Jarvie, Ian. *Window on Hong Kong: A Sociological Study of the Hong Kong Film Industry and Its Audience*. Hong Kong: Centre for East Asian Studies, 1977.

Lai, Linda Chiu-Han. "Nostalgia and Nonsense: Two Instances of Commemorative Practices in Hong Kong Cinema in the Early 1990s" In *Fifty Years of Electric Shadows*. Ed. Law Kar and Stephen Teo. Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1997. 90-97.

Lao, Sing Hing. *DinyingFuBeihingJap* (Movie & Metaphors). Hong Kong: Cosmos Books, 1991.

Law, Kar. "Certains Trend of the Hong Kong Movie Culture of the 1960s and 1970s" In *Culture and Society in Hong Kong*. Ed. Elizabeth Sinn. Hong Kong: Centre for East Asian Studies, 1995. 316-323.

Li, Cheuk-To. *Rinyupian*. Hong Kong: Subcultural Press, 1996.

Leung, Grace and Joseph Chan. "The Hong Kong Cinema and its Overseas Markets, 1950-1995." In *Fifty Years of Electric Shadows*. Ed. Law Kar and Stephen Teo. Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1997. 136-152.

Liechty, Mark. "Kathmandu as Translocality: Multiple Places in Nepali Space." In *The Geography of Identity*. Ed. Patricia Yaeger. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1996. 98-130.

Leung, P.K. *Heung Gong Diklawhan Manfa* (Hong Kong Popular Culture). Hong Kong: Joint Publications, 1993.

McDonogh, Gary and Cindy Wong. "Orientalism Abroad: Hong Kong Readings of the World of Suzie Wong." In Classic Whiteness. Ed. Daniel Bernardi. Forthcoming.

Ma, Eric Kit-Wai. *Dinsi Yumanfan Yingting* (Television and Identity). Hong Kong: Breakthrough Press, 1996.

Naficy, Hamid. *The Making of Exile Cultures: Iranian Television in Los Angeles*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993.

Salzman, Mark. *Lost in Place: Growing up Absurd in Suburbia*. New York: Random House, 1995.

Sinn, Elizabeth (ed.). *Culture and Society in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Centre for East Asian Studies, 1995.

Shohat, Ella and Robert Stam. *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Skeldon, Ronald (ed). *Reluctant Exiles? Migration from Hong Kong and the New Overseas Chinese*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong UP, 1994.

Teo, Stephen. *Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimension*. London: BFI, 1997.

Teo Yu-Ming and Lao Tuen-Yu. "Global Export of Hong Kong Television: Television Broadcasting Limited." *Asian Journal of Communication* 5.2 (1995): 108-121.

Turner, Matthew and Irene Ngan. *Hong Kong Sixties: Designing Identities*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Art Centre, 1995.

Wong, Cindy. "Doing Fieldwork on Chinese Vietnamese in America." 15.2 *Amerasia* (1989): 179-185.

—. "Ritual Revisited" In *Moving the Image: Asian Pacific Americans in the Media Arts*. Ed. Russell Leong. Los Angeles: Visual Communications, 1991.

—. "Chinese Outside Chinatown: A Chinese Community in South Florida." *Chinese America* (January 1991): 49-66.

—. "Communities Through the Lens: Grassroots Video in Philadelphia as Alternative Communication Practice." Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, 1997.

Wong, Cindy and Gary McDonogh. "Consuming Cinema: Space, Media and Experience in Hong Kong Audiences." Paper presented at the Society for Cinema Studies, 1999.

Yau, Esther Ching-Mai. "Ecology and Late Colonial Hong Kong Cinema: Imaginations in Time." In *Fifty Years of Electric Shadows*. Ed. Law Kar and Stephen Teo. Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1997. 100-114.

Zha, Jianying. *China Pop: How Soap Operas, Tabloids, and Bestsellers are Transforming a Culture*. New York: The New Press, 1995.

Organizational Hegemony in the Hong Kong Cinema

Héctor Rodríguez

Cinema historians have often noted the close linkage between the Hong Kong film industry and China's national politics throughout the 1950s and Sixties. Many production, distribution, and exhibition companies were aligned with either the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) or its Taiwan-based rival, the Guomindang (GMD). While neither political organization was officially registered in Hong Kong, their sympathizers nonetheless continued to operate in the British colony, seeking to enlist supporters, to acquire control over cinematic institutions, and sometimes to express their partisan views in public forums. This essay develops a broad institutional analysis of the salient organizational mechanisms that linked Chinese political parties with the Hong Kong film industry from 1949 to approximately1970.

Although partisan cinema workers often endeavored to promote thematic contents congenial to their own ideological standpoints, the principal aims of political activities in Hong Kong were fundamentally organizational in nature, geared not only to the dissemination of propaganda messages but also towards the consolidation of an enduring institutional presence in the colony. While propaganda was hardly an irrelevant concern, it was on the whole subordinated to the threefold tactical task of (i) securing managerial power over a range of cinema institutions, (ii) winning creative personnel to the party's cause, and (iii) establishing and maintaining contacts with other Hong Kong social movements and organizations outside the film industry. I describe the pursuit of this agenda as a work of "organizational hegemony." The political dimension of the Hong Kong cinema does not only (to my mind not mainly) consist in the thematic contents of individual films so much as in the organizational context of their production and dissemination. One of the purposes of my account is to produce an explanation of this fact.

A full explanation of the activities of politicized film companies and film workers in Hong Kong calls for a detailed examination of the socicultural environment of the territory during the period of colonial administration. This environment included the depoliticization of public culture fostered by the British colonial government, the patriotic sentiments of many Hong Kong people, the political interests of the People's Republic of China (PRC) regime, and the profit orientation of Hong Kong's commercial film industry, all of which factors circumscribed the scope of political activities and to some degree influenced the formulation of their objectives. I propose to situate the impact of Chinese political parties on the Hong Kong cinema in relation to this complicated societal arena.

