

Chapter 2

Silent Bitterness

2.1 I

During the negotiations between China and Britain over the venue of the handover ceremony, the British proposed to hold it at Central in an open playground so as to make all presence at the ceremony to witness the leaving of the last British warship, and to demonstrate Britain's "Exit with Glory." The Chinese proposed the new Wing of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre as the venue. It is said that the overall shape of the building is designed to resemble a wild goose heading the North, symbolizing the return of Hong Kong to the Motherland. However, seen from the top of the Victoria Peak, the Centre looks more like a huge turtle, which seemed to indicate the reluctance of Hong Kong people to embrace their birth mother wholeheartedly. During the course of the negotiations, the Chinese side provided the British with the hydrologic survey and data for the previous 40 years, demonstrating that Hong Kong would be very likely to have heavy storms around July 1st, and that this was not the right season for the handover ceremony be to held in open air. When the ceremony was held at the Convention and Exhibition Centre, Hong Kong was indeed inundated with torrential rain. The Chinese, who believed in the Way of Heaven, would take it as the proof of the justice of Heaven, whose tears would wipe away the historic humiliation of the Chinese as a Nation. For the colonial Hong Kong as a symbol of the humiliation, it has always been a pain in the heart of the Nation.

Back in the early days of British invasions of China, there was debate in London over whether to put Hong Kong Island or Zhoushan Archipelago under colonial rule. From a military perspective, the latter would make a strategic containment of the Qing dynasty easier, thus completely subjugating the Qing government. However, from a commercial point of view, Hong Kong was a better choice for developing trade in Guangzhou. The choice went to Hong Kong, not simply because of lacking confidence in defeating the Qing, but more importantly, because the British government by nature was an "armed bodyguard" of the British

merchant. Therefore, Britain's occupation of Hong Kong was, in the first place, not as a colonial settlement, but for commercial trade and economic interests. Accordingly, unlike its colonization of North America, the British were not particularly interested in dividing up and taking up Chinese territory. After the Hong Kong Island which was considered as "a barren rock" being ceded in 1842, the British did not occupy Kowloon on the Mainland until more than a decade later. And almost 40 years were to pass before Britain obtained a lease on the New Territories in the wild global rush for the division of colonial spoils.

The initial aim of the British occupying Hong Kong was not to fully colonize the place because they realized that Hong Kong was part of the Mainland culturally and racially in every sense, thus would be very difficult to put colonial rule into practice. Consequently, this meant that when the residents of Kowloon and the New Territories violently resisted the British occupation, the British did not go all out on a policy of colonial slaughter but tolerated a certain degree of autonomy under the approach of "indirect rule." Therefore, although Hong Kong had the appearance of being a British colony, its history has always been part of the history of the Mainland. In the past few years, some Hong Kong scholars have attempted to construct an independent identity of the Hong Kong people through writing an independent history of Hong Kong, trying thereby to separate the Hong Kong people from the Mainlander. Nevertheless, this cannot compromise the historical fact that Hong Kong people have always been Chinese.

2.2 II

Ever since being ceded, Hong Kong has been a stepping stone for the spread of Western culture to the Mainland. For modern China, modern newspapers started in Hong Kong. During the Hundred Days' Reform of 1898 and the Revolution of 1911, Hong Kong served as a base for China's democratic revolution. Many important figures in modern Chinese history, among them Wang Tao, Liang Qichao and Sun Yat-sen, all had extensive historical connections with Hong Kong. As a Chinese window to the western world, Hong Kong was also a springboard for China to the West. Since the beginning of the Anti-Japanese War, Hong Kong, as anticipated, became a base from which both the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Kuomintang (KMT) organized fundraising from overseas Chinese, lobbied for international aid, encouraged resistance to the Japanese invasion, and promoted their ideologies of nation building. In 1938, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CCCPC) decided to set up an Eighth Route Army Hong Kong Office, which was under the direct command of the Southern Bureau, to undertake the following major tasks. The Office's primary task was to raise fund and material aid for the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army. The second one was to organize various anti-Japanese forces in Hong Kong and make contact with the overseas Chinese, especially those living in Southeast Asia, so as to establish a united front and assist them to return to China. For example, the Office

