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Whose Sound and Fury?

The 1967 Riots of Hong Kong through The Times

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ABSTRACT

The 1967 Riots in Hong Kong were investigated through The Times' reports, so as to further understanding of the anti-British movement in the colonial city from a new angle, to see the stance of the British press in the crisis and its influence on the decision-making by the Hong Kong and British governments. The study includes 3 main factors: 1) The Times' analysis of the origins and causes of the event; 2) The Times' portrayal of the different groups (the rioters, the British people and the Hong Kong people); 3) The Times' obsession with the pro-communist newspapers and neglect of other camps. Primary sources of research are the original reports of The Times and of some Hong Kong newspapers, memoirs by The Times' and Hong Kong local reporters, by the participants of the movement, and by the officials of the Hong Kong

government. In addition, the Queen's speech and parliamentary discussions also serve as primary sources. Published literature, unpublished theses and internet articles are secondary sources. The finding is that The Times' reports on the 1967 Riots were a slanted coverage, but a precise mirror of Britain's real interest in Hong Kong. Whose Sound and Fury?

The 1967 Riots of Hong Kong through The Times

May 1st is a national holiday in China. On that day of 1967, David Bonavia, the foreign correspondent of The Times posted in Hong Kong, should naturally report on China's celebration of the May Day. He wrote about the issue of a set of stamps – each featuring portraits of Mao Tse-tung or quotations from his works. He analyzed the meaning of this set of stamps, meanwhile quoted the news he got to know from Agence France Presse that Mao Tse-tung made the first public appearance since the previous November. As a journalist, he might have wished that he would be in Beijing himself to see Mao with his own eyes and give more detailed report, but it was not until 1972 that The Times had him as its first resident correspondent in Beijing since the establishment of the People's Republic of China. It was very hard to get a visa from the Chinese Embassy in London then because China did not have the open-up policy and China was in the Cultural Revolution. Therefore, what he could do in 1967 then was only to watch Beijing from Hong Kong, the closest place to the mainland of China. Besides the major events in China, he also mentioned in his report with around merely 100 words about a strike taking place at a cement factory in Hong Kong then. Four days later, Bonavia (May 2, 1967) gave report on another strike at a plastic flower factory with only

50 words, together with two other pieces of news about Beijing. To British readers, the tiny pieces of reports about the two strikes were almost invisible, which were submerged in the report about China, or more so in the 30 pages of *The Times* for each day.

To Bonavia, these incidents were normal in Hong Kong those days. During the months of January through April of 1967, local organizations like trade unions and teachers from Communist schools, had been causing problems and making sporadic industrial disputes. The strikes at the cement factory and the plastic flowers factory, therefore, were seen as common as previous others. It was not until a week later, when the big strikes continued in the whole period, and when Chinese demonstrators invaded the British Consulate in Macao in response to the Hong Kong strikes, did *The Times* have detailed coverage of the events. Moreover, it was on the front page. These strikes, originally almost invisible in the coverage of *The Times*, later turned out to be the trigger of the 1967 Riots in Hong Kong, which lasted for seven months starting from May 6 to late December, and was the one of the greatest challenges from the local people to the British government in Hong Kong ever since the territory came under its rule in 1842, and the greatest challenge after WWII.

One interesting incident can demonstrate the significance of this event in Hong Kong's history. I am a member of a fan website most of whose members are in America. There are several people from Hong Kong though. Once a post asked about the ages of all the members. One member from Hong Kong replied that "When he was borned, there were bombs and riots in Hong Kong." He let all other members except

those from Hong Kong to make a guess about his age, taking it for granted that it was an easy game since the event was so well-known in Hong Kong. Many had made wrong guesses until I finally gave the correct answer, since most of them were in America. This paper might serve to make more people know about the eventful year of 1967 in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong was a very unique place. People with different stances could live in peace with each other. British Government there gave a loose control; the local Communists with connection with China, ran their business and had their own newspapers; anti-communist Nationalists with Taiwan as their leader, also took Hong Kong as their base to fight against the mainland of China. Hong Kong was a place of various powers in confrontation, yet it had enjoyed a remarkable degree of social harmony since World War II. There were serious civil disturbance in only two years – 1956 and 1967.

