems

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[112] The term "Beijing Consensus" was first coined by Joshua Ramo, the former Foreign Editor of *Time* magazine in his *The Beijing Consensus* (London: Foreign Policy Center, 2004). For a more detailed analysis of the Chinese model of development and relevant intellectual debates in China and beyond, see Huang Ping and Cui Zhiyuan, *Zhongguo yu Quanqiuhua: Huashengdun Gongsi Haishi Beijing Gongsi?* [China and Globalization: Washington Consensus or Beijing Consensus?] (Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe, 2005); Tianyu Cao ed., *The Chinese Model of Modern Development* (London: Routledge, 2005); and Mark Leonard, *What Does China Think?* (London: Fourth Estate, 2008).

[113] Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive*, 119, 133, 138; See also David C. Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

[114] For a recent reassessment on the Bandung Conference including China's role, see See Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya, eds., *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2008).

should be solved with "Asian formulas," declared in 1956 that "the Chinese and Indonesian peoples have many things in common . . . Your ideal is to build a new world free from exploitation, misery, and oppression—a world in which people can live freely and happily, which are our ideals as well."[115] It was in this context that China emerged as a soft power attractive to new countries such as Indonesia, and served as a real alternative to Western modernity in the 1950s and 1960s.

[115] Cited in Zou Sheng, ed., *Sujianuo Zongtong zai Zhongguo* [President Sukarno in China] (Hong Kong: Zhonghua Shuju, 1957), 167–68.

PART THREE

THE EXPORT AND GLOBALISATION OF MAOISM

CHAPTER EIGHT

TRANSPACIFIC SOLIDARITIES: A MEXICAN CASE STUDY ON THE DIFFUSION OF MAOISM IN LATIN AMERICA

Matthew Rothwell

> I toast a new period of fraternal friendship between China and Mexico. I remember that the only country on the American continent that had relations with China for many years, starting in the 17th century, was Mexico, then called New Spain. I recall the fact that the commerce between Mexico and China influenced various aspects of Mexican life, particularly in artisan production and in the popular arts, and I refer to the romantic legend of the *China Poblana* (Pueblan Chinese Girl), whose dress, modified by the taste of my people, became the costume par excellence for expressing the complicated and rich feeling of *mestizaje*, in the most popular and lucid national dance. Let me end by voting for the return of the China galleon to the port of Acapulco, not only to import and export valuable merchandise as in the past, but to communicate to Mexico the ideals of the People's Republic of China and pick up the highest aspirations of the Mexican people.[1]

So toasted Vicente Lombardo Toledano at a banquet held by Zhou Enlai in honor of the Union Conference of the Countries of Asia and Australasia held by the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in Beijing from 16 November to 1 December 1949.[2] As a member of the executive bureau of the WFTU, Lombardo formed part of the meeting's presidium. It was at this conference that Chinese and Soviet plans to promote the Chinese Revolution as a general model for revolution throughout the developing world were announced by Liu Shaoqi.[3] It is in this context that we have to understand Lombardo's commitment

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[1] Vicente Lombardo Toledano, *Diario de un Viaje a la China Nueva* (Mexico City: Ediciones Futuro, 1950), 108–109. Translation always mine unless otherwise mentioned.

[2] The countries sending union delegations were: Burma, Sri Lanka, China, North Korea, South Korea, the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Thailand, Mongolia, Pakistan, the USSR and Vietnam. Ibid., 106.

[3] Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 105. This point is discussed in a more global context in John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 159.

to "communicate to Mexico the ideals of the People's Republic of China," and his leading role in beginning that process.

By the time that Mexico's long 1960s began, Maoist ideas had gained sufficient traction in Mexico to play a significant role in the social movements of that period. The influence of Maoist ideas were manifest in the formation of explicitly Maoist groups that operated within the larger social movements, and also in the way that other organizations and movements took up particular Maoist ideas without committing themselves to the ideology as a whole. Mexicans who admired Maoist China and devoted themselves to propaganda work in support of the "ideals of the People's Republic of China" played a key role in the diffusion of Maoist ideas, beginning with Lombardo's memoir of his 1949 trip to China.

Systematic efforts at promoting lessons of the Chinese Revolution that began with Lombardo's memoir were continued by Lombardo's People's Party, reaching a critical point with the creation of the Mexico-China Friendship Society in 1957. This society later split in two, as veteran communist and feminist Esther Chapa led a faction that advocated armed struggle and an orthodox adherence to Mao's ideas. While Maoist ideas were then taken up by a variety of new leftist organizations in the 1960s and 1970s, orthodox Maoism in Mexico reached its high point in the guerrilla struggles led by Florencio Medrano in Morelos and Oaxaca in the 1970s.

The impact of Maoist ideas on contemporary Mexico has largely gone un-recognized. The main opposition party, the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), absorbed many former Maoist activists, while the smaller Workers' Party (PT) was formed by former Maoists. More surprisingly, Adolfo Oribe, one of the main advisers of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, was a leading ideologue of a Maoist splinter group that focused on peaceful reformist organizing among the poor. Meanwhile, the Ejército Popular Revolucionario (Revolutionary People's Army), one of Mexico's most prominent guerrilla groups (out of dozens of small armed guerrilla forces in Mexico today), still claims to adhere to a policy of Protracted People's War, a concept that originated with Mao Zedong.

The study of the diffusion of Maoist ideas in Mexico contributes to our understanding of how radical ideologies traveled within Latin America in the post-World War Two period and helps uncover a key component in the history of Latin American social movements and guerrilla warfare. From the 1960s to 1980s significant numbers of student activists, community organizers and guerrilla groups across

Latin America took direct inspiration from the Chinese Revolution and sought to apply its lessons according to their varied interpretations and in their local contexts. The Peruvian Shining Path, which led a roughly fifteen-year insurgency (1980–1995), was the most significant Maoist eruption in Latin America, although smaller Maoist guerrillas were formed in other countries, including Mexico, Brazil, Bolivia and Colombia.

By about 1970, one in four professors at the university in Ayacucho, cradle of the Shining Path, had visited China and some were using *Quotations from Chairman Mao* as their main text in philosophy and anthropology courses. The representative of Bolivia on the secretariat of the International Students' Union (ISU) in Prague returned to Bolivia via China after the Maoists left the ISU in 1963, and soon began guerrilla warfare in the Bolivian jungle. Other Bolivians and Peruvians living in China played important roles in polishing Spanish translations for publication and worked for Radio Peking, which broadcast in Quechua and Aymara as well as Spanish. In Colombia, a new Maoist party split from the pro-Soviet party in 1965 and formed a People's Liberation Army which soon operated across a large territory. While each national experience was different, in every Latin American country with a significant Maoist presence travel to China by communist leaders played a key role in the articulation of a domesticated Maoist politics. As Perry Johansson shows in his chapter, the same is also true of Sweden. In this chapter I examine the formation of Maoism in Mexico as a case study in the adaptation of Maoism in Latin America.

Conceptualizing the Domestication of Maoism in Latin America

The dynamics of the internationalization of Maoism involve both the efforts of local intellectuals inspired by the Chinese Revolution and the efforts of China to promote its state ideology, then termed "Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought." Early studies on the spread of Maoism to Latin America focused on Chinese efforts, and paid little attention to the agency of Latin Americans in the process.[4] While

[4] See, for example, Daniel Tretiak, "China and Latin America: An Ebbing Tide in Transpacific Maoism," *Current Scene: Developments in Mainland China* 4, 5 (1 March 1966): 1–12; and Ernst Halperin, "Peking and the Latin American Communists," *China Quarterly* 29 (January–March, 1967): 111–154.

China's efforts to spread and encourage the study of Mao Zedong Thought were important in the overall dynamic of the spread of Maoism, my research on the emergence of Maoism shows that the initiative of local revolutionaries in studying the example of the Chinese Revolution was the decisive factor in the internationalization of Maoism in Latin America. Thousands of Latin American intellectuals and revolutionaries traveled to and worked in China during the Maoist era (1949–1976). A small but significant number of those who traveled to China during this period dedicated themselves to distributing Chinese propaganda in their home countries and creating communist organizations based on Maoist principles.

Among the ways in which the international movement of ideas has been theorized by historians, two conceptual frameworks from recent scholarship are helpful for thinking about the domestication of Maoism in Latin America. The first of these frameworks is what Julius Scott has called "The Common Wind," and emphasizes the role of expansive, subterranean, word-of-mouth networks of communication in the movement of radical ideas through the African diaspora, from the Haitian Revolution to early-twentieth-century Pan-Africanism.[5] In the case of the Haitian Revolution, ideas were transmitted within the context of an already-existing slave community. Later, Black sailors relied on established connections within the African diaspora to spread Pan-African propaganda and organizational ties. The personal experience of those who witnessed the revolution (or the revolutionary society) first-hand, or who had personal contact with a prophetic leader such as Marcus Garvey, enabled them to claim the authority to put forward a counter-narrative against the dominant narrative and also to claim privileged status in interpreting the meaning of the revolution for their own society.

The example of Black sailors as vectors for radical ideas, particularly in the case of spreading the influence of the Haitian Revolution, is helpful in conceptualizing the role of travelers to China in the spread of Maoist ideology. As Julius Scott has shown in the Haitian

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[5] Julius Sherrard Scott III, "The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1986). See also David P. Geggus, ed., *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001) and David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 157–174.

case, sailors and former slaves who had seen the Haitian Revolution first-hand served as bearers of the idea of the revolution, conveyors of its lessons and example. Later, "the ship remained perhaps the most important conduit of Pan-African communication before the appearance of the long-playing record."[6] While the Chinese Revolution took place in the context of a world with much more advanced mass media and international communication systems, these media were very limited in what they could report on events happening inside China (indeed, even many scholars of China during these years faced great restrictions on their ability to understand events taking place inside China).[7] Certainly, Latin American, US and European media outlets delivered little news that communists would have found either trustworthy or inspiring.

The usefulness of the "common wind" model for understanding the communication of Maoism to Latin America lies in the key role of personal experience and the communication of that experience to others in ways that circumvented standard mass media. The particular social mechanics of communication differed, of course. In the case of Maoism in Latin America, the communication of new revolutionary ideas relied on organized forums, party meetings, left-wing periodicals and publishing houses. However, travel to China and personal contact with leaders such as Mao Zedong or Zhou Enlai, however brief, conveyed an authority that allowed Latin American intellectuals to plausibly challenge the dominant narratives about the Chinese Revolution and win adherents to Maoist efforts in Latin America. Viewed in this light, one can think of Abimael Guzmán as a twentieth-century Denmark Vesey.[8]

The second framework is the concept of asynchronous revolutionary development that has been put forward by John Lewis Gaddis,[9]

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[6] Peter Linebaugh, "All the Atlantic Mountains Shook," *Labour/Le Travail* 10 (Autumn 1982): 119. Cited in Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 13.

[7] See, for example, the methodological discussion of Chinese village studies in the 1970s based solely on interviewing refugees from a mainland village who had fled to Hong Kong, in Anita Chan, Richard Madsen and Jonathan Unger, *Chen Village: Under Mao and Deng*, expanded and updated edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 2–9.

[8] For Vesey's personal history and deep interest in the Haitian Revolution as a revolutionary model, see Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 170–171.

[9] Gaddis, *We Now Know*, 212–213, 362 n. 139. While Gaddis is inspired to use the term 'asynchronous' from a similar discussion in Vladislav Zubok and Constantine

who in the process of summing up many of the discoveries of the new Cold War literature notes the "surprisingly literal" way in which Mao understood the experience of the Soviet Union as that of an elder brother from whom the younger brother must learn. As Gaddis sums up:

> We have seen how he expected an American invasion of China in 1949 because the United States and its allies had sent troops to Siberia and North Russia in 1918: the Korean and Indochinese conflicts, as he perceived it, were the functional equivalent of such foreign intervention. He had allowed a brief period of experimentation with state-sponsored capitalism, analogous to Lenin's New Economic Policy. He had then collectivized agriculture and launched a Five-Year Plan for rapid industrialization, both based carefully on the Soviet model. He was even willing to wait "eighteen or even more years" for diplomatic recognition from the United States, because it had taken seventeen to recognize the Soviet Union.[10]

Gaddis convincingly shows that from 1949–1957, Mao and the Chinese Communist Party as a whole attempted to mechanically reproduce the Soviet experience of economic development and modernization.

Asynchronous revolutionary development is also a useful way of describing how Latin American Maoists sought to reproduce the Chinese revolutionary experience. Not long after the success of the Chinese revolution, the Soviet and Chinese parties decided to promote the Chinese experience as a model for revolution in other Third World countries.[11] Just as the Chinese understanding of the Soviet Union's development experience as a model led China to try to almost literally replicate the Soviet experience, Latin American Maoists tried to replicate the Chinese experience. In Peru, the Shining Path backed away from initial successes in waging guerrilla war in Lima because they diverged from the strategy of surrounding the city from the countryside. It also based its overall strategy on the belief that the United States would invade Peru, reproducing the Chinese Communist Party's experience under the Japanese occupation. In Mexico, the guerrilla force led by Maoist leader Florencio Medrano set up operations in the border region between Veracruz and Oaxaca, attempting to reproduce

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Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 214–215, Gaddis is the one who fleshes the idea out.

[10] Gaddis, *We Now Know*.

[11] Goncharov, et al., *Uncertain Partners*, 105.

Mao's success in the Hunan-Jiangxi border region. A similarly mechanical understanding of the military lessons of the Chinese revolution led Bolivian Maoists to launch a 'people's war' in a sparsely-populated jungle region.[12]

The case study that follows traces the development of Maoism in Mexico from a 1949 visit to China by Vicente Lombardo Toledano, a prominent Mexican Marxist, through the formation of a coherent Maoist trend in the wake of the Sino-Soviet split and amidst political upheaval within Mexico, to the launching of guerrilla warfare by Florencio Medrano. Thus we trace one of the many particular national experiences that formed part of the global process through which Maoism changed from "Marxism with Chinese characteristics" into an international political trend. This case study highlights the role activists who traveled to China played in domesticating Maoism, and the way their ideas about making revolution in Mexico demonstrated their belief in asynchronous revolutionary development.