Collectivism

Left-wing activities in Hong Kong during the late 40s were sometimes underlain by a value orientation which may be described as a broadly socialist rather than specifically Marxian framework. The Film Collectivization Movement of 1948 had aimed to establish a management structure collectively controlled by the film workers themselves. Underlain by an utopian communalist aspiration to bridge the gap between labor and management, the movement proposed that the people who actually made films should also make key company decisions, in order thereby to eliminate exploitation and individualism by encouraging the sharing of technical expertise and the rule of the majority. The Film Collectivization Movement was therefore underlain by a political commitment to radical egalitarianism (Lin 32).

Perhaps the most important of the cinema cooperatives inspired by the movement was the Fifties Film Company (*Wushiniandai*), headed by a key figure in the leftist Shanghai film industry, Cheng Bugao, who had directed the silent adaptation of Mao Dun's short story *Spring Silkworms/ Chuncan* (1933). While the company's members were not necessarily anarchists, anarchism exerted at least an indirect influence on their ideal of film production. The anarchist vision of free association had partly shaped the political outlook of many modern Chinese intellectuals. As historian Arif Dirlik has put it, China's anarchists wanted to abolish those institutions that "divided people from one another, and obstructed the creation of an organic society that derived its cohesiveness not from coercion but from the 'natural' tendency of humankind to voluntary association" (Dirlik 80). Although communists characteristically emphasized centralized discipline rather than free federation as the basis of an effective mass movement, many party leaders had absorbed anarchist values in their youth. Praising Kropotkin's ideals of "mutual aid" and "voluntary labor" as fundamental principles of a good society, Mao Zedong himself had argued in 1919 that small communes could not only provide small-scale models for the changes to be wrought on the entire nation but also help to initiate such changes. The slogan "from small groups to a great alliance" (*xiao zuzhi da lianhe*) encouraged the formation of communes as paradigms of a new socialist society as early as 1919 (Dirlik 180). The creation of small anarchist communes was partly a response to the deeply felt marginality of scholars and artists in modern China. If it was difficult to change the society at large, the formation of local communes could at least provide a concrete small-scale model for a future world. In the case of Hong Kong, communalism arguably provided a utopian paradigm of a future socialist society for film workers in a colonial environment which severely restricted their opportunities for free political expression.

Hong Kong left-wing cinema activities of the late 1940s and early 1950s incorporated selective anarchist ideas, particularly an emphasis on collective script-writing and the sharing of expertise, but the communist emphasis on party discipline soon asserted itself as the dominant principle of organization in the leftist film industry. The Fifties cooperative was reorganized in 1952 as a Communist-financed film company, Phoenix *(Fenghuang)*, after the decision of several of its original members to move to the People's Republic of China. One of Shanghai's most prominent directors, Zhu Shilin, remained in Hong Kong to supervise the transformation of the company, consolidating a more rationalized management structure and directing or co-directing several of its films (Rayns 1990, 57). Before his appointment in the Phoenix company, Zhu Shilin had already formed friendships with Chinese Communist Party members Qi Wenshao, Bai Cen, and Lu Yu during their work together in the Longma Film Company since 1950. Those interpersonal networks probably played an important role in bringing Zhu within a communist sphere of influence. Informal contacts among fellow filmmakers thus helped to enhance the human resources of the leftist film industry in conjunction with more formalized institutional mechanisms. Although he would never become a member of the CCP, Zhu's institutional connection to the mainland was intensified by his appointment as Special Delegate to the National Political Committee (Sek 43).

Leftist activities in the Hong Kong film industry may be fruitfully understood as a local manifestation of a broader social phenomenon in modern China: the rise of drama societies, student associations, study groups, political societies, and scholarly journals in the universities and urban centers following the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911. These manifold groups, which may be defined as "associational public spheres," were not so much centralized, disciplined organizations as loose groupings whose members would often join and leave depending on the evolution of their academic interests, political commitments, and personal relations. They also tended to be extremely eclectic and open to manifold, though almost invariably modern and frequently radical, ideas (Dirlik 172-7). These informal associations often helped to consolidate a progressive or radical identity for its members, create a sense of community, provide moral support during times of political adversity, introduce European and North American literature and philosophy, interpret and discuss the socioeconomic situation of China, and organize publications, strikes, speeches, demonstrations, and other political activities. The groups supplied an institutional context where individuals defined their identity as intellectuals and recognized each other on the basis of a shared commitment to the "salvation" or "strengthening" of China. One of the main pillars behind Mao's success in the mainland was precisely his organizational ability to enlist the support of many members of these "progressive" cultural circles, to transform their loose associational spheres into more or less disciplined party organizations, and to interpret for the intellectuals their role within the proletarian revolution.

