



THE OTHER SIDE OF GLAMOUR

The Left-wing Studio Network
in Hong Kong Cinema in the
Cold War Era and Beyond

VIVIAN P. Y. LEE

GLOBAL
FILM
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The Other Side of Glamour

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This book was completed at one of the most tumultuous times in the history of Hong Kong, as the city was going through wave after wave of mass protests of a scale and proportion unrivaled by any other metropolitan city in the world. During the final months of writing, the upheavals and controversies streaming through the news channels sounded like distant echoes to the momentous events of a bygone era. The uncanny resonances between past and present, perhaps, can engender new ways of engaging with history itself.

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I dedicate this book to my family, for always being there for me.

A note on the timeline

The reader will find that certain historical figures and events are cross-referenced in different parts of this book. Due to the complexity of the sociopolitical landscape in post-World War II Hong Kong and the intertwined nature of the subject matters in question, close examination of any segment of time will not be effective without due awareness of the larger context that very often exceeds the scope of a single chapter. As a quick-reference tool to navigate the flow of events, a timeline has been compiled to offer an at-a-glance overview of important events and persons involved in the development of the left-wing cinema in Hong Kong. In-text references to the timeline appear in the chapters to avoid redundancy in factual details.

In compiling the timeline, a considerable number of primary and secondary sources have been consulted to clarify discrepancies in dates, spellings, and other factual details. Where possible, information from primary sources, such as newspaper reports and press statements, is adopted. In the absence of first-hand materials, available secondary sources are compared to verify factual accuracy based on their cited references and other contextual details pertaining to the subject in question. Where conflicting understandings are noted in different accounts or reports and the means of verification have been exhausted without yielding a convincing conclusion, no entry is made in the timeline. Additional explanatory details, where appropriate, are given in the footnotes of the respective chapters.

Timeline

1934

- Tianyi (Unique) Film Company establishes operations in Hong Kong.

1935

- The First Cantonese Cinema Clean-up Campaign is launched by the Hong Kong Overseas Chinese Education Committee.
- Grandview Film Company Limited, founded by Chiu Shu-sun and Kwan Man-ching in San Francisco, moves to Hong Kong.

1937

- Tianyi Film Company is reorganized into Nanyang Film Company under Shaw Rende.
- The Central Film Censorship Committee proposes a ban on dialect film to be implemented on 1 July. The South China Film Association sends a delegation to Nanjing to petition against the ban. Delegates include Lee Fa, Chiu Shu-sun, Chuk Ching-yin, Ko Lei-hen, and Chan Kwan-chiu. The central government agrees to a three-year deferral of the ban.
- The ban is disrupted by the outbreak of the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression on 7 July.

1938

- The Second Cantonese Cinema Clean-up Campaign is launched by Lo Ming-yau, Lai Man-wai, and Ho Ming-wah, etc.

1941

- Japanese occupation of Hong Kong begins when Sir Mark Young, then governor of Hong Kong, surrenders the colony to Japan on 25 December.

1945

- End of Japanese occupation on 15 August.
- Resumption of the civil war between the Nationalist Party (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

1946

- Great China Film Company is founded by Jiang Boying in partnership with Shaw Runde.

1947

- Yung Hwa Film Company is founded by Zhang Shankun and Li Zuyong.

1948

- A group of left-wing filmmakers, including Yang Hanseng, Cai Chusheng, and Shi Dongshan, arrive in Hong Kong. Plans are soon underway to establish a progressive film company (Nanguo; see 1949).

1949

- The Third Cantonese Cinema Clean-up Campaign is launched by a group of left-wing filmmakers. A joint statement is published in local newspapers, including *Ta Kung Pao*, *Wah Kiu Yat Po*, and the *Kung Sheung Daily News*, on 8 April.
- The Nanguo Film Company is founded on 5 May. In partnership with the Hysan Lee family, who own the Lee Theatre in Hong Kong, the deal is facilitated by Yuen Yiu-hung, film producer and general manager of the Lee Theatre.
- Zhang Shankun establishes the Great Wall Pictures Corporation (also known as the Old Great Wall) on 3 July.
- South China Film Industry Workers' Union is established on 10 July.
- The People's Republic of China is founded on 1 October.

1950

- The Nanyang Film Company is renamed as Shaw and Sons Ltd. The Nanyang Studio is also renamed as the Shaw Studio.
- Fifties Film Company is established by a group of former Yong Hwa filmmakers in the midst of Yong Hwa's financial difficulties. Co-founders include Bai Chen, Sima Wensen, Liu Qiong, Hu Xiaofeng, Li Lihua, Shu Shi, and Sun Jinglu.
- Shipping industry tycoon Lui Kin-hong takes over the Great Wall Pictures Corporation on 25 January and renames it as the Great Wall Movie Enterprises Limited (the "New Great Wall"). Yuan Yang'an becomes general manager.

- Dragon-Horse Films is founded by Fei Mu and Zhu Shilin on 22 February with financial backing from Wu Xingcai, a studio owner and entrepreneur from Shanghai.
- In May, the Southern Film Company Limited is founded with a mission to distribute Soviet and Mainland Chinese productions in Hong Kong. The company is the sole distributor of Hong Kong progressive films in Mainland China and Southeast Asia.
- The Korean War breaks out in June. The US imposes a total trade embargo on China. Supply of raw materials for film production from the US is suspended.

1951

- The Hong Kong government revises the *Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance* to expand the scope of “public entertainment” to include exhibition of images, photography, books, and other kinds of performances.
- The Hong Kong government announces the setting up of Frontier Closed Areas along the northern border of Hong Kong in May.
- Taiwan announces a ban on Chinese-language films (戡亂時期國產影片處理辦法) involving left-wing production companies, stars, directors, and scriptwriters on 7 September.

1952

- The Liberty Film Company is founded by Huang Cho-han.
- Eight left-wing filmmakers—Liu Qiong, Shen Ji, Shu Shi and Sima Wensen, Qi Wenshao, Yang Hua, Ma Kwok-leung, and Di Fan—are deported to Mainland China on 9–10 January. Other left-wing filmmakers, including Bai Chen and Jiang Weixiang, are deported to Mainland China later in the same month.
- Sun Luen Film Company is established on 29 February. Co-founders include Lo Duen, Chan Man, Lee Hok-wah, and Tse Chai-chi.
- The Feng Huang Motion Picture Company is founded by Zhu Shilin in October. Its precursors are Dragon-Horse Films and Fifties Film Company.
- Union Film Enterprise Ltd. is established on 16 November. Among its twenty-one co-founders are Ng Cho-fan, Cheung Ying, Chun Kim, Tsi Lo-lin, and Lee Sun-fung.