Vicente Lombardo Toledano and the Beginning of Pro-China Propaganda Activities

Vicente Lombardo Toledano was one of Mexico's foremost labor leaders. In 1936 he founded the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), Mexico's largest union. The CTM became closely aligned with Mexico's ruling party, and Lombardo was forced out of its leadership in 1947. However, Lombardo remained an immensely important labor leader. Despite his being forced out of the CTM's leadership, Lombardo maintained a stance of critical support for (combined with loyal opposition to) Mexico's ruling party, subscribing to a form of Marxism that ascribed to the national bourgeoisie a leading role in Mexico's revolutionary process. Lombardo's memoir of his trip to China and the ongoing propaganda efforts of his Partido Popular, or People's Party (PP)—later People's Socialist Party, or Partido Popular Socialista (PPS)—were the initial conveyor belts of Maoist ideas to Mexico. These propaganda efforts formed the basis for the influence

[12] James Dunkerley, *Rebellion in the Veins: Political Struggle in Bolivia, 1952–1982* (London: Verso: 1984), 190–191. Oscar Zamora Medinacelli, interviewed by author, Sucre, 20 March 2007.

of Maoism on splinters from the PP(S) such as Arturo Gámiz's People's Guerrilla Group (Grupo Popular Guerrillero) (where Maoism was a secondary influence) and the Mexico-China Friendship Association led by Dr. Esther Chapa (which considered itself Maoist).

The WFTU conference required that Lombardo be in China from 12 November to 6 December 1949. The People's Republic had only been founded on 1 October and the communists were still mopping up Kuomintang troops in Sichuan and the southwest. The WFTU was a communist-dominated body and the conference was being held in Beijing both to mark and build on the success of the Chinese Revolution. Prior to the Chinese Revolution, such a conference would have been held in the Soviet Union. The conference was an opportunity for the various delegations to come and see revolutionary China for themselves. Lombardo himself utilized the trip to have conversations with Chinese communists about the nature of the revolution they had carried out.

Lombardo traveled to China through the Soviet Union, flying across the USSR as part of a convoy of four airplanes carrying delegates to the WFTU conference, then completing the journey by train. Apart from Lombardo's wife, Rosa María, only one other Latin American was present, the secretary-general of the Communist Confederation of Cuban Workers, Lázaro Peña.[13] On their arrival in Manchuria, the delegation was welcomed by singing children and a feast.

> Despite the snowstorm and the wind that keeps you from opening your eyes, hundreds of workers and schoolchildren wait for us at the station. One of these, standing in front of his comrades, who look like porcelain dolls, leads the chorus that sings the *March of the Eighth Route Army*—the hymn of the famous army of the Chinese Revolution, equivalent to *La Adelita* of the Northern Division of the Mexican Revolution—that we would afterwards frequently hear during our stay in the country.[14]

Lombardo and the rest of the executive bureau of the WFTU were received as distinguished international guests. Similar events took place along the entire route to Beijing: mass organizations of workers, youth and women greeted the delegation at several stops, hosting large meals in their honor. Along the way, a rally was held in Harbin, where Lombardo was one of four WFTU executive bureau members to address

[13] Lombardo Toledano, *Diario de un Viaje a la China Nueva*, 66–67.
[14] Ibid., 81.

the crowd. In Beijing the WFTU representatives were met by a high-level delegation led by Liu Shaoqi and were put up in the Six Nations Hotel (formerly the Gran Hotel des Wagons Lits).[15]

On 17 November Lombardo had the first of a series of meetings with representatives of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This first meeting was apparently on the history of the revolution, which he retells in the travelogue. His next meeting, two days later, was on China's agrarian reform. In his memoir, he emphasizes the land-to-the-tiller policy of land redistribution (with no mention of this as a basis for future collectivization, which given the experience of the Soviet Union would have been an obvious issue to raise); peasant participation in the process; and an end to oppression by landlords.[16]

The next day, 20 November, Lombardo had his next meeting, which focused on China's economy.[17] He emphasizes worker participation in workplace decision-making processes and the importance of state ownership combined with a secondary role for private capital. Lombardo asked his Chinese interlocutors:

> And what about financial policy, I ask my friends, remembering the bitter experiences of Mexico's governments of revolutionary origin that with one hand build or try to build and with the other destroy or paralyze their own work through lack of an effective credit policy that could serve as a basis for economic development.[18]

Lombardo's Chinese friends answered:

> All financial enterprises, they answer me, will be strictly controlled by the State. The right of issuing currency belongs to the State. The circulation of foreign currencies inside the country is forbidden. The selling and buying of foreign stocks, of foreign currencies, of gold and of silver, will be managed by State banks. Private financial enterprises that operate within the Law will be subject to the supervision and guidance of the State.[19]

In exchanges such as these, Lombardo used his questions and his friends' answers to didactically communicate Chinese policy to his readers as a development model that was potentially adaptable to Mexican conditions.

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[15] Ibid., 81–84, 88, 90–92, 97–99.
[16] Ibid., 109–118, 126–134.
[17] Ibid., 136–141.
[18] Ibid., 140.
[19] Ibid., 141.

On November 21, Li Lisan addressed the conference on the "experiences, lessons and current conditions of the workers movement in China."[20] Lombardo summed up the talk as addressing the question "How were the working class and people of China able to defeat the reactionary and brutal government of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism and win victory in a backward, semifeudal and semicolonial country like China?"[21] It is key here that he asked this in these general, universal terms: How does any backward, semifeudal and semicolonial country defeat imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism? What follows concerns not only China, but was also meant as a lesson for other backward, semifeudal and semicolonial countries. Li Lisan (and Lombardo in his memoir) emphasized the worker-peasant alliance and the agrarian revolution; formation of a united front that could encompass the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie; the People's Liberation Army; the Party, guided by Marxism-Leninism, which enabled it to articulate the appropriate tactics at each phase of the struggle and overcome rightist and adventurist deviations;[22] and the USSR's existence as a support base and its victory in World War Two. Lombardo described these factors as the Chinese Revolution's "causes of victory."[23]

In describing both Mexico and China as semifeudal and semicolonial, and drawing universal lessons about worker and peasant mobilization under such conditions on the basis of the Chinese experience, Lombardo seems to ignore the vast social and cultural differences between Mexico and China. It is hard to believe that Lombardo, who had a long history as a successful organizer of Mexican workers, particularly as the founder of the CTM, could be unaware of the vast differences between Mexican and Chinese workers and peasants, and between the larger societies these workers and peasants found themselves in. Yet, to be able to seriously advocate taking the Chinese Revolution as a model for Mexico, Lombardo must have believed that, despite whatever differences between Mexico and China he was

[20] Ibid., 144.
[21] Ibid., 145.
[22] A rightist deviation might typically involve compromising in a way that would negate the goals of the revolution, while an adventurist deviation would involve continuing armed struggle under conditions where mass support did not exist or where negotiation was called for.
[23] Ibid., 144–156.

cognizant of (and he was no fool), there are certain universal characteristics of workers and peasants, and of semifeudal and semicolonial societies, that prevail across space, time and vast cultural and social differences. These universal characteristics would then allow for lessons to be drawn from one context and applied in another, seemingly completely alien context, on the basis of the commonalities between all peasants or all semifeudal societies (regardless of time and space). This universalism seems to be an important underlying assumption of "revolutionary asynchronicity."

That night, Mao received and dined with the executive bureau members of the WFTU. Lombardo sat next to Mao's wife Jiang Qing at dinner. When he met Mao, Lombardo explained "the similarity, in origin, between the 1910 Mexican Revolution and the Chinese Revolution, and I informed him of the enormous interest with which all the peoples of Latin America followed the development of the liberation war of his people."[24] After dinner, Lombardo reflected on meeting Mao, who had made a great impression on him. Lombardo considered Mao the "leader of the greatest anti-imperialist national revolution in history," and beside Lenin and Stalin, one of the three greatest men of the early twentieth century.[25]

Lombardo's comments to Mao merit some consideration. Did Lombardo really see the Chinese and Mexican revolutions as being similar in their origin? If his comment to Mao was merely cocktail party conversation, why did he repeat it in his book, which is nothing if not didactic? While the Chinese and Mexican revolutions both involved the mass mobilization of rural people, the similarities end there.[26] The Chinese Revolution was led by a Marxist party and created a socialist country. The Mexican revolution was led by a collection of decidedly non-ideological leaders. It seems likely that the comment was meant to further convince the reader of the relevance of Chinese experience to the Mexican experience.

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[24] Ibid., 159–160.

[25] Ibid., 162–163.

[26] A serious comparison between the Chinese and Mexican revolutions has been made in Eric Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969). John Mason Hart compares the Mexican Revolution with the Chinese Revolution of 1911 in *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

On 27 November, the WFTU executive bureau members were treated to a review of a special north China division of the People's Liberation Army. The review was an occasion for discussion with military leaders about the military strategies and tactics developed in the course of the Chinese Revolution. Lombardo recounted some of these main points in his memoir, stressing the political role of the army and Mao's maxim that "the enemy advances, we retreat." While Lombardo did not say anything specific about the universality of these military lessons of the Chinese revolution, the way Lombardo treated Chinese military theoretical formulations as aphorisms rather than as something particular to China implies that he took them as lessons with universal application (despite the fact that Lombardo never made any serious plans for armed struggle in Mexico). This trend in his thinking is particularly interesting, given that some of his followers, such as Arturo Gámiz, later did take a military turn.[27]

Lombardo's final meeting with his Chinese hosts was on 29 November and focused on what the Chinese called the New Democratic form of government. A long section of his book deals with how the four classes of the united front (proletariat, peasantry, urban petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie) participated in government through parties and mass organizations that represent different class forces and sectoral interests. He cited statements by a variety of representatives of mass organizations representing non-communist social strata, such as an industrialist and a religious person, in support of the idea that non-communists were able to substantially and meaningfully participate in governing the People's Republic of China.[28]

Lombardo's memoir was one component of a new global campaign to promote the Chinese Revolution as a model for much of the Third World. In late 1949 the Chinese and Soviet communist parties reached a consensus on this approach, and it was publicly announced in a speech by Liu Shaoqi at the WFTU conference in Beijing. Given Lombardo's status as an executive bureau member of the WFTU and his political astuteness, it is certain that he would have been aware of the significance of this new approach. It is likely, although I have found no direct evidence for it, that this new policy was explicitly discussed with him by the Soviets and Chinese. Indeed, the didactic manner in

[27] Lombardo Toledano, *Diario de un Viaje a la China Nueva*, 187–189.
[28] Ibid., 192–204.

which he reports on his conversations with his "Chinese friends" about various aspects of the Chinese Revolution seems to confirm his support for this new agenda.[29]

Lombardo's main political concern was to make Mexico economically independent through the deepening of land reform and a program of rapid industrialization.[30] The Soviet Union had provided an initial example for implementing this vision. Now China, which communists assumed to share a semicolonial and semifeudal nature with much of the rest of Asia, Africa and Latin America, was also implementing this vision. But the Chinese Revolution had been a long, violent war led by a visionary Marxist philosopher. While the Chinese Revolution contained lessons for strengthening the national economy which Lombardo might have hoped to one day get the left-wing of the ruling Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) to implement, it was an ideological package that contained more volatile elements.

Two Spin-Offs from Lombardismo: Arturo Gámiz's Grupo Popular Guerrillero and Esther Chapa's Sociedad Mexicana de Amistad con China Popular

In the early 1960s, two spin-offs from Lombardismo emerged in the context of domestic and international polarization among communists set off by de-Stalinization in the Soviet Union and the 1958 uprising of teachers and railway workers in Mexico. These spin-offs echoed Lombardo's earlier promotion of the Chinese Revolution as a model for Mexico. The first was Esther Chapa's Mexico-China Friendship Society (Sociedad Mexicana de Amistad con China Popular), which dedicated itself to promoting the Chinese Revolution as a model for Mexico, not mainly as a set of economic policies but with emphasis on protracted people's war and Mao Zedong Thought. The second

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[29] The manner in which Lombardo reports on the various aspects of the Chinese Revolution echoes the way in which official Chinese publications discussed these issues. It is unclear, though, if this is because Lombardo drew on official Chinese publications in drafting his travelogue, or if it is due to the fact that his Chinese interlocutors did not themselves stray far from official narratives.

[30] A scholar of Lombardismo, Barry Carr, succinctly characterizes Lombardo's politics this way in "The Fate of the Vanguard under a Revolutionary State: Marxism's Contribution to the Construction of the Great Arch," in Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds. *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 332.

was the People's Guerrilla Group (Grupo Popular Guerrillero), which was led by Arturo Gámiz and other former PP(S) cadres who left the PP(S)-led General Union of Mexican Workers and Peasants, or Unión General de Obreros y Campesinos de México (UGOCM), to launch guerrilla warfare in Chihuahua. Whether or not the two groups had any contact, together they represented the emergence of an ideological undercurrent in Lombardismo that saw armed struggle as an immediately possible and desirable path for creating a socialist state in Mexico.

These currents in support of armed struggle emerged from Lombardismo due to global and Mexican events that polarized the communist political terrain. The conflict between the Soviet Union and China which began in 1956 and culminated in open polemics in 1963 was a major international factor. The polemics highlighted different Marxist positions, including the contradictions inherent in the PP(S)'s approach to China. Despite the efforts of China and the USSR to keep their differences out of the public eye before 1963, many participants in the international communist movement were either informed about the conflict (by someone trying to win them to one side or the other) or could see that it was going on. Indeed, the conflict had been set off by Khrushchev's criticisms of Stalin and the beginnings of de-Stalinization in the USSR. De-Stalinization entailed major changes that prompted a lot of controversy, even among those who didn't know about the high-level conflict between the Soviets and the Chinese. In 1958 there was a mass protest and strike movement in Mexico among teachers and railway workers. This struggle was led by the Communist Party and marked a high point for communist mass influence in Mexico. On the surface, the course and outcome of this movement did not seem to challenge the overall direction of the communist movement in Mexico. But the uprising, in combination with de-Stalinization in the USSR and the brewing dispute between the Chinese and the Soviets, created ferment and polarization within the communist movement.[31] It was in the context of these events that Esther Chapa and Arturo Gámiz made their breaks with the peaceful reformism of Lombardismo.

