



CHIN, Angelina Y. 2023.
Unsettling Exiles: Chinese Migrants in Hong Kong and the Southern Periphery during the Cold War.
 New York: Columbia University Press.

I YUQING QIU

is a PhD candidate at the Sciences Po Centre for History,
 27 rue Saint-Guillaume, 75337 Paris Cedex, France
 (yuqing.qiu@sciencespo.fr).

Postwar Hong Kong was not merely a British colony, but was subject to influences exerted by regional politics and the Cold War. Situated at the threshold of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Hong Kong became a transit station for those arriving from Mainland China under the political and economic uncertainties of the Cold War. Starting from 1949, the refugee crisis in Hong Kong prompted both the Hong Kong government and the PRC to establish immigration policies. Amid the backdrop of the Cold War, Chinese exiles who sought refuge in Hong Kong were deeply imbued with political significance.

Angelina Y. Chin's captivating book, *Unsettling Exiles*, sets out to revisit this period through the analysis of escapees, migrants, squatters and deportees in Hong Kong from the 1950s to the 1970s – a population that later contributed to defining the Hong Kong identity. The book comes on the heels of exciting new scholarship exploring the interconnectedness of the Greater China region and putting Hong Kong in the centre of the discussion (Zhou 2021; Ho 2023). Drawing on large collections of untapped archival materials and oral sources, *Unsettling Exiles* is a first of its kind to explore broadly and in depth the story of different types of people in transit in Hong Kong, from political critics to intellectuals, victims of abduction, as well as people who were not welcome elsewhere. While some of them regarded Hong Kong as a temporary refuge, others saw it as a neutral ground for political alternatives.

Unsettling Exiles puts the concept of "Southern Periphery" to the forefront and uses it as a framework to examine Chinese exiles in Hong Kong. Geographically, the Southern Periphery roughly encompassed Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, which shared the trait of existing outside the Central People's Government's (CPG) jurisdictional authority but were overshadowed by the CPG's discourse of being part of China. For Chin, the gap between the Centre and the Periphery was not in terms of physical displacement, but rather related to the uncertainty that characterised the processes. People in transit constantly remained in a state of precarity after their initial displacement and continued

to be marginalised by the PRC and the Republic of China (ROC). By using this framework, Chin criticises the romanticisation of Chinese emigrants' relationship with the Chinese homeland, and therefore allows for studying the way in which Chinese national politics extended beyond its administrative border. Adopting this framework also allows for an examination of the often complex, intimate, and sometimes contradictory experiences of exile in the Southern Periphery. It challenges the dichotomous view of exiles as mere freedom fighters or "escaping to the Free World" (p. 133) by highlighting the networks and continuous uncertainties that shaped their trajectories. This framework also implies a continued state of precariousness, as Chin connects the exiles of the 1950s and 1970s to present-day exiles facing current uncertainties in the Southern Periphery.

The book is constructed as follows. Chapter One sets the background of the story and reveals definitional difficulties and international politicisation of refugees in Hong Kong. International debates equally indicate the precariousness of Chinese in exile in Hong Kong without refugee status. The vulnerability was first and foremost visible in the hierarchical classification of refugees and the deliberate selection of refugees with political value. Their uncertain status was further compounded by the unstable immigration policies of the Hong Kong government, the Cold War rivalry between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Kuomintang (KMT), and the United States' intervention in the refugee crisis. Closely following Chapter One, the story unfolds with three distinct tempos, each carefully capturing different categories of people in exile over time. Evolving both thematically and chronologically, *Unsettling Exiles* investigates the development of the "Third Force" (a "political movement located in Hong Kong during the Cold War" – p. 18) among intellectual refugees to Hong Kong (Chapter Two), escapees by sea during the spillover of the Cultural Revolution in Hong Kong (Chapter Three), the "undesirable residents" of different regimes in the Southern Periphery (Chapter Four), and escapees during the 1962 refugee exodus (Chapter Five). The last chapter focuses on the interactions and confrontations between histories and memories in state and popular discourses. It scrutinises Hong Kong identity and diasporic consciousness in a contemporary context with the expansion of "Greater China" (Chapter Six).

Through the thorough examination of different types of refugees, Chin refutes the stereotyping of Chinese exiles in postwar Hong Kong. Stories of "freedom swimmers" during the Cultural Revolution were reported through pro-KMT publications that later formed the core anti-communist discourse in the Southern Periphery (p. 100). However, not all who arrived in Hong Kong escaped for political reasons. Some "did not particularly want to join the KMT at that time" (p. 187), and "Taiwan was not a familiar place where all had the courage to go" (p. 189). Examples in the book also reflect how some regarded their sojourn in Hong Kong as a temporary phase to escape economic shortages or political unrest before returning to the Mainland.