1953

- Singaporean entrepreneur Loke Wan Tho’s Cathay Organization dispatches Albert Odell to Hong Kong to establish the International Films Distribution Agency. The company also finances Yung Hwa’s productions.

- Hong Kong and Kowloon Union of Free Workers in the Film Industry is established on 27 March. (The Union was renamed in the 1950s and 1990s to include theater workers; see below.)
- Asia Pictures is established by Chang Kuo-sin in July with the financial support of the US-sponsored Asia Foundation.
- The Hong Kong Government's Film Censorship Regulations (under the *Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance*) is announced in November. All films, including local and imported films, had to be submitted to the censorship committee for approval for public release. Submissions should include film posters, advertisements, and visual and textual materials used for publicity. An appeal mechanism is introduced with the establishment of the Board of Review to deliberate on challenges to the decisions of the panel of censors.

1955

- Loke Wan Tho's International Films takes over Yung Hwa.
- Shaw establishes its Cantonese film unit.
- On 23 February, the KMT government announces a set of regulations (附匪電影事業及附匪電影從業人員審定辦法) to tighten the procedure of deliberation on left-wing film companies and filmmaking personnel.
- Kong Ngee Motion Pictures Production Company is founded by Union director Chun Kim on 1 August with the support of Ho Khee-yong, owner of Kong Ngee (Singapore).

1956

- In March, International Films merges with Yung Hwa to form a new company, Motion Pictures and General Investment Co. Ltd. (MP&GI). Loke Wan Tho recruits Robert Chung, who trained at Twentieth Century Fox in the US, as general manager, and Stephen Soong, a renowned writer and translator, as production manager.
- Wah Kiu Film Company is founded by Cheung Ying and Tse Yik-chi with the financial backing of Macau tycoon Ho Yin in August.

1957

- The Hong Kong and Kowloon Union of Free Workers in the Film Industry is renamed as the Hong Kong and Kowloon Cinema & Theatrical Enterprise Free General Association ("Free Association").
- Run Run Shaw establishes the Shaw Brothers (HK) Co. Ltd. and acquires land to build the 650,000-square-foot Shaw Movie Town in Clear Water Bay, Kowloon.

1958

- The Great Leap Forward, an ambitious five-year campaign to transform China's agrarian society into a modern industrial society, begins in Mainland China.

1959

- Lan Kwong Film Company is founded by Huang Cho-han with the financial support of Kong Ngee. Lan Kwong specializes in Cantonese film production. Its precursor is Liberty Film Company (1952–1958), a Mandarin film studio.

1962

- Sun Ngee is established by Chun Kim to strengthen the Cantonese production capacity of the Kong Ngee group. Chiu Ngee Motion Pictures, a member company specializing in Chiuchow (Chaozhou) dialect films, is also established.

1963

- Yuet Ngee, a Kong Ngee group studio, is established, specializing in martial arts films.
- Loke Wan Tho announces the establishment of Taiwan International Film Company as MP&GI's overseas branch to expand into Taiwan's film market.

1964

- MP&GI President Loke Wan Tho dies in a plane crash on 20 June after attending the Asian Film Festival in Taiwan. The accident also claims the lives of Loke's wife and accompanying MP&GI staff.
- MP&GI is reorganized into the Cathay Organisation (HK) Ltd. in July.

1966

- A solo hunger strike to protest against the Star Ferry fee increase escalates into large-scale protests and labor strikes in April.
- The Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) breaks out in Mainland China in May.

1967

- *Wenhui Bao* publishes an article from a Beijing magazine, *Red Flag*, by Yao Wenyuan (a member of the Gang of Four), in which a Hong Kong left-wing film, *Sorrows of The Forbidden City*, is severely criticized. Zhu Shilin, the film's director, is reported to have died of a stroke after hearing the news on 5 January.

- The Hong Kong government imposes a curfew after a labor strike at a plastic flower factory in San Po Kong triggers large scale riots in May.
- Two prominent left-wing stars, Shek Hwei and Fu Chi, are arrested for participating in the anti-British riots in July.
- In September, Great Wall's leading female star Hsia Moon leaves Hong Kong.
- Sun Luen's general manager, Liu Yat-yuen, is arrested. Liu was a member of the Executive Committee of the All-Circle Struggle Committee during the 1967 anti-British riots in November.
- Union Film Enterprise Ltd. closed down, three years after it ceased production in 1964.

1970

- Golden Harvest Group is founded by Raymond Chow, Leonard Ho Koon-cheung, and Leung Fung.
- In May, production and management personnel at Sun Luen, Feng Huang, and Great Wall are ordered back to Guangzhou to attend thought education sessions and to work in the factories. During this time, film production at the three studios is suspended. Sun Luen ceases production between 1970 and 1971.

1971

- Cathay's film production unit is closed down after the release of its last film, *From the Highway*, in February 1970. The company sells its studio to Golden Harvest while retaining its distribution and exhibition business.

1972

- US President Richard Nixon begins his seven-day visit to Mainland China on 21 February. The historical trip signals a normalization of diplomatic relations between the US and the PRC.

1980

- Cinema City and Films Co. Ltd. is founded by actors Raymond Wong, Karl Maka, and Dean Shek. Its precursor is Warrior Films (founded in 1979).

1982

- British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher visits Beijing in September.
- Feng Huang, Sun Luen, Great Wall, and Southern Film Corporation are consolidated into Sil-Metropole Organization Ltd. in November.

1984

- Hong Kong businessman Dickson Poon and kung fu star Sammo Hung found D&B Films.
- The Sino-British Joint Declaration is signed between Britain and China. This historical document stipulates the return of sovereignty of Hong Kong to the PRC on 1 July 1997.

1987

- *The Film Censorship Ordinance* (1987) introduces a three-tier classification system by age categories: Suitable for All Ages; Not Suitable for Children; Persons Aged 18 or above only. In 1995, Category II is further divided into II(a): Not Suitable for Children and II(b): Not Suitable for Young Persons and Children.

1996

- The Hong Kong and Kowloon Cinema & Theatrical Enterprise Free General Association is renamed the Hong Kong Cinema & Theatrical Enterprise Association Ltd. It is subsequently renamed the Hong Kong & Macao Cinema & Theatrical Enterprise Association Ltd. in 1999.

1997

- Hong Kong officially reverts to Chinese sovereignty on 1 July, ending 156 years of British rule.