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[31] On the radicalizing effect of the railway workers' and teachers' strikes on the communist movement in Mexico, see Camilo, interviewed by author, Mexico City, 16 Feb. 2006. He claimed that the 1958 teachers and railway workers movements contributed to the impulse within the PCM and in the movement generally to look for other ways of doing things than the way the PCM did things.

The Mexico-China Friendship Society

In 1957, Luís Torres Ordóñez, an economist at the National Indigenist Institute (Instituto Nacional Indigenista) and a member of Lombardo's People's Party, formed the Mexico-China Friendship Society (Sociedad Mexicana de Amistad con China Popular—SMACP). The Society distributed literature from China and organized trips to China for artists, scientists, politicians and representatives of the labor movement (notable travelers included muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros and former president Lázaro Cárdenas).[32] They would meet their professional counterparts there as well as see the sights, and then report on what they saw at meetings organized on their return to Mexico. The society was also a center for Mexican sinophilia. Thus, a meeting on Chinese art or science would mix admiration for Chinese art and culture in general with particular admiration for socialist art or science, and the alleged ability of socialist society to make new and rapid breakthroughs on these fronts (with the clear implication that, were Mexico to become socialist, or at least adopt more socialistic policies, similar breakthroughs could be made in Mexico). The society sought to both propagate the accomplishments of socialist China and win over public opinion for Mexico to switch diplomatic recognition from the Republic of China (Taiwan) to the People's Republic of China. Because of its focus on propaganda work and its ties to the Chinese government and ruling party, the society was the main conduit for Chinese propaganda entering Mexico.[33]

Doctor Esther Chapa was the first female professor of microbiology at the National Autonomous University (UNAM)'s medical school, a communist and an early feminist.[34] In the 1930s she fought for women's right to vote as a founding member and leader of the United Front for Women's Rights (Frente Único Pro Derechos de la Mujer).[35] As a communist women's rights activist, she emphasized women's equality with men and their capacity as revolutionaries, in opposition to other activists who emphasized women's nurturing and maternal nature.

[32] Victor Alba, "The Chinese in Latin America," *The China Quarterly* 5 (January–March 1961): 54.

[33] Leonardo Ruilova, *China Popular en América Latina* (Quito: Ediciones Internacionales, 1978), 136; Adolfo Mexiac, interviewed by author, Cuernavaca, 11 March 2006.

[34] Esperanza Tuñón Pablos, *Mujeres que se organizan. El Frente Unico Pro Derechos de la Mujer, 1934–1938* (Mexico City: Grupo Editorial Miguel Angel Porrúa, 1992), 95.

[35] Jocelyn Olcott, *Revolutionary Women in Postrevolutionary Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 111.

In her 1936 pamphlet, *El derecho de voto para la mujer* (Voting Rights for Women), Chapa emphasized women's participation in workplaces and universities, in the struggles against war, imperialism and fascism and in the revolutionary movement more generally. Chapa stated "she is in offices and schools, continues at home and takes to the street for demonstrations, organizes meetings, acts in revolutions and finally, favors the sanctioning of leftist governments to support the proletarian class that has the mission of destroying the capitalist regime under which we live. And this modern woman is denied the vote under the pretext that she is incapable of exercising it!"[36]

In World War II she participated in Mexico City's civil defense committee as a women's representative. She served as director of the National School for Teaching Medicine and the National Nursing School. She gave medical care at a women's prison and was involved in efforts to reform women prisoners. Before her involvement in the SMACP, Chapa had a history of leadership in international solidarity efforts. In 1939, President Cárdenas named her director of a committee to aid Spanish children victimized by the Spanish civil war[37] and she was active in solidarity activities with the Soviet Union sponsored by both the Mexican Communist Party and Lombardo. Until her break with Lombardismo in the early 1960s, her politics were similar to those of Lombardo and the Mexican Communist Party. She had participated in efforts to reform Mexican society and extend solidarity to the socialist world while also trying to work with the Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (PRM) and successor PRI governments, including participating in official state activities such as the civil defense committee and the prison administration.[38]

The Declaration of Principles and Statutes of the SMACP enumerated its goals: creating cultural and fraternal ties between the Mexican and Chinese peoples; popularizing knowledge about China and its new era; developing interchanges; and working for the inclusion of the

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[36] Quoted in Ibid., 164. The translation is presumably Olcott's.

[37] Tuñón Pablos, *Mujeres que se organizan*, 142.

[38] Andrea Gómez, interviewed by author, Cuernavaca, 12 March 2006. Erika Cervantes, "Esther Chapa fue promotora incansable del voto femenino," Comunicación e Información de la Mujer, http://www.cimacnoticias.com/noticias/03abr/s03040106.html (accessed 7 July 2007). On the contributions of Mexican Marxists to ruling party hegemony in Mexico, see Carr, "The Fate of the Vanguard under a Revolutionary State."

People's Republic of China in the United Nations.[39] In the early 1960s a major political dispute arose about what the main task of the association should be. Should it continue to mainly do propaganda work promoting China's economic and cultural advances, or should it try to spread the revolutionary lessons about China's liberation through people's war, and concentrate on doing propaganda work about the relevance of Maoism to making revolution in Mexico?

This conflict resulted in those advocating a people's war approach, led by Chapa, being expelled in 1963 and forming their own Mexico-China Friendship Society.[40] Both of these groups operated out of modest headquarters where they sold books, held meetings and showed films produced in China. They concentrated on propaganda activities, distributing *Pekín Informa* (*Peking Review*), *China Reconstruye* (*China Reconstructs*), books by China's Foreign Languages Press and other literature emanating from the People's Republic. They also organized regular visits to China. The Torres group concentrated on sending notable political figures, artists and professionals to visit China. The Chapa group organized delegations of workers and revolutionaries.[41] During the Spring and Summer of 1966 Chapa organized a delegation of "18 workers who will take a one-year course on Marxism-Leninism" and made arrangements for sending pamphlets and other literature back to Mexico from China.[42] Police records indicate that Chapa's SMACP had about 150 members in 1966.[43]

In addition to bringing propaganda back to Mexico from China, Chapa may have received some funds for her political work and for the use of other Maoists as well. Agents of the Political and Social Investigations police service (IPS) suspected that Chapa was receiving funds from China. In speculating about the source of an unusually large quantity of money that the Spartacist Communist League (Liga Comunista Espartaco) had come into, an IPS agent speculated "it is possibly Esther Chapa, Chairwoman of the Mexico-China Friendship

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[39] "Declaración de Principios y Estatutos de la Sociedad Mexicana de Amistad con China Popular" in IPS Caja 492, exp. 2, #81.

[40] IPS Caja 495, exp. 1, #475 (dated 31 May 1966).

[41] Adolfo Mexiac, interviewed by author; Andrea Gómez, interviewed by author; and Simitrio Tzompazquelitl, interviewed by author, Mexico City, 21 March 21, 2006.

[42] IPS Caja 495, exp. 1, #552 (dated 4 June 1966).

[43] IPS Caja 493, exp. 1, #199 (dated 23 July 1966). This is the only numerical estimate I have found for membership in either SMACP at any time.

Society, who is giving them money, as it is known that her trips to China are for the purpose of bringing back funds for agitational work."[44]

The differences between the two Mexico-China Friendship Societies are clear in the police surveillance reports. The reports describe Chapa as organizing "frequent visits to People's China with numerous worker delegations" and as having links to some of the small pro-Stalin and pro-China groups that were formed in the wake of de-Stalinization and the Sino-Soviet split.[45] They describe her as being in favor of the "struggle line" and applying the Chinese experience to Mexican workers' struggles.[46] The differences between the two societies are illustrated by the dueling events they sometimes held on the same night. For example, on 8 July 1966 Chapa gave a talk attended by about 70 people on the "State and Organization of People's China" at the National School for Political and Social Sciences, where she talked about her own visits to China. That same night, Torres's society held an event attended by about 50 people where they showed a film on Chinese painting and landscapes.[47] Later in the month, on 22 July, Torres's society held a talk on printing, engraving and marble sculpture in China attended by about 40 people. That same night, Chapa gave a talk on women in China at UNAM's school of economics that was attended by about 300 people. She emphasized the role of women guerrillas in China's communist struggle and showed a film from China.[48]

As can be seen from the IPS police reports, Chapa's events were usually larger than Torres's, sometimes by a large margin. It seems reasonable to expect that youthful militants swelling the ranks of Mexican radicalism in the 1960s would be more attracted to a presentation on women guerrillas than a presentation on marble sculpture. To the extent that the Torres group remained faithful to the vision of Lombardo Toledano, who discerned an "anti-national provocation" within the 1968 student movement, it probably was less attractive to New Left youth and students than Chapa's group.[49] Chapa's presence on

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[44] IPS Caja 492, exp. 1, #394 (dated 24 May 1966).
[45] IPS Caja 492, exp. 1, #108 (dated 14 May 1966).
[46] IPS Caja 492, exp. 2, #80 (dated 30 May 1966).
[47] IPS Caja 492, exp. 3, #369 (dated 8 July 1966); IPS Caja 492, exp. 3, #371 (dated 8 July 1966).
[48] IPS Caja 493, exp. 1, #161 (dated 22 July 1966); IPS Caja 493, exp. 1, #167 (dated 22 July 1966).
[49] Roger Bartra, *El Reto de la Izquierda: Polémica del México Actual* (Mexico City: Editorial Grijalbo, 1982), 185.

the UNAM campus might also have added to the prestige and accessibility of her events.

In 1966 Chapa's SMACP made a particular effort to commemorate the anniversary of the 1 October 1949 founding of the People's Republic of China. The association marked the event with a 30 September movie showing and talk by Chapa, followed by a series of smaller, invitation-only discussion sessions on 1 October. The discussion sessions were each led by experienced members of the SMACP. This effort illustrates how Chapa's SMACP saw the role of revolutionary propaganda in the formation of Maoist organization in Mexico: first Chapa showed a movie and gave a talk to a large audience. The next day, the SMACP gathered together smaller groups to talk privately and in more depth about the content and meaning of the previous day's event. Thus, Chapa sought to ideologically train new Maoist cadres.[50]

In March 1967 Chapa returned from China with the impression that she had been made China's only official representative in Mexico and with a small amount of economic aid in hand for forming a pro-Chinese communist party. Subsequently, she held meetings with Spartacist Communist League leaders with this proposition in mind. However, no unified Maoist party materialized out of these efforts. It is impossible to know exactly what she was told in China. Given China's foreign policy shift toward (and even greater domestic rhetorical emphasis on) favoring the development of liberation struggles in other countries during the early years of the Cultural Revolution, it seems quite plausible that someone in China who met with Chapa gave her a strong endorsement vis-à-vis the politics of Torres's SMACP. Certainly, Chapa's emphasis on revolutionary struggle over economic development echoed the ideological battles being fought within the Chinese Communist Party and best matched China's official line at the time. However, given the chaos in China's government in 1967 and the fact that Torres's society kept functioning as it always had, it does not seem that whatever Chapa was told was very meaningful in the long run. China did not break off relations with Torres's society, and there is no further evidence that China considered Chapa its representative in Mexico. Perhaps Chapa was a victim of a combination of the revolutionary enthusiasm and breakdown in government functioning of the

[50] IPS Caja 495, exp. 2, #273 (dated 12 Sept. 1966).

Cultural Revolution. Or perhaps China quickly re-thought its decision and decided it would be too awkward to inform Chapa of its error. In any case, Chapa seems to have placed much more importance on her (short-lived) position as China's official representative within Mexico's revolutionary movement than China did.[51]

Travel to China and talks given by those returning from these trips, along with the organized distribution of Chinese propaganda by the friendship societies and other pro-China political groups, were key ways in which Maoist politics were spread to Mexico. The IPS police archives show intensive propaganda efforts by Maoist forces during this period, with political activists showing up individually or in groups as large as 20 at universities and elsewhere with bookstands featuring the works of Lenin and Mao and other literature from China.[52] Such propaganda activities were common but risky, since although this sort of propaganda was legal, these efforts sometimes ended in police attacks on the political activists.[53]

The People's Guerrilla Group

Arturo Gámiz had been a member of Lombardo's PP(S) and had played a leading role in a series of land invasions conducted by the PP(S)-led UGOCM in Chihuahua and northern Durango during the late 1950s and early 1960s. In 1964, Gámiz and others left the PPS in order to begin armed struggle, culminating in the 23 September 1965 assault on the Madera Barracks.[54] The most in-depth ideological statements made by the movement led by Gámiz appeared as a series of five resolutions (printed in pamphlet form) adopted by a "Mountain Meeting" held in February 1965 to unify his movement around a political platform in Torreón de Cañas, Las Nieves municipality, Durango.

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[51] IPS Caja 515, exp. 3, #122 (dated 9 March 1967).

[52] IPS Caja 495, exp. 1, #616 (dated 10 June 1966); IPS Caja 493, exp. 3, #204 (dated 26 August 1966).

[53] Simitrio Tzompazquelitl, interviewed by author.

[54] Donald Hodges and Ross Gandy, *Mexico Under Siege: Popular Resistance to Presidential Despotism* (New York: Zed Books, 2002), 88–89. Modeled on Fidel Castro's 1953 assault on the Moncada Barracks (also unsuccessful from a military standpoint), Gámiz's assault on the Madera Barracks in Chihuahua was a disastrous undertaking. Seventeen guerrillas attacked 120 soldiers. Eight guerrillas died during the battle, and most survivors, including Gámiz, were soon tracked down and killed.

These resolutions display influences from a number of sources, most prominently the Mexican and Cuban revolutions.[55] They also show a significant Chinese influence.[56] As a member of the PP(S), Gámiz and his leadership cohort would have been exposed to Chinese communist ideas (including Lombardo's memoir discussed above) and clearly they assimilated some of these ideas into their own program for revolution in Mexico. Indeed, China is indicated as a reference point at the beginning of the third resolution: "Compared with China and other European nations the history of our Fatherland is very short." In the fifth resolution, the polemics against the "peaceful road," while not unique to the Chinese position, echo the Chinese polemics against the Soviet Union of the same period. The third resolution states that:

> It's common to speak of progress and stability in the abstract but we revolutionaries shouldn't go around in the clouds with abstractions, we should give things their real meaning. There are two social classes; never at any moment should a revolutionary let himself forget this, the exploited and the exploiting…

This position, along with the summation of Mexican history since the Mexican Revolution as a "half century of bourgeois dictatorship," represents a sharp break with the Lombardista and Communist Party orthodoxy that saw the economic development of Mexico under the PRM and PRI as having a significant revolutionary nationalist aspect to it.[57] In particular, the emphasis on "development for whom" echoes Maoist economic thinking in China's polemics with the Soviet Union.

