

# *Hong Kong and Taiwan Sources for Research into the Cultural Revolution Period*

THE intent of this short article is to introduce scholars who have not recently worked in Hong Kong or Taiwan to the kinds of research materials relating to the Cultural Revolution which are now available there. Most of the sources discussed, however, are at least equally valuable for studying problems of earlier years as well. Treatment is generally limited to sources not included in Berton and Wu's recently published bibliography,<sup>1</sup> although additional information can be found in that volume about the Union Research Institute and about some of the Taiwan organisations mentioned.

## HONG KONG

The uniqueness of Hong Kong sources is currently on the decline, at least for Americans, since major sets of materials formerly available only there are now in the process of being microfilmed and deposited in the libraries of several U.S. Asian Studies centres. Nevertheless a researcher's investment of time and money in a trip to the colony will definitely not go unrewarded.

The Union Research Institute has, in addition to its classified files and newspaper holdings (described in its recently published catalogue), a collection of approximately 1,000 Red Guard newspapers. These papers are all seen at the U.S. Consulate-General and considered for translation in their various series, but not all of them are judged to be important enough for publication in translated form. Another Union Research Institute collection consists of interviews conducted by its own staff with Chinese refugees and of articles which refugees have been invited to write; these are filed by year and topic but are not included in the general classified file. Items describing conditions in China during 1966 and 1967 total 206, at an average length of ten pages of handwritten but legible Chinese. Topics range from the general (e.g., "military affairs" or "education") to the very general (e.g., "political and social"), the latter usually describing many aspects of life in a single geographical spot not far from Hong Kong. The items are quite informative (some statistics are given) and the transcripts reflect considerable skill on the part of the interviewer in

<sup>1</sup> Peter Berton and Eugene Wu, *Contemporary China: a Research Guide*, Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1967.

asking follow-up questions. As with all interviews, the reliability of this data must be assumed to be low unless it can be otherwise substantiated.

A further source of Red Guard publications in the original Chinese is the non-Communist Hong Kong press. Most important are the *Ming Pao* and the *Sing Tao Jih Pao*. The *Ming Pao* began, in January 1968, to publish four or five times per week a "local affairs" feature. Here one finds conveniently gathered together excerpts from Kwangtung and Kwangsi publications, mostly Red Guard, on one single topic along with an abstract of their contents by the editor. The *Sing Tao Daily* has published since well before the Cultural Revolution a "local affairs page" which also emphasises events in Kwangtung and Kwangsi but reprints as well items about events in other areas of China. Both papers frequently reproduce verbatim articles from Red Guard and other Chinese newspapers relating to events of general or nationwide significance, such as speeches made by central leaders. Articles falling in this category are almost always translated by the U.S. Consulate-General. Both *Ming Pao* and *Sing Tao Daily* send reporters to interview travellers returning from China, and daily publish articles based on information thus received. Unfortunately, the reliability of stories given by a single traveller tends to be low; a conclusion which need be tempered only by considering the subject of the news. A report that Public Security personnel at the Canton railway station were carrying rifles is less likely to be distorted than a report giving the contents of a wall poster.

The American Consulate-General has two valuable biographical projects which, while they are designed for internal use, may be consulted by researchers. One is arranged according to person; a card appearing for each occasion when an individual's name has appeared in one of the Consulate's translation series or in the translations of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service. Generally speaking, this file is incomplete only for the cases in which a person's name was mentioned in an article not selected for translation. The second file is arranged according to position; a card appearing for both the first and last time an individual was identified as holding that position. The scope of this file covers all positions listed in the *Directory of Communist Chinese Officials*<sup>2</sup> but it has the additional advantage of including all office-holders who have been identified since 1953 instead of just the most recent incumbents. All positions which have been created since March 1966 (such as those in revolutionary committees) are of course unique to the file. The personnel file is being reproduced for deposit in a small number of American libraries,

\* Volume I, 1963; Volume II, March 1966.

but the position file is not. Only *ad hoc* facilities can be provided for visitors.

Last but not least are the refugees. Probably the most disreputable of academic sources, China-watching would never be the same without them. The Hong Kong Government has an announced entry quota of fifty per day, in addition to (or at least apart from) which there is a continuous stream of émigrés from China who evade the authorities. An upward trend in illegal entries in spite of the Macao border being closed is suggested by the progress of the statistic "arrests of illegal immigrants for October, November and December"; this number was estimated a few months ago to be 269 in 1965, 309 in 1966 and 703 in 1967.<sup>3</sup> One newspaper has estimated the success rate for attempts at illegal entry to be 90 per cent.,<sup>4</sup> a figure quite consistent with the Director of Immigration's calculation that the colony now absorbs 5,000 to 8,000 illegal immigrants each year.<sup>5</sup>

Most of these émigrés are peasants from Kwangtung with a rather low understanding of matters outside of their limited circle, but with persistence one can talk to students, professional people, cadres and, most recently, Red Guards. At present a small number of social science students are making imaginative use of intensive interview data, and almost everyone has something to learn about his topic from refugee tales. It is possible to find recent arrivals in a number of ways—through personal introductions from other scholars, through inquiry at places where they end up working or living, or through using the services of a "procurer" who, for a fee, will lead an unending stream to one's door (mostly of those "recent" in imagination only).