worked with the Alliance for the Protection of China, which was formed by Madame Sun Yat-sen. It helped to establish the Hong Kong-Kowloon Independent Battalion of the Dongjiang Column too. Their work also extended to mobilize the cultural circles to join the anti-war efforts by forming the “Hong Kong Cultural Work Committee.” Its third important task was to publish newspapers and magazines to promote the CPC’s ideology and doctrines of fighting against the Japanese to safeguard the country, in an effort to win the support of overseas Chinese and centrist intellectuals in Mainland. In particular, as the CPC and KMT began their battle for political dominance after the defeat of Japan, Hong Kong became an important base for the CPC to break through the KMT’s news blackout, and seek support from the outside world. In these circumstances, the CPC urgently needed to spread its ideas and political stance to the world, and to this end to utilize Hong Kong as a base from which to reach the KMT-controlled areas such as Guangzhou and Shanghai. Because of the uncertainty concerning the future China faced at this point, the British policy was one of “hedging its bets,” seemingly acknowledging the KMT regime, meanwhile turning a blind eye to the CPC’s activities in Hong Kong. In 1947, on the eve of the Liberation, the Hong Kong branch of the Xinhua News Agency was set up formally, acting as an official agent of the CPC to organize the united front in Hong Kong. Helped by its clandestine arrangements, a great many leaders of the democratic parties and famous figures in cultural circles who fled to Hong Kong during the war time were arranged to travel to Beijing so as to participate in political consultations about constructing the new China. The work of Xinhua’s Hong Kong branch made a historic contribution.

It was only natural that the CPC in Hong Kong turned to the working class for support. We must bear in mind that the Guangdong-Hong Kong General Strike of 1925 was led by Su Zhaozheng, a leader of workers’ movement in the early days of the CPC. Hong Kong’s capitalist and colonialist system also provided social breeding ground for the development of the Party. In 1948, Hong Kong workers established The Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions (FTU). Subsequently, one after another, primary and middle schools for the children of union members were set up (the patriotic schools or the leftist schools as they are known in Hong Kong) one after another, such as the middle schools of Han Hwa, Pui Kiu and Heung To. These schools became not only organizational links and a talent pool for leftist political forces, but also an important venue for patriotic education.

Since the start of the anti-Japanese war the CPC mobilized effectively democrats and prominent cultural figures in Hong Kong and brought them into the united front. Hong Kong’s cultural circle accordingly became an important force for the CPC to play its role. Against the backdrop of a world left-leaning ideological trend after the Second World War, the Hong Kong branch of Xinhua News Agency organized the working class on the one hand, and strengthened the cultural united front on the other. Hong Kong’s leftist political forces went from strength to strength.

Three left-wing film production companies Sun Luen, Great Wall and Feng Huang engaged quite a number of famous Hong Kong film stars and produced many films focusing on such themes as China’s history, the accomplishments of the New China, class struggle, and national conflicts. They became a dispensable force

of the Hong Kong's film industry. The Great Wall film company produced more than 80 films in the Wong Fei Hung series, which had a huge impact on the Chinese in Hong Kong and in Southeast Asia.

Two papers published by the democratic parties, i.e., *Ta Kong Pao* and *Wen Wei Bo*, moved to Hong Kong after being suspended by the KMT, where they prospered under the leadership of the Xinhua Hong Kong branch, following the principle of the united front. These two papers also started up a number of neutralist papers like the *Hsin Wan Pao*, *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* and *Daily Sunshine*, which greatly increased the supplement section with the contents catering to Hong Kong taste such as horse racing, dog racing, martial arts genre, and erotic stories. The martial arts novels of Liang Yusheng and Louis Cha first appeared in the *Hsin Wan Pao*, followed by *Ta Kong Pao* and *Wen Wei Bo*, creating a whirlwind of the martial arts novel contest that sparked the genre of new martial arts novels in Hong Kong. Before the Cultural Revolution, the circulation of newspapers directed or influence by the Xinhua Hong Kong branch accounted for nearly two-thirds of the total. It can be said without exaggeration that the cultural hegemony of Hong Kong was in the hands of the left.

With the flight of the KMT from the Mainland to Taiwan and the enforcement of the policy of buying out capitalist industry and commerce in the Mainland, a great many KMT officials as well as capitalists from Shanghai, Zhejiang and Guangzhou fled to Hong Kong. Accompanying them inevitably was the irreconcilable class hatred between the KMT and the CPC.

As early as 1956, both parties were involved in violent conflicts over the celebration of the KMT's October 10th "National Day." The British Hong Kong government, of course, took measures to suppress the left. At that time, the Hong Kong Police, the criminal underworld and factory bosses were all in cahoots. Whenever there was a dispute, no matter how trivial, between workers and capitalist the factory bosses would immediately call the police to keep order. As a result, class conflicts were often entwined with racial conflict. The capitalists from Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Guangzhou brought with them the capital, technologies and human talents. Successive waves of illegal immigrants from the Mainland joined Hong Kong's pool of cheap labor. The economic sanctions imposed on China by the American-led western world after the Korean War turned Hong Kong into a secret channel into the Mainland for trade and smuggling. Furthermore, political chaos in Southeast Asia after the Second World War forced the Chinese there to move their capital to Hong Kong. All these factors working together propelled the rapid development of Hong Kong's economy since the beginning of the 1950s.

