

Cultural Education as Containment of Communism

The Ambivalent Position of American NGOs in Hong Kong in the 1950s

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After the Communist takeovers in Czechoslovakia in 1948 and China in 1949, U.S. policymakers emphasized a strategy of “containment,” seeking to prevent any further Communist encroachments in Europe and Asia. Although non-governmental organizations (NGOs), by their nature, were not an explicit part of U.S. containment efforts, they were influenced by the policy direction set by the government. At the same time, because NGOs sought to maintain independence, they were often motivated by principles and goals that transcended the ideological and political dichotomies of the Cold War. The work done by U.S. NGOs abroad converged with but also diverged from the overarching global political divisions that characterized the period. This juxtaposition of consonance and dissonance meant that the work of NGOs complicated U.S. foreign policy.

This article examines an important case of NGO activity that was both in line with and went beyond Cold War containment thinking. The article focuses on three American NGOs that, in contributing significantly to a fledgling tertiary educational institution in Hong Kong in the early 1950s, served the goal of containment while also obfuscating what containment meant. The first of these NGOs was the Yale-China Association, an organization devoted to the “development of education in and about China, and to the furtherance of knowledge, understanding, and friendship between Chinese and American people.”¹ Yale-China had been based in Changsha in China’s Hunan province since its founding in 1901, but after its school was seized by the Chinese Communists in 1951 and its staff were expelled from

1. Yale-China Association, “About Us,” Yale-China Association, available on-line from <http://www.yalechina.org/dynamicpage.php?id=18>.

the country, Yale-China's half century of work in mainland China ended. Yale-China in the early 1950s was therefore looking for another means of continuing its educational work for Chinese.² The second organization, the Asia Foundation, had recently emerged from a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) initiative and was seeking to establish itself on independent grounds. The Asia Foundation in its early years as a self-determining entity was searching for programs to support that would reflect its concerns for peace and justice in Asia.³ At the same time, the Ford Foundation, which was focused on the promotion of democratic values and international cooperation, had just widened its focus from the state of Michigan to national and international philanthropy.⁴ With a budget far larger than any other U.S. philanthropic organization of the time, the Ford Foundation of the early 1950s sought to identify global issues and programs that would demonstrate its newly broadened perspective.⁵

Although in the early 1950s these three organizations were at different stages of development, all three discovered in Hong Kong higher education—specifically, the New Asia institution—a need that matched their policy interests. New Asia, consisting of both a postsecondary college and a research institute, was founded by self-exiled anti-Communist intellectuals who had left mainland China on the eve of the Communist assumption of power in 1949 to live and work in non-Communist Hong Kong. Believing that Communism not only defied the human spirit generally but the Chinese cultural spirit specifically, these intellectuals removed themselves from what they believed would be a culturally threatening environment in China in order to maintain and promote Chinese culture from beyond the official borders of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The best way to serve this purpose, in the minds of these intellectuals, was to establish an educational base from which to teach Chinese youth the meaning and significance of Chinese culture and the crucial importance of keeping it alive. However, their wish, though fervent, proved difficult to enact. The general social and economic conditions of Hong Kong in the early 1950s were extremely poor, and the British colonial government, still adjusting to its reassertion of control over

2. Yale-China Association, "About Us: History," Yale-China Association, <http://www.yalechina.org/dynamicpage.php?Id=18&SubId=38>.

3. The Asia Foundation, "About the Asia Foundation," The Asia Foundation, available on-line from <http://www.asiafoundation.org/About/overview.html>.

4. Ford Foundation, "Who We Are: History," Ford Foundation, available on-line from <http://www.fordfound.org/about/history/overview>.

5. Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 79–80.

Hong Kong following Japan's wartime occupation, could barely meet the basic needs of the rapidly changing colony. Funding for higher education and research was scarce, and thus the survival of an institution such as New Asia would be difficult and perhaps impossible.

Luckily for New Asia, its dream of Chinese cultural education in Hong Kong struck a chord with the Yale-China Association and the Asia and Ford Foundations. Not only did these three NGOs offer their help, but the funds they gave were considerable enough that both the college and research institute flourished, growing to such stature that they were incorporated into a full-fledged university within a decade. Why did these NGOs find New Asia's promotion of higher education in Hong Kong so worthy of their support? Why did they think New Asia's site, Hong Kong, would be an amenable and effective location for this work? And why did they believe that New Asia's goal of Chinese cultural preservation was both viable and desirable within the broader and more urgent context of the Cold War?

To answer these questions, this study examines the archival records of the Yale-China Association, the Ford Foundation, and the Asia Foundation to understand what these organizations intended to achieve by supporting the New Asia College and Research Institute.⁶ Some of these records—including press announcements, speeches, publicity pieces, funding appeals, and annual reports—are official, public declarations by the organizations to explain their

6. The Manuscripts and Archives department of Yale University's Sterling Library holds the most extensive collection of primary documents pertaining to New Asia (Records of the Yale-China Association, RU 232). The collection consists of more than 100 boxes containing mainly private reports and letters as well as funding appeals, which together explain the motives for and execution of Yale-China Association's support of New Asia. Because Yale-China supervised the use of Ford Foundation funding at New Asia, this collection also contains important primary documentation on the working relationship between Yale-China and Ford as well as on the negotiation of their common interests in New Asia. Primary documents produced by New Asia itself, such as handwritten correspondence and internal school memoranda written by New Asia personnel, are also housed there. The Ford Foundation's archives, located at its headquarters in New York, include complete board minutes dockets as well as project files on applications received and grants given to specific institutions and projects. The project file on New Asia has been lost or is otherwise unavailable. However, the board minutes are thorough in their explanations of the reasons for rejecting or accepting grant applications, and thus they provide information on the priorities and principles the foundation used in funding New Asia. The archives of the Asia Foundation are kept at the Hoover Institution archives at Stanford University. Access to them is permitted through special arrangement with the Asia Foundation head office in San Francisco. The relevant documents are kept in a dozen or so boxes of materials dealing specifically with New Asia College and Research Institute as well as more generally with the situation in Hong Kong in the 1950s and 1960s. The Asia Foundation established a Hong Kong office in 1953. Much of the material consists of correspondence or general reports from the Hong Kong representative to the San Francisco head office regarding the conditions in Hong Kong's society and education and the representative's interpretations of the Asia Foundation's proper response to changing needs. All references to the three archival collections are given according to the regulations set by the organizations themselves, excepting minor adjustments made to conform to the stylistic requirements of the *Journal of Cold War Studies*. The three collections are abbreviated in the footnotes as YC for the Yale-China Association, TAF for The Asia Foundation, and FD for the Ford Foundation.

actions, projects, principles, and motives. The content and language of such documents reveal the organizations' priorities and policies and indicate the face these organizations wished to present to the public during the early Cold War. Other archival documents are records of private meetings or missives meant for private consumption—board meeting minutes, financial statements, debates over policy plans, internal reports, and private letters and memoranda—and reveal the hesitations and contests within the organizations over formulating policy and executing principles. Taken together, the public and private documents show the complexity of the debates and decisions involved in the NGOs' choice of New Asia as an aid recipient and the meaning the NGOs collectively infused into their support of Hong Kong higher education during the early Cold War.

