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Suspicious minds: Chinese nationalism, state security and education in Cold War Hong Kong, 1949-70s

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ABSTRACT

Using archival records and leftist memoirs, this article examines how the Chinese Communist Party expanded its influence through left-wing schools in Hong Kong during the Cold War, and documents how the colonial state contended with this 'security threat'. The CCP utilised Hong Kong's capitalist environment to its advantage and expanded its influence in the education sector. To avoid provoking retaliatory actions from China, the colonial authorities employed different strategies to constrain left-wing schools, which however were only outcompeted by free compulsory education in the 1970s. This case study contributes to debates about the particularistic forms of Hong Kong's Cold War.

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Introduction

The People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded in 1949, following the end of the Second World War. Amid the Cold War, it expanded its united front efforts to propagate nationalism amongst overseas Chinese in Asia, including its education front, which coincided with the invigoration of Chinese nationalism in many colonial territories.[1] For instance, enrolment in the Chinese schools in Malaya increased considerably at a time when the Malayan Emergency was at its peak and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had successfully seized power in mainland China.[2] Similarly, in the 1950s, the CCP's 'inexhaustible' supply of left-wing literature to schools had threatened Singapore's political stability.[3] Singapore witnessed growing Chinese nationalism and clashes between police and Chinese middle school students in the 1950s, such as the National Service riots. In the face of the spreading Chinese

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[1]United front work was a strategy that was employed on mainland China in the 1940s to mobilise support from a wide range of social groups, including labour, peasants, students, professional and business elites. See Christine Loh, *Underground Front: The Chinese Communist Party in Hong Kong* (Second Edition) (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2019).

[2]Tan Liok Ee, *The Politics of Chinese Education in Malaya, 1945-1961* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 53.

[3]Wen-Qing Ngoei, *Arc of Containment: Britain, the United States and Anticommunism in Southeast Asia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2019), 35; Florence Mok, 'Disseminating and Containing Communist Propaganda to Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia through Hong Kong, the Cold War Pivot, 1949-1960', *The Historical Journal* 65, no. 5 (2022): 1397–1417.

communist influence, colonial governments in Southeast Asia adopted a hard-line approach to curb their activities.[4] The Briggs Plan launched in 1950 resettled hundred thousand of Chinese in New Villages; under a special scheme, they were offered education and other welfare services, isolating them from 'intrusions by communists'.[5] As for Singapore, a Ten-Year Education Plan was implemented from 1948, under which outstanding students from Chinese, Malaya and Tamil primary schools were provided with special classes in English primary schools.[6] Committees were set up in both Malaya and Singapore to ensure textbooks used in Chinese primary schools were 'malayanised' with limited references to China.[7] In mid-1952, a new salary scheme was launched to place Chinese primary school teachers' appointment and promotion under tighter state control.[8] These pervasive measures effectively limited the extent of Chinese Communist influence in the region.

In Hong Kong, by contrast, Chinese Communist activities were monitored but not prohibited due to its unique geopolitics. The colony was a nexus where major powers and political currents met.[9] For the PRC, Hong Kong was a source of foreign exchange and a centre for disseminating propaganda to the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia.[10] The Chinese Communists supported anti-government activities in Hong Kong and provided subsidies to various sectors, including trade unions and schools, to inspire support for Chinese nationalism and communism; these activities posed potential security threats to the colonial regime.[11] However, the colonial government endured these activities because Hong Kong was militarily indefensible.[12] In the 1950s, Hong Kong's garrison was scaled down significantly.[13] Its military vulnerability led the colonial government to avoid heavy handed suppression on these left-wing organisations, for fear that would lead to Beijing's retaliation. The colony also needed to co-exist with the PRC because it relied heavily on the supply of food and water from the mainland.[14] It therefore followed a strategy of containment, which created a relatively permissive environment for ideological contests and competing nationalist claims, notably between the Kuomintang (KMT) and the CCP.[15]

[4]Karen M. Teoh, *Schooling Diaspora: Women, Education, and the Overseas Chinese in British Malaya and Singapore, 1850s-1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[5]Tan, *The Politics*, 54.

[6]Ting Hui Lee, *Chinese Schools in Peninsular Malaysia: The Struggle for Survival* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2011), 64.

[7]*Ibid*.

[8]Tan, *The Politics*, 64.

[9]Tracy Steele, 'Hong Kong and the Cold War in the 1950s', in *Hong Kong in the Cold War*, ed. Priscilla Roberts and John M. Carroll (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016), 92.

[10]Wang Gungwu, 'Hong Kong's Twentieth Century: The Global Setting', in *Hong Kong in the Cold War*, 6–7; Mok, 'Disseminating'.

[11]David A. Levin and Stephen W. K. Chiu, 'Trade Unions Growth Waves in Hong Kong', *Labor History* 75 (1998): 40–56; B. K. P. Leung, 'Political Process and Industrial Strikes and the Labour Movement in Hong Kong, 1946-1989', *Journal of Oriental Studies* 29, no. 2 (1991): 172–206; A. E. Sweeting and P. Morris, 'Educational Reform in Post-war Hong Kong: Planning and Crisis Intervention', *International Journal of Education Development* 13, no. 3 (1993): 201–16.

[12]Florence Mok, 'Town Talk: Enhancing the 'Eyes and Ears' of the Colonial State in British Hong Kong, 1950s-1975', *Historical Research* 95, no. 268(2022): 293; Steve Tsang, *Hong Kong: An Appointment with China* (London: I.B. Tarius, 1997), 76–7; Chi-kwan Mark, 'Defence or Decolonisation? Britain, the United States, and the Hong Kong Question in 1957', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 33, no. 1 (2005): 53–5.

[13]Norman Miners, *The Government and Politics of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1977), 19, 25 and 223.

[14]Siu-keung Cheung, 'Reunification through Water and Food: The Other Battle for Lives and Bodies in China's Hong Kong's Policy', *The China Quarterly* 220 (2014): 1012–32.

[15]Chi-kwan Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War: Anglo-American Relations 1949-195* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). For Governor Grantham's comments on 'the policy in combatting the spread of Communist Influence in Hong Kong', see 'Report on Communist Activities in Hong Kong for the Six Months Ending 31 December 1949', A. G. Grantham to James Griffiths, M.P., 6 March 1950, FCO 141/14419, The National Archives, United Kingdom (TNA hereafter).

In practice, the colonial state monitored radicalism closely and repressed it using a variety of approaches when state security was endangered.[16] This 'unwillingly' permissive environment made Hong Kong a unique and unintended incubation zone between powers, providing room for the communist force to grow extensively under a capitalist regime in the Cold War, including in the education domain, the focus of this article.

Historically, Hong Kong's education sector had been a major battleground between the Capitalist and Communist Blocs, and between the CCP and the KMT.[17] In the early post-war period, this ideological contest was aggravated because Hong Kong's education system was under-developed, causing private schools with political affiliations to flourish.[18] Earlier scholarship on education in Hong Kong was divided into two strands. One strand of this scholarship focused on education policies, systems and the reasons behind their changes and has debated whether colonial education policies projected British 'cultural imperialism' or were sufficiently flexible to accommodate the needs of local people.[19] This literature reveals how education curricula were depoliticised to enhance the colonial state's legitimacy, and thus shaped identities in ways that maintained social stability.[20] For example, the colonial government formulated a Chinese history curriculum that only used works of classically trained and conservative scholars; contemporary political issues were not touched upon.[21] This literature also shows that 'native' agency took part in this 'colonialisation process', with these scholars having the opportunity to pursue their own moral and cultural agenda under this collaboration.[22] Another strand of scholarship has examined how the CCP-controlled left-wing schools propagated anticolonial nationalism and attempted to 'construct an alternative, socialist and PRC-centred identity' that challenged the practices of capitalism and colonialism.[23]

[16]Coercive means and draconian regulations were used by the colonial government to combat radical leftists during riots and emergencies. See Ray Yep, '"Cultural Revolution in Hong Kong": Emergency Powers, Administration of Justice and the Turbulent Years of 1967', *Modern Asian Studies* 46, no. 4 (2012): 1007–32;

Carol Jones and Jon Vagg, *Criminal Justice in Hong Kong* (London and New York: Routledge-Cavendish, 2007), chapter 17; Michael Ng, *Political Censorship in British Hong Kong Freedom of Expression and the Law (1842-1997)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), chapters 3 and 4.

[17]Michael Ng et al., 'Hearts and Minds in Hong Kong's New Territories: Agriculture and Vegetable Marketing in a Cold War Borderland, *circa* 1946-1967', *Modern Asian Studies* 57, no. 6 (2023), 1931–58; Chi-kwan Mark, 'Everyday Propaganda: The Leftist Press and Sino-British Relations in Hong Kong, 1952-67', in *Europe and China in the Cold War: Exchanges Beyond the Bloc Login and the Sino-Soviet Split, News Perspectives on the Cold War*, ed. Janick Marina Schaufelbuehl, Marco Wyss and Valeria Zanier (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 151–71.

[18]Free primary school education was not introduced in Hong Kong until 1971. See A. E. Sweeting, *Education in Hong Kong, 1941-2001: Visions and Revisions* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 260–1.