Because of the British Hong Kong government's "rule without governance" political policy and its *laissez-faire* economic policy, the gap between the rich and the poor as well as class conflicts became acute as never before. The increase of migrants from the Mainland made Hong Kong a refugee society from top to bottom. On top of this, under the policy that land was subject to common ownership but government auction, thousands of people became homeless. According to the government statistics, there were altogether about three million people without a

place to live in the 1970s. It is fair to say that Hong Kong in the 1960s has witnessed both class and racial conflicts being on the verge of eruption. Just at this historical conjuncture, the international situation took a turn for the worse. On the one hand, the world campaign against imperialism and colonialism, jointly initiated by China and the Soviet Union, thrived in places such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand. On the other hand, in order to secure its political power in Southeast Asia and construct the First Island Chain to blockade China and the Soviet Union, the United States joined hands with Britain to crack down on the anti-colonialist movement launched by the communist parties in Southeast Asia. Hong Kong was at one and the same time a military base for the United States to march into Vietnam, but also a secret channel of contact with the Mainland for the Chinese of Southeast Asia and the CPC in Hong Kong. For example, it was via Hong Kong that Chen Ping, the legendary leader of the Indonesian Communist Party visited Beijing. Later, following the Sino-Soviet split, in an effort to counter the huge pressure from the two super-powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, Mao Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution against imperialism, colonialism and revisionism, which immediately spread via Hong Kong to Southeast Asia and to the world. Hong Kong was like a small boat buffeted amid the raging waters, facing the possibility of capsizing at any moment.

2.3 III

On April 4, 1966, the colonial government approved to increase the fare of star ferry harbor crossing by five cents, which triggered a series of disturbance, later namely 1966 riots. After the riots were quelled, the subsequent government enquiry acknowledged the nationalist feeling and dissatisfaction among young people that lay beneath this incident. However, the leftist camp in Hong Kong did not involve itself directly in the riots. It was guided by the Xinhua Hong Kong branch, which strictly complied with the Hong Kong policy laid down by China's Central Government, namely: "making full use of Hong Kong in the interest of long-term planning" and "not to strive for the liberation of Hong Kong for the moment." Nevertheless, as the Cultural Revolution swept through the mainland, the Red Guards managed to influence the left wing in Hong Kong through various channels. It was also affected by the "12-3 Incident" (3 December 1966) in Macao.

On December 3, 1966, a conflict broke out between the Portuguese Macao government and the masses. The government's oppression provoked a strike led by the leftist organizations. Responding positively to the calls for cooperation, Guangdong authorities suspended supplies of food and water to Macao, which forced the Portuguese Macao government to accept the demands of the leftist, and consequently turned Macao into a "semi-liberated area." The victory of the Macao left wing had a direct impact on their Hong Kong counterparts, who had been subject to constant suppression from the Hong Kong colonial government. Articles in the leftist newspapers in Hong Kong painted the Macao Incident as a

“great victory for Mao Zedong Thought,” claiming that “the Portuguese colonists were cracked by two and a half quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong.” It naturally stirred the fighting spirit of the Hong Kong leftists to stand up against the British Hong Kong government and the leftist organizations kept on sending people over to Macao in order to learn from them. Faced with this situation, Zhou Enlai gave this warning to the Xinhua Hong Kong branch via Liao Chengzhi that “Hong Kong could not copy the practice in the Mainland and the proletariat Cultural Revolution would not be launched in Hong Kong. A line must be drawn between the internal and the external matters. On the propaganda front, we cannot give Hong Kong compatriots an impression that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution would sweep across Hong Kong. We should not post big-character posters inside our party apparatus and enterprises in Hong Kong, nor should we organize mass allies. ... We must avoid internal struggle in our party organizations and enterprises in Hong Kong because it would destroy our foundation and strategy in our works regarding Hong Kong.”¹

However, given the background of the Cultural Revolution, the radical leftists on the Mainland began to win the upper hand. In 1967, the Central Group of Foreign Affairs Office in charge of Hong Kong and Macao affairs was turned over by the revolutionary rebels, with Zhou Enlai’s authority in foreign affairs restricted and Liao Chengzhi’s power totally lost. In this situation, the radicals within the Hong Kong leftists began to take power and the long-term policy for Hong Kong and Macao established by the Central Government was effectively replaced by the radical line of “liberating Hong Kong.”

In 1967, under the leadership of the leftist organizations, the individual strikes provoked by disputes between the capital and the labor in various places began to escalate and gradually came together. The FTU attached entirely new political importance to these strikes, holding that the oppression by the British demonstrated that “It occurred against the backdrop of US imperialism stepped up using Hong Kong as a military base to invade Vietnam, and the various anti-China activities organized by imperialism, revisionism and counter-revolution. The incident was obviously orchestrated by Hong Kong British authorities.” “We are the Chinese workers in the great era of Mao Zedong and the people armed with Mao Zedong Thought are never scared of any kind of suppression. Our will to fight will never waver in the oppression by imperialism, the FTU’s statement said”² The all-round intervention of the FTU completely changed the political nature of labour disputes in Hong Kong from class conflicts to racial conflicts, from a local issue contained in Hong Kong to a national issue concerning China’s overall situation, further altering the labour dispute to a problem of relations between Chinese working class and western imperialism. The protest movement of the Hong Kong leftists therefore carried some particular significance in the world history. At that

¹Cheung Ka-wei (2009) *Hong Kong Watershed: The 1967 Riots*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, p. 18.