Similar networks of associational public spheres helped to create artistic movements, organize seminars to criticize "poisonous" films and to promote social awareness, promote, and publish artistic and political manifestoes in the Hong Kong film industry of the 30s and 40s. Membership in those cultural movements was broadly inclusive. Many participants were filmmakers without official Chinese Communist Party affiliation or extensive knowledge of Marxist theory but with a general sympathy for progressive and patriotic goals. Associational networks were not only or even primarily cemented by a shared commitment to Marxist or socialist ideals, but also by interpersonal networks formed in drama societies and educational institutions. The 1949 Association of Film Workers in China was animated by the aspiration of promoting Chinese cinema interests against the economic imperialism of Hollywood cinema. Its roster included actors Wu Chufan, actress Bai Yan, writer Lu Dun, and others. Although these film workers were largely of Cantonese origin, they had been born in the Mainland rather than Hong Kong and brought with them a strong commitment to the fate of the modern Chinese nation: Wu's birthplace was Tianjin, but his parents were both from Fujien province, and both Bai Yan and Lu Dun had been born in the regional capital of Guangzhou. Looking at Hong Kong from a patriotic standpoint, these filmmakers had met one another during various previous activities, building personal contacts that provided the basis for their cooperation in the cinema. Directors Li Chenfeng and Wu Hui, as well as scriptwriter and actor Lu Dun, were all graduates of the Guandong College of Theatrical Arts who had formed a theatre group during the Second World War to aid in the war effort and refused to work for the Japanese film industry during the Occupation of Hong Kong. Another prominent figure of the left was actor Wu Chufan, who had also been closely involved in such left-wing ac-

tivities as the Clean-up Campaign. Many of them would eventually move to establish an important cinema cooperative, Zhonglian, also known as the Union (Ltd.) Film Company. Although not officially funded by the PRC, the Zhonglian films sometimes received distribution in the mainland. Many of these actors had also joined leftist trade unions like the Association of Cantonese Film Workers and the Hong Kong Travelling Mandarin Film People Association and actively promised to promote only educational films with a social consciousness (Jarvie 29). These interpersonal networks of associational public spheres comprised anti-imperialist and "progressive" sectors of the educated, urban middle classes who regarded film and literature as instruments of social reform (Choi).

Xinhua as an Agent of Organizational Hegemony

Leftist activities in the Hong Kong film industry were to a large extent funded and coordinated through the New China News Agency (*Xinhua*). Since the official proclamation of the PRC in 1949, the Hong Kong Branch of *Xinhua* functioned as a representative of the new communist government in the British colony. Ostensibly a news organization, only a small proportion of its staff actually belonged to its news division. *Xinhua* not only interacted with the colonial authorities but also funded, coordinated, and supervised various leftist organizations in Hong Kong, such as banks, newspapers, trade unions, schools, publishing houses, film studios, and movie theatres (Loong 15 ff). The agency thus played a key role in the integration of Hong Kong cultural activities within a centralized organizational network. The so-called "left-wing" film industry in Hong Kong largely comprised film companies directly funded with PRC capital and linked to *Xinhua*.

Hong Kong pro-China personnel occasionally was encouraged to adopt a communist value system through the formation of Marxist study groups coordinated directly or indirectly by *Xinhua* (cf Law 16-17). Those groups sometimes cued film workers to penetrate and reorganize the management structure of private film companies. In 1948, for instance, Shanghai entrepreneur Zhang Shankun had established his own Great Wall (*Chang Cheng*) studio but was forced to resign as early as 1950, when leftist personnel effectively brought the company under pro-communist management (Jarvie 29). Another strategy of organizational hegemony was the establishment of mainland-backed exhibition venues devoted to the screening of mainland films and Hong Kong left-wing productions. Films produced by the "leftist" film companies sometimes even enjoyed distribution rights in the mainland, which was otherwise largely closed to Hong Kong productions since 1950. Occasional awards in the P.R.C. also served to communicate political approval of individual films. Thus even a Hong Kong production not directly financed with mainland funds, the Zhonglian company's *Spring/Chun* (Li Chenfeng,1953), was awarded an Honorable Mention by the Cultural Department of the PRC in 1957 (Yu 44). Leftist Hong Kong productions released in the Cantonese dialect were typically dubbed into standard Mandarin for mainland release, sometimes with a different title. Another Zhonglian production, *Father and Son/Fu Yu Zi* (Wu Hui,1954) was probably distributed in the mainland as *Dream of Vanity/Fanhua Meng*. The title change undoubtedly helped to shift attention away from the film's genre links to the family melodrama and towards the didactic social messages of the film.

The Hong Kong press also played a key role in the political polarization of the film industry. *Xinhua* supervised the pro-communist mainland-backed newspapers *Ta Kung Pao* and *Wen Wei Pao*, both of which took up a strongly anti-colonial and anti-imperialist standpoint, while the Guomindang established its own anti-communist publication, *The Hong Kong Times*, in 1949. In addition, several privately owned mainstream publications—*Sing Tao Daily*, *Wah Yiu Kat Pao*, and the *Kung Sheung Daily*—also retained close management and personnel contacts with the Guomindang and adopted a more anti-communist political line. While the leftist political newspapers were officially registered both in Hong Kong and the mainland, their right-wing counterparts were registered in Hong Kong and Taiwan (Chan 14-15). Supportive film reviews, articles, and other forms of public exposure in partisan publications remained an important form of linkage between political parties and the Hong Kong cinema world. Critics in the leftist press often encouraged viewers to attend patriotic films and sometimes to scorn Hollywood films, particularly during the Korean War (Jarvie 31). *Ta Kung Pao* also provided a forum where leftist filmmakers could publish artistic manifestoes about, say, the collectivization movement (Lin 32). The cinema was thus incorporated into a larger communist organizational network. The PRC effectively maintained an institutional system of vertical integration in Hong Kong film circles whereby production, exhibition, and criticism could be readily coordinated.