This article analyzes the ambiguity and ambivalence in the thinking of the Yale-China Association and the Asia and Ford Foundations in the early 1950s. First, it shows how and why the NGOs came to believe that supporting higher education was the best strategy they could follow in Hong Kong. Second, it examines the NGOs' perception of Hong Kong as a site for their work and demonstrates that their notion of intellectual and educational neutrality both did and did not conform to the Cold War dichotomous system. Finally, the article shows why New Asia's concept of cultural education so appealed to the NGOs' sensibilities and purposes and how such cultural education both buttressed and muddled U.S. government policies. In opting to focus on higher education despite other pressing needs, in committing to Hong Kong despite its precarious position, and in emphasizing cultural education as both goal and strategy, these three NGOs demonstrated beliefs and tactics that were both a reflection of American Cold War policy and a departure from it. By both running parallel to and diverging from governmental strategy, the American NGOs' support of New Asia in Hong Kong introduced ambiguity and complexity into containment policy.

Keeping Chinese Youth Out of China: Promoting Non-Communist Higher Education in Hong Kong

A U.S. NGO appealing for funds to support Hong Kong's New Asia College lamented the educational situation for Chinese youth in the early 1950s:

Amongst the refugee population in Hong Kong are thousands of young people of college age or approaching it. The [Chinese] Communist government puts great pressure on them to return for an education to be furnished wholly at gov-

ernment expense. Once enrolled in a Communist school or university, they are practically lost to the Free World.⁷

From the perspective of these NGOs, the problem was obvious: students in Hong Kong were being enticed back to the PRC by the no-cost or low-cost universities open to them there. Hong Kong in the early 1950s was full of recent refugees, most of whom were escapees from mainland China who had reason to avoid the just-formed Communist government. However, youth from these refugee families found themselves in a difficult situation upon completion of secondary school studies: Post-secondary education options in Hong Kong, and indeed elsewhere in Southeast Asia, were scarce. With limited or no options for further study, the offer of the PRC government to support their education if they returned to the mainland could seem attractive.

The PRC's effort to pull Chinese refugee students back to China extended beyond Hong Kong's borders. By 1953, the Chinese government had shown that it aimed to target Chinese youth not only in Hong Kong but throughout Southeast Asia with the enticement of educational offerings. According to the Ford Foundation:

The "overseas" Chinese, by which is meant the Chinese living outside China throughout Southeast Asia (e.g., Indonesia, Philippines, Malaya, Burma, etc.) dominate the economic structure of Southeast Asia to an extent out of all proportion to their number of twelve million. The Chinese Reds are well aware of the influence of this group and have conducted special propaganda campaigns to attract "overseas" Chinese youths to China.⁸

If the Chinese government succeeded in gathering on Communist Chinese soil all Chinese youth "living outside China throughout Southeast Asia," the impact would have been huge because the Chinese who had emigrated to Southeast Asian countries not only were economically powerful but were far greater in number than those recently arrived in Hong Kong. American NGOs feared that the incentives offered by the mainland Chinese government would indeed induce many Chinese students to return to the PRC for their higher education because opportunities in higher education were not available to them in Hong Kong or elsewhere in Southeast Asia. The language used by NGOs when describing the educational conditions facing Hong Kong and Southeast Asian Chinese reflected their anxiety about the possible expansion of Communism's influence through education. They referred to

7. Memorandum from Latourette to Eleanor Clay Ford of Eleanor Clay Ford Fund, 24 November 1958, in YC 232-31-232.

8. FD Board Minute Dockets, September 1953, p. 1, in FD.

the mainland government as “the Chinese Reds” and their efforts as “propaganda,” expressing concern that a large number of students might be “lost to the Free World.” For American NGOs observing the Chinese educational situation in the early 1950s, Hong Kong and the whole of the Southeast Asian region were deemed to be in a state of educational emergency, as Communism’s influence over Chinese youth was threatening to expand at an increasingly accelerated rate.

The NGOs responded with a plan to arrest the flow of expatriate Chinese students back to Communist China. To obviate the appeal of mainland Chinese educational offerings, the NGOs would support and help develop educational institutions beyond China’s borders. The hundreds of thousands of dollars funneled by American NGOs into New Asia College and Research Institute exemplify this effort. They reasoned that if education at such institutions was available at an affordable cost, the need to return to China for further schooling would disappear. Because of the increasing number of refugees converging on Hong Kong, the British colony was particularly fertile ground for the effort to curb the PRC’s educational reach. Education as containment thus became the counterstrategy of the American NGOs on China’s periphery.

Choosing to emphasize education, however, was not an easy decision because of the concurrent and conspicuous urgency of the practical physical needs of Hong Kong and Asia generally. Yale-China, in examining Hong Kong, noted the extensive need for basic medical help among the growing refugee population. In surveying the British colony in early 1952, Yale-China staff had ample opportunity to witness the extent of the poverty and physical degradation there. Their report characterized Hong Kong as “the Far East’s capital of misery,” noting that “economic and health conditions there were intolerable.”⁹ Medical services were in dangerously short supply, with rampant hunger and disease. However, despite Hong Kong’s great medical need and Yale-China’s own experience in the medical-aid field, the board of Yale-China chose to invest in a campaign to meet the educational needs of Chinese youth. A failure to bolster higher education, the board feared, would mean that the best and brightest young Chinese in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia would be educated in PRC universities in ever greater numbers. The Yale-China board hoped to prevent such an unpalatable outcome:

To assist in the post-secondary education of young Chinese men and women even though the medical needs of the people in the colony are overwhelming. . . . The Trustees of Yale-in-China are eager to keep the Chinese Commu-

9. Harry Rudin, “A Meeting of East and West,” *New Asia College 30th Anniversary Bulletin* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1979), p. 37.

nists from winning a victory because of western default in this phase of the struggle for the minds and souls of men.¹⁰

The Yale-China board chose higher education and “the struggle for the minds and souls of men” as their first priority in Hong Kong. The board members were so intent on keeping the expatriate Chinese youth away from Communist education that they decided to dedicate the NGO’s entire funding budget to the educational efforts at New Asia College.

The Asia and Ford Foundations, less limited by budgetary constraints, could afford to contribute to a variety of projects, including those of physical relief. Yet, to a considerable degree they also chose to invest in education, particularly when the grants could serve the purpose of making any Communist-offered education less appealing or less accessible. Both the Asia Foundation and the Ford Foundation gave significant funds to ensure the survival of New Asia. The buildings and infrastructure of New Asia were almost entirely funded by Ford, and academic research and development were mainly funded by The Asia Foundation. The Asia Foundation also expanded its help to other refugee colleges in Hong Kong and contributed greatly to youth educational activities in the community.¹¹ Furthermore, Yale-China, the Asia Foundation, the Ford Foundation worked to strengthen the intellectual base of Hong Kong by aiding refugee teachers and thinkers there; for example, the Ford Foundation contributed to a study conducted by the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees to ascertain the problems of anti-Communist Chinese refugee intellectuals in Hong Kong and find solutions and new lives for them beyond the PRC’s borders.¹² Such projects reflected the great emphasis American NGOs placed on developing and strengthening education and intellectual activity in the non-Communist sphere in order to contain Communist influence.¹³

The level of NGO focus on education can be explained in part by the general orientation of such organizations at the time. American NGOs had al-

10. Proposal, 13 October 1953, in YC 232-29-214. The Yale-in-China Association, formerly, the Yale Foreign Missionary Society, was reincorporated as the Yale-China Association in 1975 and maintains this latter name up through the present.