²Ibid, p. 30.

time, the extreme rigidity of the British Hong Kong government left it no other ways of tackling these problems apart from for police oppression and the shows of naval force. Every suppression served only however to intensify existing conflicts and to strengthen the Hong Kong leftists' conviction that theirs was a righteous political struggle. Without any mechanism whatsoever for communication and compromise between the radical left and the hide-bound government, the conflicts could only be escalated.

The political protest movement of the Hong Kong leftists was constantly encouraged by the official and the public from the Mainland, and supported by the Red Guard movement across the country. On May 15, 1967, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs controlled by the Central Cultural Revolution Group summoned the agent for the British Chargé d'Affaires in China to express strong protest against the oppression imposed by the British Hong Kong government, declaring in a statement that "the Chinese government solemnly announces it firmly supports the courageous and righteous struggle of the Hong Kong compatriot together with the 700 million Chinese people, and will always be their powerful backup force." On that same day, the editorial of People's Daily also praised the Hong Kong leftists for "demonstrating the courage of the Chinese people as the good sons and daughters of the motherland, a success of the education of Mao Zedong thought." Under the support from the Mainland, the Hong Kong leftists established a "Hong Kong and Kowloon Anti-persecution Committee of Hong Kong and Kowloon against the British Hong Kong Government." Following the model of Mainland Red Guard Movement, the committee members held the little Red Book *Quotations of Chairman Mao Zedong*, wore the badges with the image of Chairman Mao on them, and launched an official all-around ideological and political struggle against the British Hong Kong government in forms of putting up big character posters and holding criticism and denouncement meetings. With the ever escalating conflict led by the oppression from the British Hong Kong government, People's Daily pointed out in its commentary on June 2 1967 that "The doomsday of British imperialism in Hong Kong is drawing closer as British persecution of our compatriots becomes more frantic. With the backing of 700 million of Chinese people, the Hong Kong compatriots must seek repayment of the bloody debts from British imperialism and sentenced it to death penalty. This historic day is bound to come." This commentary almost equaled to a call for the liberation of Hong Kong. People's Daily further pointed out in its next day's editorial that "In this struggle we shall mainly rely upon the Hong Kong working class as the main force of revolution. We should also fully mobilize youths and student movements merge with the workers' movement."³ These two articles showed the direction of the protest movement for the Hong Kong leftists from the perspective of organization, ideology and objective. As a result, the Hong Kong leftists mistakenly thought the Central Government had already made the decision to liberate Hong Kong. At the same time, the leftist groups from all walks in the neighboring Guangdong Province expressed their

³Ibid, p. 59.

support for the Hong Kong counterparts in succession. A conflict had even broken out between mainland militia and Hong Kong police at the border dividing Shenzhen and Lo Wu. On top of this, the insurrectionists in Beijing created a diplomatic incident by “burning down Office of the British Chargé d’Affaires in China.”

Such kind of cultural struggle led by the Hong Kong leftists didn’t break down the British Hong Kong government. On the contrary, the British authorities acted in the name of restoring the rule of law and cracked down on the leftist movement through a series of emergency legislation, which further accelerated the conflicts. The Hong Kong leftists spared no effort to launch strikes by the workers, the students and the merchants in imitation of the Guangzhou-Hong Kong General Strike in 1925, so as to turn the harbor city into a “harbor of death and notoriety.” As the oppression from the British Hong Kong government worsened, the leftist went from protest to radical “armed conflict” and “quick-firing public assembly,” and so-called “combat against British atrocity.” When the colonial government got the confirmation that Beijing had no intention to reclaim Hong Kong, it unleashed its full force to crash the left wing of Hong Kong, such as sealing up leftist newspapers, closing down leftist schools, and arresting a large amount of leftists. Hong Kong was under the cloud of white terror overnight. Faced with this deadlock, Zhou Enlai resumed leadership and summoned various leaders in Hong Kong to Beijing from November 1967 to January 1968 in an effort to correct the protest movement from going into too extreme and convey the instruction of Mao Zedong that “do not resort to force of arms.” As a result, the 1967 Anti-British Protest Movement gradually died down. At that time, the Mainland was too occupied in coping with the chaos caused by the Cultural Revolution to look after the situation in Hong Kong, while the Xinhua Hong Kong branch was basically suspended from all activities. Without neither political back up from the Mainland, nor any more support from the Hong Kong people, under the suppression of the British Hong Kong government, the Hong Kong leftists had no other way out but to endure all the hails and rains of the seemingly endless 1970s in a lonely and isolated status.