The 1956 riots were the result of a confrontation between supporters of the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang. They were started by the Kuomintang side, who attacked communist trade unions and workers. Although they were damaging to the territory's normal peaceful atmosphere, they did not signify any inherent problems other than natural tensions between the two poles of the Chinese revolution. One result of these disturbances was an increase in the Hong Kong security forces' vigilance towards KMT agents; another was a recognition that capitalist Hong Kong had to keep on good terms with its communist neighbor if it were to survive.

The 1967 Riots were much more serious. They started in May with peaceful demonstration of thousands of workers. But as police tried to control the situation, rioting and mobbing elements appeared, with rioters throwing stones, burning cars and the police using tearing gas. At the peak, police fired at the agitators and agitators used real or false hand-made bombs. They were fights mainly between the local Communists in Hong Kong and the Hong Kong government, as spillovers of China's Cultural Revolution into Hong Kong. The deciding factor in the end was that Beijing and Canton did not give full official support to the rioters and strikers in Hong Kong, so that by the end of 1967 the anti-British movement fizzled out.

Chinese and Hong Kong media historians have studied Hong Kong newspaper coverage of this event (Lee, 1999; Chen, 1997, pp58-64). But so far no study has been done on the coverage of the British press on this event. The British press had relatively extensive coverage on this anti-British movement in the colonial city. A study of the reports of the British press will further understanding of the development of the event from all sides. The portrayal of the whole event in the British press is a key indicator of the attitudes of the British government toward Hong Kong. How did the British press draw a clear picture to help the British readers understand the chaotic situation in Hong Kong? Did it show the true sound and fury in Hong Kong? If so, whose sound and fury did it define as?

An analysis of these reports in the British press will show that Britain's major interest in colonial Hong Kong during the crisis was Hong Kong's ties with China. In addition, it will also reveal the changes of strategies of the UK in coping with the Riots in different

stages. Hong Kong was significant to the UK mainly as a watchtower of China at that time. The Times, as Lahiri (2000, p.82) put it, “the mouthpiece of official government opinion” (p.82), especially revealed Britain’s attitudes concerning Hong Kong in this period.

The Times was the newspaper voice of Britain in 1967. There was such a widespread assumption among foreign governments that The Times was a government organ of the UK. Therefore, they were much concerned about the reports of the correspondents working for The Times and expected diplomatic discretion from Times men who they regarded as reconnaissance scouts for the more formal battalions of the foreign office (Heren, 1988, pp. 185-186). Sometimes this kind of expectation can be misleading, but it is surely true that a nation’s foreign news, like its perception of history, reflects its attitudes and sentiments; it ignores the events and places we want to forget and it emphasizes the events, places, and faces we prefer or are concerned with. What are Britain’s concerns in the 1967 Riots in Hong Kong then? From the very beginning of the event, The Times had its own particular angle.

How did the Riots start? The reports from The Times on this point were ambiguous. As we have known, The Times did not pay much attention to the 1967 Riots until it had continued for a whole week. The real big strike broke out on May 6, but meager information on it was available on that day’s Times: Riot police were called today to an artificial flower factory in Kowloon to protect a press photographer from angry workers demonstrating in favour of Mao Te-tung. About 600 men have been locked out of the factory because of a strike. The Green Island Cement Company, one of Hongkong’s

oldest established firms, closed its works at midnight last night after a week's labour crisis. ("Maoist Rival Groups in Clashes," p.4)

Three days later, a 36-word relevant report appeared at the very bottom of page 7, where few people could manage to see them ("21 in court after Hongkong strikes", May 9, 1967, p.7). These reports revealed that there was a strike, that the workers were in favor of Mao Tze-tung, and there was labor crisis. However, there were no clues as to what the labor crisis was about. The British readers who knew little about Hong Kong, could only knew that there was a strike but could make no sense why it was there.