[19]Martin Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism* (New York: Longman, 1977); R. Robinson, 'The Excentric Idea of Imperialism, With or Without Empire', in *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities*, ed. W. J. Mommsen and J. Osterhammel (London: Allen and Unwin, 1986), 267–89;

C. Whitehead. 'British Colonial Educational Policy: A Synonym for Cultural Imperialism?', in *Education and British Imperialism, Benefits Bestowed?*, ed. J. A. Mangan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 211–30; C. Whitehead, *Colonial Educators: The British Indian and Colonial Education Service, 1858–1983* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003); Edward Vickers et al., 'Colonialism and the Politics of 'Chinese History' in Hong Kong's Schools', *Oxford Review of Education* 29, no. 1 (2003): 95–111; Edward Vickers, *In Search of an Identity: The Politics of History as a School Subject in Hong Kong, 1960s-2002* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003); A. E. Sweeting, *A Phoenix Transformed: The Reconstruction of Education in Post-war Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[20]Bernard H. Luk, 'Chinese Culture in the Hong Kong Curriculum: Heritage and Colonialism', *Comparative Education Review* 35, no. 4 (1991): 650–69; Vickers, *In Search of an Identity*; Ting-hong Wong, *Hegemonies Compared: State Formation and Chinese School Politics in Post-war Singapore and Hong Kong* (New York: Routledge, 2002)

[21]Luk, 'Chinese Culture', 668.

[22]Vickers, *In Search of an Identity*, 6, 42 and 230; Law Wing Sang, *Collaborative Colonial Power: The Making of the Hong Kong Chinese* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009).

[23]Lau Chui Shan, 'Hong Kong Socialist Experimentation in the Colonial era: Patriotic Schools, 1946-1976', *China Report* 47, no. 1 (2011): 27–8.

However, studies on the CCP's activities in education sector and on the colonial government's mechanisms to contain this 'security threat' using a Cold War framework remain limited and have not systematically used available archival materials.[24]

The processes and dynamics of how Hong Kong acted as a unique incubation zone of rival ideological and nationalist claims during the Cold War have major scholarly implications. First, it reveals the CCP's capacity to adjust its united front strategies flexibly. The economic and pragmatic strategies used in Hong Kong were distinctive and different from the centralised ideological approach employed in mainland China: they were tailored to cater to Hong Kong's capitalist setting and instrumental political culture. Left-wing schools could only survive in Hong Kong if they understood the 'equilibrium' and compromised where necessary- they had to manoeuvre in response to evolving geopolitical dynamics and comply with the tightening colonial laws. Second, amongst other British colonies, Hong Kong was an unusual space where left-wing schools remained a security threat until the 1970s. The government's way of handling it was also unique: it relied on tolerance, containment, depoliticisation and instrumentalism rather than a complete suppression as in Southeast Asia. This is partly because the left-wing schools were able to fill the education void left by the colonial government. This study therefore provides important insights into how and why the capitalist and communist camps co-existed and tolerated each other during the height of the Cold War.

This article draws on underexplored archival sources from the National Archives in London and the Public Records Office in Hong Kong. Given the limited access to state records in mainland China, it also examines memoirs of former leftists and reports from left-wing newspapers. Although these records were penned by a narrow group of colonial officials and elites, whose primary aim was to assess the CCP's influence in the education domain, they are useful in explaining various containment measures adopted by the colonial government to curb this 'security threat'. This study therefore accepts and makes use of this imbalance in sources to illustrate the perceptions of the colonial government and its interactions with left-wing schools.

The article focuses on the period from 1949, the year when the PRC was founded, to the 1970s, when free primary school education was introduced in Hong Kong. It reconstructs the funding and operation of left-wing schools, investigates their appeal to specific communities and explores how they promoted Chinese nationalism within a capitalist society. It also investigates how the colonial state monitored and contained this perceived 'security threat' through a variety of measures, covert and overt, administrative and legal, justified by both political and non-political reasons. Despite these efforts, the growth of left-wing schools persisted. Their number only declined significantly after the introduction of free public schooling in the 1970s. This study bridges an important gap in the existing scholarship by examining Hong Kong's educational development against the broader backdrop of Cold War geopolitics and state security. It will shed light on the previously understudied dynamics between communist initiatives and colonial countermeasures during the Cold War.

[24]Chan Lau Kit-ching, *From Nothing to Nothing: The Chinese Communist Movement and Hong Kong, 1921-36* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Lu Yan, *Crossed Paths: Labour Activism and Colonial Governance in Hong Kong, 1938-1958* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2019); Poshek Fu, 'More than Just Entertaining: Cinematic Containment and Asia's Cold War in Hong Kong, 1949-1959', *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 30, no. 2 (2018): 1–55.

I. CCP's education policy and operation in Hong Kong

To the CCP, Hong Kong was a 'natural traffic and communication centre with few travel controls for Chinese' and the 'most convenient centre for liaison with the overseas Chinese'.[25] Since early days, CCP had paid specific attention to education.[26] According to the intelligence of the Hong Kong Police Special Branch, left-wing schools in Hong Kong were regarded by the CCP as an 'extension of the mainland educational system', through which the best students were selected for higher education in China, who were expected to assist the 'reconstruction of the motherland' or return to Hong Kong as teachers after graduation.[27] Education therefore was a pivotal field to develop Hong Kong's youth into patriotic and loyal party supporters.

However, under the Societies Ordinance amended in 1950 which prohibited organisations with foreign political affiliations, the communist organisations in Hong Kong could not operate openly but had to remain underground 'on a permanent basis'.[28] Since the colonial government considered the expanding communist influence a security threat, the Hong Kong Police Special Branch and the Local Intelligence Committee monitored their activities closely and produced intelligence reports regularly. According to this intelligence from the colonial government, CCP's South China Bureau was responsible for the propagation of communism in Hong Kong. Authorities were further decentralised on provincial basis: the Guangdong Regional Control was responsible for supervising the Hong Kong Municipal Committee.[29] Throughout the 1950s, as left-wing schools in Hong Kong were treated as 'an adjunct' to China's education system, Guangdong's Education Department exercised considerable control over them. In the 1960s, control over education affairs was passed to the Guangdong Provincial Party Committee's youth section.[30] However, the youth section was only responsible for running non-workers left-wing schools in Hong Kong – the focus of this article.[31] Up until 1967, these schools paid for their own administrative expenses, except in circumstances when additional school premises had to be built. They did not start accepting finance from China until 1968 when increased capital was required for expanding their premises.[32]

To help administration, the Party Committee divided Hong Kong into three geographical divisions: Hong Kong East, Hong Kong West and Kowloon. Each division was

[25]'Communism in Hong Kong', telegram from S.I.F.E. to A. S. Malford, Marston Logan, C.M. Tarver, J. C. Richards, I.E. Brodie, 2 February 1949, CO 537/4814, TNA.

[26]'The Chinese Communist Party in Hong Kong', by Hong Kong Police Special Branch, 30 June 1949, FCO 141/14419, TNA, 11.

[27]This is also confirmed by a left-wing school's publication. For instance, in 1950, out of 25 senior form students, 18 were 'determined to serve the motherland' and applied to higher education institutions in mainland China. See Liang Yi Ming (梁一鳴), *Hon Wah Seventy* (漢華七十) [Han Hua Qishi] (Hong Kong: Chung Hwa Publishing, 2022), 59, 66.

[28]See S.5 of Societies Ordinance; 'Chinese Communist Party – Policy', telegram from Head of S.I.F.E. to Commissioner-General Office, C.O.I.S. (F.E.S.), Colonel (I), C.I.O. A.C.F.E., Mr Collins, Director General, Security Services, D.S.O. Federation of Malaya, D.S.O. Singapore, D.S.O. Hong Kong, S.L.O. Burma, 28 January 1949, CO 537/4814, TNA.

[29]'Communism in Hong Kong'. The chain of command here was verified by a book published by the CCP. See *Hong Kong and Chinese Revolution* (香港與中國革命) [Xianggang yu Zhongguo Geming], ed. CCP Guangdong Provincial Committee's Party History Research Office (中共廣東省委黨史研究室) (Guangzhou: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 1997), 226–36. Another book published by a veteran journalist also confirmed the command structure that was described by the colonial government. See Jiang Guansheng (江關生), *Chinese Communists in Hong Kong, 1921-1949* (中共在香港 1921–1949) [Zhonggong zai Xianggang 1921-1949] (Hong Kong: Cosmos Books, 2011), vol. 2, 205–7.

[30]'The Communist Threat in Education', by Hong Kong Police Special Branch, 28 April 1972, FCO 40/382, TNA, 3.

[31]Schools that provided education for the children of communist trade union members were managed by the labour section. 'The Communist Threat in Education', 2–3.

[32]*Ibid*., 21.

responsible for the left-wing schools within its area. When an urban school opened a branch school in the New Territories, the control of the branch remained with the division which managed the parent school.[33] The colonial government believed that most teachers and principals within these schools were party members or communist sympathisers. The whole command structure was therefore regarded to be 'extremely tight-knit'.[34] The CCP at the provincial level exercised control over teachers through the Hong Kong and Kowloon Teachers Welfare Association, the New Territories Teachers' Association and a secret CCP directed Education Committee which comprised of representatives from 14 different schools.[35]

The CCP's approach with respect to education in Hong Kong was pragmatic, shaped by colonial laws and local cultures. Since 1949, Zhou Enlai had given instructions to local communists and asked them not to liberate Hong Kong as the Party's Hong Kong policy was 'part of the overall strategic plan for East-West struggle'.[36] In mainland China, the CCP's centralised education system emphasised ideological education.[37] Marxist-Leninist theories and Maoism were united in curriculum to instil Chinese nationalism amongst children and teenagers, who were to learn how to 'love the motherland, people, labour and science, and develop civic morality and resolute courage to protect public property'.[38] However, Hong Kong was different: it was a capitalist society in which most residents, especially the working class, were perceived to be driven by instrumentalism and materialistic culture rather than revolutionary ideologies.[39] The CCP's education policy in Hong Kong therefore was unique: rather than emphasising class struggles and advocating the overthrow of the colonial government, it focused on promoting a traditional broad sense of patriotism through 'peaceful penetration', soliciting support from various social classes and groups through economic incentives.[40] In other words, left-wing schooling aimed to facilitate the creation of conditions for an anticolonial struggle

[33] *Ibid*., 3.