2.4 IV

“The 1967 Anti-British Protest Movement” (or Hong Kong 1967 Riots) had brought disastrous impact on both the leftist camp in Hong Kong and Beijing, in whose aftermath the power and influence of the Hong Kong left dropped to bottom. With support from the British Hong Kong government, the Hong Kong capitalist sacked a huge number of the leftist workers, causing high unemployment among these workers and driving their families into poverty. The FTU and its pro-Mainland trade unions not only suffered losses of members, but also lost its political leadership, the power of cohesion and the ability of mobilization. Meanwhile, Hong Kong and foreign companies seized the opportunity to occupy the market when the students, merchants and workers went on strikes, driving a

large number of Mainland-invested companies and left-led companies out of businesses, and thus directly affecting the Mainland's ability to make foreign currency earnings. The Hong Kong leftists lost its influence on not only the grassroots, but also the cultural circles. Led by the ultra-leftist wing at Xinhua Hong Kong branch, all the newspapers joined the front line of "combat against British atrocity," and canceled all content labeled as "capitalist, feudalism, and revisionist," such as supplement section, the martial arts and horse racing page. This, together with the suppression from the British Hong Kong government, led to drastic reduction in their circulations. As a result, *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* was taken over, while *Daily Sunshine* had to stop publication. The few that survived, such as *Ta Kung Pao* and *Wen Wei Po*, basically had no influence among the Hong Kong people, let alone any function of united front. Those newspapers that took the central line, such as *Ming Pao* and later *Oriental Daily* took the advantage to increase their market share. Apart from newspapers, the left-led movie companies and their cinemas also closed down one after another under the influence of the ultra-leftist trend in arts. Zhou Enlai's warning that "the resulting chaos (of a Cultural Revolution in Hong Kong) would destroy the well-built foundation and strategic arrangements achieved by our long-term efforts" became bleak reality.

Compared with the tangible loss of political power, a negative effect of a more profound nature was that the suppression of the British Hong Kong government over the 1967 Anti-British Protest Movement laid the foundation of the mentality of today's Hong Kong people. Since the beginning of modern times, although their land was ceded to the British, the Hong Kong people always identified themselves with China, and held the belief that sooner or later, Hong Kong would return to the motherland. That's why the Hong Kong people were even more patriotic than some of the Mainlanders, devoting their love and passion to mother China like those children scattered overseas. Although China had been fighting for a way out in a turbulent world, and Hong Kong people had been drifting around like rootless duckweed upon the waters, most of them gave support to China on its path to independence and emancipation without reservation. The Hong Kong entrepreneurs of the old generation, such as Henry Fok Ying-tung, took great risks to transport goods and materials in need to the Mainland, not out of business concerns, but driven by love for his motherland. When Mr. Fok passed away in 2006, he was referred to as an "intimate friend" by the CPC, won high praise from various parties in Hong Kong. The media even commented that his death "marked the end of an era." It demonstrated that the vigor and prospect of a new China enabled the Hong Kong leftists to obtain powerful political energy.

Later, although the Great Leap movement from 1958 to 1960 had driven large amount of Mainland refugees to flood into Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong residents in turn began to deliver parcels of food and clothes to their families and relatives in the Mainland, the majority of Hong Kong people brooded no hostility toward the mainlanders, but participated in, sympathized with or support the protest movement initiated by the Hong Kong leftists under the banner of "anti-colonialism." However, when the leftist movement gradually went to extremes, taking on the form of strikes and further accelerating into "quick-firing assembly,"

it naturally aroused the local citizens' resentment or even fear towards the leftists. As a result, the elite class and residents in Hong Kong turned their back to seek shelter from the British Hong Kong government, who accidentally got acknowledgment and support from the local citizens. The British authorities seized the rare opportunities of the 1967 Anti-British Protest Movement to conduct their project of "winning the hearts and minds."