Then when it did become the front page news a week later, it was not because what happened in Hong Kong – "British Consulate in Macao Invaded" – the headline was about "the British Consulate;" the focus place was in "Macao," where the British Consulate was. But at least there was more detailed information about what was going on in Hong Kong as well:

When I [Bonavia] visited the scene of the riots earlier today, it was clear that teenagers and children had begun to take over the disturbances, which blew out of an industrial dispute at a plastic flowers factory. Subsequent reports from the riot areas suggested that the political aspects had begun to fade into a general background of hooliganism... The big question now is whether the Chinese authorities in Peking and Canton will further inflame local passions by coming out with an official statement of support for the rioters. (May 13, 1967, p. 1)

China, instead, was still the major concern, the "big question". Bonavia revealed Britain's worries about China's role in this event. Furthermore, since the local communists were seen as representatives of Chinese government in Hong Kong, Bonavia went on with the following concerns in that report:

It is undoubtedly regrettable that the Hongkong Government is unable to communicate with local communist leaders, like trade unionists, newspaper editors and traders, except through the medium of a press statement.

With Bonavia's focus more on local communist leaders, it was very likely for the readers to connect the labor disputes with the local communists, whom seemed to be the sole cause of the riots. Meanwhile, Bonavia speculated China's role in the riots. Yet still there was no explanation of what the labor disputes were about.

In July, two months after the rioting, The Times revealed what some Parliamentary members held in mind about who were responsible:

I [Leicester Bowden, a parliamentary member] would not like anyone to assume ... that these incidents are all based on bad labour relations. They are not. This is communist activity, either instigated or supported by China, but certainly of such a nature that it is much bigger than anything likely to arise from labour disturbance. (July 9, 1967, p. 10)

The view that China supported the Riots was common among the elite in the UK, who consisted of the major readership of The Times. They were men of power, position and authority in Britain and the Empire, much like the owners, editors, and writers of The Times. This is not to say that women or working-class people did not read The Times, only that the target audience was the powerful male elite of the imperial state whose educated, propertied and professional views "counted" in the public sphere (Walker, 2001, p.4).

The actual situation in Hong Kong at that time was much more complicated. Both the left-wing trade unionists, who received influence from the mainland China's ongoing Cultural Revolution, and Hong Kong's internal economic unrest triggered the rioting.

The Chinese Cultural Revolution reached its height in 1967, which changed from verbal argument to violence. In Canton, from where the Hong Kong left-wings used to receive directions, the former leaders were pulled down from their positions. The chaotic situation in Canton made the left-wing leaders in Hong Kong confused. They were either afraid of being thrown away by possible local new rebellions, or gave themselves the pressure to take similar action as what people were doing in the mainland, so as to either reinforce their leading position, or to show their achievement to the mainland leaders in Beijing and Canton. In this sense, the local left-wings did make use of the strikes and turn it into their movements after it had started. Nevertheless, there is evidence that China did not interfere in the beginning. In July, Ming Pao Monthly, one influential independent local newspaper gave testimony that no one had ever seen any Communist from the mainland went to Hong Kong to lead the riot together with local people (Jiong, 1967). As the strikes broke out, however, they did attracted attention from Beijing. At that time, Lin Biao and “the Gang of Four” had taken charge of the Foreign Ministry, whose representative in the Foreign Ministry was Yao Dengshan. He showed his support to the Hong Kong strikes, which caused Xinhua News Agency in Hong Kong took further action to promote the Riots. Therefore, if we say that neither Chinese influence nor Hong Kong’s local left-wings started the Riots, they did have great influence in promoting it after it started.

Another important factor that caused the Riots was the social contradictions in Hong Kong. In the 1960s, with substantial industrial development, there was greater and greater discrepancy between the rich and the poor. The conditions of the workers were deteriorating. According to Welsh (1993), the standards of employment in Hong Kong