[34] *Ibid*.

[35] 'The Chinese Communist Party in Hong Kong', 13–4.

[36] Jin Yaoru (金堯如), *50 Years of Memories in Hong Kong* (香江五十年憶往) [Xiangjiang Wushi Nian Yiwang] (Hong Kong: Jin Yaoru Memorial Fund, 2005), 30–4.

[37] Since 1949, efforts were made by the PRC to centralise the education system in mainland China. For example, the People's Education Press (PEP) was set up in December 1950 as a subsidiary agency of the Ministry of Education. By 1956, PEP had a 'virtual monopoly' over curricula in primary and secondary schools. In 1959, the country reverted to a single national curriculum. See Alisa Jones, 'Changing the Past to Serve the Present: History Education in Mainland China', in *History Education and National Identity in East Asia*, ed. Edward Vickers and Alisa Jones (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), 72; Yu Miin-ling, 'From Two Camps to Three Worlds: The Party Worldwide in PRC Textbooks (1959-1966)', *The China Quarterly* 215 (2013): 686.

[38] Jones, 'Changing the Past', 72–3.

[39] Earlier scholarship suggested that most Hong Kong people were politically apathetic and driven by instrumentalism due to their refugee and sojourner mentalities. See Miners, *The Government*, 34; J. S. Hoadley, 'Hong Kong is the Lifeboat: Notes on Political Culture and Socialisation', *Journal of Oriental Studies* 8 (1970): 210–1. However, new literature suggested that political cultures varied in different social classes. The working class was driven by instrumentalism and could be mobilised when their interests were at stake. See Florence Mok, *Covert Colonialism: Governance, Surveillance and Political Culture in British Hong Kong, c. 1966-97* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 18.

[40] 'Review of Communist Activities in Hong Kong', L.I.C. 6 (67), Local Intelligence Committee, June 1967, CO 1030/579, TNA, 7. This approach was generally adopted in different fronts, such as the cultural and education fronts and was confirmed by leftist memoirs. See Jin, *50 Years*, 30 and 35. This approach was similarly adopted by the KMT in Hong Kong in education. For example, they would hold ceremonies on Chinese national occasions and perform various rituals, such as community shouting of party slogans and observance towards portraits of Sun Yat Sen. However, the colonial government's worries over KMT educational activities declined gradually as the CCP was more successful in expanding its influence. Also see Paul Morris and Anthony Sweeting, 'Education and Politics: The Case of Hong Kong from an Historical Perspective', *Oxford Review of Education* 17, no. 3 (1991): 250–2.

but could not immediately seek to topple the capitalist order and breach colonial laws-the 'equilibrium' which must be observed. It attempted to cultivate Chinese nationalism within the legal parameters, preparing for Hong Kong's future retrocession to China.

II. Influence of changing Sino-British relations and international politics

The CCP's united front work's intensity and radicalness were largely governed by changing Sino-British relations and international politics. While the broader 'peaceful penetration' approach had been continuously emphasised by the communist education circle throughout the colonial era, the years from 1949 to the 1970s can be divided into five different periods, in which education policies of different intensity could be observed. From 1949 to 1952, the Communists focused on promoting patriotism and consolidating their influence in the education domain. Contrary to the Counter-revolutionaries Campaign in China which aimed at eradicating 'capitalists' and 'reactionaries', a 'broad patriotic united front' was set up in Hong Kong.[41] However, this period still witnessed subversive actions initiated by left-wing students and teachers. For example, they were actively involved in the Kowloon disturbances in March 1952, which were sparked off by the colonial administration's refusal to allow a mission from Guangdong province to enter Hong Kong to provide aid to the victims of a fire in Tung Tau village.[42]

The colonial government's strong suppression of disturbances and the subsequent deportation of Mok Ying-kwai, a member of the Chinese Reform Association who was involved in the mission, led to a period of 'moderation' from 1953 to 1956. Observing the Party's line of 'peaceful coexistence' in foreign policy, which was reiterated at the Bandung Conference in 1954, the local Communists seemed to seek accommodation with the colonial government. Towards the end of 1955, the colonial government noticed that the CCP further 'took a new tack', changing from 'passive non-violence' to 'active gestures of friendship'.[43] In education, the 'political temperature' was perceived as particularly 'low'. Even Parker Tu, leading communist personality and principal of Pui Kiu Middle School, seemed to hold a 'superficially correct' attitude towards the colonial government: 'Although there is no doubt that he had evaded the colonial law, he was careful to conceal his transgressions'.[44] However, the CCP continued to expand its influence in the education sector, with Protestant schools being its specific targets.[45]

This period of peaceful co-existence ended in 1956. Until 1961, relationship between the local leftists and the colonial government became increasingly tense, with the shift traced to the 1956 riots – a violent disturbance that broke out on 10 October in Lei Cheng Uk

[41]For details of the Counter-revolutionaries Campaign, see Hu Sheng, *A Concise History of the Communist Party of China* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1994), 420–1.

[42]Carol Jones and Jon Vagg, *Criminal Justice in Hong Kong* (London and New York: Routledge-Cavendish, 2007), 243. According to left-wing memoirs, the colonial government was against the mission representatives and some left-wing filmmakers and arbitrarily deported them in 1952. See Zhou Yi (周奕), *A History of the Leftist Struggle in Hong Kong* (香港左派鬥爭史) [Xianggang Zuopai Douzheng Shi] (Hong Kong: Liwen. 2002), 102 and 107.

[43]Telegram from P. G. F. Dalton to C. D. W. O'Neill, 22 June 1956, CO 1030/203, TNA.

[44]'Untitled', by Hong Kong Police Special Branch, 19 July 1958, FO 371/133338, TNA, 8.

[45]'Review of Communist Activities in Hong Kong', June 1967, 20. Protestant schools became the CCP's targets likely because they exercised predominant influences on Hong Kong's education system and were attended by students that were elites. For instance, in the 1950s, churches and their organisations operated 25 schools of out the 30 'most prestigious secondary schools'. By the 1960s, they 'monopolised almost entirely the admissions into the University of Hong Kong'. See Ming Sing, *Hong Kong's Tortuous Democratisation: A Comparative Analysis* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 54; N.W. Kwok, *A Church in Transition* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Christian Institute, 1997), 4.

resettlement estate and spread to Kowloon on 19 and 21 October due to a dispute between Nationalist and Communist sympathisers over the display of the Nationalist flag.[46] By late 1957, the CCP education policy had consequently shifted, with the 'tempo' of 'political indoctrination' on the increase, as observed by the formation of student reading groups studying the communist press and courses for the 'indoctrination' of teachers.[47] Left-wing schools also increasingly asked to fly the PRC's national flag despite the government's warning, which was rare in previous periods.[48] According to the Local Intelligence Committee, the CCP had 'deliberately chosen the education field for a trial of strength with the Hong Kong government' and their propaganda represented 'a form of total Cold War'.[49] When Chung Hwa Middle School was closed due to 'unsafe condition of the school buildings' in August, the Communists pursued a policy of 'open defiance'.[50] After the incident, the left-wing press attacked the colonial government, accusing it of allowing the police to beat the journalists up during the school's closure.[51] Such development occurred at a time of worsening Sino-British relations caused by the tensions in the Formosa straits.[52] According to Governor Robert Black, local leftists tried to frighten 'Hong Kong government off any further action contemplated against communist schools'.[53]

This period of disharmonious relations changed in 1961 when there was a significant decrease in the organisation of political study groups. For example, both Heung To and Pui Kiu Middle Schools, two of the largest communist-controlled schools in Hong Kong, announced in September 1961 that no political study group sessions would be held in the entire term.[54] The Special Branch believed that the 'slackening of political activity in the schools' was a political decision: affected by 'internal difficulty' in China 'caused by the Great Leap Forward'.[55] The narratives taught at schools focused on attacking the United States rather than the British and the colonial governments, arguing that the US government was 'making [a] deliberate move to cause a Third World War'.[56] It was not until 1963 that regular study of local left-wing newspapers was instituted during school hours.[57]

This period of restraint lasted until 1966, when the mood in the left-wing education circle changed due to the Cultural Revolution: 'when political activity in China was intensified, the cult of Mao study was promoted with ever-increasing zeal'.[58] In 1967, direct confrontations between students and the police force began to occur. Anticolonial protests became radicalised.[59] Left-wing students and teachers printed and distributed inflammatory leaflets.

[46]'Intelligence for Two Weeks Ending 22nd October', telegram from A. Grantham to the Secretary of State, 23 October 1956, CO 1030/250, TNA.

[47]'Review of Communist Activities in Hong Kong, 11(59)', Local Intelligence Committee, 3 February 1959, attached in 'Communist Activities in Hong Kong', telegram from Governor to the Secretary of State, 19 February 1959, CO 1030/579, TNA, 14.