11. Interview with Lun-Zun (L.Z.) Yuan, 21 June 2003, San Francisco. Yuan was the Hong Kong representative of the Asia Foundation in the 1950s.

12. FD 1953 Annual Report, p. 35, in FD. The full report of this UN study is given in Edvard Hambro, *The Problem of Chinese Refugees in Hong Kong: Report Submitted to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees* (Leiden, Netherlands: A. W. Sijthoff, 1955). Hambro was chief of the Hong Kong Refugees Survey Mission.

13. For a general account of U.S. international philanthropic work in this period, see Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1963), ch. 9. In many areas of the world, U.S. NGOs contributed extensively to, even focused predominantly on, the development of medical, technical, and economic infrastructure. The educational emphasis of the NGOs in 1950s Hong Kong thus cannot be read as a general representation of NGO priorities everywhere.

ready been investing heavily in education generally and higher education particularly, believing that it was the best way to foster and train future scholars and leaders. After World War II, foundations not only increasingly emphasized higher education but also highlighted the broader influence of intellectual leaders in expanding democracy and engaging in independent policy analysis. This effort intensified and moved into the global arena in the early Cold War years. By the early 1950s, the major NGOs had become focused on training leaders abroad and producing a global intellectual elite that shared not only common skills and knowledge but common values. According to Ford, the strategy was to nurture a class of “modernizing elites” who would be linked to their cohort around the world.¹⁴ To achieve this goal, the NGOs increased their investment in global higher education and sent special missions around the world to identify the most appropriate universities and research institutions to which they could contribute. The people educated at such institutions were meant to serve subsequently as pivotal figures in development programs worldwide.¹⁵

NGO support for New Asia College was fully in line with this goal. By educating Chinese youth in Hong Kong and keeping them out of the PRC’s clutches, the NGOs could produce top students who would hold non-Communist values and become leaders of non-Communist societies. New Asia clearly understood the American NGOs’ motives in this regard and designed its appeals for NGO funding accordingly. For example, in describing its mission in an appeal to the Asia Foundation for funds to build a school of agriculture, New Asia wrote,

We realize that anti-communist activity is not only necessary for the present, it will continue to be so after we return to the Continent. The ideas of democracy and liberty will have to penetrate into wide-spread rural villages of the whole country. With this idea in mind we intend to train a group of young men who on their return to the continent should work among the farmers in the villages not only as technicians but also as leaders of intellectual life.¹⁶

The Asia Foundation chose to continue funding for New Asia in order to train junior researchers to become the “new blood” needed to fill the profes-

14. Francis X. Sutton, “American Foundations and United States Public Diplomacy,” (address delivered to the Symposium on the Future of United States Public Diplomacy, of the U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements, 22 July 1968): quoted in Edward Berman, *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy: The Ideology of Philanthropy* (Albany: State University of New York, 1983), p. 60.

15. Berman, *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations*, pp. 70–71.

16. TAF P-56, 1952, in TAF.

rial ranks” of universities in a future non-Communist China and to groom non-Communist intellectual leaders in all areas of life.¹⁷

For the Asia Foundation and the other American NGOs working in Hong Kong, the best way to contain Communist influence in Asia was to buttress higher education outside the PRC’s borders, fortifying the periphery against mainland Communist encroachments. Creating educational options beyond the PRC’s reach was intended to combat Communist influence through non-military means and to prevent the Communist authorities from bringing more people under their sway. Because the PRC had been using higher education to lure young Chinese, the NGOs sought to counter this by facilitating an expansion of educational options on China’s periphery.

The Politics of Location: Hong Kong’s Ambiguous Neutrality

The need to provide non-Communist education on the Chinese periphery made Hong Kong a base for the NGOs’ efforts. Although the choice of Hong Kong was initially coincidental and was simply a response to the crisis at hand, the NGOs soon carefully weighed the relative benefits and broader symbolic meaning of Hong Kong as a site from which to work. In the process, Hong Kong came to represent something much more than a refugee convergence point.

The educational predicament in Hong Kong that first drew the American NGOs’ attention existed in no small part because of the proximity of the British colony to mainland China: Hong Kong was the place to which Chinese refugees could flee most readily. Such closeness, however, had its perils for the American NGOs. When the Ford Foundation was considering funding for New Asia, one of the concerns was whether working in Hong Kong would be too great “a gamble in view of Hong Kong’s proximity to Red China.”¹⁸ Ford worried that Hong Kong and its institutions might be in danger of being unduly influenced, or even taken over, by the Chinese Communist government. Ultimately, however, Hong Kong’s proximity to China along the border convinced Ford that the colony would not only be effective but would in fact be the most crucial place from which to work:

The Officers regard support of the New Asia College as a calculated risk and one that is worth taking. They feel that Hong Kong for a number of reasons—not

17. TAF P-56, Ivy to Qian, 26 February 1955, in TAF.

18. FD Board Minute Dockets, September 1953, p. 1, in FD.

the least of which is its very proximity to Red China—is the best place in which to attack the problem of providing trained Chinese leaders for Southeast Asia.¹⁹

The Asia Foundation similarly ascribed to Hong Kong great strategic importance in the sphere of education and information. In the early 1950s the foundation chose Hong Kong as the headquarters of its new Intra-Asian Chinese Program, a program meant to coordinate the efforts of all non-Communist overseas Chinese for the anti-Communist cause. Hong Kong was to be the base for such an operation because, in the Asia Foundation's view, "Hong Kong is rightly recognized as the most important Free World production center for Chinese-language publications and other media; it is the most important center of influence amongst overseas Chinese outside Taiwan."²⁰ To provide overseas Chinese and others with a stream of updated and accurate information on the ill effects of Communist rule in China, Hong Kong was also used by the Asia Foundation as a base for gathering information about the PRC, a task facilitated by Hong Kong's "easy access to a wealth of Communist publications and because of the opportunities to interview eye-witnesses from the interior of China."²¹ The beneficiaries of such education and information would be not only the refugees in Hong Kong but the broader network of overseas Chinese who might otherwise succumb to Communism's enticements. Hong Kong, acting as what Yale-China termed "the bridgehead of the free world," could serve as an ideal site from which to collect unfavorable information about the PRC and to advocate a non-Communist brand of learning and thinking.²²

The choice of Hong Kong conformed to the NGOs' general strategy at the time. Their impulse, facing the the Sino-Soviet bloc, was to work most intensely in the areas nearest the Communist powers and hence most likely to be threatened by them. The Ford Foundation especially worried about the countries "precariously situated along the periphery of the Soviet-Communist orbit."²³ Ford designated South and Southeast Asia, what it labeled "the underbelly of China," as a primary target for its work.²⁴ Hong Kong was a key part of this zone.

19. Ibid.

20. TAF P-55, Preface to Budget Proposal 1955/56, in TAF.

21. TAF P-56, Chinese Communist Research Institute, in TAF.

22. Memo re: Discussion with Ford, 18 May 1953, in YC 232-29-214.

23. Carl Spaeth, "Program for Asia and the New East" (1952), Ford Foundation International Training and Research Papers, Administration, Board of Overseas Training and Research: quoted in Berman, *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations*, p. 56.