were generally accepted as disgraceful by European standards and even by Asian standards (p. 457). As early as in 1965, many labor disputes took place and workers' movements were here and there in Hong Kong now and then. Workers were discontented with welfare policy, their wages and the tendency of raise of prices. The root causes of the original disturbances were probably deprivation and endemic boredom. With very few communal facilities available, street life was the center of social intercourse. A young man who lived in a shared cubicle in an overcrowded tenement would find it very difficult to stay out of any excitement on the streets, and the criminally minded would find the cover irresistibly useful. Had the Hong Kong government realized these factors, or the British press, especially The Times reported on them, thus attracting the attention of the authorities, things might have developed in a different direction. David Bonavia did noticed something contradictory to what the authorities assumed: in a report on a dockyard strike on May 23, 1967, he wrote about the fact that although there were only 300 hard core communist union men, over 3,000 men joined in the strike. "It is significant that so few are able to call out protest strikes by the majority of uncommitted or even right-wing workers"(May 24, 1967. p. 5). But he was not able to point out the real reason why it was significant.

One person did her best to draw attention to the very real causes for distress. Elsie Elliot, a member of the Legislative and the Urban Councils, wrote to officials of the Hong Kong government about underfunding of education, about examples of corruption, especially among the police, negligence and brutal indifference. The Colonial Secretary "was not willing to listen to anything that might lead him to the truth. His own reign in Hong Kong was short"(Welsh, 1993, p.467). Her complaints were led to attacks from

officials like Sir Michael Hogan (Chief Justice of Hong Kong) and the Police Counsel, D.J.R. Wilcox. They accused her of “inciting” the demonstrators, and of making “unsubstantiated” allegations against the police. As a result, Sir Michael sentenced Mrs. Elliot “to the bar of public opinion where she must meet the censure and repudiation of all those right-minded people”(p.467). Hong Kong authorities themselves, replicated a top people’s life of the UK in the colonial, had the same concern as their counterparts in the UK. We can predict what kind of reception The Times might have if it did the same as Mrs. Elliot.

In London, what The Times did most, on the contrary, was to reinforce the Parliament’s opinion that the rioting was caused by the communists in the mainland of China and Hong Kong. At the starting stage of the event, the reports associated the strikes with hooliganism, which means unruly and destructive behavior, usually by gangs of young men, its origin unknown. “Teenages and children have begun to take over the disturbance” (Bonavia, May 13, 1967, p.1), and the scene was “ugly, with squads of steel helmeted riot police firing tear gas at mobs,” and the “mobs throwing stones” (“Tension Eases,” May 15, 1967, p. 4). Nevertheless, the mobs’ titles changed after May 15, when Beijing broke her silence and accused the British government in Hong Kong. It was the second time that news about Hong Kong made the front page since the Riots broke out. And from then on, the demonstrators became “left-wing demonstrators,” “communist demonstrators,” “communist mobs” or “communist agitators”(Bonavia, May 20, 1967, p. 3; May 22, 1967, p. 1). They “burned the Union Jack,” “attacked or assaulted the police,” and “insulted British people;” they also

“chanted revolutionary songs,” “shouted anti-British slogans,” “wore Mao Te-tung’s badges” and “waved red books of Mao Te-tung’s thoughts.”

Situation worsened in July. When policemen were attacked, the police shot at the rioters on July 10. Then on July 26, the rioters started to use bombs. The crisis was described as moving to a new stage of terrorism. The communists were called “terrorists,” “extremists” using bombs to attack police and to intimate common people, thus creating violence (Bonavia, July 17, 1967, p. 1; August 2, p. 4; “More Hong Kong Bomb Blasts,” October 16, p. 6). All the reports showed was a picture of the rioters, the mobs, the terrorists, the violent criminals, in all, an image of the communists. This image had come into existence long before in Britain. What communism then to the Western people was like what the new terrorism now to the world. China, one of the largest countries under its influence, cast shadows to what British people saw of Hong Kong, thus easy recognition of this image of the rioters. Interestingly, when similar actions were taken by non-communist Chinese, the reporter used different terms:

Large numbers of organizations... have come out with statements of support for the government’s policy in handling the disturbance. In one recent instance a representative with communist sympathies was forced by his committee to express support for the government....In one village three men who tried to form a communist committee were beaten up by a local pugilist who had just been released from the goal and objected to seeing his village “get a bad name”(Bonavia, June 15, 1967, p.5). There were no clues as to how the representative with communist sympathies was forced to show his

support to the government; when the villager took violence to deal with the communists, he changed from a “criminal” to a “pugilist.”