The concept of "winning the hearts and minds" was an invention of General Templer, high commissioner of the British Empire in Malaya, during his suppression of anti-colonialist movement launched by the local communist party. It specifically referred to the employment of news and propaganda by the Empire and its colonist government in its "news management" which described the revolt and riot of the colonies as "terrorism" through various official channels of discourse in forms of news, report, speech and research, thus creating the "oxygen of terrorism," shaping public opinion, deepening the fear of the public towards anti-colonialist movement, so as to back the colonists' armed suppression and help stabilize the political order. This was a brand new political weapon of the British Empire after World War II in its suppression of the Zionist uprising in Palestinian areas (1944–1947), the political crisis in Malaya (1948–1965), the Mau Mau revolt in Kenya (1952–1960) and the EOKA movement in Cyprus.⁴ The British Empire realized that the "cold war" was a war fighting for "ideological territory," and that the most important weapon of this war was ideas. During the process of winning the hearts and minds, at the level of political discourse, the British politicians succeeded in "binding" the "cold war" against communism with the suppression of revolutions in colonies, "binding" the communist ideologies with the national liberation movements against imperialism and colonialism, and thus damage, distort and demonize the anti-imperial and anti-colonialist movements by declaring communism as "terrorism" in propaganda. Only with knowledge of this background, can we understand why the book entitled *The Gulag Archipelago* won the applause of the west as well as the Nobel Prize for Literature. As a result, the relationship between the British Empire and Commonwealth and their colonies was painted as a relationship of mutual benefit, the Empire thus taking on the image of a benevolent ruler and an unwilling colonist. With the successful installment of such a political discourse, the theoretical foundation for the British Empire to maintain its colonies was also transformed from the racist tone of transmitting civilization in the 17th and 18th century and the Darwinist survival of the fittest theory in the 19th century to the argument of moral obligation in the 20th century. That's to say, the British Empire must undertake the moral responsibility to protect its subject of the colonies from the terrorist despotism of communism. Only with acknowledge of this background, can we begin to understand why such a concept as "the moral obligation to Hong Kong" often appeared in the vocabulary of the British authorities, from Mrs. Thatcher to Mr. Patten.

⁴Susan L. Carruthers, *Winning Hearts and Minds: British Governments, the Media and Colonial Counter-Insurgency (1944–1960)*, London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1995.

During its suppression of the leftist anti-British protest movement, the British Hong Kong government set up a specialized publicity committee, and established a Hong Kong Working Group back in Britain in charge of the work of propaganda. By ways of official document, media interview and news report, it systematically described the protest movement as “riots” and “terrorism,” thus connecting certain concepts with each other in political discourse, such as “the leftist,” “China,” the “Cultural Revolution,” the “Gulag Archipelago” and “terrorist regime of communism,” forming a horrible political picture and creating a terrifying psychological effect.⁵ Besides, the British Hong Kong government also listed the leftist newspapers and schools as its main targets in the suppression of the so-called “riots,” with the same aim to completely deprive the left wing of their political discourse.

By the systematic implementing “winning the hearts and minds” program, the Hong Kong colonial government thoroughly altered the deep consciousness and the psychological structure of the Hong Kong people, leading to their extreme fear of “the leftist,” “the Communist Party,” “the Mainland” and “socialism.” Such a kind of fear, together with the echo from the “hatred towards communism” of the KMT elites, the big capitalists and rightist intellectuals fleeing from the Mainland to Hong Kong, made “fear and hatred of communism” a common emotion among the Hong Kong citizens, which undoubtedly enhanced their psychological repulsion against the return of Hong Kong to the motherland, and also increased the difficulty of its return. As Professor Ian Scott put it, “Ironically, in the light of communist objectives, the end-result of the disturbances was to increase the support for, and the legitimacy of, the existing order. Faced with a choice between communism of the Cultural Revolution variety and the, as yet, unreformed colonial capitalist state, most people chose to side with the devil they knew.”⁶ In the words of Lau Siu-kai, “The 1967 Riots deepened the fear and resentment of the Hong Kong citizen towards the CPC and the leftist, and damaged the relations between Hong Kong compatriots and the Chinese government. Their mistrust of the Chinese government has remained till today. Such kind of psychological inversion towards the Central Government has not only made the process of Hong Kong’s return a winding course, but also made it more difficult for the Hong Kong people to establish a friendly relationship with Beijing.”⁷

2.5 V

The tragedy of the anti-British “1967 Protest Movement” is undoubtedly part of the tragedy rising out of the “Cultural Revolution.” It should be seen from the perspective of the worldwide anti-imperial and anti-colonist movements since the

⁵Liang Jiaquan et al., *The Mystery of the 1967 Riots*, Hong Kong: Economic Times Press, 2001.

⁶Ian Scott, *Political Change and the Crisis of Legitimacy in Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 104.

⁷Cheung, Ka-wei (2000) “Preface” to *The Inside Story of Hong Kong 1967 Riots* (in Chinese).

World War II, the various political experiments to surpass capitalism since the 19th century, the moral basis of the revolutions in China and the third word claiming to “fight for justice for the poor,” and the ethic pursuit of the Chinese revolutions to cultivate “new people for communism.”