24. Oral History Transcript, John B. Howard, n.d., pp. 4–5, in FD. In 1953, approximately one-third of the Ford Foundation's budget for international programs was allocated to South, East, and Southeast Asia. Statistics compiled from FD 1953 Annual Report. The Annual Report of 1953 was the

However, if containment in Southeast Asia was the NGOs' principal concern, why not base their activities in Taiwan, whose non-Communist, even anti-Communist, role was much more explicit? The Taiwanese government shared the NGOs' goal of undercutting Communist China's influence. For Yale-China, Taiwan initially seemed an attractive option. Many on the organization's board initially preferred Taiwan, where U.S. help was clearly welcome. However, after an on-site survey, Yale-China decided that because the U.S. government already was significantly involved in Taiwan the association's support would be more usefully allocated to Hong Kong. Official U.S. aid to Taiwan was being channeled through the Mutual Security Administration, and hence the general need for financial support there was not nearly as great as in Hong Kong.²⁵ More important was concern about how Taiwan's political situation and Cold War role might affect educational projects. When Yale-China employees were scouting Taiwanese educational institutions as possible candidates for support, they discovered that the Taiwanese government intended to exert considerable control over educational establishments and especially any foreign involvement in them. The Taiwanese government even pressured Yale-China to support Taiwan, declaring that Americans had a responsibility to contribute to Taiwan's survival and that the Taiwanese government expected a substantial transfer of funds from Yale-China to the government itself before it would permit the organization to give aid to any particular school.²⁶ Even more objectionable, the Taiwanese government wanted the curriculum and teaching methods of the school to be under its direct supervision. Educational content would be strictly censored by official authorities, and thus intellectual and academic freedom would be non-existent.²⁷

Faced with such strictures and demands, Yale-China decided against working in Taiwan. The degree of political control demanded by the Taiwanese government would, the association feared, stymie the educational objectives it valued. Even though Yale-China had no sympathy for the Communist government in China, it wished to uphold the integrity of its own educational mission and the broader parameters of its work. Yale-China also feared that a close relationship with Taiwan would have more-concrete consequences for its long-range goals, posing risks for the Chinese who had previously been associated with Yale-China and were still on the mainland:

foundation's most comprehensive annual report of the early 1950s, containing both the most specific information on projects and budgets and also general explanations of organizational principles and program directions. As such, it is the most representative statement of Ford's activities and goals in that period.

25. Proposal, 13 October 1953, in YC 232-29-214.

26. Rudin, "A Meeting of East and West," p. 36.

27. Nancy E. Chapman, *The Yale-China Association: A Centennial History* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2001), p. 81.

Any activity which appears to take sides in the cold war would create difficulties for our Chinese colleagues still at the old stand in China. . . . At present the communists are reported to be launching a new campaign of political investigation into the behavior and thinking of individuals. . . . This might be a dangerous time to appear openly among the opposition.²⁸

Yale-China also had a vested interest in maintaining a neutral profile in the eyes of the Chinese Communist government because of hopes of returning someday to the mainland. Although the periphery would suffice until mainland China became accessible, Yale-China's heart lay on the mainland, and it hoped to resume work there as soon as was practicable. In fact, when Yale-China decided to support New Asia in Hong Kong, it stressed that this was a temporary measure and that "it would be the primary intent of Yale-in-China to return to the mainland . . . if the opportunity arises within the five-year period."²⁹ In the interim, Yale-China needed to operate in a way and in a place that would not arouse the suspicion or ire of the PRC government.

For these reasons, Taiwan was a much less desirable site. As an NGO with long-term goals in China, Yale-China wanted a site that would be relatively free from explicit pro-American and anti-Communist associations. The Asia and Ford Foundations, though they did not have similar pre-1949 ties to particular people or projects on the mainland, were also reluctant to become too deeply involved with Taiwan. In the early 1950s Ford had no projects in Taiwan and was connected to Taiwan only via individual researchers it supported who happened to work on projects related to Taiwan.³⁰ The Asia Foundation, after considering the possibility of promoting the Taiwan Nationalist government as the official "inheritors of the great Chinese cultural tradition," ultimately decided to adopt a less partisan position and to limit its involvement with Taiwan.³¹

Although the educational mission of these NGOs was to curb Communist influence, they wanted to prevent this goal from overshadowing their work.³² Hence, they did not want to become conspicuously aligned with official U.S. positions and policies. The NGOs were mindful that they were unofficial, "non-governmental" entities. The Asia and Ford Foundations saw their non-governmental nature as a crucial asset. The Asia Foundation, for in-

28. Memorandum from Schoyer to Holden, 6 September 1952, in YC 232-94-702.

29. YC Board Minutes, 22 March 1953, in YC 232-5-30.

30. FD1953 Annual Report, in FD.

31. TAF P-79, General Taiwan 1952-53, in TAF.

32. Not all U.S. NGOs steered clear of Taiwan. Some organizations, such as the China Medical Board of New York and the Door of Hope Mission, did relocate there. The NGOs examined in this paper, however, were sensitive to political insinuations that might adversely affect their educational work and thus had misgivings about Taiwan.

stance, pointed out that, as a purely private organization, it could work more effectively than the U.S. government “to help find ways to maintain and expand private U.S. contact and communication with the peoples of Asia following the establishment of Communist regimes in China and North Korea.”³³ Such “bridges of understanding and communication” built between peoples rather than states were, Ford believed, the essential work of NGOs because these channels of communication “may prove of inestimable value in advancing freedom and extending democratic ideals.”³⁴ Although advancing democracy and opposing Communism might be the shared goal of NGOs and the U.S. government, the Asia Foundation felt that its non-governmental nature gave it “the freedom and flexibility to do things the Government would like to see done but which it chose not to do or could not do directly as well.”³⁵ The Ford Foundation likewise believed that “the unofficial status of a foundation can be a great advantage, particularly during a period when hundreds of millions of people are poised precariously between democracy and totalitarianism, and distrust any government effort to win their support.”³⁶

Although the NGO’s use of language attentive to “democracy” echoed terms then current in official U.S. parlance, NGO concerns in fact went beyond those of U.S. foreign policy. The NGOs believed that by maintaining neutrality in the sphere of thought and education they could help establish democratic foundations that were much stronger and more durable than if their focus were solely on the containment of Communism. The Ford Foundation also emphasized that, despite its interests in pushing education in a certain direction, it could not betray its more fundamental commitment to free inquiry. Democracy’s object would best be attained, Ford believed, not by insisting that Communism be banned from consideration but by creating and permitting a free intellectual space from which any ideas could be explored:

The Foundation’s trustees have believed consistently in the support of nonpartisan and objective activities designed to strengthen our democratic institutions. For a democratic society needs objective and scientific analysis and nonpartisan education, as well as political debate and partisan controversy to insure orderly progress.³⁷

In pursuing this goal, Ford insisted that the thought of both East and West be thoroughly examined, with particular attention paid to the underlying values

33. U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *The Asia Foundation: Past, Present, and Future*, report prepared by the Congressional Research Service, 98th Cong., 1st sess., 1983, p. 1.

34. FD 1953 Annual Report, p. 14.

35. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *The Asia Foundation*, p. 1.