The group of communist agitators, whether creating troubles or dying, whether arrested, charged or injured, only had the above group identity in reports in The Times. Here are several typical example: “Eighteen people were arrested in Hong Kong tonight... Two women were among the arrested” (“Police Raid,” August 1, 1967, p.5); “Sixteen people were injured by bombs as small crowds of communist agitators gathered...”(Bonavia, September 21, 1967, p.4) “...three women were hurt by explosions”(“ Women injured,” November 3, 1967, p.5). However, when it was British people that were concerned, there were often detailed explanation, and they were treated as individuals, with either names or specific descriptions of incidents or both.

On August 10 report titled “Woman injured by Camera Bombs”:

A young British woman was hurt in the second of two explosions which injured a total of six persons in Hong Kong today.

Miss Jacqueline Turner, aged 21, was on duty at the information desk of the Ocean Terminal when a home-made bomb exploded. She was taken to the hospital with injuries that were later described as not serious. Her desk apparently shielded her from the full blast of the explosion. (p.4)

The report gave full details of the British victim, including her name, age, occupation, the condition of her injury (even though it was not serious). As to the other five local Chinese people injured together with this Miss Turner, people could know nothing from this report. Furthermore, the reporter went on to describe Miss Turner as a benevolent

British lady helping people who lost his/her camera: The bomb is reported to have been placed in a camera case which was left on a seat near the desk. The case was handed over to Miss Turner as lost property. An hour later it exploded, throwing her to the ground.

Beside the report, there was also a photo of Miss Jacqueline Turner. Therefore, the report now only showed the concern with British people from the newspaper, but also made the government policy toward the Riots more justified.

It is true that 1967 left most Hong Kong people with the memory of terror, of those “pineapples” – real or false bombs, but still more than that. Tsang Yok Sing(1996), who was a student and striker among the leftists during the Riots, reflected his memory on the event in a different way from The Times’ reports:

The demonstrations of that year marked the first time I had ever taken part in any political activity. The government handled the riots in a very high-handed, colonial manner. I felt that it was protecting the interests of the capitalists, and, in doing so, suppressing the workers. I personally knew many of the people, the workers and trade unionists, involved in the violence, and they were good people. When we were together, none of those people was prone to violence. They were simple workers who had been exploited all their lives. Yes, they harboured a lot of resentment towards their employers and capitalists, but, no, they were not bandits; they were not taking to violence for violence’s sake. They were oppressed so they had to protest themselves. (p.93)

Tsang gave another picture of the “rioters” and “terrorists” different from that of The Times. They were kind people, good citizens, only to be forced into violence by the high-handed unreasonable policy and capitalists’ exploitation.

In the meantime, Tsang also revealed what his view on the Government and the police, contrary to that of The Times:

The prevailing view now is that the police acted with a great deal of restraint at the time, and that people in the leftist camp were just a violent mob, throwing bombs and escalating the violence. This is not true, and the Government's firm action was neither necessary nor justified. We saw how the workers started with a peaceful sit-in. They just sat there with the "little red book" (of Mao's quotations) in their hands, chanting and singing. I saw the riot police come and beat up the workers. When some police officers were killed by the terrorist bombs, many of us thought they deserved it because they were working for an oppressive government. (p.95)

Tsang's brother, "a timid boy," was imprisoned for handing out leaflets calling for the reform of the school curriculum and denouncing the British for the Opium War. Tsang's fifteen-year-old sister, was also arrested because she and thirteen other girls refused to go back to the classroom when the school bell rang. She was sentenced to the women's prison for one month, guilty of breaching the emergency legislation in force during 1967.

Tsang represented what the group of people in the "mob" were thinking then. But it was impossible for their message to reach the British readers then. Henry Lethbridge(1985) also had a different image of the young people who participated the demonstration in the beginning. He described them as "reminiscent of a children's crusade ... a procession, twisting and turning like lion dancers ... boys, laughing, grimacing and showing off"(p.57). The playfulness turned more destructive as looting and arson spread. Neither can the readers got to know of this kind of change of the processes.