For J. Lee

Introduction

As a contribution to the Global Studios series, this book is the first book-length study in English dedicated to Hong Kong's left-wing film studios as a network of individual and corporate agents serving a common ideological course under the auspice of the Communist Party (CCP). Critical discourse on the Hong Kong left-wing cinema has emphasized the progressive filmmakers as primarily an ethical force caught in a left-right divide and an advocate of social and cultural reform through the cinematic medium. While this ethical-reformist bent of the cinematic left is central to the aesthetic vision and public image of the progressive film community, the analysis presented in this study pays attention to the institutional and corporate character of the left-wing film apparatus and their strategic self-positioning in the mainstream film industry during the 1950s and 1960s. This understanding of the left-wing's praxis will have a bearing on production and exhibition strategies of film studios, as well as the continuation of the left-wing film network in the post-Cold War, post-Cultural Revolution era. Considering the change in industrial status and sociopolitical prominence of the reconstituted left-wing film network since Hong Kong's return to Chinese rule in 1997, the temporal stretch to the post-handover period is deemed necessary for an overall evaluation of the historical trajectory of the left-wing film establishment in Hong Kong, in particular in relation to China's cultural policy toward Hong Kong since the mid-twentieth century. In addition to elucidating the historical trajectories and representative figures and films of the major studios, the inquiry into the cinematic left in Hong Kong in this study is informed by the following questions:

- How did the left-wing studios and filmmakers position themselves and their productions in colonial Hong Kong vis-à-vis their right-wing counterparts and other commercial studios at the time?

- Apart from studio labels, what qualities would identify a film as “left-wing” that would differentiate it from non-left-wing (or “right-wing”) films?
- Is there a consistent intellectual-political orientation in left-wing studio productions? If so, how did the studio management and production crew negotiate perceived conflicts between art, ideology, and entertainment?
- To what extent has the left-wing studios completed their historical mission since the consolidation and restructuring of the four major studios into a more commercially driven enterprise, Sil Metropole (Hong Kong), in the early 1980s?
- What is the historical significance of the left-wing cinema before the 1980s, and how does it contribute to our understanding of Hong Kong’s film culture past and present, and more broadly the relationship between film and society in Hong Kong?
- Does the cinematic left have an “afterlife” in Hong Kong cinema since its decline in the late 1960s, and where can we find its traces today?

Since its inception more than a century ago, Hong Kong cinema has been a preeminent form of local entertainment and a site of ideological contentions propelled by colonial, national, and international politics at different historical junctures until today. Whether seen as “quasi-national,” diasporic, or *bentū* (local),¹ Hong Kong cinema in the last century was never far from the epicenter of major political earthquakes that had shaken the foundations of national and international orders. Operating a film studio in a colonial city that was virtually defenseless against the regional economic and political torrents sweeping up its shores, therefore, was no small feat. Oftentimes, artistic vision and idealism had to be guided by shrewd entrepreneurship and astute political sensibility to steer an uncharted course in a small capitalist colonial enclave where trade and commerce were its founding principles.² Covering a time span of six decades since the end of World War II, this book traces the historical development of the left-wing film establishment in Hong Kong, which came into being between 1949 and 1952, developed in full swing for about fifteen years, and then went into decline by the end of the 1960s. In the early 1980s, the “classical” left-wing studios were refashioned into a state-owned film and media enterprise that would play a pivotal role in the integration of the Hong Kong and Mainland film industries.

The inquiry begins with the interplay between the macropolitics of the Cold War and the micropolitics of a regionalized/localized ideological warfare between the Nationalist Party (KMT) in Taiwan, the CCP in Mainland China, the British colonial government in Hong Kong, and US intelligence and propaganda agencies. This historical context lends itself to a critical mapping of the general contours of the “cultural Cold War” between the KMT and the CCP as it materialized in the so-called “left–right divide” in the filmmaking world. Indeed, the local film industry was as much a product of the colonial administration’s *laissez-faire* policy as a site of ideological and political contest. While the major studios are the main axis of analysis, the historical trajectory and later transformation of the left-wing cinema in Hong Kong cannot be fully understood without tracing the footprints of their subunits and other cultural agents (who may or may not be a member of the organized “left”), the totality of which made up the left-wing film apparatus, or the left-wing film network, in Hong Kong. This understanding of the cinematic left sheds light not only on the left-wing’s engagement with the art and politics of filmmaking, but also on their institutional character and corporate strategies to claim a place in the commercial mainstream. This understanding of the left-wing film network, in turn, illuminates their nuanced legacy in Hong Kong cinema today.

Equally deserving readers’ attention, especially those who are better versed in the Western left-wing traditions, are the political forces that conditioned the development of Hong Kong’s “left-wing,” which was essentially a product of the political rivalry between the KMT and the CCP, whose strategy of “making full use of Hong Kong in the interest of long-term planning”³ had remained a guiding principle for the party’s activities in the British colony throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. In Hong Kong, the “left” is a political entity commonly known as *zuo pai* (lit. the “leftist camp”), which in the Cold War era implicated its opponent, the “right-wing” or *you pai* (lit. the “rightist camp”). As such, the left-wing consisted of a multilayered and sophisticated network of social and cultural organizations, businesses, and schools that formed the CCP’s “united front” in Hong Kong.⁴ To avoid being politically explicit, the cinematic left identified themselves as “progressive filmmakers” (hence “progressive films”) to distinguish their work from commercially oriented and right-wing (pro-Taiwan) films. Instead of being a self-constituted intellectual-cum-workers movement with an anti-establishment bent, the left-wing was an extension of the influence of

the CCP in Hong Kong characterized by a patriotic and anti-imperialist outlook. The left-wing cultural front consisted of schools, newspapers, publishing companies, and film studios directly or indirectly sponsored by the Chinese government. As Ching Cheong has cogently argued, the political left in Hong Kong consisted of (and still does) individuals and groups from all levels of society. It is “a unique community distinguished by their support of the Chinese Communist Party and the People’s Republic of China.”⁵ As such, the terms “leftist” and “left-wing” as they have been understood in the West cannot be assumed to be equally valid in the context of pre- and post-World War II Hong Kong. In this book, the term “left-wing” is used to refer to filmmakers, studios, and related organizations directly or indirectly under the supervision of the CCP, as well as left-leaning individuals affiliated with the “official” left-wing establishment.