[48]Telegram from Governor to Alan Lennox-Boyd, 21 January 1959, CO 1030/579, TNA; Zhou, *A History*, 171-2.

[49]'Review of Communist Activities in Hong Kong, 11(59)', 7.

[50]Telegram from R. Black to the Secretary of State, 4 September 1958, CO 1030/579, TNA; 'Review of Communist Activities in Hong Kong, 11(59)'.

[51]'Police Beat Up Journalist' (警察毆打記者) [Jingcha Ouda Jizhe], *New Evening Post*, 26 August 1958.

[52]Zhou, *A History*, 179-80; 'Review of Communist Activities in Hong Kong, 11(59)', 2.

[53]Telegram from Black to Secretary of State, 4 September 1958.

[54]Hong Kong Police Special Branch Summary, September 1961, CO 1030/1432, TNA, 6.

[55]Hong Kong Police Special Branch Summary, February 1961, CO 1030/1432, TNA, 2.

[56]Hong Kong Police Special Branch Summary, July 1962, CO 1030/1433, TNA, 7-8; Hong Kong Police Special Branch Summary, October 1962, CO 1030/1433, TNA, 7.

[57]'L.I.C. Monthly Intelligence Report, March 1963', telegram from Governor to the Secretary of State, 6 April 1963, FCO 141/12635, TNA, 3.

[58]'The Communist Threat in Education', 2.

[59]Some left-wing schools, such as Hon Wah, however argued that their teachers and students only supported workers' 'peaceful protest activities'. See Liang, *Hon Wah Seventy*, 125.

Some were even believed to have manufactured and planted bombs.[60] Many leading leftist schools were raided. Chung Wah Middle School was even shut down after a suspected bomb explosion inside the school.[61] This period of aggression only ended in October 1967 when Zhou Enlai regained control over China's foreign affairs.[62]

From 1968 onwards, peaceful struggle was re-emphasised. In early 1968, Zhou asserted that the 'anti-persecution struggle had gone on the wrong track' in Hong Kong.[63] He instructed the local leftists that 'struggle was to continue on peaceful lines, avoiding collisions with the British'.[64] Their main task now was to 'win over the masses by appeals to patriotic feelings and by increased political indoctrination'.[65] The differences between conditions in Hong Kong and China were reiterated, stressing the importance of adopting different methods to apply Mao's Thoughts.[66] According to colonial intelligence, Guangdong had given specific instructions to Hong Kong's education circle: efforts should be devoted to the construction of new schools and infiltration into non-communist affiliated institutions.[67]

III. Left-wing schools: extent of influence

Before 1949, the CCP already had considerable influence over Hong Kong's education sector. According to official statistics, it had controlled and infiltrated into over 11% of the schools and 12.5% of the students who, the colonial government believed, were 'subject to indoctrination'.[68] In June 1949, the Special Branch commented that the situation was 'both serious and dangerous' as 'communist influence over the schools' was increasing by 'leaps and bounds'.[69] Governor Alexander Grantham also agreed that the education sector was 'thoroughly infiltrated by the Communists' in July 1949 – 'a dangerous situation'.[70]

After the CCP seized the control of mainland China, 'a wave of patriotic enthusiasm spread through many Hong Kong schools'.[71] Many 'hard-core communist schools' were established.[72] By October 1952, the CCP managed to control and infiltrate into 83 schools with 16,732 students in Hong Kong, which accounted for about 8% of the total schools and 8.5% of the total students enrolled.[73] Between 1953 and 1956, the CCP continued to make major efforts through 'peaceful penetration', 'building up their strength' and

[60]Gary Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed: The 1967 Riots* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 132.
[61]Ng, *Political Censorship*, 123; Zhou, *A History*, 291–304.
[62]Jin, *50 Years*, 73.
[63]Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed*, 125.
[64]'The Communist Threat in Education', 4.
[65]*Ibid*.
[66]Hong Kong Police Special Branch, 'Communist Confrontation with the Hong Kong Government: Future Communist Policy and Tactics', 7 November 1968, FCO 40/222, TNA, 10.
[67]'The Communist Threat in Education', 4–5.
[68]'Communist Schools in Hong Kong', telegram from Governor to Secretary of State, 17 November 1952, CO 986/259, TNA.
[69]'The Chinese Communist Party in Hong Kong', 15.
[70]Telegram from A. G. Grantham to Arthur Creech Jones, 27 July 1949, FCO 141/14419, TNA.
[71]'The Communist Threat in Education', 1.
[72]'Report on Communist Activities in Hong Kong for the Six Months Ending 31 December 1949'.
[73]'Communist Schools in Hong Kong', 17 November 1952. Statistics in archival data are fragmentary and their presentation changed over time during the studied period. There is no separate data stating the percentages of communist-controlled and infiltrated schools before 1954. From 1954 to 1958, only the number of communist-controlled and infiltrated schools was reported and the number of students enrolled in these schools was not given. Reports of 1959 and 1960 showed the number of communist-controlled and infiltrated schools, along with the number of students enrolled in them. However, from 1961 onwards, the number of students enrolled in communist-infiltrated schools was not reported.

'consolidat[ing] their position in those schools controlled by them'.[74] From September 1954 to March 1955, out of approximately 1,200 schools in Hong Kong, the number of communist-controlled and infiltrated schools increased from 41 to 88.[75] The number of communist-controlled and infiltrated school further increased to 147 in June 1956.[76] The growth evidently represented 'a marked extension of communist influence'.[77] Underground youth activities which were connected to left-wing schools also grew during this period.[78]

During the period of aggression from 1958 to 1961, which corresponded to the years of the Great Leap Forward, communist influence in the education sector expanded. It was estimated in 1959 that there were 53 communist-controlled schools with 16,414 pupils and 121 communist-infiltrated schools with 63,661 pupils, constituting 16% of the total student population in Hong Kong (see Table 1).[79] In particular, there was 'a very significant increase' in the activities of communist-controlled associations of headmasters, teachers and students 'in support of issues over which the leftists have sought to make adverse publicity against this government and to influence its policy'.[80] As P. G. F. Dalton had pointed out, 'gestures of defiance against the government have become more frequent, and the Governor considers that the situation is becoming serious'.[81] According to D. C. Wilson, the CCP's education networks were so far-reaching that even draconian legal measures, such as the deportation of key figures, had limited impact on its growth.[82]

Realising that education was 'always a sensitive point' and concerning Hong Kong would 'bear the brunt' of the deteriorating Sino-British relations, the colonial government managed this 'security threat' in careful manner.[83] By 1961, there was finally a decrease in the percentage of enrolment in left-wing schools. Amongst the 600,000 students in Hong Kong, 13% of them studied in either communist-controlled or communist-infiltrated schools.[84] There were 3,250 out of 28,750 secondary students receiving left-wing education.[85] The secondary school figure was however still alarming as these institutions were 'real hard-core schools'.[86]

In the quiet period from 1961 to 1965, the number of communist-controlled schools kept pace with the general rise in Hong Kong's school population (Table 2). After 1965, some new buildings were further constructed.[87] By early 1967, despite increased school

[74]'Hong Kong: Implications of Recent Chinese Policy', document from A. Grantham to S of S., 25 June 1956, CO 1030/203, TNA; 'The Vulnerability of Hong Kong to Non-Military Aggression', by Local Intelligence Committee, June 1955, CO 1035/78, TNA, 2; Telegram from P.G.F. Dalton to A. A. E. Franklin, British Consulate, Formosa, 8 June 1956, CO 1030/203, TNA.

[75]'The Vulnerability of Hong Kong to Non-Military Aggression', by Hong Kong Local Intelligence Committee, December 1956, CO 1035/78, TNA, Table 2.

[76]*Ibid*.

[77]*Ibid*., 2.

[78]*Ibid*.

[79]'Education Department -Registration Section, Report for the Quarter Ending 30th June 1959', 30 June 1959, HKRS 935-1-9, HKPRO.

[80]*Ibid*.

[81]'Proposed Action against the Supervisor of a Communist-dominated School in Hong Kong', by P. G. F. Dalton, 18 July 1958, FO 371/133338, TNA.

[82]'Communist Activities in Schools', telegram from Wilson to Foreign Office, 26 June 1958, FO 371/133338, TNA.

[83]*Ibid*.

[84]'Education Department - Registration Section, Report for the Quarter Ending 31st March 1961', 31 March 1961, HKRS 935-1-9, HKPRO.

[85]Hong Kong Police Special Branch Summary, September 1961, 3.

[86]Extract-Notes on Short Visit to Hong Kong-March 4-10, 1961 (D. McLellan), 25 April 1961, CO 1030/1107, TNA.

[87]'The Communist Threat in Education', 5.