Mao's maxim that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" is echoed in Gámiz's statement that "rights and freedom reside in the gun."[58] Also telling, Mao's concept of the mass line is reflected

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[55] The influence of the Mexican Revolution was mainly rhetorical. The foco tactics and assault on the Madera Barracks (imitative of Castro's assault on the Moncada Barracks) were directly inspired by the Cuban example.

[56] Another commentator has noted the Maoist influence on the Grupo Popular Guerrillero, see Baloy Mayo, *La Guerrilla de Génaro y Lucio: Análisis y Resultados* (Mexico City: Editorial Diógenes, 1980), 49.

[57] Although, as indicated above in our quotation from Lombardo's memoir regarding economic development in China and Mexico, Lombardo and also the PCM saw the revolutionary nationalist aspect of Mexico's modernization as being secondary to the continued subordination of Mexico to the United States and other imperialist powers.

[58] Arturo Gámiz García, "Resolución 3. Breve Resumen Histórico," in *Segundo Encuentro de la Sierra "Heraclio Bernal"* (Ediciones Línea Revolucionaria, 1965), 1.

in the following statement by Gámiz: "The obligation of revolutionaries is to synthesize and rationalize the experience the masses gain in their struggles and integrate it with the universal revolutionary movement…"[59] While Gámiz was not an archetypical Maoist, an examination of his ideological statements shows the clear influence of the Chinese Revolution. Whether or not he was exposed to Maoist ideas as a PP(S) cadre, Gámiz took up some Maoist ideas and wielded them in explaining his reasons for taking up arms after leaving the PPS.

Chapa and Gámiz: From Lombardo's Popular Front to Mao and Che's Armed Struggle

Esther Chapa's Mexico-China Friendship Society continued its propaganda work throughout the 1960s and its work was carried on by her sister Virginia after Esther's death in 1970.[60] It remained the main conduit for Chinese propaganda and as such was a key link in the ideological training of Mexico's Maoists. Arturo Gámiz's People's Guerrilla Group was smashed soon after its ill-conceived assault on the Ciudad Madera barracks in Chihuahua, with some survivors joining another guerrilla group, the Party of the Poor. These two groups came out of Lombardismo, but broke with it because of their militant stances, which involved taking up the politics of Maoism to a greater or lesser extent. They were part of a larger turn toward armed struggle and confrontational mass politics that occurred in the 1960s.

What happened that made advocates of armed struggle like Chapa and Gámiz leave Lombardista political organizations (the original SMACP and the UGOCM[61] respectively) in the early 1960s? I am not arguing that the 1958 strike movement and the Sino-Soviet split suddenly catalyzed some latent trend within Lombardista thinking. Rather, before these events (to which can be added the Cuban Revolution),

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[59] Gámiz García, Resolución 4. Medio Siglo de Dictadura Burguesa. La Burguesía ha Fracasado. Es Incapaz de Resolver los Problemas Nacionales, in *Segundo Encuentro de la Sierra "Heraclio Bernal"*, 5–6.

[60] In the 1980s, when the Chinese government asked Virginia Chapa to destroy or return most of her materials from the Maoist era, Virginia passed her large stock of Maoist propaganda along to Mexicans working in solidarity with Peru's Sendero Luminoso. Martín Rodríguez and Víctor Reyes, interviewed by author, Mexico City, 20 Feb. 2006.

[61] Both of which were PPS-led mass organizations; i.e., organizations which generally followed the political guidance of the PPS but which had a broader membership than the party itself.

most communists perceived no conflict between the idea of eventually waging an armed struggle to overthrow the Mexican state and a long-term policy of supporting the left-wing of the PRI. Major communist parties around the world had integrated broad popular front politics with armed struggle during the 1930s and 1940s.[62] Lombardo's discussion of the Chinese Revolution as a model for Mexican revolutionaries did not ignore the Chinese experience of armed struggle, even though that was not what he chose to emphasize. When Esther Chapa wrote in 1936 that the modern woman "acts in revolutions and finally favors the sanctioning of leftist governments to support the proletarian class that has the mission of destroying the capitalist regime under which we live," she put mass uprisings side-by-side with supporting the left of the ruling party.

Yet after the Sino-Soviet split, with its polemics over Khrushchev's policy of peaceful coexistence, the failures of Mexico's communist leaders in 1958, and the successful examples of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 and the decisive defeat of the French in Vietnam in 1954, a shift occurred. What had previously not been a contradiction within the thinking of Lombardismo now became one. Those who were won over to the new armed struggle line, or who had been inclined in that direction all along, had to separate from their old organizations and begin creating focus or people's armies, depending on their particular orientation. So Arturo Gámiz gathered his forces and assaulted the Madera Barracks, while Esther Chapa founded a propaganda society dedicated to winning over other Mexicans to follow the model set by the Chinese Revolution.

The Guerrilla Efforts of Florencio Medrano

Florencio Medrano's efforts at forming a base area for a Maoist people's war in Mexico from 1973 to 1978 represent a particularly noteworthy attempt to make a Maoist revolution in Mexico. While Maoist ideas had a broad and diverse influence from the 1960s on, Medrano was a special case. A central tenet of Maoism is the idea that protracted people's war is necessary to make revolution; that "political power flows from the barrel of a gun." Of all the political forces that

[62] The major examples being in China, Vietnam, France, Italy, Spain and Greece.

took a large part of their inspiration and ideological orientation from the experience of the Chinese Revolution, Medrano and his guerrillas were the only ones to make sustained efforts at creating base areas for a protracted people's war according to the Maoist model. In addition, Medrano considered Maoism an all-encompassing world outlook, and in that regard was more archetypically Maoist than many other communist and guerrilla groups that were heavily influenced by Mao but felt that Maoism was only applicable to particular spheres of politics and warfare. If there was ever a movement that might have become a Mexican Shining Path, it was Medrano and his followers.

Florencio Medrano Mederos was born into a poor *campesino* family. Before becoming a Maoist, he had been an activist in the Communist Party, in Danzós Palomino's Independent Peasant Union and in Génaro Vásquez's Guerrero Civic Association. In May 1966 he served a month in prison for a land invasion he led in his home town of Tlatlaya in Mexico State. Between 1964 and 1966 Medrano was in dialogue with Javier Fuentes, leader of the Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat (Partido Revolucionario del Proletariado (PRP), about joining. Upon returning from a trip to China, Fuentes encouraged Medrano to join another delegation Fuentes was organizing. In the summer of 1969 Medrano went to China for six months (from 9 July to 31 December) as part of a delegation of at least seven members of the PRP.[63]

During his time in China, Medrano received what Elena Poniatowska calls a "leadership course."[64] The Special Prosecutor for Political and Social Movements of the Past (Fiscalía Especial para Movimientos

[63] For background information on Medrano and the details of his trip to China, see Elena Poniatowska, *Fuerte es el Silencio* (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1980), 244–245, 251; Ramón Pérez, *Diary of a Guerrilla* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1999), 107–108; Fiscalía Especial para Movimientos Sociales y Políticos del Pasado, "La guerrilla se extiende por todo el país," National Security Archive at George Washington University, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB180/070–Grupos%20armados.pdf (accessed 7 July 2006), 9. There are some discrepancies in the sources regarding the details of Medrano's trip to China, and the Fiscalía Especial document claims Medrano traveled to China in 1970, not 1969. Because of the discrepancies in the sources, the dates given in this paragraph should be taken as approximations. Also, while the Fiscalía Especial document places Medrano's hometown in Tlatlaya, Estado de México, Poniatowska gives his birthplace as Guerrero, see Poniatowska, *Fuerte es el Silencio*, 251.

[64] Poniatowska, *Fuerte es el Silencio*, 244.

Sociales y Políticos del Pasado)[65] claims Medrano attended an international cadre school. Ramón Pérez also claims Medrano received military and ideological training in China.[66] None of the sources get into the specifics of the content of the claimed training, however. Medrano got to see quite a bit of the country, including Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Yan'an and the Jinggang Mountains. He spent time on a collective farm and learned about Chinese rice cultivation techniques. Medrano and his companions attended a banquet held by Zhou Enlai for foreign delegations, and shook Zhou's hand.[67]

On his return to Mexico, Medrano unsuccessfully disputed the leadership of the PRP with Fuentes. Medrano felt that since the majority of the PRP's membership was campesino it should be led by a campesino like himself. This argument reflected Medrano's anti-intellectualism, which had been stoked by anti-intellectual currents in China during the Cultural Revolution and was heightened by the poor performance of the PRP intellectuals who Medrano tried to train in guerrilla warfare techniques in the mountains of Morelos. The PRP decided it would launch a protracted people's war in Yucatán and proposed to send Medrano there to lead it. Medrano argued against such a move, claiming he was only valuable in Guerrero and Morelos where he had a mass base of support, and that in any case, "they're not even Mexicans over there." This odd proposal by Fuentes and the PRP leadership seems to reflect a desire to recreate the Chinese experience by setting up a guerrilla front in a remote location where the state would have less ability to field its repressive apparatus. Although threatened with expulsion, Medrano prevailed and the PRP abandoned the idea of sending him to find followers and start a guerrilla war in Yucatán.[68]

Before these conflicts between Medrano and other leaders of the PRP could lead to division, a PRP bomb maker in Mexico City accidentally

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[65] This was the name of the government body named during the Fox administration (2000–2006) to investigate human rights violations by the Mexican army and police against social and political movements which emerged during the 1960s and 1970s. It was inspired by truth commission efforts in other countries. At the last minute, the Fox administration suppressed the report of the Special Prosecutor, which was subsequently posted on the National Security Archive's website.

[66] Pérez, *Diary of a Guerrilla*, 108. Pérez also claims that Medrano was in China for three years, contradicting Poniatowska and the government, each of whom claim he was in China for six months (despite citing different years for his trip).

[67] Poniatowska, *Fuerte es el Silencio*, 244–245.

[68] Ibid., 245, 250–254.

blew himself up, setting off a police round-up of PRP cadres and leading to the arrest of Fuentes. This left Medrano as the main leader of the PRP outside of jail. Medrano took control of what was left of the organization and set up a mass front called the National Worker-Peasant-Student Association (Asociación Nacional Obrera Campesina Estudiantil—ANOCE).[69] At the core of ANOCE was a "struggle committee" comprised of 30 experienced Maoists, including some activists who knew some Chinese. The first major effort ANOCE undertook was the occupation of vacant land (intended for luxury recreational development) on the outskirts of Cuernavaca, creating a squatter community which they called Colonia Rubén Jaramillo.[70]

In the early 1970s there were many squatters' movements across Mexico. Poor peasants were flooding into Mexican cities due to the crisis of peasant agriculture. The lack of available housing in the cities forced many new arrivals to join in forming new settlements on the outskirts of the cities.[71] But Medrano's 31 March 1973 land take-over in Cuernavaca was fundamentally different from other squatter struggles going on at the same time, mainly because it was launched and led with the express purpose of creating a base area for a Maoist protracted people's war. In contrast to other squatter settlements in other parts of Mexico, the way in which the Colonia Rubén Jaramillo was run reflected important themes of the Cultural Revolution that Medrano absorbed while in China.

On 25 March 1973 an assembly of poor Cuernavacans held by ANOCE had set seven o'clock on the following Saturday, 31 March, for the land take-over. By nine o'clock, only a few families had shown up, and Medrano got on his motorcycle to round up the stragglers. He rode around the poor parts of Cuernavaca, exhorting his followers to follow through on their commitment to the land seizure. By dawn on Sunday, more and more families were arriving, and Medrano awarded 400 square meters to each of the first 30 families, on the condition that they build their new homes and begin living on their plot within 72 hours. After three days, three hundred families had arrived and

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[69] Ibid., 252.

[70] Ibid., 197, 259. Poniatowska's account of Colonia Rubén Jaramillo and Florencio Medrano is mainly based on interviews she conducted with people who lived in the community and participated in Medrano's movement.

[71] See, for example, Juan Manuel Ramírez Sáiz, *El Movimiento Urbano Popular en México* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1986).

the settlement was continuing to grow. In order to accommodate the stream of newcomers, Medrano called an assembly of the squatters to reduce plot sizes. By appealing to the need for proletarian solidarity, Medrano overcame initial resistance from the first wave of settlers and the assembly decided to reduce all plots to 200 square meters. Eventually, 1500 plots were distributed and after a few months the population reached 10,000.[72]

In order to build up the settlement's infrastructure, Medrano made collective labor mandatory. According to Elena Poniatowska's account, "almost everyone was enthusiastic to participate in the communal tasks. Installing drainage pipes, raising the church, fencing in the cemetery, the sports field and the children's playground were everyone's work." When asked what materials a bridge would be built with, Medrano answered: "With the mettle we carry inside," echoing Chinese propaganda about massive development projects built with little more than the will of the workers themselves. Indeed, as Medrano put it, "I want to make the Jaramillo settlement the first people's commune of the Mexican Republic." Medrano organized Red Sundays, when idealistic youths came from Cuernavaca and Mexico City to join in the collective labor, echoing the movement of educated youth to do peasant labor in the Chinese countryside. The hospital was named after Norman Bethune, a Canadian doctor who died serving in the Chinese Communist Eighth Route Army and who was the subject of one of Mao's four "always read" essays. Echoing the Cultural Revolution's education reforms, the schools built in the settlement emphasized the need for education to be connected with productive labor.[73]

Student participation in the Red Sundays generated some unforeseen political complications. Many of the students were flirting with a variety of leftist ideologies. Their presence expanded the range of political ideas in contention within the settlement (some students were partisans of the PCM, while others belonged to other militant Marxist organizations such as the Trotskyite Revolutionary Workers Party). Some ANOCE cadres complained that the students didn't do their work well and that they wanted to talk about Marxism and other revolutionary ideas more than they wanted to work. Some cadres also felt

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[72] Poniatowska, *Fuerte es el Silencio*, 181–183, 185, 191–192, 197–198. At the same time as Poniatowska gives the number of squatters as 10,000, she claims there were 5000 families.