The Labor Movement

This pro-China cinema sector was connected to the Hong Kong labor movement. The penetration of local working class activities by communist organizers facilitated the formation of a pro-China network of film institutions. The communist influence on the colony's organized labor had increased during the war of resistance against Japan, when the main Chinese guerilla forces in Guangdong province were dominated by the left. Many people who had fled Hong Kong to join the resistance effort out of patriotic sentiments became convinced communists during the war and later engaged in labor activism back home (England 109-110). The experience of the anti-Japanese struggle thus enhanced the human resources and organizational penetration of the CCP in the Hong Kong labor movement, where working class actions demanding lower hours, better conditions, or higher pay also retained a strongly nationalistic and anti-imperialist ethos. The colonial government itself often insisted that many industrial conflicts in post-war Hong Kong were connected to mainland-based communist organizations, describing them as "labour disputes where politics dominates economics," but it seldom considered the possibility that those disputes may also have been motivated (at least in part) by a genuine grass-root hostility towards colonial rule and economic exploitation (Leung 1991, 21). An important reason behind the initial success of communist organizational hegemony within the labor movement was almost certainly the widespread perception that the CCP, which had achieved a resounding success against the Guomindang in the mainland, was uniquely capable of strengthening the Chinese nation against foreign imperialism.

Hong Kong labor activities were coordinated since 1947 by the pro-communist Federation of Trade Unions, which received PRC funds via *Xinhua* ("Money from China"). Hong Kong's customary "contractor system" of employment enabled the Federation to monopolize jobs in various trades and industries to the exclusion of rival right-wing unions ("Nationalists"). Contrary to the widespread stereotype that Hong Kong workers are largely passive, the territory's labor relations were anything but peaceful: a staggering sixty-eight strikes took place between 1950 and 1960, and there were one hundred ninety-three strikes in the following decade (Young 146). The peaks of labor activism in Hong Kong took place in the years that preceded and immediately followed the 1949 establishment of the P.R.C., and also during the climax of the Cultural Revolution in 1967. An important incident that demonstrates the impact of organized labor on the film industry in the early 1950s occurred in the privately owned Yonghua company. Workers demanded back payments and brought about a costly strike in 1952, when the company was al-

ready suffering heavy losses. The Hong Kong government deported more than twenty striking workers, including such communist directors as Shen Ji and Sima Wensen, who were accused of plotting on behalf of the People's Republic (Leyda 274; Law 17). Despite their claim to political neutrality, colonial authorities had actually worked to enhance the power of capitalist management by deporting the more active film workers. There was in other words a close alignment between the interests of private cinema entrepreneurs and the colonial regime.

The Yonghua strike had taken place during a politically tense historical moment. In 1949, the Hong Kong government had already built air-raid shelters, strengthened the police force, and increased the armed forces to more than 30,000. The Legislative Council had also adopted new legislation that, in the name of public security, required all residents over twelve years of age to carry an identity card, granted the police special rights to search private houses and deport undesirables, and made the registration of societies a police affair (Young 136). The government's mood was one of extreme anxiety over the potential expansion of communism throughout South East Asia, a region where the British empire retained considerable economic and political interests. In November of 1948, British representative in South-east Asia Malcolm McDonald had called for "stepped up British diplomacy" in the region as a response to "the threat of communism"; his stated objective was to promote "methods of preventing the floodtide of Red success from spilling Southward" ("Red Danger"). Anxiety over the fate of Hong Kong followed an explosion of communist "terrorism" in Malaya in 1948, which had led British foreign secretary Ernest Bevin to denounce this putative "communist plan to drive every Western association out of Southeast Asia ("Communists Warned"). Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech-Jones noted that the activities of communists in Hong Kong were being closely watched and that many activists were in the process of being deported precisely in order to avoid a repetition of the events in Malaya ("Communists in Hong Kong").

The crucial motive behind government activities was to prevent the formation of independent networks of political activists actively engaged in the subversion of colonial rule. Instead, authorities wanted to promote an apolitical public culture hostile to the formation of oppositional organizations. The inescapable reality of a communist victory in the mainland, however, forced Britain to temper its confrontational approach towards the new socialist government. By 1952, London had effectively abandoned preparations for a full-scale defense of Hong Kong against a Communist invasion, reducing the local garrison to those forces necessary for the maintenance of internal security and the supervision of a potential evacuation. The Hong Kong government largely tolerated Communist Party activities in the colony, including the production of left-wing films, so long as they did not in the government's judgment pose a substantial threat to the basic colonial situation. At the same time, the PRC government did not promote intense labor confrontations throughout the rest of the 1950s and early 1960s, perhaps because it continued to earn millions of pounds annually—up to one third of its total foreign exchange revenues—through its own organizations in Hong Kong ("HK: Static or Storm"; Harris 9).

A challenge to this fragile balance between the colonial regime and its communist neighbor occurred during the social "disturbances" which lasted from May to December of 1967. Inspired by China's Cultural Revolution, local Red Guards instigated against colonialism, while leftist trade union activists engaged in strikes, work stoppages, bomb attacks, street demonstrations, violent clashes with the police, and attacks against rightist personalities. Helped by a fresh injection of *Xinhua* funds, the Federation of Trade Unions often coordinated those activities, to which the colonial regime responded with mass arrests, seizures of weapons and suspected bombs, and emergency regulations prohibiting any display of "inflammatory" wall posters (Scott 96-106). Police raids targeted leftist schools, union halls, and movie theatres in order to wipe out agitational posters, quotations from Chairman Mao, and other subversive displays, which sometimes were replaced with police posters ("Day-long Operation"). Leftist cinemas often also doubled as study centers or strategic posts for the labor movement, and the police responded accordingly (Ng). On June 13, 1967, the Governor-in-Council cancelled the license of one pro-communist movie house in Kuntong, the Silver Theatre, and sent riot police to tear down offensive displays and close down the premises the following night: "The audience, who were still inside, were allowed to file out one by one" ("Police Close Down Theater").