Table 1. Number of schools controlled and infiltrated by CCP in Hong Kong, 1954-1961

	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
Total Number of Communist-controlled Schools	23	28	36	42	43	53	52	49
Total Number of Communist-infiltrated Schools	18	60	111	122	125	121	102	84

Source: Reports of Registration Section/Branch of Education Department, September 1954-December 1961, HKRS 935-1-9, HKPRO.

places provided by government and aided schools, those communist-controlled schools still provided education for about 19,600 pupils, equivalent to almost 2% of total student population (Table 2).[88] Although the number of the left-wing schools and students attending which was relatively small, the intensive political education clearly had a tremendous impact on the youth. Many of these students were willing to engage in 'terrorism, sabotage and the fomenting of strikes, with the aim both of disrupting the administration and maintenance of essential services and of interfering with supplies'.[89] This turn to violence occurred in 1967, when riots inspired by the Cultural Revolution broke out in Hong Kong. Between 1 September and 29 November 1967, 112 pupils were arrested for offences such as possession of offensive weapons, real or fake bombs, inflammatory posters, forming part of intimidating assemblies and obstructing the police.[90] The Emergency Regulations Ordinance was invoked to suppress leftist propaganda in schools during the riots.[91] Demonstrations were dispersed by the police using tear gas. Teachers and students were detained without trial.[92]

Although the CCP reiterated that struggles in Hong Kong should be carried out in a 'more subtle' manner, some leftist students remained radical throughout the year of 1967.[93] For example, when 52 left-wing students and teachers of Heung To were tried on 2 November 1967, 150 of their supporters showed up at the court hearing, leading to a 'rowdy scene'.[94] The students who were facing the trial also continued defying the magistrates, shouting words and slogans, such as 'wolf policeman', 'beast soldiers' and 'ever-victorious thought of Mao Zedong'.[95] Another example is that the bomb-planting youth from Hon Wah Middle School abused the judge and shouted anticolonial slogans at the court after he was sentenced.[96] Violent attacks persisted. It was reported in November 1967, several leftist children attacked two policemen with compasses while they were on duty. Upon their arrest, the 'taunting, slogan-chanting' crowd of students still showed no remorse.[97]

Despite the setback in 1967, the morale in the communist education circle remained high and 'study groups, meetings and Mao exhibitions have continued without a break'.[98] As Trench had pointed out, 'public apprehensions are building up at our generally

[88] *Ibid*., 6.
[89] *Ibid*.
[90] 'Communist Schools in Hong Kong', telegram from James Murray to D. Allen, 30 September 1968, FCO 40/89, TNA.
[91] For example, Emergency (Prevention of Inflammatory Speeches) Regulations (L.N. 80 of 1967).
[92] Ng, *Political Censorship*, 120–5.
[93] 'Communist Confrontation with the Hong Kong Government: Future Communist Policy and Tactics', 7 November 1968, 11.
[94] 'Unruly Court Scene-Police Called in', *China Mail*, 2 November 1968.
[95] 'Students Claims Police Sprayed Him with Gas: Reds Yell in Court', *Star*, 14 November 1967.
[96] 'Judge Praises Alertness of Witness: Student Bomber Gets Ten Years', *Hong Kong Standard*, 16 November 1967.
[97] 'Student Mob Attacked Two Policemen with Compasses, Court Told', *Hong Kong Standard*, 15 November 1967.
[98] 'Communist Confrontation with the Hong Kong Government: Future Communist Policy and Tactics', 5–6.

Table 2. Total Number and Percentage of Schools and Students, and Left-wing Controlled Schools and Students in Hong Kong, December 1961-March 1967

	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967
Total Number of Registered Schools	1,939	2,075	2,125	2,178	2,269	2,295	2,298
Total Number of Students Enrolled	667,228	756,846	815,632	853,188	913,274	982,301	991,283
Total number and percentage of Communist-controlled Schools	49 (2.5%)	46 (2.2%)	46 (2.2%)	46 (2.1%)	47 (2.1%)	47(2%)	46(2%)
Total Number and percentage of Students in Communist-controlled Schools	16,464 (2.5%)	15,169 (2%)	14,630 (1.8%)	16,057 (1.9%)	16,840 (1.8%)	18,414 (1.9%)	19,600 (2%)

Source: Reports of Registration Section/Branch of Education Department, December 1961- March 1967, HKRS 935-1-9, HKPRO.

* From 1961, the Hong Kong government stopped showing the number of students enrolled in communist-infiltrated schools in the reports generated by the Police Special Branch. Only enrolment information of communist-controlled school was reported.

lenient attitude towards communist schools'.[99] Many citizens were concerned about the leftist youth's radical political culture and their adherence to terrorism: 'If quick action is not taken to stamp out every Red attempt at troublemaking, we will surely be in for another long, hot summer of violence. It will only take an incident to bring the Red mobs out again if they sense the government will not act ruthlessly.'[100]

IV. The appeal of communist schools

The strategies that the CCP employed to persuade Hong Kong parents to send their children to left-wing schools had been consistent. Understanding the prevailing instrumentalism amongst the local population, the CCP utilised Hong Kong's capitalist environment to its own advantage and used finances as a pull factor. According to the Special Branch, most students studied in communist-controlled schools in Hong Kong were from families that had 'some loyalty towards, or dependence upon the C.P.G. (Central People's Government)'. They were mostly employees of the communist organisations, members of communist-controlled trade unions, dealers of Chinese products, fisherfolk whose vessels operated in Chinese water.[101] Although no evidence suggests that the CCP used direct coercion to force these families to attend left-wing schools, it was certain that many did not wish to offend the 'ultimate source of their livelihood'.[102] In other words, urges to maintain economic ties with the CCP rather than political convictions served as an important motivation for parents who worked directly under communist-controlled organisations to send their children to left-wing schools.

In contrast, families with no communist affiliations, were 'not being greatly attracted to' left-wing schools. However, the competitive tuition fee that these schools offered, as Table 3 has shown, continued to drive some parents to send their children there 'out of convenience'.[103] One reason was that prior to the 1970s, the colonial government failed to offer sufficient primary and secondary school places for children.[104] For example, by

[99]'Communist Schools', telegram from David Trench to Commonwealth Office, 29 August 1968, FCO 40/89, TNA.

[100]Many reports in newspapers expressed similar concerns and urged the government to act against communist schools. See 'Action Needed', by 'Concerned', *Star*, 8 February 1968; 'Unruly Court Scene-Police Called in'; 'When Will Govt Act Against Pui Kiu', by 'Irritated', *Star*, 11 December 1967.

[101]'The Communist Threat in Education', 13.

[102]*Ibid*., 14.

[103]'Communist Schools', telegram from D Trench to Foreign Office, 18 September 1968, FCO 40/89, TNA.

[104]'The Provision of Primary and Secondary Education', 9 February 1962, CO 1030/917, TNA, 1.

1962, although there were 490,000 primary education places for 500,000 children aged between six to 11, half of them were in private schools. In secondary education, there were 100,000 places but only 25,000 were government-funded.[105] Studying in these private schools usually incurred expensive tuition fee.[106] Left-wing schools' tuition was however significantly cheaper, catering to low-income families.[107] Students could also apply for remission of fees which ranged from 25 to 100% and would receive financial assistance when purchasing textbooks.[108] Most importantly, once a place had been secured in a communist-controlled kindergarten or primary school, it was almost certain that education would continue in one of the leftist secondary schools. Parents therefore did not have to overcome 'another hurdle' when their children finished their primary school education.[109] Such advantages appealed to parents who did not believe in communism.

Left-wing schools also provided additional services, which otherwise working-class families would not be able to afford. They provided extra-curricular activities, such as film screenings, reading and singing groups, excursion trips to China, and compared favourably to other private or state schools in this respect. For working class families, these schools could 'take children off the hands of working parents after school and during school holidays'.[110] Despite lacking professional qualifications and university degrees, leftist teachers, especially the younger one, were enthusiastic, 'one great asset lacking in so many teachers in other schools', with these teachers were 'deeply involved in their pupils and spend their free time organising extramural activities, visiting pupils' home, taking part in study trips and comfort missions and generally involving themselves in their pupils' lives'.[111] Despite earning approximately one-third of the wages of teachers in public schools, they remained 'zealous and devoted'.[112] A former student in Hon Wah Middle School praised her teachers not only as 'respectable' educators, but also her 'idols' and 'brothers', who were 'organised', 'knowledgeable' and could be trusted to have 'heart-to-heart' conversations.[113] Financial and materialistic incentives, along with the enthusiasm of left-wing teachers, led many working-class families to send their children to left-wing schools, even these schools generally achieved poorer results in public examinations.[114]

However, evidence suggests that there was a minority who sent their children to left-wing schools because of their belief in patriotic education and that the PRC was the legitimate Chinese government. For example, one parent who had quit his civil service job in Hong Kong and returned to Beijing to work for the Chinese Academy of Science, sent his daughter to study in the prominent left-wing institution, Pui Kiu Middle School, because of 'his love for his country'.[115] As Pui Kiu graduates recalled, they were presented with three flags during the colonial era: the KMT flag, the British flag and 'the [PRC] flag

[105]*Ibid*.
[106]The tuition fee of non-communist-controlled private schools was least three times higher than those in government and aided schools.
[107]Liang, *Hon Wah Seventy*, 60.
[108]'Communist School Fees', B. F. Slevin, Y.E., 3 October 1968, FCO 40/212, TNA.
[109]'The Communist Threat in Education', 24.
[110]'Review of Communist Activities in Hong Kong', June 1967, 25.
[111]'The Communist Threat in Education', 13 and annex C.
[112]Ibid., 20; Liang, *Hon Wah Seventy*, 60.
[113]Liang, *Hon Wah Seventy*, 76.
[114]Hong Kong Police Special Branch Summary, July 1961, CO 1030/1432, TNA, 8.
[115]Pui Kiu Middle School, *Pui Kiu Middle School 70th Anniversary Special Issue 1946-2016* (培僑中學七十周年紀念特刊) [Peiqiao Zhongxue Qishi Zhounian Jinian Tekan 1946-2016] (Hong Kong: Pui Kiu Middle School, 2016), 72.