China watching in the Hong Kong Riots was the most apparent with so many quotations from Hong Kong pro-communist press. One of the foci of The Times reports about the 1967 Riots was the role the pro-communist press played and how the event

was reported in those left-wing newspapers. It was because the local pro-communist press was seen as representatives of Chinese government.

In 1950, the Hong Kong pro-Communist press did play a subtle role in Sino-British relationship. Britain was among the first, in January 1950, to offer recognition of the new regime of Beijing. However, Britain also continued to acknowledge the legitimacy of Taiwan. The relations between the two countries thus were not formalized by exchange of ambassadors till many years later. Since Beijing refused to agree that Hong Kong was anything other than an integral part of China, temporarily under foreign administration, it was impossible to have diplomatic links between the two. Consequently, the Xinhua News Agency's Hong Kong Branch, which had operated since 1945 as something more than a news agency, became the representative of the PRC government and its ruling communist party.

During the 1967 Riots, the Hong Kong government was not able to have any contact with any Chinese officials until 26 November that year, because no Chinese official was willing to take responsibility of negotiating. Deprived of the Beijing government as a direct source for news, The Times watched China's reaction through the Xinhua News Agency's Hong Kong Branch and through left-wing newspapers, which were assumed to receive directions from the Beijing government. A definite advantage of The Times was that David Bonavia, the foreign correspondent in Hong Kong, was fluent both in Mandarin and in Cantonese, thus having precise interpretation of the Chinese newspapers.

In 1967, Hong Kong had several dozen Chinese newspapers, classified into three groups – pro-Beijing, pro-Taiwan and independent. There had always been bitter battles among these local Chinese newspapers because of different political stances. During the 1967 Riots, the battle was the most heated.

The leftist newspapers not only supported the riots but also followed and explained the policy of the Hong Kong leftists. One major leftist newspaper, the Ta Kung Pao charged that the riots were caused by a planned intervention of the Hong Kong government in a labor dispute. The “savage act” by the authorities represented the racial oppression of the Chinese by the British colonial government. As the government called to maintain law and order, the newspaper regarded it as a means of suppression (“Editorial,” May 18, 1967) and denied the value of the existence of colonial laws (“Editorial,” June 7, 1967).

For the independent newspapers, the Ming Pao Daily, urged citizens to remain calm and united. Its editorials pointed out that “Hong Kong people supported the government efforts to end the riots not because they fully endorsed the colonial government, but because of their eagerness for freedom. They would rather remain free in a colony than live under the rule of the communists”(“Editorial,” October 28, 1967).

The rightist newspapers, the Hong Kong Times for example, expressed the view that the riots were not caused by internal conflicts in Hong Kong, but was actually planned by the communists. It urged people to trust the government and at the same time, urged the government to take strong action against the Hong Kong leftists (“Editorial,” May 12, 1967).

Despite all the arguments among all those newspapers, The Times focused its attention only to the reports of the leftist newspapers because what it tried to do was understand China's attitudes toward and relationship with Hong Kong's rioters, thus providing the British and the Hong Kong government with information for further decision-making.

As the Riots just broke out, when speculating on China's attitude, Bonavia (May 13, 1967) speculated Hong Kong leftist plans by studying their newspapers:

Editorials in these newspapers have launched personal attacks on the governor and denounced British handling of the riots in terms reminiscent of those used during the Macao crisis last year....The big question now is whether the Chinese authorities in Peking and Canton will further inflame local passions by coming out with an official statement of support for the rioters.

On balance this seems likely in view of the attitude taken by local Chinese newspapers normally subservient to Peking. (p.1) After China's Foreign Ministry, under the control of the "Gang of Four" then, showed support to the Hong Kong Riots by a statement on May 15, The Times quoted one left-wing newspaper that "units of the Chinese People's Liberation Army were gathered at the border ready to 'support the struggle of their compatriots in Hong Kong'"("160 Arrested," May 23, 1967), which turned out to be fake news.

On June 8, after more study of the Chinese newspapers, The Times came out with more updated information about China's position in Hong Kong, that Hong Kong was a relatively minor issue to Chinese government:

The Hong Kong issue is being crowded out of Chinese propaganda by expressions of support for the Arabs in their war with Israel.