[73] Ibid., 190–195, 197–200, 262–263.

that bringing in crowds of newcomers allowed cover for police spies to enter the *colonia*. However, Medrano felt that by facilitating political ferment within the settlement and developing its ties to outside political forces he was creating a broader support base for initiating armed struggle.[74]

As the settlement grew, the lesser political commitment of many latecomers caused problems for Medrano's political project. Some settlers came with the idea of trying to sell or rent their plots, having already done the same in other squatter communities. Police were also able to enter disguised as squatters. One even got elected as a block representative to the colonia's assembly. After a couple of months, Medrano began focusing more and more on political and military preparations for armed struggle and paid less attention to keeping the community politicized and mobilized. Sometimes these preparations required him to leave Rubén Jaramillo for days at a time. As a result, problems such as inadequate trash removal accumulated, and enthusiasm for collective labor and political struggle diminished. Criminals began to use the colonia as a base of operations, since the police couldn't enter. As Medrano's preparations for armed struggle advanced, he and his guerrillas began carrying arms openly, scaring many community members.[75]

By the end of 1973 the dangerous experiment of an armed, self-governing area on the outskirts of a major city was too much for the Mexican government to take, and the army invaded the settlement (it did not leave until 1980). Medrano and the core of his armed force escaped and made their way to the countryside around Tuxtepec, where Medrano had organized some supporters. For five years, until his death in combat, Medrano and his forces tried to adapt Mao's military and political teachings to Mexican conditions and form a base area in a border region between the states of Oaxaca and Veracruz. In China, border regions between states had been lawless areas, and Mao Zedong took advantage of that weakness to create a relatively stable base area along the Jiangxi-Fujian border. While Medrano was able to use the terrain and popular support to evade the police, he was never able to create a base of operations that the police or army could not penetrate.

Medrano formed mass organizations among timber workers and peasants in the Tuxtepec region, and used his armed forces in support

[74] Ibid., 200–202.
[75] Ibid., 256–258, 264–265.

of the demands of these organizations. Medrano criticized Mexico's Guevarist guerrillas for being disconnected from the people:

> Our movement is also the result of a series of experiences like those of the compañeros Génaro Vasquez, Lucio Cabañas and Arturo Gámiz, who offered their lives for the sake of the people. These compañeros deserve our respect because they died for their ideals. But they also made mistakes, and we have to learn from their mistakes. These compañeros believed that a small unit of guerrillas, Che Guevara style, would be able to carry off a revolution in Mexico. That's not the way, because the guerrillas can't be disconnected from the people. A revolution has to be made by the people—that is, directed by its best children. That's why our idea is to tie ourselves to the people, so that we can teach them the ideal of struggle. They have to know their rights and know how to defend them against oppressors and exploiters and their servants.[76]

Because of this, Medrano expressed his need to be close to the communities he was trying to organize, even though this put his life in danger.[77] However, despite his attempt to combine involvement in popular struggles with armed struggle, he was unable to form any sort of relatively stable base area, and his party (now renamed the United Proletarian Party of America (Partido Proletario Unido de América—PPUA) was never able to pass over from being a roving guerrilla band to being a force more deeply rooted among the people of the Tuxtepec region.

Medrano's somewhat mechanical fidelity to Mao Zedong is the hallmark of his movement. According to Ramón Pérez, a young PPUA militant from Oaxaca, Medrano always had Mao's works at hand and encouraged his militants in their study as well.[78] Drawing on the strong anti-intellectualist strain in the Cultural Revolution and the tendency to see Mao's writings as applicable to any problems that could possibly arise, he constantly studied Mao's works, but neglected the sort of broader study that would be necessary to truly comprehend the nature of Mexican society in the 1970s. When he felt threatened by intellectuals, Medrano would respond by invoking the purges of intellectuals in China in order to quash opposition.[79] He saw the bold action of the workers and peasants on the basis of Mao's theories as all that was necessary in order to make revolution, that somehow, by

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[76] Pérez, *Diary of a Guerrilla*, 49. This quote almost certainly relies on Pérez's memory of what Medrano said.

[77] Ibid., 67.

[78] Ibid., 65, 106.

[79] Poniatowska, *Fuerte es el Silencio*, 253–254.

"daring to struggle" he would not only "dare to win," but would do so inevitably. Medrano was guided by his faith in the power of Maoism as an ideology and in the capacity of the people to struggle when led by a Maoist political line.

Conclusion

Travel to China was a central feature in the domestication of Maoism in Mexico. It was in China, during the WFTU conference, that Lombardo was briefed on the early 1950s Soviet and Chinese policy of promoting the Chinese Revolution as a model for other underdeveloped countries, and his travel memoir communicates what were intended as universal lessons of the Chinese experience for a Mexican audience. The Mexico-China Friendship Societies (SMACP) created regular channels of communication for both literature and people to flow between China and Mexico. Reports of trips to China and the universal revolutionary lessons learned there were central features of the propaganda work of both the SMACPs. Florencio Medrano became a Maoist on his trip to China, where he absorbed political lessons that guided his actions from his return in 1970 to his death in 1978. His closest collaborators had also made the trip to China.

The connection to China created through the SMACPs and by other China travelers formed the basis for the creation of a counter-narrative to both dominant Mexican and (after 1956) Soviet narratives about the Chinese Revolution. Relying on the authority of their own experiences and utilizing the Chinese propaganda that flowed through pro-Chinese political networks, travelers to China painted a positive picture of the Chinese Revolution both as an event in its own right and as a source of lessons to be applied in Mexico. As the crafters of the pro-China counter-narrative, China travelers played a disproportionate role in creating new Maoist organizational efforts. The parallels with Maoists in Sweden, explored by Perry Johansson, are extraordinary.

In drawing lessons from the Chinese Revolution, Mexican Maoists' thinking reflected a belief in "revolutionary asynchronicity." That is, they thought that they would almost literally reproduce aspects of the Chinese revolutionary experience. In his portrayal the Chinese Revolution as a model for Mexicans, Lombardo elides the vast differences between Mexico and China. He perceived the Chinese Revolution as

offering a model for all 'semi-feudal, semi-colonial' countries. Medrano sought to reproduce many aspects of the Chinese experience. In the Colonia Rubén Jaramillo, students from the cities came to engage in collective labor with the resident squatters, like youth in China who had been "sent down" to the countryside. In addition, such collective labor was perceived and described in terms taken directly from Cultural Revolution China. The schools in the Colonia were structured, like Chinese schools, around the practical needs of the poor, and combined labor with instruction. After losing the colonia to the Mexican army, Medrano then retreated to a border region, where he attempted to reproduce Mao's experience in the Hunan-Jiangxi border area of the Jinggangshan.

The Mexican case displays a broad dissemination of Maoism, but also its defeat and co-optation. Medrano never succeeded in building a large and successful party or guerrilla army. Constantly on the run following the breakup of Colonia Rubén Jaramillo, he was limited to small scale engagements in support of mass organizing in a small area of the country. Other Maoists helped found squatter settlements and get the residents legal title, electricity and water service, and then found that their mass base no longer had much interest in revolution. Confronted with this situation, by the 1990s leaders and their mass bases were backing the PRD, PT, or even the Salinas presidency. While some of them still used Maoist language, they had been co-opted. Though Maoism in Mexico in the early 1960s represented a way of breaking with the previous history of communists helping to build the PRI's "great arch," by the 1980s most activists that had taken the Maoist path had either been crushed or swung back into the limits imposed by the state.

The case of Maoism in Mexico is intrinsically interesting to students of Latin American social movements and guerrilla groups. But does it have anything to tell us more generally about the dynamics of the international movement of ideas? In Mexico, the "Common Wind" of Maoist influence began through Lombardo's political networks and spread through the networks created by the SMACPs. Without a political and social network capable of countering the near total absence of a positive narrative about the Chinese Revolution in the mass media, it seems unlikely that a Maoist political trend would have emerged in Mexico. In this sense, we can see the parallel with Julius Scott's "Common Wind," which spread the influence of the Haitian Revolution among African-Americans. In both cases, pre-existing subterranean

political and social networks served as the basis for the diffusion of new, revolutionary ideas.

As in the case of the Chinese Communist Party's early imitation of Soviet modernization policies and belief that it would face tribulations similar to those faced by the young Soviet Union, Maoists in Mexico displayed a similar "revolutionary asynchronicity" in their understanding of how their political struggle would unfold. This raises some questions: is such "asynchronicity" common to other Marxist movements, or is it a perverse particularity of Maoists? Perhaps such imitation indicates a religious current within some forms of Marxism. As Edward Gibbon has noted, "In all religions, the life of the founder supplies the silence of his written revelation: the sayings of Mahomet were so many lessons of truth; his actions so many examples of virtue…"[80] One might note that liberalism has also taken awkward, imitative forms in Latin America as well.[81] How general is the tendency for universalist ideologies based on a historical sequence of events (such as liberal modernization, capitalist industrialization or communist revolution) to produce such "asynchronicity" when they travel to other places?

[80] Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1788; reprint, London: Penguin, 1994), 3:182.

[81] See, for example, Roberto Schwarz, *Misplaced Ideas: Essays on Brazilian Culture* (New York: Verso, 1992).

CHAPTER NINE

MAO AND THE SWEDISH UNITED FRONT AGAINST USA[1]

Perry Johansson

Most narratives of the Cold War revolve around the two superpowers dominating or being used by smaller nations, with China lurking in the shadows, ruled by an unpredictable and power-hungry dictator whose goal to lead a world revolution failed spectacularly. However, Mao's foreign policy held both domestic and long-term geopolitical goals. Peering behind the screen of day-to-day politics we find that Mao had other aims besides world revolution. This is evident in his support of Maoist organizations in the West.

This chapter is a case study of Maoism in Sweden in the 1960s. It describes what happened when China, with money, propaganda, political schooling and "techniques of hospitality," won over a number of promising Swedish individuals to the Chinese side in its conflict with the two superpowers. As part of a covert united front against the American war in Vietnam, the most important Maoist organization set up in Sweden was the United NFL-Groups in Sweden (DFFG). China's support of this and other Maoist organizations in Sweden had little to do with communist revolution. China's interest had more to do with creating a third front of European and other countries inside the non-communist-bloc that could be allied with China in criticism of the USA. As this article shows, Sweden came to play exactly this role. In early 1968, after a year of popular anti-US protests, Maoist provocation forced the ruling Social Democratic Party (SAP) to react. With new leader Olof Palme at the helm, SAP entered the anti-war movement with a parallel protest organization. As a result of this decision Sweden became the most anti-American, pro-socialist nation in the West.[2]

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[1] I would like to thank T. Wandel and P. Windahl for help with editing.

[2] This history of Swedish Maoism has been largely ignored by historians. The exception is a recent Ph.D. dissertation by Anne Hedén. Very little has been written on the Swedish Vietnam War movement besides Kim Salomon's Ph.D. dissertation,

China in the Cold War

By the early 1960s China was under threat from both of the world's superpowers. As a result of tension over the Great Leap Forward and Mao's criticism of Soviet engagement with the US, Khrushchev withdrew all technical support and stopped helping China develop a nuclear bomb. Mao felt betrayed by the Russians. This new world order was clearly dangerous for China but as the deft guerrilla tactician he was, Mao knew how to profit from this seemingly disadvantageous situation.

Having withdrawn from day-to-day leadership after the Great Leap Forward, Mao turned to foreign policy to pave his road back to power. The Vietnam War gave him the opportunity. With American troops now just beyond China's borders, Mao could argue that China was encircled by reactionary forces and must prepare for war against both outside and inside enemies.[3]

The Chinese shared the American view that the Vietnam War could have a domino effect. In September 1963, when communist leaders from Vietnam, Laos and Indonesia met their Chinese comrades in Guangdong, Zhou Enlai announced that Southeast Asia had become the scene of a confrontation between international revolution and the reactionaries.[4] The big difference from the Korean War was that China now stood opposed to the Soviet Union. Rather than this making him more cautious, Mao decided to up the ante. As the Chinese explained, the Russians had left the revolutionary path and become traitorous revisionists negotiating with the enemy. Mao therefore assumed the

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Rebeller i Takt med Tiden, FNL-Rörelsen och 60-Talets Politiska Ritualer (Stockholm: Rabén Prisma, 1996). The only substantial historical treatment of how important the Vietnam War was for the Social Democratic Party is another Ph.D. dissertation, by Carl-Gustaf Scott, "'A Good Offense is the Best Defense': Olof Palme, den Svenska Extremvänstern och Vietnamkriget," *Arbetarhistoria* 3 [2005]. When it comes to the cause of the Swedish Maoist movement, it is argued that China had no active part in it at all. Lars Åke Augustsson and Stig Hansén's book on Swedish Maoists, *Maoisterna. En Historia Berättad Av Några Som var Med* (Göteborg: Lindelöws bokförlag, 2001), declares in its introduction that, "It was not China that made the Swedes into Maoists." Leading Swedish historian Kjell Östberg's book on the radical movements of the sixties, *1968: När Allting var i Rörelse. Sextiotalsradikaliseringen och de sociala rörelserna* (Stockholm: Prisma, 2002) has no account whatsoever of the Chinese role in international politics at the time.

[3] Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 210.

[4] Ibid., 208.

role of leader of the world proletariat. The Vietnam War became for the Chinese as well as for the Americans a testing ground for what direction the world would take. Mao urged the assembled communist leaders to step up the anti-imperialist fight in Southeast Asia by mobilizing the masses. China promised to serve as the "great rear," providing weapons, people and advice.[5] Mao declared that the war in Vietnam would bring US military power to its knees. An African-American revolt would follow, providing a convincing ideological triumph for communism.