Leftist film stars also played a highly visible role during the riots by taking part in demonstrations, distributing food and towels to striking workers, and making other public demonstrations of support ("Sympathisers"). Prominent actress Shek Wei and her husband Fu Chi joined a communist umbrella group, the All Cirlces Anti-British Persecution and Struggle Committee, and were arrested by the colonial regime in July of 1967. The government's initial plan was to deport them to the mainland, but when the PRC authorities refused to authorize their entry, the two stars were imprisoned in the Victoria Detention Camp. Shek Wei was finally released only in October of the following year, while Fu Chi inexplicably remained in confinement for an additional two-month period ("Communist Film Star"; "Fu Chi"). Husband and wife continued their political activities after their long captivity, appearing in a highly publicized press conference together with Fei Yi-ming, publisher of the pro-communist newspaper *Ta Kung Pao*, to demand the release of all communist prisoners in Hong Kong ("Three Demands"). The events of 1967 therefore mobilized the human resources of the leftist film industry and other organs of the PRC in Hong Kong in a collective effort of mass activism which was suppressed by colonial authorities.

The release of several political activists from prison throughout 1968, however, probably marked a conciliatory British gesture towards Beijing ("Fu Chi"). The colonial regime kept on making highly visible efforts to accomodate pressure from the PRC. Although its exhibition license had been officially revoked on a permanent basis in 1967, the Silver Theatre was allowed to open again for business on May 23 of 1968. The venue's gala opening took place in a festive mood that combined political assertiveness with show business glitter: decorated with prominent red flags and quotations by Mao Zedong, the gala premiere was attended by the most famous leftist stars of the territory and included a cocktail reception for 700 ("Back in Business"; "Gala Day"). According to newspaper reports, the first film screened would not be "politically inclined", but rather the "swordfighting thriller" *I Come Back Again/ Wo You Huilai*, described in the press as "a current hit in the Mandarin movie world" produced by the leftist Phoenix Company ("Back in Business"). The nature of this choice exemplifies how commercial pressures tended to attenuate the encoding of partisan messages even in "pro-China" productions, encouraging a certain thematic homogeneity that cut across the political divide between left and right. Leftist films often drew on a broadly "progressive" cluster of values derived from the New Culture and May Fourth Movements in early modern China. Those values emphasized the oppressiveness of traditional superstitions and family values while praising communal solidarity and sometimes mildly criticizing landlords and rich businessmen in a social realist vein. Proclamations and manifestoes by pro-China filmmakers often drew on what may be described as a discourse of quality, calling for a more professional attitude towards filmmaking.

On the whole, the paucity of overtly

partisan agitation and propaganda films was partly a consequence of the economic constraints of a capitalist cinema market and the political pressures of British colonial censorship. But this situation was probably also encouraged by the improvement in relations between the PRC government and Britain immediately after the Cultural Revolution, a period of relatively low industrial conflicts in Hong Kong (Leung 1991, 24-5). By early 1968, Premier Zhou Enlai had reportedly called off all labor agitation activities and agreed to foster a normal working environment in the colony ("Hong Kong Communists"). In exchange, the colonial regime increased its censorship of right-wing Hong Kong films and anti-communist Taiwan-made productions potentially offensive to the mainland government (Loong 65-6; Teo 40; Miners 228-9). Perhaps the most famous case of political censorship concerned rightist director Long Gang's *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow/ Zuotian, Jintian, Mingtian* (1970), a film which used the plot of Albert Camus' *The Plague* as a conservative allegory of the 1967 labor conflicts. Censors held its release back for two years and only approved a revised, heavily edited version. In a similar vein, Tang Shuxuan's critical depiction of the Cultural Revolution, *China Behind/Zaijian Zhongguo* (1974) and the Taiwan-made anti-communist film *The Coldest Winter in Beijing/Wangtian Houtu* (Bai Jingrui, 1981) were banned initially, although they were all eventually released (Loong 66; Teo 41).

Movie censorship following the 1967 riots not only affected the Chinese and Taiwanese motion picture industries, but also the local distribution of other Asian films. In June of 1968, the Film Censorship Board banned two Pakistani films, *Farangee* and *Jaage Utha Insan*, for the reason that "they might incite public disorder and racial disorder," provoking ethnic conflicts between the Indian and Pakistani communities in the territory ("Row over Ban"; "Film Man"). Mr. M. A. Baig, manager of Crescent Business International, the distribution company which handled both films, unsuccessfully petitioned the Film Review Board, an appeal body technically independent of the Film Censorship Board, to overturn the decision ("Film Row"). The British authorities' refusal to permit the screening of the films probably demonstrates their fear of facing additional grass-root riots at a time when the 1967 protests had already come to an uneasy end. Angry letters to English language newspapers claimed that the two banned films would have anyway been shown without English or Chinese subtitles and could therefore not possibly harm anyone outside of the Pakistani community. One Pakistani distributor observed that he had previously handled three Indian and Pakistani films with strong anti-imperialist messages, all of which had been passed by the censors and provoked no violent clashes among viewers (Khan; see also Shah). This comment brings out the inconsistency with which the Censorship Board conducted its work: as chief film censor William Hung put it in a different context: "There are no hard and fast rules for censoring films" ("The Old Ban").

The Right-Wing Film Industry

In addition to the New China News Agency, the anti-communist Guomindang regime also played a role in the politicization of Hong Kong cinema circles. In this context, it is important to appreciate that all local filmmaking organizations shared a crucial characteristic with almost the entire manufacturing sector in Hong Kong. The small size of the local market simply could not profitably absorb a large production output. Local production therefore depended on overseas markets which were often highly volatile due to political upheavals, changing protectionist policies, and competition from other newly industrializing nations (Leung 1996, 4-6). When the mainland market was largely closed to Hong Kong films other than a handful of leftist productions, local companies immediately turned to other areas with sizable Chinese populations. According to a rough estimate about the 1960s, the Hong Kong studios derived about 60% of their combined total earnings from Malaysia, 30% from Taiwan, and the rest from Hong Kong and other areas in the region (Chang 15). Such economic considerations compelled some private entrepreneurs to establish intimate ties with the Guomindang regime in order to secure stable access to the lucrative and politically stable Taiwan market.