Observers feel that Hong Kong is at present a very small issue from the point of view of the leadership in Peking. ("Hong Kong's Ferry Stopped," p.6)

Here are two more examples, among the many in that period. In July, Bonavia found out that the local communists were simply taking cue from Beijing's newspapers to decide on their strategies in Hong Kong. China did not give them directions at all: "...As far as can be ascertained they (the local communists) are taking their cue from ambiguous leading articles in the Peking People's Daily rather than from directives of the authorities in Canton, who fully understand Hong Kong's value to China (July 19, 1967, p.4). On August 9, The Times' reporter decoded a message from Xinhua News Agency's Hong Kong Branch and further his findings that Beijing did not give the local communists real support.

...Yesterday's New China news agency message from Hong Kong acclaimed a "new upsurge in the struggle of the patriotic Chinese." The expression is a familiar one in communist Chinese reporting. It can be rendered: "this campaign is going rather badly; we must give it a puff." Certainly the puffs keep coming from Peking, but all along the purpose has seemed to be the nourishing of the emotions of mainlanders in need of a cause for righteous indignation rather than giving any effective backing to the communists in Hong Kong. ("Office Block Guerrillas," p.1)

Every several days, there were either direct quotations from the local left-wing newspapers or from the Chinese newspaper People's Daily, or the reporter's own interpretation of news from these newspapers, which served as information for the British government to make their decisions on their policies accordingly. Both the reports and the policies indicated that in the crisis, Britain considered China for the first place rather than Hong Kong when making their decisions on Hong Kong.

In 1949, when the People's Republic of China was just established, things had been different. Britain had a firm intention to protect Hong Kong from infiltration then. Hong Kong was very important for the UK then because, for one thing, the British government still clung to the concept of Great Britain as a world power, and Hong Kong was an important base for her influence in the Far East, especially since Malaysia was also her colony; for another, a lot of British capital still remained in Hong Kong. However, by the time of Malayan independence in 1957, British strategic interests in the Far East were almost an end. The "withdrawal was signaled in Hong Kong first by the reduction of the garrison to a level compatible only with the maintenance of internal security, and later, in 1958, by the closure of the naval dockyard. From that date Hong Kong was an appendage, one without any strategic significance, and from which decreasing commercial advantage was to be expected. British Parliamentary interest was minimal, and British public interest in Hong Kong, except as an exotic spot for expensive holidays, somewhat less" (Welsh, 1993, pp. 452-453). Immediate interest appeared only when the larger question of relations with China was involved. Therefore from then on, Hong Kong's significance to the UK mostly lied in its particular relationship with China.

When the rioting started, Britain's stance on Hong Kong was clear, that if China would like to take Hong Kong back, Britain would simply leave Hong Kong, and that if China would not take it back, Britain would stay. Many in the Government, worried by what was becoming an increasing dangerous situation, even took advantage of their summer leave to go back to Britain. Among those who left were the Commissioner of Police and the Governor himself, Sir David Trench. However, despite the instigating message of local pro-communist newspapers, Beijing leadership actually tried to resist

to exporting the Cultural Revolution. Sir Jack Cater (1996), Personal Assistant to the Governor, who took charge of the situation as the Governor had vacation in Britain, recalled that Premier Zhou Enlai himself held an underlying message to help the British administration contain the situation. After the first two months of passive defense, the Government started to take high-handed actions and raid the communist headquarters in Hong Kong in July. Despite this, the struggle continued till late December. In the tough process, when the Hong Kong Government could get no direct help from Beijing, The Times' interpretation of the message from the pro-communist newspapers did played an important role in reinforcing the confidence in Hong Kong for both the Hong Kong Government and the Britain and in their decision-making.

The substantive attention The Times paid to pro-Communist press contrasted with its absence of coverage on independent and right-wing newspapers in Hong Kong. There were only 3 times when The Times had reports about the rightist or the independent newspapers during the Riots. Why The Times only focus on reporting the voice of the pro-communist side? The fact that it did not give equal report on other camps of newspapers again showed British concerned more with China rather than just Hong Kong, since the other camps of newspapers were either independent or affiliated with Taiwan.