36. FD 1953 Annual Report, p. 14.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

and philosophies that had shaped human societies in all their variety.³⁸ The principle of intellectual freedom meant that the NGOs required a space that would not conspicuously and inflexibly place them on either side of the ideological divide. In this sense, neutrality was not only something afforded by the organizations' non-governmental nature but was in fact a necessary ingredient to achieving their goals.

The American NGOs' need for a nonpartisan work site made Hong Kong particularly attractive. Although Hong Kong was under the control of Great Britain, a country clearly on the U.S. side in the Cold War, the United States did not have unlimited influence there because the British wanted "to support U.S. efforts in confronting the Soviet-led Communist bloc and [to] protect British interests in China at the same time."³⁹ On the one hand, Britain's behavior and rhetoric during this period did mirror the sharp Cold War attitudes and terminology of its U.S. ally, as exemplified in a 1949 policy statement: "We . . . refuse to discuss the future of Hong Kong with a China which is undemocratic, since we should not be prepared to hand the people of Hong Kong over to a Communist regime."⁴⁰ On the other hand, the British also aimed to keep Hong Kong as free of political partisanship and unrest as possible, in order to safeguard the China trade that Britain deemed crucial and to forestall the feared possibility that China might attack and reclaim Hong Kong.⁴¹ The British thus constantly emphasized their intent to preserve relative neutrality for Hong Kong. The colony's governor at the time, Alexander Grantham, stated: "The strength of our position in Hong Kong depends

38. Schoyer to Holden, 20 March 1953, in YC 232-29-215.

39. James T. H. Tang, "World War to Cold War: Hong Kong's Future and Anglo-Chinese Interactions, 1941-55," in Ming K. Chan, ed., *Precarious. Balance: Hong Kong Between China and Britain, 1842-1992* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1994), p. 108.

40. Arthur Creech-Jones, 19 August 1949, in File 1, Vol. 57, CP (49)177, Arthur Creech-Jones Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford: quoted in Steve Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), p. 156.

41. Mao Zedong in the 1940s, and his government after 1949, had indicated that they did not intend to seize Hong Kong from the British by force in the near future but did expect its return at an unspecified later date. See Tang, "World War to Cold War," pp. 116-117; and Tsang, *A Modern History*, pp. 153-154, 159. However, this position was premised on the maintenance of relatively cordial relations between the new People's Republic of China and Britain, and thus the British were ever anxious to avoid any disturbance of this delicate equilibrium lest it result in threats against its colony. See Steve Tsang, "A Strategy for Survival: The Cold War and Hong Kong's Policy towards Kuomintang and Chinese Communist Activities in the 1950's," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (May 1997), pp. 296-298, 302; and Tang, "World War to Cold War," pp. 119-120. For broader background on British policy, see Brian Hook, "National and International Interests in the Decolonisation of Hong Kong, 1946-97," in Judith M. Brown and Rosemary Foot, eds., *Hong Kong's Transitions, 1842-1997* (London: Macmillan Press, 1997); Feng Zhong-ping, *The British Government's China Policy, 1945-1950* (Keele, UK: Ryburn Publishing, 1994); and John Kent, "The British Empire and the Origins of the Cold War, 1944-49," in Anne Deighton, ed., *Britain and the First Cold War* (London: Macmillan, 1990).

largely upon non-involvement in political issues.”⁴² Kenneth Younger, a senior Foreign Office official, explained that “if we are to side openly with the Americans it would lead to a rupture of relationship with China, [and] Hong Kong would become untenable.”⁴³ Even though on some matters the British accepted U.S. demands for strict execution of Cold War policy, the British colonial government was careful not to allow its Hong Kong territory to become jeopardized by Cold War political divisions and tensions.⁴⁴

With the British seeking to keep Hong Kong minimally involved in the Cold War, U.S. ambitions to have the British colony play a strong containment role were curtailed. The United States would have liked to have used Hong Kong against the PRC, relying on it as “a window looking into Communist China” and “a reservoir of Chinese intelligence and Chinese talent.”⁴⁵ However, because Taiwan could also be used for such purposes, U.S. officials felt no need to insist on using Hong Kong. Moreover, U.S. officials were less than eager to become overly involved in Hong Kong, particularly in the event of a Chinese invasion, which for the United States would “risk major military involvement in China and possibly global war.”⁴⁶ Furthermore, military intervention in Hong Kong would have put the United States into the position of defending another country’s colony—an unpopular idea in anticolonial circles both at home and abroad.⁴⁷ With defense of Hong Kong entailing such extensive political and military costs, the United States judged it unwise and unnecessary to become deeply involved in Hong Kong.⁴⁸ U.S. hesitation and

42. Hong Kong to Colonial Office No. 230, 5 March 1950, CO 537/5628, Public Record Office, London (hereinafter PRO): quoted in Tsang, “A Strategy for Survival,” p. 300.

43. Kenneth Younger draft Cabinet paper, Crowe to Garner, 23 July 1950, CO 537/6074, 54501/1, PRO: quoted in Chi-Kwan Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War: Anglo-American Relations, 1949–1957* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 2004), p. 101.

44. For a full treatment of the issue of Anglo-American debate on Hong Kong’s Cold War role, see Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*; and Law Yuk Fun, “Delayed Accommodation: United States Policies towards Hong Kong, 1949–1960,” Ph.D. Diss., University of Hong Kong, 2001. See also Tang, “World War to Cold War,” pp. 117–124. British reluctance to become mired in U.S. Cold War tangles was also true for other areas of East Asia. See Peter Lowe, *Containing the Cold War in East Asia: British Policies toward Japan, China and Korea, 1948–53* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1997).

45. Theodore Olsen, Inspection Report to State Department, 9 June 1953, in RG 84, USIS HK 1951–5, Box I, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD: quoted in Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, p. 36–37. The United States did use Hong Kong for propaganda and intelligence purposes to an extent but was limited in the scope and scale of this work by British pressure. See Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, ch. 5; and Law, “Delayed Accommodation,” chs. 9–10.

46. Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, NSC Meeting 47, 15 July 1949, in Box 206, President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers: quoted in Tsang, “A Strategy for Survival,” p. 296.

47. Law, “Delayed Accommodation,” pp. 353–357, 369–371.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 347–351, 368–369; and Tsang, “A Strategy for Survival,” pp. 295–96. U.S. policy to-

restraint in this regard helped Hong Kong in the 1950s to maintain, to a considerable extent, its British-defined neutrality.⁴⁹

In both British and American policy, then, Hong Kong's role was ambiguous. With political and practical factors shaping official policy, both governments, albeit for different reasons, settled on a strategy for 1950s Hong Kong that gave the colony an image of relative political neutrality. The American NGOs capitalized on Hong Kong's neutral image in order to maintain the independence of their current work on the Chinese periphery and to leave open their future options on the Chinese mainland. Yale-China declared that Hong Kong was "neutral enough as far as the Chinese and their activities here go to escape the name of anti-communism" and was "the one place where we can work effectively and with complete freedom from political interference among Chinese people."⁵⁰

NGO action was thus situated within the framework of official British and U.S. policy in using Hong Kong's ambiguous Cold War position. But the NGOs' commitment to intellectual and educational freedom was such that they envisioned the purpose and significance of Hong Kong's purported neutrality differently from the way the governments viewed it. The NGOs' intention to return to their work on the mainland at the earliest opportunity, their need to preserve contacts and co-workers on the mainland, and especially their desire to perform educational work in a more objective way—all these facets ensured that the NGOs' efforts extended beyond Cold War battles and counter-battles, either ideological or geopolitical. Unlike the U.S. and British governments, the NGOs acted on motivations that were pedagogical and idealistic. Their underlying interests were separate and divergent from those of the two governments. Even where the NGOs' desire for a neutral site matched the concerns and goals of government, the NGOs' vision went well beyond what the Cold War prescribed.

ward Hong Kong was part of a larger policy framework that made Asia less important than Europe in U.S. foreign policy. See Law, "Delayed Accommodation," p. 352. Even when the Korean War and conflicts in the Taiwan Straits raised the significance of Asia in the American mind, Hong Kong continued to take a back seat in American defensive containment priorities. The U.S. government's view of Hong Kong's significance did not change significantly until the late 1950s. See Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, Epilogue; and Law, "Delayed Accommodation," pt. III.

49. Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, in her *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992: Uncertain Friendships* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), argues that, despite the U.S. failure to commit explicitly to Hong Kong's defense, U.S. officials actually did intend to intervene if necessary (pp. 200–202). The works of Mark, Law, and Tsang refute this interpretation by highlighting the ambiguous stance of the United States vis-à-vis Hong Kong, showing that the U.S. government did not in fact intend to involve itself in Hong Kong's military defense in case of Chinese attack.

50. Memorandum from Schoyer to Holden, 6 September 1952, in YC 232-94-702; and Long Report to Trustees, 16 June 1957, in YC 232-83-489.

Containing Communism by Conserving Chinese Culture

In striving for relative political neutrality by eschewing explicit political alliances and controls, the NGOs embraced the realm of culture. Anxious to avoid political complications in their support of education, they found in New Asia an ideal candidate for their support. Although the college's founding had been motivated by those who strongly opposed Communism in mainland China, the emphasis at New Asia had always been on the study and fortification of Chinese culture rather than on anti-Communism per se. The architects of New Asia believed that strengthening Chinese culture was the best strategy for securing China's post-Communist future and identity. In supporting New Asia's curricular orientation, the NGOs likewise decided that containment was best served by promoting Chinese culture through higher education.

In defining the cultural import of their educational mission, the NGOs' work of creating non-Communist educational opportunities for young Chinese involved more than simple numerical goals. Ford expressly opposed the "expansion of New Asia into an ordinary college with the purpose of simply providing more and better higher education for Chinese students."⁵¹ What Ford intended to support was an institute dedicated to the intense scholarly probing of political issues and systems in such a way that Communism would be discredited. As Ford conceived of New Asia: "The emphasis of the institute would be on scholarly examination, or re-examination, of eastern and western thought, cultural values, political philosophy and the like, looking toward the evolvement of new answers to Asia's problems other than Communism."⁵² Ford's intention was to invalidate Communism through detailed discussion and research, rather than simply proclaiming the ills of Communism. Ford thus wanted to support studies in philosophy, values, and theory, taking as its target a broad scope of knowledge from wide-ranging cultural sources. By promoting a consideration of both "eastern and western thought," Ford cast its educational and scholarly mission as one with cultural connotations.

The cultural meaning of such an educational and research agenda was, however, double-sided. On the one hand, in labeling Communism "a corruption of all the basic inalienable rights of man" Ford left no doubt that it saw

51. Memorandum from Schoyer to Holden, 20 March 1953, in YC 232-29-215.

52. *Ibid.*

Communism as a malign ideology for all people.⁵³ At the same time, Ford stressed the particular unsuitability of Communism for specific societies. In setting parameters on the scope of its educational containment activities, Ford specified that it would target for support “those nations whose political philosophy and objectives, if sustained or achieved, are incompatible with Communism.”⁵⁴ Similarly, the Asia Foundation, alongside its generalized attacks on Communism, demonstrated awareness of cultural particularity by escalating its work in societies it considered to be especially incompatible with Communism. The Asia Foundation’s choice of New Asia as a funding recipient was based in part on its assessment that China and the Chinese people were particularly unsuited to Communism:

Communism and the communist way of life are most un-Chinese. They are diametrically opposed to the traditional Chinese philosophies and ethics. Communism would not have had even its limited measure of success in China today had it not been for the long Sino-Japanese war and the subsequent dislocation of Chinese cultural and educational life.⁵⁵

The Asia Foundation was convinced that even though wartime destabilization had caused China to fall under Communism after the war, Communism was incompatible with the Chinese cultural nature. By marking Communism as particularly “un-Chinese” and by referring to the level of cultural orientation, the Asia and the Ford Foundations promoted the notion that a particular culture could be inherently antithetical to Communist principles.

This emphasis on culture proved important. The NGOs’ insistence that some cultures were especially anti-Communist meant that, instead of simply teaching students to reject Communism in the abstract, they should teach students how Communism clashed with their particular culture. If Chinese cultural values and Communist values were fundamentally incompatible, an educational containment strategy could simply concentrate on strengthening Chinese culture:

Since the requirements of communism in China are rooted in the destruction of Chinese culture, the act of enabling it to continue and to flourish implies cutting at the foundation of the communist effort on the mainland. So long as Chinese culture remains intact and attractive the Pei-p’ing regime will find that its stability is impaired.⁵⁶

53. Memorandum re: Discussion with Ford, 18 May 1953, in YC 232-29-214.

54. FD 1953 Annual Report, p. 14.

55. TAF P-56, Memorandum from L. Z. Yuan, 17 September 1953, in TAF.

56. TAF P-79 General Taiwan 1952/53 Taiwan Country Plan, p. 5, in TAF. Pei-p’ing is the Republican-era name of the mainland Chinese capital, Beijing.

After predicting the demise of Chinese Communist authority in the face of Chinese cultural strength, the NGOs had to place the fortification of Chinese culture at the top of their priority list.

The work at New Asia, seen in this light, was simple and straightforward: the partnership of American NGOs with New Asia would rest on their shared goal of bolstering traditional Chinese culture in order to fight the influence of Chinese Communism.⁵⁷ The Asia Foundation would support a program of research at New Asia

aimed toward a renaissance of basic appreciation and understanding of Chinese history and cultural development as an alternative to Communist doctrines and interpretations and to increase the influence of these scholars and make it possible for them to take up the responsibility of intellectual leadership.⁵⁸

Promoting “a renaissance” of Chinese cultural learning would, the Asia Foundation believed, simultaneously mean an exploration of non-Communist possibilities for China’s future. By stimulating scholarship on Chinese culture, the NGOs intended to create intellectual leaders for China who would, by virtue of their grounding in Chinese history and learning, provide an “alternative to Communist doctrines and interpretations” The linkage between education and the fight against Communism was not simply a matter of providing educational opportunities for Chinese youth outside the PRC. Rather, the idea was that promoting Chinese culture through education would directly diminish Communism’s ideological hold.