Guomindang authorities in Taiwan systematically manipulated the capitalist structure of Hong Kong film production for political ends, securing the loyalty of many private Hong Kong film companies through strictly economic pressures: no politically offensive film would be granted a Taiwanese distribution license, thus effectively cutting off the picture in question from one of the most lucrative Chinese markets in South East Asia. Direct Guomindang support for the right-wing industry in Hong Kong was institutionalized through a series of activities that included loans, cash awards, tax deductions, and festival prizes, all of which were systematically used to reward loyal producers and directors. In 1956, the Guomindang's Ministry of Education established a Committee of Motion Picture promotion and Development to allocate subsidies to, and otherwise regulate, overseas (mainly Hong Kong) productions. In March 1962, a set of Regulations Concerning Goverment Loans for Mandarin Film Production was put into effect in order to govern a credit account established by the Government Information Office to help "national" language producers, a definition which covered Hong Kong companies working in Mandarin (*China Yearbook 1962-3* 581). Any Hong Kong studio film shot in Taiwan was considered eligible for tax deductions. This measure not only encouraged co-productions between the two industries but also tightened the Guomindang's political control because any overseas filmmaker seeking Taiwan locations was required to submit a script in advance (Liu 56). The "right-wing" faction of Hong Kong was an institutionalized phenomenon cemented by close economic and personal ties between the Guomindang regime and the creative and managerial personnel of Hong Kong companies.

The Guomindang also used economic pressures for political ends by means of its control over some trade associations. Formed in 1957, the right-wing Hong Kong and Kowloon Cinematic Theatrical Enterprise Free General Association Ltd., also known as the Freedom Association, has been described by Hong Kong filmmaker Ann Hui in the following terms:

> . . . every film worker, including technicians and especially directors and actors, has to join this society for a nominal fee of 30 Hong Kong dollars a year. If you do not enroll as a member, your name cannot appear on the credits of the movie. [It] is really a political association, because you have to subscribe to the politics of Taiwan—of anti-Communist China. And you are not permitted by the society to go to China to shoot a film, not even an anti-Communist or non-political film. If you do, you are faced with the prospect that not only will Taiwan not buy your movie, but that they also won't buy any of your following movies. (Kennedy 47)

No Hong Kong filmmaker could obtain an entry visa into Taiwan without the Freedom Society's approval (Liu 55). At the same time, the Guomindang and the United States government provided funding for sympathetic companies. In addition to the ubiquitous Voice of America radio broadcasts, US funds backed the Asia Foundation—which provided financial backing for the cultural activities of anti-communist intellectuals—as well as the Asia News Agency with its publishing arm Asia Press and its Asia Film Company, established in 1953 and closed down due to cut-backs in US aid five years later (Law 18). Asia Film Company releases would receive extensive publicity in the *Asia Pictorial*, a U.S.-sponsored publication modeled after *Life* magazine.

Shaw Brothers

The most efficiently rationalized film organization in the right-wing camp was undoubtedly Shaw Brothers. The Shaw Brothers empire was characterized by an intense concentration and centralization of capital. Concentration occurs whenever individual corporations or firms employ more labor power, own more industrial machinery and premises, and otherwise expand their absolute size relative to other competitors. Centralization occurs whenever fewer companies employ a relatively larger amount of the total labor force and manage the production of relatively more profit (O'Connor 43). The Shaw economic structure was based on a principle of vertical integration inspired by the Hollywood studios before the end of the Second World War. The company controlled its own film production facilities, publicity networks, and exhibition outlets (Rayns , 60). Its initial resources included the ownership over 100 film theaters and nine amusement parks throughout South East Asia in addition to a substantial family fortune that provided the necessary initial capital for its production and distribution facilities. In 1958, Run Run Shaw had constructed several studios and films theaters, set up acting schools to train the company's own contract stars (over 1,500), and brought film technicians from Japan and the US to act as instructors for his technical crew. The result of these efforts was the monumental 46-acre Movie Town, which included ten studios and 16 exterior sets, living quarters for the staff, as well as dubbing studios and laboratories. The Shaw production policy in the late 1950s and the first half of the 1960s emphasized period films which required expensive sets, thus driving many smaller companies out of business by augmenting film production costs. Period films were relatively inexpensive for the Shaw studio to produce because the company owned 80,000 costumes of different historical periods as well as exterior sets which could be reused in different productions, sometimes simultaneously, thus minimizing production costs. Smaller companies in Taiwan often lacked elaborate facilities and needed greater capital investments to produce similarly elaborate historical epics and period musicals.

In the mid-seventies, the company owned 143 theaters throughout South East Asia and North America. Shaw's publicity department relentlessly published such periodicals as *Southern Screen* (*Nanguo Dianying*) to promote upcoming releases. The magazine carefully reproduced a star system, including photos of new studio actors, highlighting their fashions and hair styles, providing biographical information, and summarizing their recent activities. An important editorial strategy consisted in humanizing the stars by describing their feelings and hopes, sometimes in the form of a dramatic narrative. A January 1964 issue, for instance, included photographs of Shaw star Ivy Ling Po during a trip to Taiwan with a text presumably written by the actress herself. Using a rather hyperbolic language, the piece described Ling Po's feelings as her plane approached the city ("Would they like me? Would they give me the cold shoulder?") and the enthusiastic reception she encountered ("There they came by the thousands. In swarms, droves, like ocean waves, surging forward towards me. Every face was a cordial smile.") (Po 126).