The film industry in postwar Hong Kong

From the 1930s to the outbreak of World War II, Hong Kong became the center of Cantonese film production with a growing demand in southern China and the Chinese diaspora. Following a hiatus during the Japanese occupation (1941–1945), the reshuffling of the global political and economic order in the second half of the twentieth century increased the leverage of the Hong Kong film industry to develop into a Cantonese film production metropolis in the world. While Hong Kong was gestating toward a regional Cantonese film culture with a transnational distribution network, Mandarin film studios continued to maintain a healthy supply of Mandarin films to the local and overseas Chinese audience throughout the 1940s. Successive waves of immigration from Mainland China in the first-half of the twentieth century had encouraged the development of Mandarin and Cantonese films as two distinctive and transnationally popular Chinese-language cinemas, while other dialect films were also produced on a smaller scale.⁶ The parallel hegemonies of Mandarin and Cantonese cinemas were also visible in the major left-wing studios, which roughly observed the division of labor in their respective language specialization with occasional crossovers. At the same time, the local film scene was also animated by the blossoming of acting and filmmaking talents. Studio-owned magazines, too, became a popular pastime among local as well as overseas Chinese audiences.⁷

Hong Kong cinema transformed itself from a complementary production base for the film industry in Shanghai into what Chu Yingchi calls a “quasi-national” cinema with its own distinctive artistic and production practices.⁸ This incubation period saw the introduction of sound film in the 1930s and the consolidation of the political boundary between British Hong Kong and Communist China shortly after 1949. These two events would have a lasting impact on the local film industry in the latter half of the century. The first Cantonese talkies have been dated back to around 1933. Among the contenders for the “first Cantonese talkie” title are *White Gold Dragan / Bai jin long* (1933), *Blossom Time / Genü qingchao* (1933), and *The Idiot’s Wedding Night / Shazai dongfang* (1933).⁹ *Blossom Time* was the debut film of Grandview, a major Cantonese film studio with bases in the US and Hong Kong. Produced by Tianyi (Unique) in Shanghai, the success of *White Gold Dragan* prompted Shanghai-based studios to set up filming facilities in Hong Kong to expand Cantonese sound film production. However, the first Cantonese talkie made in Hong Kong was *The Idiot’s Wedding Night / Shazai dongfang* (1933). Since then, Cantonese-language films continued to grow in popularity in southern China and the Chinese diasporas across Southeast Asia and North America.¹⁰ While sound films usually had a greater appeal to the local audience and therefore made good business sense, linguistic affiliation would also strengthen regional distinction, a noncommercial by-product with more far-reaching repercussions in national identity politics. This “language issue” gradually snowballed into keener market competition between Mandarin- and Cantonese-language films (the biggest dialect cinema in the Chinese-speaking world), and no less a political concern of the Nationalist government at a time when a single national language (*guoyu*) was deemed essential to unify a country besieged by external and internal threats. Under the banner of the “New Life Campaign,” the Chiang Kai-shek regime was especially hostile to Cantonese films and a ban was proposed in 1937. The KMT authorities softened its stance after a collective lobbying by filmmakers, who stressed the propagandistic value of local dialect films.¹¹

The politics of filmmaking in Hong Kong was indexical to the larger picture of a new global order emerging in the wake of World War II and successive waves of decolonization and nation-building in former European colonies. At a historical juncture where international axes of power were defined by Cold War politics, Hong Kong’s status as a British colonial city at the southern border of the People’s Republic of

China (PRC) with a predominantly Chinese-speaking population was a political and cultural pedigree that would cast a long shadow over its successive governments and no less the people who came to be known as “Hongkongers.” Before the PRC closed its doors to the world on the eve of the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), cross-border commute between Hong Kong and Mainland China had been frequent and relatively hindrance-free.¹² This explains why the local film industry had been maintaining a close relationship with film studios and personnel in the Mainland, whether cooperating or competing in film ventures. The career of Lai Man-wai, remembered as the “father of Chinese cinema,” reflects this two-way traffic between Hong Kong and Shanghai as well as the transnational character of Hong Kong cinema. Lai’s filmmaking ventures straddled Shanghai and Hong Kong. He set up his first studio, Minxin, in Hong Kong in 1923, followed by a Shanghai branch in 1926, when film production in Hong Kong was interrupted by a prolonged labor strike.¹³ Among his business partners were influential tycoons among the Chinese elite in the British colony. One of Lai’s cross-cultural ventures was his collaboration with Brodsky in 1913 in the production of a feature film, *Zhuangzi shiqi* (Zhuangzi Tests His Wife), which was released in Los Angeles in 1917.

Political events such as the US trade embargo and the imposition of political and trade barriers between Hong Kong and Mainland China significantly altered the landscape of film production in Hong Kong. Prior to the founding of the new socialist regime in 1949, the political struggle between the Nationalist and Communist camps and the civil war that ensued after 1945 had already driven thousands of refugees to Hong Kong. Apart from a chronic housing crisis and the shortage of social infrastructure to cater to the postwar population boom, the economic and cultural capital that came with these “south-bound” migrants also made possible a speedy economic rehabilitation, when both Taiwan and Mainland China were engrossed in internal chaos and a bitter ideological struggle as both claimed to be the legitimate government of China. Comparatively, Hong Kong was able to maintain a greater degree of political stability. As a *laissez-faire* economic zone located at an intersection of the socialist and capitalist blocs, the colonial city was also an ideal gateway for espionage and other covert forms of political infiltration. Leveraging their bargaining power with the British colonial administration, the KMT, CCP, and

US intelligence and propaganda units channeled financial and human resources into local cultural and social organizations to pursue their political interests. It was under these circumstances that Cold War politics penetrated the cultural scene and social life of the Hong Kong society, where the “left–right” politics in Hong Kong cinema began to take shape.

The origins of the left-wing film establishment in Hong Kong can be traced back to the left-wing film movement in Mainland China in the 1930s.¹⁴ In the late 1940s, a number of left-wing filmmakers supported by the Communist Party came to Hong Kong to start film production in the territory. Driven by intellectual idealism, social mission, and ideological conviction, these filmmakers displayed a close affinity with the south-bound intellectuals from Mainland China, an émigré community that had maintained a strong emotional connection to their home country.¹⁵ They had to reinvent themselves as a “progressive” cultural force with a reformist agenda while competing with the more established commercial counterparts who had close business ties with Nationalist Taiwan. Their effort to reform Cantonese cinema (considered to be corrupt and decadent) resulted in the Third Cantonese Cinema Clean-up Campaign in 1949,¹⁶ the same year that saw the founding of the People’s Republic. The 1950s was a decade of exploration and consolidation of progressive filmmaking in Hong Kong, with the establishment of four major left-wing studios and the formation of a left-wing film network that encompassed production, distribution, and exhibition facilities. Compared to the “revolutionary films” in Mainland China, the left-wing cinema in Hong Kong continued in more diverse and localized forms. Acting on the party’s instruction to stay close to the taste and interest of the local people, filmmakers steered away from explicit political messages and propaganda, producing works that would meet the dual objectives of moral education and entertainment.

This left–right divide did not preclude indirect forms of collaboration across the rivalling camps in the film industry. In some cases, it was politically imposed on filmmakers and stars who were obliged to either take sides or jeopardize their careers. The historical footprints of the left-wing studios therefore frequently crossed paths with their right-wing counterparts as a result of the entwined political, cultural, and economic forces in Hong Kong. Against this complex historical backdrop, the political and cinematic identity of the “left-wing” was created, negotiated, defined, and redefined.