But Mao's true aim may have been different. The Chinese leadership had already realized in 1958 that overextending American forces in a prolonged war in Indo-China would weaken the American ability to defend Taiwan.[6] Mao himself was probably content having the Americans tied down in Vietnam. He could use the close presence of the enemy to frighten the Chinese people into support for a Cultural Revolution that would bring him back to power and eliminate his rivals in the leadership.[7] The alliance with the military and Lin Biao was a natural step. As always for Mao, war and revolution went hand in hand.

Despite all Mao Zedong's defiant talk of the superpowers as "paper tigers," in reality China stood alone in a threatening world. As a possible counter to being squeezed between the two superpowers, Mao began reconsidering the role of Europe. Mao's strategy was to focus on "principal contradictions" and isolating the "chief enemy." From 1960 the Chinese media coverage on Western Europe increased and became more favorable. Mao realized that the creation of the EEC meant that contradictions between the Western European countries were no longer as strong as the disagreements between Western Europe and the USA.[8] Since the 1940s Mao had perceived an "intermediate zone" of countries, neither communist nor capitalist but with revolutionary potential. In 1964 he refined this concept, distinguishing two tiers of the intermediate zone, one being the developing countries and the second comprising non-socialist countries of the developed world.

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[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid., 207.
[7] Ibid., 210–212.
[8] Harish Kapur, *Distant Neighbours: China and Europe* (London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1990), 52.

Around the same time he also considered the possibility of a "third force" of Western European countries on the side of China.[9]

This renewed Chinese interest in Western Europe worked hand in hand with China's battle for the souls of the world's communists. Mao's attempt to win over communist countries at the Moscow meeting of 1960 was a failure; only Albania shifted sides. The substitute strategy was to divide and split foreign communist parties. While this would not work in any of the Soviet satellite states, its chances were much better in Western Europe, especially since the brutality of the Soviet Union had been witnessed at close quarters in Budapest in 1956. Winning over the Western communists was also facilitated by the way in which contacts with foreigners was organized. In the 1960s few Westerners could visit the PRC, and those who did were closely supervised by organizations like the Chinese People's Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (*Zhongguo Renmin Duiwai Wenhua Xiehui*), the International Relations Department of the Chinese Communist Party (*Zhonggong Zhongyang Lianluobu*) or the All China Youth Federation (*Zhonghua Qingnian Quanguo Lianhehui*), depending on the visitors' organizational status.

Since the 1930s, China's Communist Party had followed a strategy, learned from the Soviet Union, of creating and cultivating "foreign friends." These friends became living proof to the Chinese people that its government had good contacts with Western nations. Furthermore, pro-China propaganda in the West was more likely to be successful if it was propagated by Westerners.[10] From the start, this strategy had been connected with international relations and the survival of the Chinese Communist Party.[11] The US refused to recognize the CCP leadership of China and for many years the PRC lacked official diplomatic exchanges with most Western nations. This prompted China to establish a "people-to-people diplomacy," seeking Western "friends" at an unofficial level.

The methods the Chinese, like other communist dictatorships, used to win over foreigners consisted of lavish banquets, fine hotels and VIP

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[9] Ibid., 54.

[10] Political scientist Anne-Marie Brady describes this extensively in *Making the Foreign Serve China* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002).

[11] It has been argued that well-treated propagandists like Edgar Snow played an important role for the victory of the CCP. See Bernard Thomas, *Season of High Adventure: Edgar Snow in China* (Berkeley: Unviersity of California Press, 1996).

treatment, aptly labeled "techniques of hospitality" by the sociologist Paul Hollander. Softened up by such hospitality, persuasion followed. All visitors to China were provided with Chinese interpreters who also functioned as guides and "minders." These guide-interpreters were selected by the party on the basis of wholehearted devotion to socialism and political alertness.[12] They were ordered to learn useful things about every individual foreigner, and after having spent the day with visitors from abroad the interpreters were required to report to cadres what had been said and done. In this way the Chinese learned more about the foreigners than vice versa. Ordinary Chinese were not allowed to speak openly with foreign guests, and in any case knew what they could and could not say. Whatever story the Chinese Communist Party wanted to communicate to the visitors and the world was meticulously prepared in this way.

But not all Chinese influence was so discreet. The Chinese not only treated foreigners with techniques of hospitality, but also assisted Maoist Western organizations and individuals in material ways. Already by the 1960s many Western national security organizations suspected that China was financing Western left-wing organizations. The Swedish Security Police (SÄPO) also considered the possibility that China was financially supporting the subversive activities of Maoist groups.[13] SÄPO therefore recorded all the contacts between Swedish Maoists and Chinese Embassy personnel.[14] According to one source, the early Maoist Marxistiskt forum had been given money to buy two business premises on Kungsgatan, where the Marxist bookstore Oktober was opened.[15] SÄPO surveillance showed that the treasurer of the Swedish Maoist organization KFML visited the Chinese Embassy regularly once a month. Harald Holst, a Maoist and secretary of the DFFG from 1968, recently confirmed the suspicions of SÄPO, explaining how every month he received his wage, "eight hundred in undeclared money (*svart*)," from the Chinese Embassy.[16] Holst was then running

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[12] Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Western Intellectuals in Search of the Good Society* (New York: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 378.

[13] Magnus Hjort, *Hotet Från Vänster: Säkerhetstjänstens Övervakning av Kommunister, Anarkister m. m 1965–2002* (Stockholm: Statens offentliga utredningar 2002): 9, 103. SÄPO also suspected that KFML was gathering intelligence for the People's Republic of China.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., 104. The Sweden China Association had the same address at Kungsgatan 77.

[16] Augustsson and Hansén, *Maoisterna*, 148.

Danelius Bookstore, the first in Sweden to sell Chinese propaganda. At one particular meeting at the Embassy he received a thick envelope with thousands of US dollars to pay for the printing of a book.

Holst then traveled back to Gothenburg, changing the money at many different locations so as not to arouse suspicion.[17] Another member of the extreme left and co-founder of two Swedish communist parties, Frank Baude, describes in his memoirs how he and two other Swedes traveled to Beijing, where Kang Sheng generously asked them how much they needed. Returning to Sweden, they were caught with $10,000 in start-up money for a Maoist party.[18] Economic assistance was not always delivered in cash, as there were other ways to help. For example, the Chinese provided books, magazines and musical recordings that the Swedes could sell for a profit.[19] There were also free subscriptions to Chinese publications. The nascent Swedish Maoist party kept the money, but the address register of Swedish subscribers went to the People's Republic of China.[20]

Although China supported Maoist organizations all over Europe, Sweden held a special position for China. Sweden was the first Western nation with which the People's Republic established formal diplomatic relations. A year later, in 1951, Mao suggested to Stalin that Sweden should be added to the list of countries meeting to negotiate peace in Korea.[21] When the Swedish secretary-general of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld, set out to try and solve the problem of American Korean War prisoners held by China, he received favorable treatment by Zhou Enlai and was able to leave China with the difficult affair settled, the prisoners freed as a birthday gift from Zhou. The Chinese Embassy in Stockholm was for some time perhaps the most important one in Western Europe. When China in 1969 decided to start manning foreign diplomatic posts again after the tumultuous first years of the Cultural Revolution, Zhou Enlai ordered the first four Ambassadors to go to Sweden, Vietnam, Albania and France.[22] But

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[17] Augustsson and Hansén, *Maoisterna*, 149.

[18] Hjort, *Hotet Från Vänster*, 106. Nils Holmberg and Frank Baude both claim that this is a misunderstanding and that the real figure was only 10,000 in Swedish currency.

[19] Ibid., 104.

[20] Augustsson and Hansén, *Maoisterna*, 148.

[21] Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 106.

[22] Barbara Barnouin and Yu Canggen, *Zhou Enlai: a Political Life* (Hong Kong: the Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2006), 287. Harish Kapur argues that the

despite good official relations, China also nurtured contacts with Swedish individuals and organizations outside the official political sphere. Most prominent was the Sweden China Association, already set up in 1952 and later to be chaired by Sweden's most influential Maoist, Jan Myrdal.

Jan Myrdal and the Sweden China Association

> In the remarkable time of the 1960s, Swedish students every Sunday morning walked up to the closest news-stand to buy Aftonbladet, read JM [Jan Myrdal's] articles and adjusted their own opinions accordingly. JM was the guru and it is today difficult really to appreciate the role he played. China was the great model, the People's Communes, the energy of the collective—solidarity was made concrete there, in new wells and terraces. Liu Lin became something of an emblem of all that. (Stellan Lindqvist in *Aftonbladet*, 4 June 1994)

The Sweden China Association was set up after a delegation had been treated to banquets, fine hotels and alcohol in the newly-established People's Republic of China.[23] The CCP hoped this and other associations would deliver a positive image of the new regime abroad. The Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the supervising organization, asked the Swedes to push more aggressively for subscribers to buy propaganda magazines. The labor union people and leftist peace activists running the Sweden China Association, however, thought that owing to the anti-communism in Sweden during the Korean War the time was not right.[24] Chairperson Andrea Andreen nevertheless traveled with the now-infamous delegation led by Joseph Needham that accused the USA of having employed biological weapons. This was an important propaganda victory for China.[25]

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most important landmark of a shift in foreign policy after the xenophobic years of the Cultural Revolution was the well publicized meetings Mao Zedong, Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai held jointly with the ambassadors from Sweden, Albania, Pakistan, Zambia, Kampuchea, Congo, Tanzania, and New Guinea. See Harish Kapur, 1990, 101.

[23] One of the travellers, Knut Senander, wrote a book describing the trip in some detail: *Min Kinadagbok*. (Stockholm: Svensk kinesiska föreningen, 1953).

[24] In minutes from the SVKVF meetings this Chinese organisation is simply referred to as "the Society" (SVKVF archives).

[25] For more about the role of Needham in this affair, see Simon Winchester *Bomb, Book & Compass* (London: Viking, 2008).

An equally important propaganda victory was the publication of Jan Myrdal's book *Report from a Chinese Village*.

The Chinese knew Myrdal well from 1952, when they sent a propaganda entertainment (*zaji*) troupe to Europe to galvanize support for the Korean War. Myrdal traveled with the troupe for several months all over Sweden. He grew to like the leader and the hard-working egalitarian discipline of the troupe. During the propaganda tour, the Chinese members presented local Swedish politicians with badges saying "Resist USA-imperialism" and held secret meetings with Myrdal and others, toilets flushing in case their rooms were bugged.

Jan Myrdal was young, highly intelligent and a charismatic public speaker. His parents Alva and Gunnar Myrdal were influential social democrats serving as ministers in government and engaged in international affairs. Jan was something of a black sheep and caused his parents and the SAP a lot of trouble. That he despised the Social Democratic Party became clear from his early novels, which were merciless attacks on the Swedish "*folkhem*"—the welfare state SAP and his parents had built. The novels sold poorly, and into his thirties Myrdal still relied economically on his parents. Independence only came after he was invited to China in 1962.

In seeking foreign friends for China it was important to pick the right ones, preferably those with political influence and the prospect of becoming useful.[26] Jan Myrdal was a good choice. He was a communist, a skillful writer and had considerable political connections. When Myrdal and the Chinese started planning his trip he was living with his mother Alva in New Delhi. She was the Swedish ambassador to India and close to Nehru. From 1961 Myrdal's mother was working for disarmament in the United Nations while his father Gunnar—an internationally celebrated economist who had written about US racism—was occupied with an ambitious plan to explain poverty and politics in Asia. It was probably not by chance that the Chinese picked Jan Myrdal. At the time of his first visit, Mao was being criticized for his economic experiments and wanted support for developing nuclear weapons. The conflict with India would soon break out into a border war. Mao saw African-American resentment of white racism as a possible trigger for revolution in the US, and was touting China as a model for all the underdeveloped countries of the world. Jan Myrdal's

[26] Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 20.

parents were involved in all these different international issues: development in Asia, disarmament, African-Americans and racism, India and so on.

The Chinese Embassy in Stockholm met with Myrdal in 1960, and later in Moscow they talked again about inviting Myrdal to China. It was not easy for Westerners to get a visa to China without approval from high up, but back in India Myrdal suddenly received a one-year visa to travel and write and was asked to come right away. He packed his things and left. He received unprecedented access, and was able to travel widely around the country. He spent a month in the veteran revolutionary village Liu Lin doing interviews and then stayed in Beijing writing a book on the village while also meeting Mao Zedong. After it first came out in 1963, Jan Myrdal's *Report from a Chinese Village* was translated into more than twenty languages. In English, Swedish, German and Japanese the text appeared in several editions.

The propaganda value of the book lay in the reception it got. Written by the son of the world-famous economist and Nobel laureate Gunnar Myrdal, the report was judged a scientific study of communism under Mao. It was reviewed in important papers like the *Guardian*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *New York Times*. Well-known journalists and China experts like Edgar Snow and Harrison Salisbury heaped praise on Myrdal. In the French edition, historian Jacques Gernet wrote: "This is the best book I have read on Communist China," while Claude Levi-Strauss claimed that *Report from a Chinese Village* was the first anthropological study to explain modern history.[27] In reality, the book was mainly proof of Chinese propaganda skills. As one former Swedish Maoist explained many years later, it is "hard to find anything that separates Myrdal's account from the official propaganda-story of the government."[28]

Myrdal's short year in China came to shape the rest of his life. The privilege of staying in the closed PRC and writing two books

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[27] Excerpts of these international reviews are printed on the cover of the Swedish translation of Myrdal's second book *Kinesisk Resa* [Chinese Journey] (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1966).

[28] Nils Olof Ericsson, "Böcker som Format vår tid." *Internationella Studier* 3 & 4 (1990); 39. The book and Myrdal's relation to China are discussed in Perry Johansson, *Sinofilerna: Kinakunskap, Samlande och Politik från Sven Hedin till Jan Myrdal* [The Sinophiles: Sinology, collecting and politics from Sven Hedin to Jan Myrdal] (Falun: Carlsson Bokförlag, 2008); and Perry Johansson, "重访扬·米尔达笔下的中国山村" [Revisiting Myrdal's Chinese Village] in *Kuawenhua Duihua* [Transcultural Dialogue] 2007: 146–56.

there was not only a ticket to intellectual stardom when he returned home. He was also granted a lifetime writer's salary from the Swedish government. This provided Myrdal with independence and the means to transform himself into the intellectual leader of the Swedish radical left. Despite all the work he had done for the Soviet communist empire in Eastern Europe and the fact that he had written positively about the Soviet Union until the very year he began negotiating with the Chinese in 1960, Myrdal had now become a die-hard Maoist. The Chinese had won him over to their side, and though he had never before commented on Chinese communism, he started churning out a seemingly endless series of books, articles and speeches lauding the Chinese revolution.