The Shaw production, distribution, and advertising strategies were to prove extraordinarily successful in entering the Taiwan market: each year between 1961 and 1963, the top grossing Chinese film in Taiwan was a Shaw Brothers production. The most successful was of course *Liang Shanbo yu Zhu Yingtai/The Love Eterne* (Li Hanxiang, 1963), a period film with songs which sold over 720,000 tickets in Taiwan (Cai 19). The rightist regime rewarded Shaw Brothers by bestowing its "Golden Horse" annual award on the film. *Southern Screen* gleefully reported that "never before in China's history has a picture—Chinese or foreign—been welcomed with such fervor and adoration", adding that *Love Eterne* was seen by almost two thirds of Taipei's population and out-grossed even *Ben Hur*. The celebratory tone with which the article described a Chinese film successfully competing against US imports typifies an important discourse among Taiwan and Hong Kong filmmakers, which cannot be fully discussed here: the struggle to conquer the local market against foreign competition. As well, the magazine emphasized that the film had been well-received by both native-born Taiwanese and mainlander viewers, thus highlighting the growing capacity of the Mandarin cinema to cross over into a local market previously dominated by Taiwanese dialect films. The growth of a rationalized studio system in Hong Kong modeled after, and meant to compete against, the Hollywood paradigm was partly responsible for the switch of a local Taiwanese-speaking audience from Taiwanese dialect films to Mandarin films.

The economic success of the Shaw Brothers studio in the Taiwan market was partly a political phenomenon made possible by the company's Guomindang connections. This political alliance was buttressed by the company's willingness to publicize the Guomindang's own film productions in the pages of *Southern Screen*. The January 1964 issue, for instance, included a two-page report on the location shooting of the Taiwan-made wide-screen colour production *Oyster Girl* generously illustrated with photographs of the main cast and producer Henry Kung ("Intended" 121-2). The film was made by Central Motion Pictures Corporation (CMPC), one of four studios owned by the Guomindang in Taiwan. The political ties of large-scale Hong Kong studios ran deeper than is normally acknowledged. In February of 1968, for instance, executives of the Shaw Brothers and Cathay studios signed a pact in Taibei in pledging not to distribute or exhibit films made in Mainland China ("Red Movie Ban").

In addition, the Shaw management and its creative personnel often attended official celebrations in Taiwan. The guest list for the National Day festivities in October of 1964, for instance, is an impressive roster of the studio's major stars, including Wang Lai, Le Di, Ivy Ling Po, and Li Lihua, whose presence was highly publicized in the official press as a ceremonial demonstration of loyalty ("Guo Qing"). The regime clearly extracted political capital out of the support of popular actors and actresses, but its political influence extended into the top-level management and creative personnel. One of the most commercially successful Shaw filmmakers was Zhang Che, who had lived in Taiwan throughout the fifties, collaborated with authorities in the making of *Storm over Mt. Ali/Ahlishan Yunfeng* (1949). Another key figure within the company was actor and director Wang Hao, a mainlander from Tianjin who had created the Haiyan Film Company in 1952 and directed the fiercely anti-communist prisoner of war film *14,000 Witnesses* (1962), produced jointly with Taiwan's Huaqiao Company. The fact that he was invited to host the 16th Golden Horse Awards and serve in the jury of the 17th edition further evidences his institutional affinity with the Guomindang regime (*The China Factor* 130).

Despite the extensive political connections between Shaw Brothers and the Guomindang, there is no evidence to support the conclusion that every, or even most, of the films produced by Shaw Brothers and other "right-wing" film companies consistently adhered to a pro-Taipei line. There were of course some political projects with a patriotic content but, in general, the Guomindang's Hong Kong activities seem to have more successful in establishing an institutional presence in the territory's cinema circles than in securing the production of policy films. Filmmakers very often strove to ensure wide audience appeal rather than advance the political agenda of any given organization. Even a more traditionalist Shaw production like *Love Eterne*, for instance, contained a politically ambivalent plot—a young woman disguises herself as a man in order to enter a Confucian school but then falls in love with a young

scholar—that can be interpreted from different social and political perspectives. The dialogue, which explicitly affirms the equality of men and women, puts forth a progressive denunciation of "feudal" patriarchy that can accommodate both a communist and a Guomindang framework. On the other hand, the young woman Zhu Yingtai finally emphasizes her filial respect for her father and maintains her chastity, thus reaffirming a certain traditionalist element.

Conclusion

The linkage between the Hong Kong film industry and Chinese national parties can be described in terms of five institutional mechanisms: (i) the funding of and managerial control over cinema organizations, (ii) critical support in either the leftist or rightist Hong Kong press; (iii) awards and other forms of financial assistance given by either Beijing or Taipei; (iv) participation by creative personnel in cultural movements, labor disputes, or trade and cultural associations with political affiliation, and (v) distribution rights in either the Chinese mainland or Taiwan. The politics of film culture was not, however, only based on the political or social convictions of participants but also on networks of interpersonal relations among fellow film workers who had collaborated in film and drama projects. These institutional mechanisms worked in a sociocultural environment that included at least the following characteristics: (i) efforts by colonial authorities to forge a depoliticized public culture; (ii) the changing relationship between Beijing and London in a cold war context; and finally (iii) the economic realities of a capitalist film market, which encouraged the alignment of some "right-wing" companies with the Guomindang regime.

Works Cited

"Back in Business." *Hong Kong Standard* (May 23, 1968).

Cai Guorong. *Lishi Niandai Guopian Mingdao Mingzou Xuan* [Celebrated National Directors of the 1960s]. Taipei: Republic of China Film Development Foundation, 1982.

Chan, Joseph Man. *Shifting Journalistic Paradigms: Mass Media and Political Transition in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1987.

Chang, Tsuh-chuan. "New Look in Asian Movies." *Free China Review* 4.7 (July 1964): 15.