The left-wing studios

As a precursor to the subsequent chapters, where readers will see more detailed discussion on studio history, style, and production and exhibition strategies, it would be helpful to highlight a few features of the respective studios in the context of the cultural and filmmaking environment in the 1950s and 1960s, a period that marked the blossoming and decline of the “classical” left-wing cinema in Hong Kong. The focus here is on the film industry and filmgoing culture in Hong Kong in the 1950s, the founding principles of the left-wing studios, their self-positioning in the Hong Kong film market, and major turning points in the fortunes of left-wing films that would make their eventual decline and consolidation inevitable. To better serve the purpose of this introduction and the rest of this book, the discussion below consists of historical snapshots serving as indexes to the following chapters, where the respective themes and arguments are further elaborated.

The relocation of the film industries from Shanghai to Hong Kong since World War II had fostered an émigré cinema that distinguished the studio productions in the 1950s and 1960s, when Hong Kong-made films became popular cultural products across many parts of Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, the local population made up of both recent migrants from Mainland China (mostly Mandarin-speaking) and fellow Cantonese-speaking residents who may or may not be “natives” but had longer and deeper roots in the territory. The Mandarin-Cantonese split was further complicated by the presence of other dialect groups of Fujian, Chaozhou, and Hakka origins, to name a few. As far as the local cinema was concerned, Mandarin and Cantonese films were predominant as they accounted for the largest market shares. Political stability, reliance on overseas markets, and a complex and versatile demographic makeup contributed to the special character of Hong Kong cinema in the mid-twentieth century. The impression, and to some extent reality, of being a “rootless” society, ironically, became a fertile field for different forms of ideological interventions and cultural self-inventions.

When the Communist Party set up its filmmaking apparatus in Hong Kong, the agenda was to establish a stronghold for socialist film production and distribution outside Mainland China. Meanwhile, a cluster of “southbound” intellectuals, many of whom were nurtured by the progressive thoughts of the 1920s and 1930s, found themselves embittered by the capitalist system under British rule, where they saw

ordinary folks suffering from glaring social inequality, class exploitation, and aggravating social problems. It was also a time when labor movements began to take on more organized forms, sometimes escalating into large-scale strikes and conflicts.¹⁷ A mixture of political idealism and patriotism prompted these filmmakers and writers to launch a concerted effort in reforming the “decadent” and unhealthy film culture of Hong Kong, their city of exile.

Besieged by intensifying political tensions arising from the US anti-Communist campaign in the region and local skirmishes sponsored by the KMT and the CCP, the British administration in Hong Kong had been hard-pressed to maintain its political neutrality while keeping a wary eye on the versatile situation in Mainland China. The localized Cold War in Hong Kong had an immediate and material impact on the colonial government’s cultural policy. The most obvious effect on the film industry was the segmentation of film studios according to their professed ideological allegiance. Indeed, the left, right, and middle positioning resulted from both personal convictions and more pragmatic concerns. Research on film censorship has shown how the colonial administration had exercised tacit political monitoring of the circulation of both local and foreign films with unwelcome political overtones that might affect its relationship with neighboring countries.¹⁸ This politicized film production environment had an instrumental role to play in filmmaking, industry structure, market differentiation, and competition between film studios.

Union and Sun Luen were the two major left-wing studios specializing in Cantonese films. Both studios were distinguished by their unambiguous progressive outlooks and mission statements, which the founders and production teams put into practice in earnest. Sun Luen and Union’s productions can be defined by their creative adaptation of the aesthetic taste and preferences of the so-called south-bound artists to appeal to the local audience and to make their films contextually relevant. Committed to a cinema of high social and artistic value, Union and Sun Luen became the labels of many Cantonese film classics that contributed to the distinctive “look” of Cantonese cinema of the time. Equally noteworthy was the doubling up of on- and offscreen roles of leading actors and actresses at Union (and Sun Luen in the first few years): film stars and directors were co-founders of the studios who also played executive and decision-making roles in the studios’ management. Such a “democratic” culture was unusual in commercial operations but worked

to the advantage of both the stars and the left-wing studios in navigating an alternative course in an otherwise intensely competitive film market. The serious social drama films aside, Union and Sun Luen also produced lighter entertainment films to capture a wider spectrum of audience. This popular turn bespeaks the dilemma and complexity of “being left-wing” in an unfavorable social and political environment. One can say that the genre films reflected the reality and nature of the cinematic left in Hong Kong, and more importantly a humanistic vision that mediated the filmmakers’ ideological prerogatives.

Great Wall and Feng Huang (also known as Phoenix) were the left-wing’s Mandarin studios. Great Wall’s precursor was Great Wall Pictures Corporation (also known as the Old Great Wall). First established in 1949 by Zhang Shankun, a veteran film producer from Shanghai, the company ran into a financial crisis in 1950 that led to Zhang’s departure. Great Wall was soon restructured (later known as the “new Great Wall”) under its top executive, Yuan Yang’an, in 1950 (see timeline). The predominance of progressive filmmakers who remained at Great Wall led to a strategic repositioning of Great Wall, which started production of progressive films with a view to fostering a “healthy film culture” and social atmosphere.¹⁹ Great Wall’s new management, however, was not immune to market demands. Within the first year of its operation, the company managed to roll out a number of commercially successful costume and historical dramas. High production values and star power firmly established Great Wall as a leading left-wing studio in Hong Kong in the 1950s. Founded in 1952, Feng Huang was supported by the new government in China. Like Union and Sun Luen, Great Wall and Feng Huang had a synergetic relationship in staff deployment and resource sharing. This aspect of the left-wing’s business model is further explored in Chapter 2. The four left-wing studios also worked with their Mainland counterparts in (co-)producing feature and documentary films that took advantage of the exotic scenery in China that was not available in Hong Kong. Sun Luen was among the most proactive forerunners in film co-production. A memorable example is *House of 72 Tenants* (1963; dir. Wong Wai-yat), a co-production with the Pearl River Studio.²⁰ Applauded as a ground-breaking film at the time, *House of 72 Tenants* was later remade by Chor Yuen in a TVB-Shaw production in 1973. Other more recent imitations and adaptations of the film include Stephen Chow’s *Kung Fu Hustle* (2004) and *72 Tenants of Prosperity* (Eric Tsang, Chung Shu-kai, and Patrick Kong, 2010).