The Hong Kong leftists were always considered to have the noblest heart. They used to uphold the instructions of Chairman Mao as their moral guide, willing to giving a helping hand, putting public interest before their own need, and dedicated to public affairs without asking for any personal rewards. When Hong Kong became a “society of refugees” in the 1960s, the Hong Kong leftists spontaneously organized the Mainland compatriots to walk hand in hand to tide over the difficulties, and thus became the moral model for the Hong Kong society. It was this kind of virtue that backed the leftist people to put aside personal safety and self-interests and actively join in the anti-British protest movement without concerns for personal or family losses, as long as just course needed them. It was worth pointing out that they were not young people who had nothing to lose but enthusiasm, but workers, citizens and intellectuals who had families to support. When these people were arrested, they kept on heroic fighting in prison. The story of the Red Crag heroes (Red Crag, a novel by Luo Guangbin and Yang Yiyan, published in 1961, describing the struggles of the communists in Refuse Pit and Bai Mansion prisons during the Chinese Civil War between the KMT and the CPC—translator’s note) repeated itself in the Stanley Prison in Hong Kong. However, with the systematic propaganda of “winning the hearts and minds” project under the British Hong Kong government, the image of the Hong Kong leftists was utterly demonized. Later, as Hong Kong’s economy took off in the 1970s, the Mainland further denied the “Cultural Revolution.” With the world turning to the Right, the kind of virtue represented by the Left was thoroughly denied by the profit-driven market ethnics, their political pursuits were regarded by the rightists from a most vulgar angle as mere individual fanaticism, ambition and evil, their struggle against British colonist rule was accordingly demonized as “riots.” It seems the Hong Kong leftists have been abandoned by the whole world and the era they live in, whose existence could only be traced from two labels in the public discourse of today’s Hong Kong —“lefty” and “the radical elder in Victoria Park” (the phrase refers to a group of senior citizens who denounce the speeches of the pro-democracy groups when the latter participate a weekly TV and Radio program called “City Forum” in Victoria Park—translator’s note). And it is only with the knowledge of the particular history and culture of Hong Kong can we understand the moral insult and political derogation embodied in these two concepts.

As time passed on to the 1980s, the procedure of Hong Kong’s return kicked off, and the focus of the Central Government’s work on Hong Kong affairs was shifted to the unification of the industrial and commercial circles. With the return of Hong Kong reaffirmed, and the prospect of the Mainland’s reforms and opening up unfolded, some business giant used to exclaim, “The new rich of Hong Kong will be those who are not afraid of its return to the Mainland.” The business elites who used to “fear” or “resent” communism drew themselves to the Mainland one after another, and became deputies to the National People’s Congress (NPC) or members

of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) under the name of patriotic businessmen. However, in the eyes of the Hong Kong leftist, these "patriots overnight" were not committed patriots in a political sense, but merely showed their love towards the motherland out of commercial or political interests. As a result, an invisible tension was formed between the capitalist and the working class, the servile followers of the colonist and the patriots within the united front of Hong Kong's return to China, who used to be incompatible opposites during the 1967 anti-British Protest Movement. However, within the grand framework that advocated the "priority of the great course of Hong Kong's return to the motherland," and that "there was no newcomer in patriotism," the steadfast political beliefs of the traditional left, such as the national interest and the great course of the unification of the Chinese nation, had once again overcome their care for personal welfare and historical grievances, which led them to cooperate with the industrial and commercial circles to brace the wind and rain on the way of Hong Kong's return, and further coordinate with the British Hong Kong civil servants after the return of Hong Kong, who used to participate in the crack down on them. Over the decades, the Hong Kong leftist has shouldered both the burden of "riots" in Hong Kong and the burden of "Cultural Revolution" in the Mainland. Yet who is to pay the price for their unswerving patriotism? Who is to speak out for their dedication? The pathos of history has always been troubling the Hong Kong left wing, both as a knot on their closed hearts and a burden to keep them behind the times.

After the "Cultural Revolution," a nationwide discussion on the emancipation of mind went on in the Mainland, out of which came the consensus that "practice is the sole criterion for testing truth." With this came a fundamental revolution on the route, policies and guidelines of the Communist Party of China. Mao Zedong Thought evolved into Deng Xiaoping Theory, and further into "the Three Represents" and the Scientific Outlook on Development. The CPC has completed its transformation from a revolutionary political party to a ruling party during this process, raising the new object to construct the ruling ability and build harmonious society. It is this capacity to emancipate the mind, keep up with the times and realize self-renewal that enables the CPC to keep its status as the political core of China's elite class and lead the country's development. In comparison, the notion of "emancipating the mind" and "advancing with the times" came too late for the traditional Hong Kong leftists to affect the vested interests, complete the reconstructing of the interests or handover between generations. Moreover, the proposal to emancipate the mind or advance with the times eluded the reevaluation of historical events such as the 1967 anti-British Protest Movement. If the overall evaluation of the "Cultural Revolution" in the Mainland has resulted in the consensus to "look forward in solidarity," it is another story in Hong Kong on the evaluation of the 1967 Protest Movement, because during more than a decade's journey of its return to the motherland, Hong Kong was in the center of severe political differentiation, which has lasted after its return, forming a gap between the traditional leftist and the mainstream elite that is hard to bridge. Therefore, it has become a urgent task for the Hong Kong leftists to truly emancipate the mind, unload their historical burdens, renew internal mechanism of their organizations,

complete reshuffle of interests and turnover of power between generations as soon as possible, realize self-reform, become part of Hong Kong elite and undertake the political mission in the 2017 general election of Hong Kong's chief executive. As to the mainstream Hong Kong elite, whether or not they are able to identify with communist China and catch up with the pace of Mainland development largely depends on whether or not they will be able to understand the Hong Kong leftists and the 1967 anti-British Protest Movement in a larger picture.