By retracing the politicisation of Chinese refugees in Hong Kong, the author further reiterates her initial argument against the popular perception of Hong Kong as a neutral place during the Cold War and provides a more nuanced narrative on the history of Chinese exiles in Hong Kong. Polemics on Chinese refugees in Hong Kong

further indicate how different political visions circulated within Hong Kong society. While some political refugees at Rennie's Mill envisaged the return of the KMT to the Mainland, certain intellectuals regarded as the "Third Force" discussed reuniting China with a constitutional government outside of the CCP and KMT (p. 58), and others remained politically indifferent (p. 188).

Unsettling Exiles vividly portrays the intimate experience of Chinese exiles in the Southern Periphery. In particular, Chapter Five retraces the journey of three men who fled to Hong Kong in 1962 but continued to be entangled in Chinese politics. Their personal accounts resonate with Meredith Oyen's remark about "the politization of what is, essentially, a local problem" being "at the heart of refugee movements and refugee policy" (2014: 190). Their testimonies offer a graphic example of trajectories of exile in the Southern Periphery. Hong Kong therefore became a dwelling place for those whose sense of home and belonging was uncertain, an uncertainty penned by previous scholarship as a "citizenship contested," where "identity was fluid, and the boundaries of political mobilization were blurred" (Zhou 2019: 4).

Ultimately, *Unsettling Exiles* paves the way for further dialogues and exploration concerning the Southern Periphery. For example, what was the particular role of Macao? How differently did the CCP's national politics impact Macao, Hong Kong, and Taiwan? The field can also be greatly enriched by studies that compare displacements and refugee crises in different Asian countries during the same period. This book is a truly valuable read for scholars interested in Hong Kong studies and Chinese peripheries during the Cold War. It can also be a good fit for a university curriculum on contemporary China.

References

HO, Denise Y. 2023. "Oysterman and Refugee: Hong Kong and China Between the Tides, 1949-1997." *The American Historical Review* 128(2): 561-87.

OYEN, Meredith. 2014. "'Thunder without Rain': ARCI, the Far East Refugee Program, and the U.S. Response to Hong Kong Refugees." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 16(4): 189-221.

ZHOU, Taomo. 2019. *Migration in the Time of Revolution: China, Indonesia, and the Cold War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

—. 2021. "Leveraging Liminality: The Border Town of Bao'an (Shenzhen) and the Origins of China's Reform and Opening." *Asian Studies* 80(2): 337-61.

HONG KONG MEDIA AND ASIA'S COLD WAR PO-SHEK FU

FU, Po-Shek. 2023.

Hong Kong Media and Asia's Cold War.

Oxford: Oxford University Press.

I SABRINA Y. TAO

earned her PhD degree in East Asian Languages and Literatures at the University of Oregon, 20 Friendly Hall, Eugene, OR 97403-1248, United States (ytiao@uoregon.edu).

The study of cultural Cold War in British colonial Hong Kong has gained increasing scholarly attention over the past decade, with historians and film, literary, and cultural scholars examining the circulation of cultural products, the history of cultural agencies, as well as the role of cultural workers in the transnational cultural makings. Po-Shek Fu's book, *Hong Kong Media and Asia's Cold War*, is an exemplary work within this trend, marked by meticulous archival research that draws from diverse contemporary sources. These sources range from newspapers and film studio releases to memoirs and previously unexplored materials from Hong Kong and the US. It offers a detailed analysis of Hong Kong media institutions and the influence of global Cold War dynamics on their cultural production.

As a sequel to Fu's earlier renowned work, *Between Shanghai and Hong Kong: The Politics of Chinese Cinemas* (2003), in which he introduced the "Shanghai-Hong Kong nexus in the cultural and entertainment business of the two cities from 1935 to 1950" (p. xiii), *Hong Kong Media and Asia's Cold War* extends the timeframe from the 1950s to the 1980s, with a particular focus on Hong Kong's media landscape during the 1950s and 1960s. It explores Hong Kong's strategic position in Asia's Cold War, highlighting its role as a "crossroads where the global, regional, and local [influences] intersected" (p. x, xiii). To maintain colonial stability, the British colonial administration policed ideological advocacy to prevent potential political unrest, especially through film censorship aimed at preserving colonial authority by depoliticising and deescalating the Cold War rivalry between the Communists, the Nationalists, and the Americans – all vying for influence in East Asia. Fu argues that these powers exploited the colony's political neutrality, or "Cold War gray zone," to conduct propaganda and psychological warfare targeting Chinese diasporas in Southeast Asia and beyond (p. x-xi).

The book is structured with a preface, four main chapters, and an epilogue. Chapter One examines the cinematic warfare conducted by the three camps. It details the rise of leftist film companies and