As Hong Kong fell victim to the whirlwind of ultra-leftist politics in Mainland China, (which materialized in the 1967 Hong Kong Riots),²¹ left-wing film production began to take a downturn. Shocked and confused by the capricious course of events sweeping through the country, left-wing filmmakers found their work being condemned as “poisonous weed.” At the peak of the Cultural Revolution, party representatives in charge of resource allocation and political guidance in Hong Kong then demanded the studios to strictly follow the latest political prerogatives. The result was an about-turn toward formulaic propagandistic films divorced from local reality. At the same time, left-wing studios were facing tough competitions from their commercial rivals, Shaw and MP&GI, who continued to roll out star-studded blockbusters sold through their local and regional distribution networks. Feng Huang, Great Wall, and Sun Luen thus were hard-pressed for solutions to stay in business, while Union had already folded by 1967 due to the retirement or departure of acting talents. From the mid-1960s and throughout the 1970s, the left-wing studios in Hong Kong struggled to survive the damage done during the Cultural Revolution. In 1983, the “big three” decided to experiment with joint production. Their first joint venture was *Shaolin Temple*, which was also the debut film that started the career of Jet Li as the new generation kung fu superstar after Bruce Lee. *Shaolin Temple* thus paved the way for the consolidation of Feng Huang, Great Wall, and Sun Luen into what came to be known as Sil-Metropole (Hong Kong). The establishment of Sil-Metropole can be seen as a landmark in the history of left-wing studios in Hong Kong, and ironically also a signal of further marketization and commercialization of left-wing studio productions in Hong Kong. Sil-Metropole offers an insightful case study of the historical transformation of left-wing film studios in Hong Kong. More importantly, its arrival and evolution coincided with China’s Reform and Opening Up era, which kicked in a new phase of globalization of Chinese cinema with deep repercussions in the film industries and film cultures of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Mainland China in the following decades. The decline of left-wing studios during the Cultural Revolution and their subsequent consolidation into a more market-oriented conglomerate can be seen as the end of the golden age of the “classical” left-wing cinema in Hong Kong. This said, the ethos of the left-wing was taken up, albeit in nuanced articulations, by directors committed to the social realist aesthetic. The legacy of the left-wing cinema can be observed in less politically driven productions in the post-Cultural Revolution era, when China began

in earnest a new phase of economic modernization laid out in Deng Xiaoping's Reform and Opening Up policy. In Hong Kong, the film industry was going through a structural transition, with the reorientation of Shaw from film production to television broadcasting and the phasing out of the major studios. The continuation of a socially engaged cinema within a commercial mainstream dominated by popular genre films would prove to be vital to the nurturing of the new auteurs associated with the Hong Kong New Wave.

A recurrent question raised in this study is the multifaceted meaning of "being on the left" in Hong Kong at different historical moments. As Christine Loh (2018) has argued for a reevaluation of the left from being an "underground front" in the colonial era to a new hegemonic force that ironically has to keep the ruling party "underground" in the postcolonial present,²² the historical trajectory of the left-wing film network in Hong Kong speaks volumes about the under-articulated dilemmas and anxieties of being left, right, and middle in Hong Kong, which has remained an existential condition of the ex-colony at large. It is hoped that this book will contribute toward shortening the perceptual distance between the heyday of the left-wing studios and contemporary realities of the Hong Kong film industry, for reasons partially laid out above and further examined in the rest of this book.

Critical discourse on the left-wing cinema: points of departures

Over the years, vast amounts of historical sources have been discovered and archived by researchers inside and outside Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Film Archive (HKFA) has published filmmakers' memoirs and collections of essays of various lengths and depths showcasing important figures, studios, trends, and events of the earlier decades of the local film industry. In addition to two volumes on the Shaw Brothers and MP&GI, edited volumes on the left-wing studios and filmmakers' memoirs and interviews have been published, including *One for All: The Union Film Spirit* (2011), *Artistic Mission: An Exploration of Sun Luen Film Company* (2011), *Cold War and Hong Kong Cinema* (2009), and *Age of Idealism: Great Wall and Feng Huang Days*.²³ The collection, consolidation, and organization of primary and secondary sources that are otherwise scattered, damaged, or lost in time is indispensable to further research on the left-wing cinema

since the early 1950s. To a certain extent, these publications have shaped the direction of critical discourse on the left-wing cinema in Hong Kong. Emerging from this body of literature is a general impression that the left-wing cinema was a patriotic and progressive cultural force struggling under an unfriendly and politically biased colonial regime known to be an ally of the US. A favorite metaphor of the left-wing's "in-betweenness" is the word "*jiafeng*," literally meaning a crack, fissure, or rupture.²⁴ In this discourse, the left-wing inhabited this ruptured space and found itself caught in the political schism created by the rivalry between the KMT and the CCP. Another common expression frequently invoked is "All for One, One for All," a quote from a left-wing film in the 1950s that has been popularized by commentators to represent the left-wing's ethos. This phrase not only underscores the "spirit" of left-wing films, but has also found its way into later interpretations on the historical and social significance of the left-wing cinema.²⁵ In this discourse, the left-wing is also characterized as a "new cultural elite" dedicated to the course of social and cultural reform.²⁶ A common thread that runs through these accounts is the political backdrop of the localized Cold War in Hong Kong and the unfavorable cultural environment under British colonial rule. Evidence of systemic bias against the progressive film circle ranges from censorship, surveillance, market access control to arrests and prosecutions. Against this background, the left-wing film community emerges as an ethical force on a mission of artistic and cultural reform. Patriotic and anti-imperialist in outlook, the left-wing film community was committed to raising the artistic and moral benchmarks of Hong Kong cinema.

A more complex picture than a one-sided bias against pro-CCP groups is revealed in historical research on Hong Kong during the Cold War period. The British colonial administration's balancing acts of political censorship and monitoring did not spare KMT saboteurs, and colonial governors were not necessarily acquiescing toward the US intelligence when internal security was at stake.²⁷ Not to be neglected in this truncated relationship was the institutional nature of the left-wing film establishment: as a constituent of the PRC's "cultural brigade" (*wenhua jundui*) in Hong Kong,²⁸ it was the outcome of long-term strategic planning of the state whose ultimate purpose was political in nature.