Table 3. Comparative school fees in Hong Kong in 1968

Type of School	Private	Subsidized	Government	Communist-controlled
Kindergarten				
Urban area	$60-70	N/A.	N/A.	$180-$300
Resettlement estate	$90-$150			
Rural area	$40-$264			
Primary School				
Urban area	$40-$1,000	$20-$200	$40	$40-$230
Urban area (evening)	$24-$240	$20		$30-$96
Resettlement estate	$90-$120	$40	$40	–
Rural area	$50-$240	$6-$10	$40	$20-35
Secondary School	(Chinese)			
Urban area	$300-$1,000	$100-$490	$400-$450	$260-$650
Rural area	$300-$650	$180-$220	$200-$220	–
	(English)			
Urban area	$400-$1,200	$240-$460	$400-$450	–
Rural area	$350-$600	$220-$260	$200-$220	–

Source: 'Schedule A: Comparative Fees', attached to 'Communist School Fees', by B. F. Slevin, Y. E., 3 October 1968, FCO 40/212, TNA.

with five stars' but they were determined to choose the PRC, 'the new [Chinese] nation' as it was 'the country that they belonged to'.[116] In the Cold War context, this patriotic alternative which was 'free of Western influence' could serve as important impetus for some to attend left-wing schools.[117]

This section shows that the CCP was pragmatic and able to adjust its united front strategies flexibly based on Hong Kong's capitalist setting and instrumental political culture. It also indicates that the orientations of 'leftists' in Hong Kong were far from homogeneous: while some merely 'took side' in this education Cold War due to materialistic and economic gains, some minorities were firm believers in patriotic education and the PRC government.

V. Propagating anticolonial nationalism and Maoism

Although the students primarily attended left-wing schools due to financial factors, once they were enrolled, they were subject to teaching of communist ideologies, which was similar to education in mainland China. Education in China focused on promoting the acceptance of the proletarian leadership and cultivating allegiance to the PRC. Its task therefore was to produce 'new men' with such loyalties, or 'model socialist citizens' who would place the interests of the nation above that of themselves.[118] Also, education should eradicate 'subtle influence of the imperialistic West'.[119] In particular, anti-US sentiments were propagated in teaching materials since the early 1950s.[120] Left-wing educators in Hong Kong similarly promoted 'patriotism' and 'Maoist doctrines' to encourage pupils to oppose 'British authority'.[121] The daily activities of Heung To

[116] *Ibid*., 66.
[117] 'Review of Communist Activities in Hong Kong', June 1967, 24.
[118] Theodore His-en Chen, *Chinese Education since 1949: Academic and Revolutionary Models* (Oxford and New York: Pergamon, 1981), 2; Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Volume III* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1965), 30; Jones, 'Changing the Past', 73.
[119] I.E., 'Education in Communist China', *The World Today* 8, no. 6 (1952): 261.
[120] Yu, 'From Two Camps', 690–3.
[121] 'The Communist Threat in Education',15.

Middle School, one of Hong Kong's largest communist-controlled schools, provide insights into this question. Pupils at this school spent 30 minutes each day reading and discussing daily news in *Wen Wei Po*, which was regarded by the colonial government as the CCP's propaganda mouthpiece in Hong Kong, followed by ten minutes singing of revolutionary songs. After the recess, there were algebra lessons, which 'followed the normal syllabus' that the colonial government approved. The subsequent English lesson however used an English translation of *The Red Lantern* as textbook. Mao Zedong's quotations were used as reference to explain the content. After another recess, the physics lesson followed the 'normal syllabus'. After lunch, students attended two Chinese literature lessons, in which 'various works of Mao were used as textbooks'.[122] Other subjects similarly focused on cultivating Chinese nationalism. For instance, Chinese history promoted national pride amongst the students and discouraged the tendency to 'worship foreign powers' since the leftists believed that the official syllabus had 'strangled national sentiments'.[123] These 'self-arranged' programmes that deviated from the Education Department's suggested syllabus were common in left-wing schools.[124] On average, about 12 out of 25 hours were spent on political discussions and activities per week.[125] Since 1960, left-wing schools also piloted a 'Model Student' system similar to that in China, with points awarded to students according to their achievement in 'work, conduct and ideological progress', and with students submitting diaries to their teachers, which must include 'self-criticism of their ideological progress'.[126]

Since many of these students were not anticipated to take the Hong Kong Certificate Examination but were encouraged to participate in examinations in China, examination papers in left-wing schools were tailored to serve this purpose. Unlike the government-approved textbooks, the left-wing materials did not avoid teaching contemporary history but often touched upon twentieth century 'revolutionary' Chinese history. For example, the Chinese literature examination was 'based entirely on Mao's works'[127]

(1) Write out the two poems on 'Seeing off the Plague God' and another one entitled 'Ascent of Lushan'.
(2) Why is it that we must lay down our burdens before we can start the engine? Give your own examples to support your answer.
(3) What have you learnt from the article 'The Working Class Must Exercise Leadership in Everything'?
(4) With Mao Tse-tung [Mao Zedong]'s thinking in mind, criticise Miscus's principle of universal love.
(5) After studying 'The Working Class Must Exercise Leadership in Everything', how have you transformed your ideological concept of the world outlook?[128]

[122]'Annex C: Daily Activities of a Secondary Student in a Communist School, December 1968, Heung To Middle School', attached to 'Political Indoctrination in Communist Schools', memo from B. F. Slevin to A. F. Maddocks, 13 January 1969, FCO 40/212, TNA.
[123]Liang, *Hon Wah Seventy*, 76–7.
[124]*Ibid*., 43.
[125]'Annex A: Typical Week's Syllabus of a Secondary Class in a Communist School, Heung To Middle School', attached to 'Political Indoctrination in Communist Schools'.
[126]Extract from Hong Kong Police Special Branch Report, November 1960, CO 1030/110, TNA, 4.
[127]'Political Indoctrination in Communist Schools'.:
[128]'Annex D: Chinese Literature Paper for Middle 4 Class of the Heung To Middle School-First Term Examination, November 1968', attached 'Political Indoctrination in Communist Schools'.

These questions largely synchronised with the radicalised curriculum of the 'reformed' education system in China under the leadership of two members in the 'Gang of Four' - Yao Wenyuan and Zhang Chunqiao.[129] Since 1968, the new communist curriculum focused on the importance of the leadership of working class and made students spend more time in factories rather than classrooms.[130] The education reforms emphasised the eradication of the 'burden' of the old Chinese and Confucian ideas, and influence of Western capitalism.[131] Teaching materials of literature and language were designed to contain pieces that 'praise[d] Mao, Mao's ideas and his revolutionary'. The ideological indoctrination was so pervasive that 'even the arithmetic textbook contained mainly Mao ['s] quotes'.[132] Similar phenomenon could be seen in Hong Kong. For example, the geography paper was 'predominantly political in nature and endeavours to instil a sense of pride in China's achievement', while the history examination was based on 'distorted instruction' denouncing colonialism.[133]

Outside the classrooms, extra-curricular activities were organised to promote communism and a sense of solidarity. Students were encouraged to return to China to acquire a thorough understanding of Mao's doctrines and class struggles.[134] Since 1950, CCP tried to attract 'large number of students into China' for what the colonial government considered 'indoctrination courses'. A special school for such purposes was established at Huizhou in Guangdong. During their visit, students were showed the positive sides of China and were provided with entertainment, such as music, cinema shows and sightseeing tours.[135] When they returned to Hong Kong, they could act as propaganda agents, spreading positive stories about their experiences in China.[136] In 1956, offers of a part payment of emoluments in foreign exchange were made as incentives to those who relocated to China, catering Hong Kong's instrumental culture.[137] These trips successfully encouraged some students to return to China after their graduation. Taking Hon Wah Middle School as an example, from 1950 to 1960, more than 400 graduates returned to China for further education, 'making contributions to China's development'.[138]

In addition, doctrinal control of teachers was an important aspect of left-wing schools. 'Teachers' Self-Governing Associations' were active from 1952 to 1958 under the leadership of Parker Tu. During their meetings, which were organised outside school hours, teachers were required to give a short presentation on their study of communist publications, such as *Red Flag*, the official CCP magazine, *People's Daily*, the CCP mainland newspaper and *Wen Wei Po* and *Ta Kung Pao*, local left-wing newspapers.[139] Topics reflected affairs in China. For instance, in the late 1950s, the Great Leap Forward and 'the

[129]Jonathan Unger, *Education under Mao: Class and competition in Canton Schools 1960-1980* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 139.

[130]'Working People are the Real Masters of History' (劳动人民是历史的真正主人) [Laodong Renmin Shi Lishi de Zhenzheng Zhuren], *People's Daily*, 19 August 1969; Unger, *Education*, 156–7.

[131]'Criticising Old Teaching Materials' (批判旧教材) [Pipan Jiu Jiaocai], *People's Daily*, 12 December 1969.

[132]Unger, *Education*, 156–9.

[133]'Political Indoctrination in Communist Schools'.

[134]Chen, *Chinese Education*, 4; Theodore His-en Chen, 'Chinese Communist Education: The Three P's', *Far Eastern Survey* 29, no. 6 (1960): 87.

[135]Telegram from O.A.G. to the Secretary of State, 31 July 1956, FCO 141/14757, TNA.