The Hong Kong government surpassed the Riots with support of the British government, with Beijing's acquiesce, and with support from the Hong Kong population. Nevertheless, The Times gave almost no report to the people in Hong Kong.

The Times' interest in stereotypic portrayal of communist terrorists contrasted with its neglect of the Hong Kong public. There were very few reports on the general Hong Kong public opinion of the event, though occasionally mentioned by The Times. When they did appear in The Times reports, they were either in the background as the foil of the communists, or as a group of anonymous people, for example: "About 50 agitators began shouting slogans, but they again failed to arouse any public interest or support..." ("Hong Kong Bombs," September 11, 1967, p.5). There was hardly an identity of general Hong Kong people in the Times. It appeared in the reports of The Times that the power either lay in Beijing or the British Hong Kong government. But in reality, the public were the people who had utmost concerns with Hong Kong's fate. British authorities could leave if things went out of control; China was too concerned with her internal chaos to care about Hong Kong then. But the Hong Kong public could not leave their home and they could not do without a peaceful Hong Kong. Therefore, their full support for the Government played one of the decisive roles in the final victory. The Times' unduly neglect of the Hong Kong public again revealed what was its major interest in Hong Kong.

In late December, eventually the 1967 Riots approached its end, with 51 deaths, over 800 injuries (Li, 1996, Ch.4). There was no exact record of the total number of people imprisoned. But the following figures can be indicative of the total arrests. By May 24, only 19 days after the Riots broke out, 781 were arrested and 427 convicted (Bonavia, May 25, 1967, p. 3). On July 17, more than 600 were arrested for that single day (Bonavia, July 17, 1967, p. 1). On August 1, 117 people were arrested (Bonavia, August 2, 1967, p. 4).

As the situation calmed down, the Hong Kong Governor and the British officials discussed the lessons. In Parliament, Lord Hervey Rhodes thought it imperative that a major attempt to be made to clean up the jungle of labor relations; Lord Antony Moynihan said he would like to see a Hong Kong governor taking off the ridiculous hat, which carried with it the old imperial role. Lord Malcolm Shepherd, the Minister of State at the Commonwealth office, described the new situation in Hong Kong, that there seemed to be a new feeling among employers: a desire to associate themselves more closely with the needs and aspirations of their employees and establish an atmosphere in which good labor relations might develop and flourish; he also suggested labor legislation reform in the Hong Kong government ("Parliament," November 19, 1967, p.5). The result, as Cater (1996) puts it, was that "A number of reforms included the provision of compulsory, free primary education, and the setting up of the City District Officer System as well as several other innovations which might otherwise have taken light-years to achieve.... It was very clear that the New Territories people and the fishermen came out of 1967 in much better shape than the townspeople did" (p.112).

The Times reports on the 1967 Riots in Hong Kong presented British government's concerns with and views on China and Hong Kong. The reports sounded the minds of the people in power in the UK. Firstly, the origins and causes of the event was nothing but the political conspiracy of either the local communists or communists from the mainland of China, while the labor disputes were not a big issue, which was even negligible. Secondly, all people who participated the Riots were mobs, agitators, terrorists, communists (when actually even right-wing workers took part in the movement in the beginning). Then to decide who were the leaders of the Riots and their

plans, attention went to the pro-communist newspapers. Voices of independent and rightist newspapers were seen as not informative enough to be primary sources, thus not heard in The Times. Finally, British interest in Hong Kong was very much a political concern. Therefore, the Hong Kong public, which should have been the real spot light, possessed only a vague image as an intangible group. In The Times' reports through the Riots, we hear the sound and fury of the Hong Kong Governor and the police; we hear the sound and fury of the leftist minority troublemakers; but we can hear almost nothing from the public, the ordinary everyone in Hong Kong. Therefore, Hong Kong was important to the UK mainly as a watchtower of China, while the Hong Kong people were of no interest to the British government at a time of crisis. The Times' reports on the movement were a slanted coverage, but a precise mirror of Britain's real interest in Hong Kong.

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