While the left-wing studios' institutional nature has been widely acknowledged, the deeper implications of its political origins are usually relegated to the back seat in an ethical-idealist critique. Not that this portrayal is incorrect, but the complexity and ambivalence of the

cinematic left's status as the CCP's film production apparatus in Hong Kong, hence a member of the state's cultural brigade among other party-affiliated agencies stationed in the British colony, is sometimes obscured in a narrative informed by the idealist, aspirational, and patriotic qualities of the left-wing cinema. While one should not overlook the marginalization of non-US/KMT friendly individuals and organizations in colonial Hong Kong, there is evidence that the colonial administration was equally troubled by the KMT's sabotage activities and the US's overexertion of its political influence through its intelligence and propaganda networks in the region (cf. Chapter 1). Studies on film censorship, surveillance, and the US's intelligence activities have shown how the British colonial government had tried to keep conflicting parties on a delicate balance instead of adhering to a rigid anti-Communist Cold War mentality.²⁹ According to a recent study on film censorship in Hong Kong from the 1940s to the 1970s, censorship on films from the Mainland were actually more relaxed than those from Taiwan by rate of pass in the 1950s, and a gradual relaxation was observed from the mid-1960s onward.³⁰ What Priscilla Roberts calls "the acrobatics of multiple balancing"³¹ that characterizes the colonial administration's approach to the localized Cold War in Hong Kong should be a more accurate description of the complex realities faced by both the government and the Hong Kong society at large. What's more, such balancing was not exclusively the duty call of the colonial government but was also an indispensable survival skill by which individuals and organizations, left or right, navigate the stormy waters of Cold War politics in postwar Hong Kong. It is also in this critical light that the historical trajectory of the left-wing film network is reconsidered in the following chapters.

Chapter synopsis

The main historical timeframe of the book corresponds to the Cold War era, which also coincided with the early history of the People's Republic of China (PRC) since its founding in 1949. Chapter 1 offers an overview of the political and filmmaking landscape of post-World War II Hong Kong. Specific emphasis is placed on the local manifestations of Cold War politics against which the left-wing film apparatus was constituted as a member of the CCP's cultural brigade in the British colony. To the left-wing filmmakers, being "popular" served both ideological and

commercial ends. Their films therefore had to be popular cultural products in the first place before they could be an effective means of ideological persuasion. In this light, the corporate strategies in the “making of” a popular left-wing cinema in Hong Kong deserves closer attention. Chapter 2 introduces the four major left-wing studios, namely Great Wall, Feng Huang, Sun Luen, and Union, to shed light on the production and exhibition strategies that enabled the left-wing film establishment to compete with their much better resourced right-wing counterparts in the local and overseas markets. Very often, the line between the “left” and the “right” was more fluid than fixed, as both camps were struggling for survival in a highly politicized market environment where political credentials may not make good business sense at all times. What, then, did it mean to be “on the left” under the peculiar circumstances of Hong Kong’s localized Cold War? This question informs the inquiry into the ecology of film production and exhibition in Chapter 2. The next two chapters zoom in on the aesthetics and politics of left-wing films. As far as left-wing Cantonese films are concerned, critical discourse has tended to focus on a number of well-known classics, while relatively less attention has been paid to the left-wing’s engagement with popular genres to balance their aesthetic, ideological, and commercial objectives in the making of “spiritually and morally uplifting films” that appeal to the tastes and interests of the local audience. In this light, Chapter 3 examines a cluster of genre films in greater depth to shed light on the left-wing’s quest for popularity in the commercial mainstream. Gender politics takes the front seat in the discussion of the left-wing’s critical intervention in the cinematic imagination of modernity in Hong Kong cinema in Chapter 4. While images of the “fallen woman” and the “modern girl” have been the most important tropes in critical discourse on the literary and cinematic imagination of Chinese modernity since the 1930s, they have remained understudied subjects as far as the Hong Kong left-wing cinema is concerned. In this chapter, these figures of modern femininity in left-wing films are discussed in comparison with their right-wing counterparts to make a case for the left-wing’s reinvention of these gendered metaphors of capitalist modernity through a critical engagement with popular film genres.

While the havoc of the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution (henceforth Cultural Revolution) in Mainland China (1966–1976) was undeniably attributable to the left-wing studio’s decline,³² the left-wing cinema in Hong Kong is certainly not to be regarded as *passé*. The end

of the Cultural Revolution brought in a new era of economic reform and rapid modernization in Mainland China. Beginning from the 1980s, a corresponding adjustment in the state's cultural policy was noticeable in the gradual opening up of China's cultural market to foreign imports and investments. Aware of the structural damage done to its film production base in Hong Kong, the Chinese government moved quickly to revive the left-wing film establishment once public order was restored in China.³³ Chapter 5 looks at the corporate history of the left-wing establishment since the early 1980s, when China began a new and ambitious modernization project under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. This period also witnessed the transformation of Hong Kong's left-wing film apparatus into a modern film and media conglomerate, Sil-Metropole (Hong Kong). While the left-wing studios were thrown into an operational disarray during the peak of the Cultural Revolution, the local film industry was also going through a critical transition that prefigured the arrival of the so-called "golden age" in Hong Kong cinema in the 1980s. As a state-owned film and media enterprise in Hong Kong, Sil-Metropole's corporate repositioning in the local and regional film markets before and after the change of sovereignty in 1997 would transform it into a major cultural broker between the Hong Kong and Mainland film industries.

The "afterlife" of the left-wing cinema outside its institutional bounds can be traced in the work of non-left-wing filmmakers. Chapter 6 considers the work of two non-left-wing directors, Patrick Lung Kong and Cecile Tang Shu-shuen, whose diverging intellectual and aesthetic temperaments make a case for the nuanced, and sometimes controversial, legacies of the conventional left-wing, which has so far remained an understudied subject. As critical transitions, Long and Tang's careers expose the still haphazard film production and reception environment in the late 1960s and 1970s, when Hong Kong society was finding its way out of the political conundrums of the previous decades. As argued throughout this book, the left-wing film apparatus in Hong Kong can better be understood as a network of a diversity of cultural agents, from acting and production personnel to studio managers, theater operators, and their financial partners. The final chapter (Chapter 7), therefore, is devoted to lesser known members, that is, the satellite studios, of the left-wing film network and how these smaller units served the interest of the reconfigured left-wing film production and China's investment in national soft power in the age of media globalization. Surviving in an intensely politicized environment prompted both film studios and

filmmakers to adopt a dynamic and flexible approach to survive in a capricious political climate. What has emerged from this scenario is the active cultivation of a “middle ground” by different parties as a temporary relief from the straitjacket of left–right politics.