After returning from China, Jan Myrdal joined the Sweden China Association, working actively as a member of the board. In 1968 he took over as chairman and immediately set out to radically transform the association. In his inaugural speech as chairman to the annual meeting, Jan Myrdal clarified what friendship with China meant for the new association:

> Friendship with China does not only signify an interest in classical Chinese culture, the Chinese language, Chinese life. Today friendship with China means taking a stand against imperialism and its anti-Chinese campaign, standing in support of the Chinese people's revolution. An important task will be to spread knowledge about the Chinese Cultural Revolution and Mao Zedong Thought (SVKF archives).

Myrdal also instructed that the association should uncritically distribute all material they got from China, adding that the members of the Swedish association must work in close cooperation with the authorities of the People's Republic.[29] Criticism against China was effectively banned and the association from then on worked actively to block Swedish objections to Chinese politics in Tibet or Xinjiang. In February 1968 the Swedish Chinese Association discussed internally how to be more alert to counter attacks on China in Swedish media so that relations between the two countries did not deteriorate (SVKF Archives).

In the official investigation of its Cold War surveillance of the extreme left, SÄPO mentioned the close relations between the Swedish-

[29] Bertil Lundahl, "Svensk-Kinesiska de Första Femtio Åren" (Stockholm: *Kinarapport Hästens år*, 2002), 59.

Chinese Friendship Association and the Chinese Embassy. The Friendship Association archives further show that personnel from the Chinese Embassy attended the meetings and that the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries asked for detailed reports on the activities of their Swedish friends (SVKF archives). But despite the importance of the official economic support and the opinion work done by Jan Myrdal and the Sweden China Association, the real push to bring Sweden politically closer to China came from somewhere else: the war in Vietnam.

Clarté and the Formation of an Anti-Vietnam-War Movement

Vietnam was the first war covered on television. Bill Ayers remembers the strong influence the images had on him. "Seeing Vietnam on TV was hypnotic: I could see myself floating there."[30] It was the way it was fought that made the Vietnam War good television. The search and destroy campaigns the American military resorted to between 1965 and 1967 were directed at harmless peasants and involved lots of action. This tactic meant environmental war: burning forests and the emptying and relocating of villages. "Eminently filmable and just about risk-free," the journalist Murray Sayle remembers.[31] But this of course also enabled the orchestration of a certain narrative on the war: high-tech aliens attacking poor peasants with napalm that set whole forests ablaze in seconds. These disturbing televised images were the main reason why large groups of young people in far-away Europe turned against the war. In Sweden, anti-war anger was skillfully channeled by the work of a small number of newly-converted Maoists.

Just months after the Americans first engaged in battle in Vietnam, a group of intellectuals from the Swedish socialist student organization Clarté arrived in Beijing, the only European group besides a delegation from Albania to take part in the celebrations of the fifteenth anniversary of the People's Republic.[32] The Chinese Embassy in Stockholm

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[30] William Ayers, *Fugitive Days: A Memoir* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), 99.

[31] Murray Sayle, "Why the Bastards Wouldn't Stand and Fight," *London Review of Books* 24: 4 (2002).

[32] Tommy Hammarström, *FNL i Sverige*. (Stockholm: n.p., 1975), 13. Founded as a peace organization in France in 1923 the socialist student's organization Clarté had functioned as a plant school for the Social Democratic Party leadership.

had made the first contact, and in discussions with Chairman Sköld Peter Matthis proposed that in order to evade any possible hostility of the central board of Clarté they should invite selected local sections (Clarté archives). In September a group of six Swedes arrived in Beijing and was then treated with trips to Shanghai, Nanjing, Suzhou and the industrialized Northeast. The group described their travels in a booklet published locally by the Uppsala division. They were all extremely enthusiastic and wrote that they left Beijing "with feelings of the greatest love and sympathy for a China they already missed very much."[33]

The group was treated with good food, cultural events, and trips to historical spots. They met a number of representatives of the people, old revolutionaries, writers and so on, individuals who had been carefully selected and trained by skillful propagandists for well-rehearsed and convincing presentations. The show had the intended effect and the Swedes completely fell for it. Meeting the chairman of the Shanghai Youth Federation, they explain that "he said 'I know, I was there', and we believed him blindly."[34] The Swedes also met a proletarian writer and were charmed by this man with "eyes like a prophet."[35]

Besides the usual praise of the results of the communist revolution, another prevailing theme in their report from the trip is US imperialism. They learned in China how the Americans helped Chiang Kai-shek, and were also served stories of how people remembered the killing of a student by an American car and the rape of a young Chinese woman by an American soldier.[36] After the US began fighting North Vietnam in the summer of 1964, the Chinese Communist Party launched a nationwide campaign to "Resist America, assist Vietnam."[37] This campaign would penetrate every part of Chinese society and must have been a dominant theme in official public discourse and propaganda at the time the Swedish Clarté group toured the country. The Swedish group visited the People's Commune "Friendship between China and Vietnam," and the writer with eyes like a prophet recommended that they see the film *Letters from South Vietnam*.[38]

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[33] Anonymous, *Clarté i Kina* (Uppsala: Clartéförening, 1967), 4.
[34] Ibid., 13.
[35] Ibid., 66.
[36] Ibid., 14.
[37] Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 214.
[38] Anonymous, *Clarté i Kina*, 70.

The Clarté group returned to Sweden devoted Maoists. The central section of Clarté was, however, still dominated by the Soviets. When the Chinese tested a nuclear bomb in October, the board prepared an anti-test statement to be signed and delivered to the Chinese Embassy.[39] Sköld Peter Matthis, just home from Beijing and still chairman of Clarté, refused to sign the statement and had to step down from his post.[40]

Matthis instead put his energy into building up an organization to protest against the American war in Vietnam. He organized a study group on imperialism and Southeast Asia. In April 1965, when Stockholm held the World Peace Council Meeting, two North Vietnamese FNL delegates contacted him.[41] Matthis' Clarté group began arranging demonstrations outside the US Embassy in Stockholm. As these did not generate enough attention, they decided to instead move the protests to the busy centrally-located market square, Hötorget.[42] Witnessed by a throng of Stockholm's Saturday shoppers, the very first protest on 14 June ended with police confrontation. Without police permission, Matthis had gathered a small group in the central city square and placed protesters at every corner with banners saying: "Vietnam: USA's protection is terror to the people." Matthis was ordered by the police to take down his placard but refused and was arrested and carried away screaming.[43] The incident made the news, with images of Matthis manhandled by the police. The following Saturday the square was packed with people waiting for more action. Jan Myrdal and a handful of other writers had also joined the protesters handing out leaflets.[44]

A year after the first demonstrations at Hötorget, Clarté received another invitation from China. A much larger group arrived in late summer 1966 as the Cultural Revolution was getting underway.[45] After

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[39] This decision was preceded by much conflict and disagreement. At one point the pro-Chinese faction stole the Clarté member files and handed them over to the Chinese Embassy.

[40] Erik Tängerstad, "Den Svenska FNL-Rörelsens Förhistoria," *Arbetarhistoria* 1992: 63–65 and 1993: 28–34, 29.

[41] *Stockholmstidningen*, 20 Feb. 1966.

[42] Åke Kilander, *Vietnam var Nära: En Berättelse om FNL-Rörelsen och Solidaritetsarbetet i Sverige 1965–1975* (Nörhaven: Leopard förlag, 2007), 15.

[43] Tommy Hammarström, *FNL i Sverige* (Stockholm: n.p., 1975), 14.

[44] Ibid., 17.

[45] Travelling the Trans-Siberian railway on their return to Sweden, the Russian border police confiscated all the literature they had been presented by the Chinese.

Figure 9.1 Anti-Vietnam war demonstration in Stockholm

returning to Sweden, this group took over the leadership of Clarté at its Congress in February 1967. The old leadership was no longer able to resist the Maoists, who soon declared that Clarté adhered to "Mao Zedong Thought."[46] Triumphantly they published a special issue of the Clarté journal on the Cultural Revolution. Appearing the same year as *Quotations from Chairman Mao* and a reprint of Myrdal's *Report from a Chinese Village*, this issue of the Clarté magazine was extremely influential for disseminating the ideas of the Cultural Revolution.[47]

The Chinese cleverly focused their attention on communist youth organizations. In the early 1960s, even before starting to court the student organization Clarté, they had invited a group from the youth section of the Communist Party of Sweden, the Democratic Youth.[48] Then-chairman of Clarté, Bo Gustafsson, was asked to participate. Born into a communist mine-worker family in the north, Gustafsson became chairman of the Sweden Soviet Friendship Society while only a teenager, but the Russians Gustafsson met during the Moscow stopover of the Democratic Youth trip to Beijing struck him as cold, pompous and bureaucratic. The Chinese were different, much warmer and without airs.[49]

That summer, as Khrushchev withdrew Soviet technical experts from China, the CCP started competing with the Soviet Union for influence over foreign communist organizations.[50] The Chinese presented Gustafsson with massive amounts of material on the split with the Russians and he read "till his eyes started bleeding."[51] Gustafsson sympathized with Mao's ideas, and was impressed by the Chinese way of analyzing contradictions and the strategy of forming a people's front. Returning home, the former chair of the Sweden Soviet Friendship Society made his debut as a "Chinese," writing on the Maoist revolution in the communist daily *Ny Dag*.[52]

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[46] Hjort, *Hotet Från Vänster*, 73.

[47] Ericsson, "Böcker som Format vår tid," 41.

[48] Jan Myrdal had by then been—an active member of Democratic Youth for more than ten years.

[49] Augustsson and Hansén, *Maoisterna*, 21.

[50] John Byron and Robert Pack, *The Claws of the Dragon: Kang Sheng—The Evil Genius behind Mao—And His Legacy of Terror in People's China* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 255.

[51] Augustsson and Hansén, *Maoisterna*, 21.

[52] Ibid., 22.

The converted Maoist Gustafsson, however, soon had to resign as chairman of Clarté. The problem was not only that Clarté—although open to all socialists—remained loyal to the Soviets in the Sino-Soviet conflict, but also that Clarté was originally a peace organization. Its importance grew when it became involved in disarmament work. When the Russians, the USA and the UK agreed on a nuclear weapons test ban in 1963, Clarté naturally supported this. Bo Gustafsson, now loyal to China, protested, arguing that the agreement was a tactical maneuver designed to stop China from acquiring its own nuclear defense.[53] Gustafsson's argument was not accepted by the organization, but his protest opened up the first visible rift among the Swedish communists. The internal conflict would grow until the Maoists led by Gustafsson and Matthis finally managed to take over the organization.

Bo Gustafsson, who was later to become Professor in Economic History, had by then already published *Från kolonialism till socialism* (From Colonialism to Socialism). The book became the most influential text in the study groups Matthis arranged on Southeast Asia. (*Dagens Nyheter* 13 April 1976) Like Myrdal, Gustafsson was a young, highly intelligent communist, and it was people like him that were needed for establishing a national Maoist network.

KFML and a Swedish "Gang of Four"

As we have seen, the Chinese matched all foreign communist organizations with host institutions. The Swedish student organization Clarté had its counterpart in the All China Youth Organization, and the Sweden China Association was handled by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. These organizations were of course responsible to the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. It was the International Relations Department of the Chinese Communist Party—led in the 1960s by the brutal head of the security apparatus, Kang Sheng—that was responsible for creating a Swedish Maoist party.

Jan Myrdal, Sköld Peter Matthis and Bo Gustafsson were all prime candidates for the task of establishing a Maoist party. The Chinese, however, had early on found their candidate in Nils Holmberg. In the

[53] Tängerstad, "Den Svenska FNL-Rörelsens Förhistoria," 29.

1930s he had been brought by the Comintern to Moscow to work in the Anglo-American country secretariat. (Biographical Archives, ARAB) Holmberg was then sent to England, but was exposed by an informer and had to flee back to Sweden. He became a member of parliament for the Communist Party of Sweden (SKP) until a dispute with the party leadership made him resign his post. In 1959 Holmberg was approached by the Chinese and asked to come to Beijing to work on the translation of *China Pictorial*.[54] The translation of a Chinese propaganda journal was not actually his main function; the editorial offices also functioned as a political school for educating foreign communists. During Holmberg's two years in Beijing, the crisis with the Soviet Union became official and, as he recalls, he was helped to understand what the conflict was about.[55] In the autumn of 1961 Holmberg returned home and started, as he put it, the "struggle against revisionism."[56]

Holmberg was made vice-chairman of the Sweden China Association in 1963 and continued translating the works of Mao Zedong.[57] Back in Sweden, Holmberg got together with Bo Gustafsson and the two set up China-friendly Marxist study groups in the university cities of Gothenburg, Uppsala and Lund in the same year as the first Clarté trip to China.[58] Holmberg then traveled to China again, to meet Mao Zedong, and the next year published the polemic pamphlet *Vart går Sveriges kommunistiska parti*. Holmberg and Gustafsson had by then initiated their attack on the Soviet domination of Swedish communism. The Maoist faction grew stronger, and at the Communist Party of Sweden's 1967 Congress they petitioned to secede and found a new Maoist organization: the Communist League Marxist-Leninists (Kommunistiska Förbundet Marxist-Leninisterna— KFML).[59]

KFML published the pamphlets *Gnistan* and *Marxistiskt forum* and ran the bookstore Oktober, a gathering spot for far-left activists and later a publishing house. All over the country bookstores followed suit,

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[54] Biographical Archives, ARAB.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] When Holmberg returned home from Beijing the Gothenburg section of the Sweden China Association voted him the new chairman (SVKF archives).
[58] Hjort, *Hotet Från Vänster*, 16.
[59] The KFML's first congress stated that the association rested on the foundation of Marxism-Leninism and "Mao Zedong Thought", proclaiming that the association would actively propagate the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

and *Quotations from Chairman Mao* became their number-one bestseller. Translated to Swedish by Nils and Marika Holmberg and published in 1967, the same year KFML was set up, the "Little Red Book" became obligatory reading material for the members of KFML. For all this, KFML initially relied on Chinese money. The year the association was set up, Holmberg was again invited to Beijing. Together with Frank Baude and a third Swedish delegate they met Kang Sheng, who as noted above told them to name the sum they needed.