By positing a basic conflict between Chinese Communism and Chinese culture, the NGOs could bypass any preaching of Communism’s ills and concentrate instead on emphasizing the strengths of Chinese culture. Cultural fortification through education as an all-encompassing strategy fit well with the NGOs’ general faith in education. For Yale-China, with its roots as a missionary society, education had long been a primary means of reaching the spiritually “lost” in China. However, with the threat of Communism so close at hand and with so many other forces luring youth away from solid values, Yale-China decided that it would not make religious conversion its chief aim in postwar Hong Kong. Although Yale-China continued to regard China’s greatest need in spiritual terms, the Yale-China leadership believed that China’s cultural identity had to be strengthened before any religious answer could be meaningful or even desirable:

Yale-in-China is primarily concerned with the soul of China. What is to be the destiny, under God, of this great people and nation and cultural tradition? What

57. Yuan, interview.

58. TAF P-56, Announcement, 10 November 1953, in TAF.

can we do to help a people in exile and dispersed in many strange lands retain their identity as a people, hold on to their traditions, renew their ideals . . . so that the thing that is “China” may not be entirely cut off by the twisting plough of revolution or entirely erased by a slow accommodation to Western customs or the need for a job? . . . If this people is to gain a new faith, a new sense of direction, it must come from something that is called forth from within themselves, something that grows up from their own roots—new insights discovered and set forth by their own intellectual leaders.⁵⁹

The process of strengthening Chinese culture would, in Yale-China’s view, necessarily entail a searching examination of self in order to find a “new faith,” but this new faith could not be something artificially and arbitrarily imposed from an external force. Instead, it must be found within China’s own cultural soul, “called forth from within.” For this reason, even though Yale-China might have wished to preach Christianity and anti-Communism, it could not treat either of these as the main goal of its work with Chinese youth and Chinese scholarship.

Instead, Yale-China’s task was to assist with the maintenance and renewal of Chinese cultural roots. In this endeavor they considered New Asia to be an ideal executor because it was, in Yale-China’s eyes, “dedicated completely to the preservation and renewal of the Chinese spirit.” At New Asia, Chinese youth would have the opportunity to “learn what it means to be Chinese.”⁶⁰ Underlining and instilling a deep-seated sense of true Chinese-ness could be accomplished with the right educational tools. Yale-China found New Asia ideal because it seemed not only to promote Chinese culture through its curriculum but also to exist as a living embodiment of comprehensive Chinese-ness. After surveying the various colleges in Hong Kong at the time, Yale-China concluded that none of the others symbolized China as completely as New Asia did. Most of the refugee colleges then in Hong Kong were composed of students and teachers primarily from the southern Guangdong Cantonese-speaking region. These Cantonese colleges, Yale-China felt, represented too small a portion of China. Yale-China wanted to invest in a broad vision of Chinese culture and needed an institution that would symbolize China as a whole, not just one region:

New Asia is special in that it is a “northern” school in its language and culture and general orientation. . . . In a national sense it represents traditional China, without localisms and outside influence, better than the other H.K. [Hong

59. Long Report, Verbally Delivered to Public Meeting on 16 June 1957, in YC 232-83-489.

60. Ibid.

Kong] institutions, and better, I think, than the schools in Taiwan or Singapore do, or will.⁶¹

In elevating Chinese-ness through symbolic representation and curricular content, Yale-China's goals converged with the strategies of the Asia and Ford Foundations in seeking Communism's containment by educating Chinese youth about their own culture. In modern history this desire by Westerners to promote traditional Chinese culture was noteworthy. Yale-China and other NGOs working in China before the Communist takeover tended to argue for reform of every aspect of Chinese life. U.S. organizations, including the Rockefeller Foundation and many missionary societies, had worked to help China change, to become more educationally, socially, scientifically, politically, medically, and technically modern.⁶² This emphasis on change almost always, almost necessarily, implied a belief that China's traditional cultural values and institutions should be at least adjusted and perhaps abandoned. The advancement of Chinese cultural preservation in Hong Kong by American NGOs ran against the grain of this earlier pattern, but neither did it fit neatly with a developing NGO policy that sought, in the wake of postwar global decolonization efforts, the revival of traditional culture in newly independent countries in order to combat colonial ill effects on cultural identity. For example, the Ford Foundation in 1953 gave a substantive grant to the Burmese government for the establishment of a Center of Oriental Studies whose primary research focus would be Burmese Buddhism. Ford hoped that solidifying Burma's religious base would translate directly into a strengthening of Burmese national unity and identity.⁶³ Hong Kong, however, was not yet in the process of being decolonized in the early 1950s, so the NGO aid to New Asia was not tied to this new pattern.

61. Memorandum from Schoyer to Holden, 3 February 1954, in YC 232-94-704.

62. Studies of earlier non-governmental American efforts to reform China include Mary Brown Bullcock, *An American Transplant: The Rockefeller Foundation and Peking Union Medical College* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Jeffrey Trexler, "Education with the Soul of a Church: The Yale Foreign Missionary Society and the Democratic Ideal," Ph.D. Diss., Duke University, 1991; and Karen Brewer's "From Philanthropy to Reform: The American Red Cross in China, 1906-1930," Ph.D. Diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1983. The NGO efforts matched earlier reformist activities by Western groups in China. See Jonathan Spence, *To Change China: Western Advisers in China, 1620-1960* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1969). Even after the 1920s, when Chinese nationalist pressure caused a shift toward greater use of local leaders and institutions in U.S. philanthropic (especially missionary-related) work, the orientation of U.S. organizations in China remained focused on reform and relief. In the case of the Harvard-Yenching Institute (which also gave financial help to New Asia College), contributions were made to the development of Chinese studies programs at the Chinese Christian universities. However, this aid was intended to establish the viability and reputation of the foreign-established Christian universities and thus differed from the full-fledged promotion of Chinese culture as in the New Asia case. Regarding U.S. philanthropic work in Republican-era China, see Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad*, pp. 327-331, 348-359.

63. FD 1953 Annual Report, p. 30.

The strategy of cultural preservation in the case of New Asia was born of the containment goal: preserving Chinese culture would reduce Chinese Communism's power. Although the NGOs hoped that education and research would produce non-Communist answers for China, they concentrated their efforts, first and foremost, on promoting cultural self-understanding. This cultural understanding, in turn, was bound to highlight culturally specific incompatibilities with Communism. The NGOs believed that by supporting the study of traditional Chinese culture they could make Communism seem even more unappealing—and thus eliminate the need to preach anti-Communism explicitly, just as preaching Christianity would become unnecessary for Yale-China. The NGOs' support for New Asia, then, signified not only their deep commitment to cultural education but also their belief that New Asia would simultaneously revive Chinese culture and deflate Communism—a goal they all shared.

Conclusion

The American NGOs' support for New Asia College in Hong Kong had mixed meanings. On the one hand, the NGOs clearly fell into line with the main ideological divisions of the Cold War and sought to apply some of the precepts of official U.S. policy to the realm of higher education in Asia. On the other hand, their interpretations of Chinese culture and of Hong Kong, coupled with needs and goals that were prior to or separate from Cold War concerns, gave meanings to the NGOs' work that were quite distinct, even divergent, from the position of the U.S. government.