[136]'Report on Communist Activities in Hong Kong for the Six Months Ending 31 December 1949'.

[137]Telegram from O.A.G. to the Secretary of State.

[138]Liang, *Hon Wah Seventy*, 66.

[139]'Untitled', 2.

general line of socialist constructions' were debated.[140] In 1963, due to the Sino-Soviet split, ideological dispute between China and the Soviet Union became a common topic and editorials on 'revisionism' were disseminated in book form.[141] In addition, 'Lessons Preparation Groups' were organised for every subject. Teachers were asked to submit teaching notes to the head of their groups, which were often amended to emphasise 'the correct teaching of the communist way of life to the detriment of Western methods'.[142] Such arrangement was in place most likely due to the flexibilities left-wing teachers had in designing courses despite recommendations made by the senior communist officials. The Lessons Preparation Groups therefore could be interpreted as a monitoring system, ensuring that 'desirable' teaching materials were selected.

VI. Countering communist educators

To contend with the security threat and curb this vigorously expanding communist influence, the Hong Kong government employed a diverse range of measures. First, it increased its legal capacity to prosecute leftists. For example, it amended the Education Ordinance and Regulations several times from 1948 to 1958 to widen its powers, which included the ability to close a school, de-register a school/teacher on the grounds that the school/teacher was 'prejudicial to the interests of Hong Kong'.[143] A teacher could also be de-registered if the Director was satisfied that 'the environment in which that person received his education' would make the person 'unsuitable as a teacher in the colony'.[144] This provision was powerful because a teacher's education background in mainland China alone could have resulted in their deregistration. Moreover, a school head could be removed if they appeared to the government to be 'no longer a fit and proper person to act as a principal'.[145] Furthermore, schools were prohibited to engage in instruction or activity of 'a political or partly political nature';[146] and 'no salutes, songs, dances, slogans, uniforms, flags, documents or symbols' of a political nature could be practised, displayed or worn in schools without the Director's permission.[147] This was to prevent the schools from becoming a breeding ground for anticolonial elements. The government also could draw on the wide executive power under the deportation law to expel teachers and principals if the Governor believed that such deportation was for 'the public good'.[148]

In practice, the government used these powers cautiously to avoid provoking military retaliation from Beijing, which aligned with Hong Kong's general 'firmness without provocation' policy in other areas, such as the agricultural and cultural domains.[149] In addition, the colonial government found it difficult 'to justify too rigid an enforcement'

[140]*Ibid*., 2–3.
[141]'L.I.C. Monthly Intelligence Report, March 1963', 3.
[142]'Untitled', 3.
[143]Education Amendment No. 2 Ordinance 1948, s. 10.
[144]Education Ordinance 1952, as amended in 1958, s. 32A.
[145]Education Ordinance 1952, as amended in 1958, s. 28A.
[146]Education Regulations 1952, reg. 88.
[147]Education Regulations 1952, as amended in 1958, regs. 71, 72 and 88.
[148]*Ibid*.
[149]Steve Tsang, 'Strategy for Survival: The Cold War and Hong Kong's Policy towards Kuomintang and Chinese Communist Activities in the 1950s', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25, no. 2 (1997): 298; Mark, 'Everyday Propaganda', 155–6; Ng, *Political Censorship*, chapter 4; Ng et al., 'Hearts and Minds'.

simply because 'vacancies were not available in registered schools'.[150] The Hong Kong education system was under-developed largely because the colonial government and its business collaborators had 'stubbornly resisted' the introduction of free compulsory education.[151] For example, in 1964, the Financial Secretary, John Cowperthwaite, argued that the introduction of free compulsory education would require 'more than double' direct taxation, which was an exaggeration.[152] Textile tycoon and Legislative Councillor, Francis Yuan-hao Tien, also argued that providing free and compulsory education for everyone that aged up to 16 would constitute 'a danger' as 'more young people than ever before will choose to continue full-time education rather than employment'.[153] Under these circumstances, the left-wing schools were in fact filling a void in education that was left by the colonial government. Hence, rather than closing all the left-wing schools, the colonial government made a pragmatic compromise: legal actions only targeted the most politically high-profiled schools and 'main personalities engaged in organising the communist indoctrination of students' to create a chilling effect for other left-wing schools, which would only receive official warnings if they were found to have engaged in 'problematic' activities.[154]

More often, the colonial government used administrative measures to check left-wing radicalism. For example, syllabi and teaching materials were subject to the Director of Education's approval.[155] Various committees were formed in 1952 to censor the content of curriculum and textbooks.[156] The Education Department was also reorganised to check CCP's growing educational influence. A Special Bureau within the department was set up to contain the spread of communist ideas in schools.[157] This Bureau collaborated with the Special Branch: they had 'constant inter-change[s] of information on all matters affecting education', including movement of teaching staff and school activities.[158] Teachers' applications were to be referred to the Special Branch for 'a more exhaustive examination' to guard against the 'political indoctrination into education'.[159] Inspections were carried out without notices to check potential communist activities and materials in schools.[160] These measures, which were 'more of a holding action than a positive attempt at clearing Communist influence away from schools', provided room for left-wing schools to survive.[161]

[150]Savingram from Robert Black to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 12 August 1960, CO 1030/1107, TNA. The number of uneducated children in Hong Kong rose from approximately 23,000 in 1950 to over 200,000 in 1957, showing the severity of under-provision in school places in Hong Kong amid explosive population growth. See *Hong Kong Year Book* (Hong Kong: *Wah Kiu Yat Po*, 1951), 90 and *Hong Kong Year Book* (Hong Kong: *Wah Kiu Yat Po*, 1958), 101.

[151]Leo Goodstadt, *A City Mismanaged: Hong Kong's Struggle for Survival* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2019), 45.

[152]Goodstadt, *A City Mismanaged*, 45; for original quote, see *Hong Kong Hansard*, 26 February 1964, 52.

[153]Goodstadt, *A City Mismanaged*, 45; for original quote, see *Hong Kong Hansard*, 30 March 1978, p. 696.

[154]*Hong Kong Standard*, 2-3 August 1958, HKRS 163-1-2201, Hong Kong Public Records Office (HKPRO hereafter).

[155]Education Regulations 1952, reg. 87.

[156]Morris and Sweeting, 'Education and Politics'.

[157]Ng, *Political Censorship*, 62–70.

[158]Various extracts of reports by Hong Kong Police Special Branch, November-December 1952, CO 968/259, TNA; Various extracts of reports by Hong Kong Police Special Branch, January-February 1953, CO 968/259, TNA.

[159]Report tabled by T. R. Rowell, Director of Education of Hong Kong for the Second Conference of Directors and Deputy Directors of Education, held in the Department of Education, Fullerton Building, Singapore, 4-5 September 1950, CO 968/259, TNA, appendix VIII. Explanation of the objectives of Education Amendment (No. 2) Ordinance 1948 was given by the Attorney General of Hong Kong during Legislative Council meeting, 22 December 1948, Hong Kong Legislative Council Official Report of Proceedings.

[160]Report tabled by T. R. Rowell.

[161]'Hong Kong: Review of Developments during 1958', Black to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 21 January 1959, CO 1030/581, TNA.

The communist-controlled schools were good at exploiting legal loopholes. Political discussions and classes began to take place 'in secret or after school hours'.[162] To disarm suspicion, some of these left-wing publications were presented as 'free from political propaganda'.[163] In addition, left-wing schools operated drills, during which students and unregistered teachers left the premise through a back entrance.[164] For example, Pui Kiu Middle School had installed an 'elaborate security system' to give staff and students warning when the inspectors visited, during which 'all political books, notes and papers are removed out of sight'.[165] Schools also commonly instructed students not to attend classes and 'hide all left-wing books, magazines and other extra-curricular reading matters' on the day of inspection.[166] In cases when excess students were caught by the inspectors, they were drilled to argue that they were merely visiting someone at the school.[167]

In response, the colonial government took swift enforcement actions strategically at 'helpful timing' covertly without drawing the public's attention, usually when the Chinese government was 'preoccupied elsewhere, eg. Tibet or the Communes'.[168] For example, Parker Tu, 'probably the most influential personality in communist education circles' was deported in August 1958 for refusing to sign an undertaking that promised not to engage in political activities at school.[169] More typically, the colonial government resorted to ad hoc measures on non-political grounds to avoid provoking retaliations from Beijing. It usually closed left-wing schools using ordinances regulating safety or land use. For example, in 1950, Hon Wah Middle School was threatened to be closed down unless structural alterations were made within one month in compliance with fire prevention regulations.[170] In 1958, another 'hardcore Communist middle school', Chung Hwa Middle School was closed because its 'roof timbers had rotted and the floor joists had been eaten away by white ants' and was thus unsafe for students.[171] Reporting to the Colonial Office in London, Governor Black admitted that the government used grounds that were 'normally devoid of political content or implications', such as fire hazard or floor stress to de-register communist-controlled schools because '[i]t [was] most unlikely that these schools [would] be able to satisfy the requirements of the Fire Brigade and Public Works Department'.[172]

In sum, on the one hand, seeing Chinese nationalism as 'revolutionary heresy' and a 'security threat', the Hong Kong government was 'vigilantly keeping eye on communist activities';[173] on the other hand, being aware of the potential political repercussions and