International political developments, Chinese foreign and domestic policy and the rise of Maoism in Sweden were all closely connected. Each of the important Swedish organizations that were or became Maoist were set up or taken over by people whose ideological conversion took place inside the People's Republic. KFML, SVKVF, Clarté and DFFG were all led by Swedish Maoists. These organizations had Chinese "mother organizations" and were connected through a number of key individuals actively taking part in all of them simultaneously. Sköld Peter Matthis, for example, was head of the united FNL groups (DFFG), Chairman of Clarté, one of the founders of KFML, and a member of the Sweden China Association. It was this core group of people, politically educated in China, who led the Swedish Maoist movement. With Chinese direction, it took only four driven, ambitious and intelligent individuals to challenge the Soviet domination of the communist organizations in Sweden. But it was something other than a dispute on communist terminology and doctrine that weakened the old left of Sweden. The Soviet-friendly Communist Party of Sweden had completely missed the importance of the Vietnam War for young people in the West, something the Maoists, prodded by China, noticed right away.

Many members of the Swedish new left prefer to remember their history as a spontaneous collective awakening to the truth of an unjust world. They recall being united in and are still proud of their struggle against US imperialism and the war in Vietnam, feeling they had a part in the final victory of the Vietnamese. "We had something to fight for that was more important than ourselves," an activist veteran sums up, revealing his contempt for today's younger generation.[60] What is left out of their narrative is the crucial factor that made the anti-war-movement of Sweden so disciplined and successful. In fact, despite

[60] Kilander, *Vietnam var Nära*, 362.

its myth of spontaneous protests, the anti-war movement had all the hallmarks of Leninist organizational tactics. The Maoist Clarté helped form local FNL groups all over Sweden and soon put them under the umbrella organization DFFG. Except for the few Maoist leaders themselves, not many people knew who was in control of the Swedish anti-Vietnam-war movement. It has remained a well-kept secret.[61] But what was the goal of this Maoist group? What interest did they have in a far-away Asian war?

The major task for the Swedish Maoists was not to work for a Marxist revolution in Sweden. Their main goal was to build popular opinion against the USA. KFML internal discussions make clear that their main focus was to be on the Vietnam War and other liberation movements in Southeast Asia, not on a possible Swedish revolution.[62] If the Swedish people could be united against the war in Vietnam they could be taught that US imperialism was the real cause. KFML estimated that less than one percent of the population supported their goals, while a full 80 percent was against the war in Vietnam.[63] The Swedish FNL movement consequently functioned under three guiding slogans: "USA out of Vietnam," "Support the Vietnamese people on their own conditions," and "Fight US imperialism."[64] The Maoists hoped to use anti-war popular sentiment to turn people against China's main enemy, the United States.

The Rise and Fall of Swedish Maoism

The Swedish FNL had been anti-American from its foundation but their protests become stronger and more provocative with time. The American flag was soon being covered with swastikas, eggs were thrown at American official representatives, Uncle Sam dolls hanged from lamp posts, and comparisons drawn between US military action in Vietnam and the Holocaust. At a demonstration outside the Stockholm US Trade Center people threw stones, eggs and bottles, broke windows and smeared the walls with red paint. On International Labor

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[61] Kim Salomon, "FNL-bok Undviker de Svåra Frågorna," *Dagens Nyheter* November 13, 2007.
[62] KFML/SKP arkivet (ARAB Stockholm).
[63] Salomon, *Rebeller i Takt med Tiden*, 150.
[64] Östberg, *1968*, 94.

Day in 1966, protesters set the American flag on fire outside the US Embassy, which led to outrage, and not only in the USA.[65] Burning the flag of another country was a crime, and the incident was harshly condemned by the Swedish establishment. The FNL saw it differently. Little more than a month after this incident the Swedish FNL held a meeting attended by 1,500 members condemning the ban on protest rallies against foreign representatives. The FNL jointly decided to brave the 300 policemen waiting for them outside the building and to march all the way to the US Embassy. Spirits were high. Coming out from the lively FNL meeting one activist remembers that "Jan Myrdal grabbed me under one arm and Sture Källberg under the other and pushed hard as stone, very determined and angry. We broke through the police line."[66] Soon chaos erupted. Police fought the protestors from horseback with heavy nightsticks. The Social Democratic establishment was beginning to strike back.

The hope of Jan Myrdal and the Swedish Maoists was of course not that their protests would make the US change its opinion on the necessity of the war. The provocative protests were rather a strategy to gather support to break up the unity of the Social Democratic Party (SAP). Sköld Peter Matthis argued that it was important to "take hold of the Vietnam question to pry loose a rift in the SAP."[67] He recalls how influenced they were by the ideas of Mao Zedong, and the strategy the CCP had used in forming a United Front with the Kuomintang against the Japanese.[68] Would the strategy of the FNL really draw the Swedish people into anti-Americanism and cause a rift in the dominant SAP?

In early 1968 prospects looked good for the Swedish Maoists. The foundation for a Maoist party had been laid by Holmberg, Matthis and Gustafsson. The Maoist KFML and Clarté had managed to infiltrate and control the FNL anti-Vietnam-War movement. Jan Myrdal had maneuvered into a position to become head of the Sweden China Association. The united front protests had turned increasingly anti-American and the Swedish people's outrage over US atrocities in Vietnam was growing steadily, channeled into protest activities all over the country. The Cultural Revolution in China was at its most fervent

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[65] A photo of Swedish protesters burning the US flag appeared on the first page of the New York Times.

[66] Kilander, *Vietnam var Nära*, 132.

[67] Salomon, *Rebeller i Takt med Tiden*, 172.

[68] Augustsson and Hansén, *Maoisterna*, 43.

state. In early February, the North Vietnamese hit the Americans with the surprise Tet Offensive, effectively destroying US confidence. The US itself was convulsed with protests, and just as Mao had predicted the militant Black Panthers were in open revolt against white America. The very same spring, Paris and other Western cities exploded in revolutionary riots. But the hopes of the Swedish Maoists were soon dashed. What tore the Maoist front apart, just when everything the new Swedish left had dreamed for seemed about to come to fruition?

What ultimately happened in Sweden came as a big surprise. The Maoist plan had been for the FNL to use the Vietnam conflict to rip apart the SAP, but as it turned out it was the SAP, by stealing the Vietnam War question, that split open the new left, condemning it to splinter into numerous squabbling factions. The leadership of the Social Democrats, with access to security police reports about the Maoist infiltration of the FNL, worried that the protests in 1967 were becoming too hostile towards the US.[69] Sweden was officially neutral but in reality leaned toward NATO. The country was therefore dependent on the USA: its export-oriented economy focused on the US market, and the important Swedish weapons industry relied on American technology.[70] The governing SAP realized that it was necessary to take command of the Swedish anti-war movement before it got out of hand and damaged relations with their important ally.

Gunnar Myrdal, previously minister of finance, therefore stepped up as the chairman of an alternative to the FLN, the Swedish Committee for Vietnam (Svenska Kommitteen för Vietnam—SKFV). In the SKFV manifesto, Gunnar Myrdal wrote that "some confused minds" had used the rallies to protest against and criticise the Swedish government.[71] One of the "confused minds" Gunnar Myrdal referred to was of course his own son Jan Myrdal, the de facto leader of the anti-American Maoist movement in Sweden. When the SKFV was inaugurated in January 1968, the leadership of the SAP contributed funds and continued to support it.[72]

From the start the SKVF became the vehicle for certain factions within the party. SAP had been in power since 1932, its leaders regarded as father figures of the nation. The anti-war protests showed them that

[69] Scott, "A Good Offense is the Best Defense."
[70] Yngve Möller, *Sverige och Vietnamkriget* (Stockholm: Tidens förlag, 1992).
[71] Salomon, *Rebeller i Takt med Tiden*, 179.
[72] Ibid., 175.

it was time for a change of leadership, for the party and the nation. The young, aristocratic Olof Palme knew he was slated for the post but worried he did not have the popular support needed. The young generation of radicals he wanted to appeal to were all in the grip of the FNL. The solution to his problem came in February 1968, when Gunnar Myrdal organized the first SKFV anti-war rally in Stockholm. The North Vietnamese ambassador to Moscow was a secret guest of the SAP and joined the protests. Palme walked to the front of the rally to deliver a speech, and the North Vietnamese ambassador came up to Palme's side during the march. Walking with a real representative of North Vietnam won Palme and the SAP the hearts of many of the young war protesters on the left.[73] With this move, the SAP took down the Swedish Maoists, who now lost their cover for the united front. It secured the SAP a landslide victory in the parliamentary elections that same year. The Vietnam War issue was from now on in the hands of the real masters of creating mass movements.

The decline of the Swedish Maoists was in actuality a victory for China. KFML, SVKF, DFFG, Clarté et al. had certainly been the extended arm of China in Sweden, but their political strength was no more China's ultimate goal than was a revolution in Sweden. As Qiang Zhai points out in his book on China and the Vietnam War, what motivated Mao Zedong's foreign policy was less world revolution than a vision of China's place in the world.[74] Squeezed between the two superpowers, China's objective was to find support among the rich nations of the world that were not fighting in Vietnam, and to try and win Western European countries over from their loyalty to the US. On the other hand, Mao had to counter the influence of the Soviet Union. Mao might have failed to win over any communist parties in Moscow in 1960, but his tactics to divide or take over communist organizations in Western nations proved more successful. The Chinese successfully managed to create a rift in the Swedish Communist Party. What the Chinese wanted from the Swedish Maoist organizations was certainly not a Maoist revolution, but rather to bring Sweden on board as part of a third-force alliance against the superpowers. China sought to stoke the flames of opposition to their main rivals, the USSR and

[73] Palme told his critics and the more conservative members of the SAP that he did not know the Vietnamese ambassador would take part in the rally.

[74] Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars 1950–1975* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 221.

the USA. From a Chinese perspective it was even more valuable to have allies in the SAP on global issues like the Vietnam War, Third World liberation movements and "US imperialism."

The image of Palme walking together with the North Vietnamese ambassador against the USA was displayed on front pages around the world. Sweden, the Social Democratic Party and Olof Palme were recast overnight as the toughest Western champions of Third World socialist liberation movements. From this moment on, Sweden's foreign policy shifted to the left. The trend would last for twenty years, disturbing Sweden's formerly strong relations with the USA. The SAP dominated the Vietnam question from that day in 1968 until the end of the war, creating a true mass movement with more than a third of the population mobilized against the war. The new policy of the SAP under Palme also resulted in massive aid to precisely the Third World revolutionary countries in South America, Africa and Asia that Mao Zedong had supported. From now on, Sweden was clearly regarded as taking a "third way" between the ideological blocs of the time. The Chinese had, through their propaganda and schemes to set up a Maoist organization with the task of organizing an anti-USA front, managed to create insecurity in the otherwise stable binary of the Cold War. They had created a *third* alternative to the two ideologies of capitalism and communism, a radical model for developed nations similar to what China was for the poor countries of the Third World.

Conclusion

The rift between China and the Soviet Union that appeared in the 1950s became definitive in the 1960s, when the USA and USSR sought to divide the world between them in "peaceful coexistence." With little support in the communist bloc, China now stood alone and had to look for allies in the Third World and in the West. The spread of Maoism to Latin America is discussed by Matthew Rothwell in his chapter. The mechanics of the spread of Maoism to Sweden are strikingly similar. In the early 1960s Nils Holmberg, Bo Gustafsson and Jan Myrdal were invited to China, treated well and indoctrinated daily by skillful propaganda and political schooling. Three veteran ideologues of the Swedish communist collective were won over to the Chinese cause. On returning home they started taking over the various communist organizations still dominated by the Soviet Union.

When the Americans went to war with North Vietnam, Mao used the situation to support his domestic political goals, creating a nationwide campaign against the Americans. A section from the Swedish student socialist organization Clarté was invited to Beijing and gobbled up all the propaganda they were served. The young chairman Sköld Peter Matthis soon started arranging protest rallies against the US Embassy in Stockholm. Simultaneous with the anti-US protests, Gustafsson and Holmberg managed to split the Soviet-leaning Communist Party of Sweden and create the foundation of a Maoist party: the KFML. Jan Myrdal took control of the Sweden China Association and turned it into a Maoist organization completely loyal to China. Gustafsson and Matthis took over the socialist youth organization Clarté. At this point KFML, SVKVF, Clarté, FNL, and DFFG were all Maoist. By 1967 they worked closely together under a small group of devoted China friends, most importantly Matthis, Gustafsson, Holmberg and Myrdal. The common agenda was the "united front," pulling all Swedes together in outrage against the US. Anti-Americanism was the central issue of anti-war protests.

The Social Democratic Party that had ruled Sweden since the thirties reacted defensively to this threat from the left by putting the young Olof Palme in front of an attempt to tear down the Maoist monopoly on the Indochina problem. In the first demonstration organized by the SAP in 1968, Olof Palme walked side by side with the North Vietnamese ambassador to Moscow. Palme won a political platform for himself by breaking the Maoist hegemony over Sweden's young leftists, but in the process the SAP became radicalized and Sweden leaned progressively further towards the socialist camp as it became deeply involved in aid to Vietnam and other Third World socialist countries. Relations with the US turned sour as the anti-war activities were transformed into a true mass movement. This was precisely what the Chinese had hoped for.

It was internal and geopolitical Chinese interests that put this whole chain of events into motion, and in the end, although the Swedish Maoists lost, China got what it wanted. Through their Swedish friends Gustafsson, Holmberg, Matthis and Myrdal China managed to split up the Soviet-dominated left. With the SAP entering the fight against the war, Mao suddenly had a Western European country on his side against the USA. In this wealthy capitalist welfare state with socialist elements, a "third way" was forged that appealed to intellectuals and politicians in both the Western and Soviet-dominated blocs.

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