Notes

1. See Chu, *Hong Kong Cinema: Coloniser, Motherland, and Self*, xviii–xxi.
2. Instead of enlightenment and evangelism, such as in the case of the older colonies, Wang argues that when the British came to Hong Kong, trade and commerce had become the exclusive objective. Wang, *Anglo-Chinese Encounters since 1800*.
3. Mao Zedong’s dictum had guided the Chinese government’s policy toward Hong Kong, which was briefly interrupted by the radical forces during the 1967 anti-British riots. See Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 153; and Loh, *Underground Front: The Chinese Communist Party in Hong Kong*, 125.
4. For an in-depth analysis of the CCP’s “underground front” in Hong Kong, see Loh, *Underground Front: The Chinese Communist Party in Hong Kong*.
5. Ching, *The Origins of the Hong Kong Riots*, 9.
6. Xiamen (Amoy) and Chaozhou dialect films were also produced on a small scale. See Ng, *Chaozhou-dialect Films in Hong Kong Cinema*; and Ng, *Amoy-dialect Films in Hong Kong Cinema*.
7. Studio-owned magazines were distributed internationally with regular updates on screen icons, new projects, and publicity events. The most popular of these publications are the *Great Wall Pictorial* (Great Wall), *Union Pictorial* (Union), *International Screen* (MP & GI), *Southern Screen* (Shaw), and *Hong Kong Movie News* (Shaw).
8. Chu, *Hong Kong Cinema: Coloniser, Motherland, and Self*, xi–xxi.
9. Although *White Gold Dragon* is the mostly cited “first Cantonese talkie,” evidence from other sources suggests that both *Blossom Time* and *The Idiot’s Wedding* were produced/released in the same year. *The Idiot’s Wedding* is also considered to be the first Cantonese talkie made in Hong Kong. See Chung, *100 Years of the Hong Kong Film Industry*, 80–91.
10. Fu, *Between Shanghai and Hong Kong*, 56; Law and Bren, *Hong Kong Cinema: A Cross-cultural View*, 120.
11. The South China Film Association sent a delegation to Nanjing to petition against the ban. Delegates included Lee Fa, Chiu Shu-sun, Chuk Ching-yin, Ko Lei-hen, and Chan Kwan-chiu. The central government agreed to a three-year deferral of the ban. Cf. timeline.
12. As a free port, the British colonial administration had encouraged migration of labor from former British colonies such as India and Pakistan while maintaining an elite British profile at top-level policy- and decision-making roles.
13. Lai negotiated a deal with Brodsky in 1913 to create special effects for the film. See Zhang, *Chinese National Cinema*, 31.

14. On the left-wing film movement in Mainland China in the 1930s, see Pang, *Building a New China in Cinema*.
15. The term “south-bound” itself implied both migration and the geopolitics of a notional north-south divide, where the “north” designates the so-called “Central Plain” or “China proper,” a privileged term in relation to the less civilized “south,” the peripheral southern region that is historically and metaphorically inferior to the north. Emotionally attached to the home country, their work very often expresses a sense of displacement and homesickness, which usually was accented by a self-perceived marginality living in a British colony cut off from the Chinese cultural tradition.
16. The third of its kind since the late 1930s, the 1949 campaign was initiated by progressive filmmakers who later founded the left-wing’s Cantonese film studios, Union and Sun Luen. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 1.
17. The intensification of workers’ discontent prompted leftist labor unions to mount large-scale protests that culminated in the 1967 anti-British riots. The connection between the Hong Kong riots and the Cultural Revolution is explained in Ching, *The Origins of the Hong Kong Riots*, and Cheung, *Hong Kong’s Watershed the 1967 Riots*. Cf. Chapters 1 and 2.
18. Ng, “Inhibition vs. Exhibition: Political Censorship”; Yip, “Closely Watched Films: Surveillance and Postwar Hong Kong Leftist Cinema”; Du, “Censorship, Regulations, and the Cinematic Cold War in Hong Kong,” 117–151.
19. Making educational and morally uplifting films was repeatedly emphasized in party officials’ advice to left-wing filmmakers in Hong Kong. See Ho, *Artistic Mission: An Exploration of Sun Luen Film Company*, 24–25; and Lo, “Reflections on the Left-wing Cinema,” 86.
20. The Hong Kong production company was Hungtu (1959–1965), a subunit of Sun Luen specializing in Chaozhou dialect films. Of the twelve films credited to Hungtu, four were co-produced with the Pearl River Studio.
21. A spinoff of the Cultural Revolution, the 1967 anti-British riots lasted for eight months and resulted in numerous deaths and hundreds of injuries. Different interpretations of the origins of the disturbance and course of events have been offered by various political camps and researchers. See Ching, *The Origins of the Hong Kong Riots*; and Cheung, *Hong Kong’s Watershed the 1967 Riots*. Cf. Chapter 2.
22. Loh, *Underground Front: The Chinese Communist Party in Hong Kong*.
23. The HKFA’s publications are mostly in Chinese. Some titles are available in English translation. A full catalogue is available at [https:// www.filmarchive.gov.hk/en_US/web/hkfa/publications_souvenirs/pub.html](https://www.filmarchive.gov.hk/en-US/web/hkfa/publications_souvenirs/pub.html) (last accessed 18 May 2018).
24. *Jiafeng* is frequently used to characterize the existential condition of the left-wing cinema. See Zhang, *Studies on Hong Kong Leftist Films*; Lee, “The Best of Both Worlds: Hong Kong Film Industry during the Cold War Era,” 90; and Chung, “A Film Industry In-between Two Political Powers,” 175–177.
25. This ethical approach pervades several volumes of the HKFA’s publications, including the titles cited in this chapter.
26. See, for example, Chang, *Screening Communities: Negotiating Narratives of Empire, Nation, and the Cold War in Hong Kong Cinema*, 75–101; and Zhou, “Hong Kong’s Leftist Cinema during the Cold War Era,” 21–34.

27. Lombardo, "A Mission of Espionage, Intelligence and Psychological Operations," 64–81; Tsang, "Strategy for Survival: The Cold War and Hong Kong's Policy," 294–317. See Chapter 1 on the colonial government's handling of the left–right rivalry.
28. Ho, *Artistic Mission: An Exploration of Sun Luen Film Company*, 23.
29. Leary, "The Most Careful Arrangements for a Careful Fiction," 548; Lombardo, "A Mission of Espionage, Intelligence and Psychological Operations," 64–81; Ng, "Inhibition vs. Exhibition: Political Censorship of Chinese and Foreign Cinemas in Postwar Hong Kong," 23–35; Yip, "Closely Watched Films: Surveillance and Postwar Hong Kong Leftist Cinema," 35–59; and Tsang, "Target Zhou Enlai: The 'Kashmir Princess' Incident of 1955," 766–782.
30. Du, "Censorship, Regulations, and the Cinematic Cold War in Hong Kong," 126–130. According to Du, "There was not necessarily more room granted to anti-Communist USIS films for exploitation than to Communist films of the Mainland during this period, if the films were of an overtly propagandist character" (142).
31. Roberts, "Cold War Hong Kong: Juggling Opposing Forces and Identities," 35.
32. Zhang, *Studies on Hong Kong Leftist Films*, Chapter 4.
33. A meeting with Hong Kong's left-wing filmmakers was held in Beijing in January 1979 to reassure them of the Party's full support in reviving Hong Kong's "patriotic" film production. See Chapters 6 and 7.