[162]Report tabled by T. R. Rowell.
[163]'The Chinese Communist Party in Hong Kong', 14.
[164]'The Communist Threat in Education', 22.
[165]'Untitled', 4–5.
[166]Extract from Hong Kong Police Special Branch Summary, June 1960, CO 1030/1107, TNA.
[167]*Ibid*.
[168]'Random Notes on Hong Kong in Relation to the Problems of Chinese Education in South-East Asia', 26 1959, CO 1030/900, TNA.
[169]Telegram from Black to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 21 June 1958, CO 1030/581, TNA.
[170]Zhou, *A History*, 47–8. However, a fire broke out in Hon Wah in January 1963 because of the store underneath the school. See Liang, *Hon Wah Seventy*, 94–8. The colonial government's hazard concerns therefore were sometimes legitimate.
[171]Telegram from Black to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 26 August 1958, CO 1030/581, TNA. For details of Tu's deportation and Chung Hwa's closure, see Ng, *Political Censorship*, chapter 4.
[172]Savingram from Black to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 12 August 1960, CO 1030/1107, TNA.
[173]'Hong Kong: Review of Developments during 1958'; Letter from Grantham to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 27 March 1959, CO 537/4815, TNA.

the fact that the colonial education system was under-developed, the Hong Kong government rarely suppressed left-wing educational activities using hard-line legal measures. It instead adopted a pragmatic and compromised approach: administrative and non-political actions were only taken against the largest schools and best-known educators in the hope of 'strik[ing] at the heart of the trouble'.[174] However, as Section II has shown, this pragmatic and permissive containment strategy in turn facilitated the left-wing schools to expand their influence over a sizeable minority of the Hong Kong youth.

VII. Colonial education reform: a strategy to contain communist influence

The closure of several left-wing schools after the 1967 riots meant that 2,500 students were denied access to schools.[175] Despite the CCP's implementation of the 'smile campaign' in 1968, enrolment in left-wing schools fell. It was reported that even leading communist schools, such as Chung Wah Middle School, experienced difficulties in enrolling adequate number of students. It is likely that the violence during the riots led to loss of credibility of left-wing schools amongst the public. By March 1968, communist-controlled schools only accounted for 1.9% of Hong Kong's total student population, which was 20,000 students as opposed to 1,000,000 in total. This figure represented a 0.07% decrease over the year of 1967, when left-wing percentage was 1.97.[176] However, the number of students in communist-controlled schools continued to increase from 1968 to 1972 under their expansion programme. In 1968 alone, there was an increase of 7,000 students studying in left-wing schools.[177] In 1969, the total number of students in left-wing schools increased to at least 26,167, without including the excess students, the size of which could not be identified.[178] With increased expansion in the New Territories, the percentage of left-wing students rose to approximately 3% in 1972.[179]

The continued presence of communist-controlled schools after 1967 alarmed the new Governor, Murray MacLehose. As a diplomat by training, MacLehose realised that the geopolitical climate, in particular the improvement in Sino-British relations and the Sino-US rapprochement in the early 1970s, made the adoption of 'draconian measures to eliminate communist schools' increasingly difficult.[180] A longer-term solution to combat this 'security threat' in Hong Kong was needed. At the same time, there was growing fear that the European Economic Community (EEC), which increasingly adopted a protectionist trade policy, would impose restrictions on imports from Hong Kong because of the use of child labour in its local factories, particularly in the textile industry.[181] As Sweeting has argued, to disarm 'criticism from within the EEC', the education system needed to be expanded.[182] Compounded with the changing political

[174]Telegram from Black to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 21 June 1958.
[175]'The Communist Threat in Education', 6.
[176]'Communist Schools', telegram from Cradock to Foreign Office, 3 September 1968, FCO 40/89, TNA.
[177]'Chinese Communist Confrontation with Hong Kong Government- Assessment of Recent Activities and Future Capabilities', Hong Kong Police Special Branch, 13 December 1968, FCO 40/222, TNA, 19.
[178]'Briefing Notes', amended by Director Education, 21 October 1969, FCO 40/212, TNA, 1.
[179]'The Communist Threat in Education', 8.
[180]'The Communist Threat in Education'; Letter from R. F. Pierce (Defence Branch of Hong Kong) to E. O. Laird (FCO), 7 June 1972, FCO 40/382, TNA.
[181]Anthony Sweeting, 'Education in Historical Processes', in *Education and Society in Hong Kong*, ed. G. Postiglione (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1992), 49; Vickers, *In Search of an Identity*, 36.
[182]Sweeting, 'Education in Historical', 49.

climate in Britain, the advocate of the United Nations agencies and the growing security threat from left-wing schools, officials of the colonial government and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in London started considering the introduction of free and compulsory education in Hong Kong seriously. Providing better access to places in government-funded schools was considered the most effective way to check left-wing influence in education.[183] After the discussion with the FCO, the colonial government announced and implemented 'a more ambitious programme to provide nine years of aided education for all' as 'the most effective counter measure' against the expansion of communist-controlled schools in Hong Kong.[184] This geopolitical context, along with economic incentives stated in most of the existing literature, provides a useful explanation for MacLehose's commitment to education reforms in Hong Kong in the 1970s.[185]

With the introduction of free nine-year education, it became more difficult for left-wing schools to attract students; their number finally declined in the early 1970s.[186] By the late 1970s, left-wing schools began applying to the Education Department to join the 'Brought Place' Scheme.[187] Under the scheme, the government sent students to private schools and paid for their tuition fee. Increased left-wing schools' involvement in the scheme indicated that they lost their economic appeals and had to rely on government's aid to recruit students. By January 1980, many communist-controlled schools were driven out of business by the reformed education system: only 26 communist-controlled schools remained in the colony, and ten of which had ceased to function although they remained registered.[188] Leftist influence in education sector finally ceased to be a 'security threat' to the colonial government.

Conclusion

As preceding scholars have put it, Cold War Hong Kong was unique, featuring many contradictions and ambiguities that were particular to its locale and geopolitical identity.[189] Unlike Berlin, no wall was built between Hong Kong and the PRC; people and ideas moved relatively freely between the two neighboring regimes with opposing ideologies. This relative freedom made Hong Kong easily susceptible to both communist and capitalist influences simultaneously and become a major battleground of the cultural Cold War in Asia.[190] And the education sector is no exception.

While the PRC dealt with the Cold War battle in capitalist Hong Kong under Zhou Enlai's guiding principles, 'long-term planning and full utilisation', the British and colonial governments' approach was equally pragmatic.[191] The CCP was first able to flourish in the education domain because it took advantage of a

[183]Letter from R. F. Pierce to E. O. Laird, 7 June 1972, FCO 40/382, TNA; Letter from E. O. Laird to Wilford and Logan, 13 July 1972, FCO 40/382, TNA.

[184]Letter from Pierce to Laird, 7 June 1972.

[185]For detailed discussions between Hong Kong and London on this proposed education reform, see Ng, *Political Censorship*, 151–5.

[186]Telegram from M. MacLehose to FCO, 11 January 1978, FCO 40/940, TNA.

[187]Telegram from M. MacLehose to FCO, 4 December 1978, FCO 40/940, TNA.

[188]'LIC Hong Kong Report for January 1980', LIC Hong Kong, February 1980, FCO 40/1165, TNA, 5.

[189]Priscilla Roberts, 'Cold War Hong Kong: Juggling Opposing Forces and Identities', in *Hong Kong in the Cold War*, ed. Priscilla Roberts and John M. Carroll (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016), 26-59.

[190]See Fu Po-Shek, *Hong Kong Media and Asia's Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[191]Jin, *Fifty Years*, 30 and 35.

vacuum that the colonial government was reluctant to fill for economic and political reasons. Their unconventional use of economic incentives to increase school enrolment shows that it devised unique united front strategies that catered to political culture in Hong Kong without explicitly violating local laws. Such flexibility and adaptability did not only facilitate the growth of left-wing schools, but also helped maintaining Hong Kong as a base to generate foreign exchange and support communist movements in Southeast Asia. For the colonial government, it similarly tried to strike the most favourable condition against the broader Global Cold War context and local political, economic and legal constraints. In the case of education, its reliance on the left-wing schools to provide additional school places and prioritisation of sustaining a peaceful relationship with Beijing outweighed this 'security threat'. Hong Kong then became an 'unwilling Cold Warrior' which tolerated not just the survival of left-wing schools but their expansion.[192] From the viewpoint of the colonial government, the city became an incubation zone of Chinese nationalism. The two sides' pragmatism led them to co-exist in the education domain extraordinarily despite other conflicts in the Cold War. This strange co-existence relationship only ceased in the 1970s, when free compulsory public education was finally introduced to wipe out this 'security threat'. Since most ordinary Hong Kong Chinese were only drawn to communist education for instrumental reasons, many turned to government-funded schools when places became available and free in the 1970s. The violence and radicalism in the 1967 riots further deterred people from sending their children to left-wing schools, leading to the decline of communist influence in the education sector in the 1970s. Showing how complex, adaptable and pragmatic the Cold War in Hong Kong was, this article invites further studies on the different layers of strategic boundaries and levels of pressing priorities behind this 'unwilling Cold Warrior'. Understanding the situations and conditions in which the Chinese and colonial governments tacitly and tactically tolerated each other will certainly give us more insights into how the Cold War was unfolded locally in Asia, in contrast to other territories in the world.

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[192]Chi-kwan Mark, 'A Reluctant Cold Warrior: Hong Kong in Anglo-American Interactions: 1949-1957' (Thesis (D. Phil.), University of Oxford, 2001).

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