However, the 1967 anti-British Protest Movement is indeed a Gordian knot in Hong Kong politics. The national conflict between China and the West, the class conflicts between the labor and the capitalist, the political difference between the left and the right, the difference in views between the elite and the public, and the difference in guidelines between the "Cultural Revolution" and the reforms and opening-up—all these conflicts and differences, when interwoven with each other, have formed knot of contradicting emotions "hard to cut clean or arrange in order." If we put it under a larger background of a-century-old cultural conflict between China and the West in the modern times, we will be able to see that both Hong Kong and the Mainland have been torn apart by all kinds of incompatible thoughts, sentiments and interests. It reflects both the internalized international war of the western developed countries transferred onto the developing countries and the painstaking struggle of the Chinese nation to find out a way in the fight for survival. As to our individual Chinese, every one of us must bear the fate of history on our shoulders, be it a tragedy or comedy, as they have already become an organic part of the rejuvenation of Chinese civilization. Today, faced with the fact of China's rise, we need to take a little time to face all the grudges and hates, old and new alike. We even need to learn to forget to some extent so as to let time heal the wound on the hearts.

There are two forces in the political dilemma of today's Hong Kong. On the one hand, the elite middle class (in legal services, education and other sectors) raised by the British Hong Kong government (or the West actually) refuse to identify with communist China or the Hong Kong leftists, and got lost in the constitutional order of the "one country, two systems" policy, and a world with a rising China. On the other hand, the traditional Hong Kong leftists are still trapped in the historical misunderstandings, unable to acknowledge the modern political system and its values established during British rule, or catch up with the pace of the emancipation of mind in the mainland, thus regarding the current mainstream elite with a resentful eye. However, we must recognize that the reconciliation of mind and the return of heart need time, patience, understanding and tolerance, just like the "one country, two systems" policy which embraces huge contradictions. After all, time is the biggest and the most powerful politics. In this sense, politics is an art of forgetting. As time passes by, many problems fade away, not necessarily because they've been solved, but rather because they've been forgotten. Such is the way time works that the issue of "de-colonization" was seldom mentioned at the 10th anniversary of Hong Kong's return (I only saw one article on the subject in *Ming Pao*, written by Dr. Ma Ka-fai), not to mention the 1967 anti-British Protest Movement. Yet we have to realize that behind such well-intentioned forgetfulness is "silent bitterness."

When tears, sour and bitter, blind my eyes,
 I see the white veil, fluttering in breeze, over your head,
 And your hands, in the hands of a stranger,
 Closer you walk, in your eyes there is silent bitterness.
 You still have my blessing, with my greatest sorrow.
 And you will turn back never more.

This *Elegy* by Li Kuang (Cheng Kin Pak) swept the literary circles of Hong Kong in the 1960s. This is a poem on love, but seems to be able to express the heartfelt feeling of the leftist camp in Hong Kong better. However, doesn't the Hong Kong rightist camp share the similar patriotic pathos? Doesn't such pathos impact the Hong Kong politics from time to time? The Hong Kong right after the 1980s is just like the left since the 1960s, both resembling the resentful lover in the poem, who with all his "silent bitterness" feels the weight of "the greatest sorrow." If in this "great sorrow" there can be less solitary pride and hatred, more confidence in the nation's future, more responsibility to the country and more tolerance and forgiveness towards each other, then maybe the left and the right could look toward the nation's reconstruction of civilization, and be able to end the disputes, heal the wounds, and achieve forgiveness and reconciliation of the soul. In reality, the 1967 anti-British protest has never been redressed in Hong Kong, and many criminal laws of the British Hong Kong rule are still in effect. However, on the 1st of July 1999, during the second anniversary of Hong Kong's return, the name of Lee Chark-tim, leader of the 1967 protest and FTU chief, appeared on the list of the Great Bauhinia Medal winners issued by the then chief executive Tung Chee Hwa. Later, Tsang Tak-sing, who was put in prison by the colonial authorities during the 1967 Protest Movement, was appointed "Justice of the Peace" (JP). During the celebration of the 10th anniversary of Hong Kong's return in 2007, the Liaison Office of Central People's Government in the Hong Kong SAR (LOCPG) issued medals for the first time to the Hong Kong citizens in reward of their service to the city, while Tsang Tak-sing was again appointed as the head of Home Affairs Bureau of the SAR Government. Who can predict what kind of miracles may wait ahead in Hong Kong's future?



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