Further minor sources could be mentioned, such as reports of conditions at Chinese ports from transient seamen made available by the Hong Kong Government Marine Department, or documentary movies on the Cultural Revolution displayed at local left-wing cinemas,<sup>6</sup> but this would only distract from a concluding comment on Hong Kong's biggest advantages which are quite unrelated to source materials. One of these might be termed "analytical density": the large number of China-watching diplomats, journalists and scholars concentrated here allow the prospective writer on the Cultural Revolution to subject his inevitably one-sided views to extensive critical improvement. Secondly, there is a definite "currency" differential. The process of securing documents, confirming disputable points, and filling in gaps by interviewing or consulting other specialists can be completed in Hong

<sup>3</sup> *China Mail*, 18 January 1968.

<sup>4</sup> *Hong Kong Standard*, 16 August 1968.

<sup>5</sup> *Hongkong Standard*, 16 September 1968, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> For instance there was at the time of writing a film called "Courageously Advance Raising High the Great Banner of Revolutionary Criticism" about events in Shanghai in early 1967.

Kong far more efficiently and quickly than elsewhere.\* Finally, the advantages of using as a research assistant an émigré who has lived at one time under the communist régime and who is familiar with the CCP's language, concepts and terms of reference can hardly be exaggerated. Such people are readily available.

#### TAIWAN

The prospects for visitors wishing to engage in research on mainland affairs in Taiwan have taken a sharp upward turn since mid-1966, a change which has corresponded with a great improvement in the quality of analyses being published by the Nationalists themselves.

To facilitate outside scholarly work, a "foreign guests reading room" has been set up in the offices of the "Institute of International Relations."<sup>7</sup> Here one can find secondary materials produced by several organisations on Taiwan, indexes of the holdings of a number of official libraries, and a small staff which tries very hard to help the visiting researcher obtain data he is interested in seeing and which provides introductions to other organisations which might have relevant materials. This reading room (the only one in the Institute with air-conditioning) has a high quality Ricoh copying machine, a microfilm reader-printer and desk space for five or six scholars.

The most valuable library on Communist China to be found on Taiwan is that belonging to the Intelligence Bureau under the Ministry of National Defense, located outside Taipei in New Peitou. This bureau is the largest intelligence organ in Taiwan, having approximately fifty analysts working full time. Besides a complete collection of the publications of other research organisations on the island, they have numerous original documents and pamphlets from the mainland and a respectable collection of provincial newspapers; their periodical holdings, however, are strongest for the early fifties. Available for consultation are the bureau's own intelligence reports and position papers (1-2 pages mimeographed) as well as transcripts of monitored provincial radio broadcasts (20-40 pages of Chinese manuscript daily). The Nationalists are now prone to publish items of more general significance, but a researcher primarily interested in provincial or local politics will certainly discover sources here which are not otherwise available. Fukien, Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Hunan, Anhui, Peking and Shanghai seem to be the areas covered most extensively. Three or four visiting scholars can be accommodated, but no copying machine is available.

A second collection of considerable value on provincial affairs is found in the office of the Kuomintang Central Committee's Sixth

\* The Universities Service Center, 155 Argle Street, Kowloon (Director, Mr. Guy Searls) provides an invaluable service in these and other respects for visiting scholars.

<sup>7</sup> Mailing address: P.O. Box 1189, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.

Section located at the end of Jen-ai Road in Taipei. This organisation, which is responsible for following communist affairs, maintains two large clipping files of mainland publications, one arranged by topic (about two-thirds of the collection) and the other by province (about one-third); both files have Cultural Revolution sections separate from previous materials. Unfortunately, no facilities are available here, only one or two visiting scholars being able to work in an improvised space.

Each Central Government ministry in Taipei maintains a research office with a small staff of five to ten persons responsible for following mainland affairs in its own functional area. These research offices all have clipping files which are kept up to date and which can be consulted by visiting scholars. At the Communications Research Office under the Ministry of Communications, for example, there is a file of all information which has been gathered on mainland railways. Every two or three years the Public Security Bureau under the Ministry of National Defense compiles the reports of these various offices together with military and political analyses provided by the ministry's own staff into a single convenient reference volume.

Personnel data compiled by various organs on Taiwan are in some cases more detailed than alternative sources outside, especially for the provinces and cities listed above. The Ministry of National Defense's Intelligence Staff Materials Office maintains a file arranged by military units known as "Information on Bandit Personnel Movements," although securing access to this is difficult. However, two other series are more easily accessible. Known respectively as "Collection of Information on Bandit Personnel—Organisation Chart" and the "Collection of Information on Bandit Personnel—Biographies," they have been maintained since 1956 as a co-operative venture of two intelligence organs.<sup>8</sup> The former is arranged by organisation and includes valuable structural charts. The latter is arranged by person with a stroke order system which makes it rather tedious to use.

Most of the Taiwan collections, because of their official nature, have both rules and "rules" governing their use. A period of residence to make friends, become known and learn the mores of the system is all but a prerequisite for fully exploiting their worth.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Berton and Wu, pp. 167–168.

<sup>9</sup> Some colleagues have encountered considerable difficulty gaining access and feel that this point should be stated more forcefully.