China Yearbook 1962-3. Taipei: China Publishing Corporation, 1963.

Choi Po-king. "From Dependence to Self-Sufficiency: Rise of the Indigenous Culture of Hong Kong, 1945-1989." *Asian Culture* 14 (April 1990): 161-77.

"Communist Film Star Shek Wei..." *Hong Kong Standard* (October 13, 1968).

"Communists in Hong Kong." *South China Morning Post* (November 26, 1948): 1.

"Communists Warned: Ugly head of civil war will be stamped out." *South China Morning Post* (September 17, 1948): 1.

"Day-long Operation Against Leftists." *The Hong Kong Standard* (July 21, 1967).

Dirlik, Arif. *The Origins of Chinese Communism*. New York: Oxford UP, 1989.

England, Joe. *Industrial Relations and Law in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Oxford UP, 1989.

"Film Man will Petition Censor Board's Verdict." *Hong Kong Standard* (September 2, 1968).

"Film Row Going On." *Hong Kong Standard* (July 21, 1968).

"Fu Chi, 4 Top Reds Are Freed." *Hong Kong Standard* (December 12, 1968).

"Gala Day for Reds." *Hong Kong Standard* (May 24, 1968).

"Guo Qing Qun Xing Hui" (All-star gathering for the National Day). *Central Daily News* (October 13, 1963).

Harris, Peter. *Hong Kong: A Study in Bureaucratic Politics*. Hong Kong: Heinemann Asia, 1978

"HK: Static or Storm." *The Hong Kong Standard* (June 6, 1967).

"Hong Kong Communists Betrayed." *Hong Kong Standard* (February 6, 1968).

"Intended for Asian Festival." *Southern Screen* 71 (January 1964): 121-2.

Jarvie, Ian. *Window on Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 1977).

Law Kar. "The Shadow of Tradition and the Left-Right Struggle." *The China Factor in Hong Kong Cinema*. Hong Kong: The Urban Council, 1990. 15-20.

Kennedy, Harlan. "*Boat People*." *Film Comment* 19.5 (October 1983): 41-47.

Khan, N. "The Banning of a Film." *Hong Kong Standard* (September 5, 1968).

Leung, Benjamin K.P. *Perspectives on Hong Kong Society*. Hong Kong: Oxford UP, 1996.

—. *Social Movement as Cognitive Praxis: The Case of the Student and Labour Movements in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: The University of Hong Kong, 1991.

Leyda, Jay. *Dianying: An Account of Films and the Film Audience in China*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972.

Lin Nien-tung. "Some Problems in the Study of Cantonese Films of the 1950s." *Cantonese Cinema Retrospective (1950-1959)*. Hong Kong: The Urban Council, 1978.

Liu Hsien-cheng. "Interacting Cinema Development between Taiwan and Hong Kong: The Past and the Future." *A Perspective of Chinese Cinemas of the 90s*. Taipei: Golden Horse Film Festival, 1994. 53-58.

Loong Sin. *A Shadow Government of Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hai San, 1985. (in Chinese)

Miners, Norman. *The Government and Politics of Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Oxford UP, 1995.

"Money from China." *The Hong Kong Standard* (August 1, 1967).

"Nationalists in the Limelight." *The Hong Kong Standard* (June 28, 1967).

Ng Ho. "Anecdotes from Two Decades of Hong Kong Cinema: 1847-1967." *A Comparative Study of Post-War Mandarin and Cantonese Cinema: the Films of Zhu Shilin, Qing Jian and Other Directors*. Hong Kong: The Urban Council, 1983. 139-146.

O'Connor, James. *The Corporations and the State*. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.

"The Old Ban Stays." *Hong Kong Standard* (July 12, 1969).

Po, Ivy Ling. "The Unforgettable 50 Hours in My Life." *Southern Screen* 71 (January 1964): 126.

"Police Close Down Theatre." *Hong Kong Standard* (June 15, 1967).

Rayns, Tony. "The Redirected Embrace." *The China Factor in Hong Kong Cinema*. Hong Kong: The Urban Council, 1990. 49-57.

____. "La Veritable Histoire des Fréres Shaw." *Cahiers du Cinema* 351 (September 1983): 59-60.

"Red Danger in South-east Asia." *South China Morning Post* (November 30, 1948): 7.

"Red movie ban pledged by film bosses." *Hong Kong Standard* (February 27, 1968).

"Row over Ban on Two Films." *Hong Kong Standard* (June 30, 1968).

Scott, Ian. *Political Change and the Crisis of Legitimacy in Hong Kong*. Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1989.

Sek Kei. "Zhu Shilin: A Critique." *A Comparative Study of Post-War Mandarin and Cantonese Cinema: the Films of Zhu Shilin, Qin Jian and Other Directors*. Hong Kong: The Urban Council, 1983.

Selznick, Philip. *The Organizational Weapon: A Study of Bolshevik Strategy and Tactics*. Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960.

Shah, Badri. "Banning of a Movie." *Hong Kong Standard* (September 9, 1968).

"Sympathisers Give Moral Support." *Hong Kong Standard* (May 11, 1967).

Teo, Stephen. "Political and Social Issues in Hong Kong Cinema." *Changes in Hong Kong Society Through Cinema*. (Hong Kong: The Urban Council, 1988. 38-41.

"Three Demands." *Hong Kong Standard* (December 21, 1968).

Young, John D. "The Building Years: Maintaining a China—Hong Kong—Britain Equilibrium, 1950-1971." In *Precarious Balance*. Ed. Ming K. Chan. Armonk: E. M. Sharpe, 1994. 131-148.

Yu Mo-Wan. "A Study of the Zhong Lian Film Company." *Cantonese Cinema Retrospective (1960-69)*. Hong Kong: The Urban Council, 1982. 41-45.