That the work of American NGOs did, in many ways, reflect the priorities and value orientation of official U.S. policy is not difficult to understand. The NGO leaders were living in the general climate of hostility toward Communism and presumably were as subject to its sway as anyone. Moreover, a strong correlation exists between many American NGOs and the U.S. government despite the unofficial nature of the former. The leaders of some of the most prominent NGOs of the time served as government officials at other points in their careers.⁶⁴ Such leadership correlation no doubt strengthened the Cold War orientation of many NGOs' policies. Furthermore, some NGOs, though privately organized and managed, were established with the blessing of the U.S. government and subsequently received significant govern-

64. The most famous example of such leadership correlation is Dean Rusk, who, between his tenures as assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs (1950–1952) and secretary of state (1961–1969), served as president of the Rockefeller Foundation. Berman, *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations*, pp. 64–65.

ment aid. For example, the Asia Foundation, originally called the Committee for Free Asia, not only was created with U.S. National Security Council approval but was led by a board whose founding members were handpicked by the government and later received indirect funding from the CIA.⁶⁵ Although this funding source did not necessarily dictate the activities of the foundation, its alliance with the government at the time of its origin and early development makes a parallel agenda unsurprising. Finally, both government and NGOs often considered the close alignment of their missions to be desirable. The U.S. government encouraged a close link between the activities and goals of official and unofficial American work abroad, stating that “voluntary foreign aid is most productive when it complements public aid.”⁶⁶ Among NGOs, the Ford Foundation proudly declared that it was of “special significance that no statesman or official of government . . . [has] ever differed with our major premises.”⁶⁷

With such connections in leadership, funding, and stated goals, the NGOs could be expected to endorse the official policy of containment and to work for this goal with some zeal. However, the manner in which they carried out this task, and particularly their emphasis on education, is noteworthy. The U.S. government was not blind to the need to convince people to steer clear of Communism. Mechanisms such as the international radio program Voice of America, the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948, and the United States Information Agency in 1953 were all geared toward the goal of disseminating information that would counter the Communist message.⁶⁸ However, far more of the U.S. government’s attention during the first decade of the Cold War was given to the economic and military realms.⁶⁹ The first decade of the Cold War is remembered for economic programs such as the Marshall Plan and for

65. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *The Asia Foundation*, pp. 1, 21.

66. Arthur C. Ringland, “Organization of Voluntary Foreign aid, 1939–1953,” 15 May 1954, in *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. 30, no. 768, p. 386; quoted in Brian Smith, *More than Altruism: The Politics of Private Foreign Aid* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 53.

67. H. Rowan Gaither, Jr., “The Ford Foundation and Foreign Affairs: An Address Delivered . . . at the Twenty-fifth Year Service Dinner of Dunwoody Industrial Institute, Minneapolis, May 3, 1956”: quoted in Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad*, p. 617.

68. Hans Tuch, *Communicating with the World: U.S. Public Diplomacy Overseas* (Washington: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, 1990), pp. 14–25; and Randolph Wieck, *Ignorance Abroad: American Educational and Cultural Foreign Policy and the Office of Assistant Secretary of State* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992), pp. 15–20. Studies on the political use and dissemination of information during the Cold War include Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945–1961* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997); David Krugler, *The Voice of America and the Domestic Propaganda Battles, 1945–53* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2000); Gary D. Rawnsley, *Radio Diplomacy and Propaganda: The BBC and VOA in International Politics, 1956–64* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996); and Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997).

69. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, pp. xi–xiv.

military conflicts such as the Korean War. In the midst of such programs and conflicts, the NGOs' decision to focus so intently on education in Hong Kong is striking. Their emphasis on books over bread or arms, and the depth of their commitment, suggest an alternate approach to the containment of Communism.

Because American NGOs had long regarded education as one of their primary tasks and responsibilities, their dedication to this goal was in part a simple intensification of a pattern that preceded Cold War concerns. But the education program in Hong Kong departed from U.S. official policy, because although the NGOs really were not neutral (they *were* fundamentally opposed to Communism), they nonetheless were intent on maintaining an appearance of relative neutrality. Instead of finding the most U.S.-friendly base from which to work, the NGOs preferred a site less influenced and less limited by political and ideological controls. Instead of embracing the language of political partisanship, they adopted an image of neutrality and intellectual freedom. Instead of considering their ties to mainland China severed, they waited eagerly for the chance to resume their work and reunite with their friends there. In all these ways, the NGOs' educational work in Hong Kong, though clearly motivated by a containment agenda, refused to situate itself as anti-Communist. By adopting a mantle more "non-Communist" than "anti-Communist," the NGOs attempted to achieve political goals in an apolitical manner. In claiming such apolitical neutrality, however, the NGOs' work acquired an aura of profound ambivalence. This ambivalence grew with the NGOs' insistence on claiming neutrality not only for themselves but also for Hong Kong. Their need for neutrality, in combination with the complex demands of the British and U.S. governments regarding Hong Kong's postwar role and position, heightened the ambiguity of Hong Kong's role during the Cold War.

In light of this ambiguity, the goal of conserving Chinese culture as an antidote against Communism could serve both the goals of containment and the need to maintain some distance from that enterprise. As long as a direct correlation could be drawn between strengthening Chinese culture and curtailing Communism's influence and appeal, the NGOs could do the educational work they wished to do, confident that both their government's and their own priorities were being addressed. But the NGOs' emphasis on promoting Chinese culture through education produced a degree of ambivalence. Although the NGOs spoke of Communism as irrefutably and universally unacceptable, they also focused particular attention on cultures that they believed to be somehow especially "incompatible" with Communism, including that of China itself. In making this claim, the NGOs brought into sharp focus the particularity of contexts and countries, even while denouncing Commu-

nism more generally. Between their broad declarations about Communism and their specific claims about individual countries, the NGOs did not clarify exactly which aspects of Chinese culture, or any culture, were incompatible with Communism. Despite this vagueness, their central idea—that Communism could be especially wrong for some cultures—was potentially dangerous because it left open the possibility that Communism could be less incompatible, even compatible, with others. This ambiguity about the relationship between Communism and culture complicated the usual clear moral divisions that the Cold War environment demanded.

The implications for the educational process, product, and philosophy in which the NGOs were engaged were even more pronounced. Although the NGOs were committed to the training of an anti-Communist intellectual leadership, they also emphasized the education of a culturally cognizant and globally connected intellectual elite whose knowledge and concerns extended far beyond Communism or its containment. In this, the influence of the broader forces of globalization and international development then gaining momentum in the postwar world may have been even more significant than the influence of Cold War divisions and ideology.⁷⁰ Promoting a vision broader than that of ideological battle also complicated the educational programs. Although the NGOs aimed to ensure that those educated through institutions supported by NGO funding would be fully aware of the dangers of Communism and would work against it, the NGOs also insisted on advancing learning that encompassed the full pantheon of global political systems and cultural traditions, as well as promoting freedom of thought and inquiry. The NGOs were thus advocating education and research that, on the one hand, had already determined which options were unacceptable but that, on the other hand, must evaluate and consider all options without bias or prejudice.

This situation was logically contradictory but was symptomatic of the fundamental ambivalence in the position of NGOs during the Cold War. Although they genuinely tried to serve the containment goal, the NGOs could not abandon their grander ideal of comprehensive education and objective research. This ideal sharply contrasted with government informational programs that, far from seeking comprehensiveness and objectivity, aimed to communicate an explicitly black-and-white message. President Harry S. Truman in his influential “Campaign for Truth” speech in 1950 emphasized that the United States must “overcome” Communist “deceit, distortion, and lies” by propagating a message of “truth—plain, simple unvarnished truth” in order to “promote the cause of freedom against the propaganda of

70. Iriye, *Global Community*, p. 65.

slavery.⁷¹ But the NGOs often held back from promoting a clear-cut anti-Communist picture. NGOs that worked under the postwar American occupation of Japan, for example, sought to curtail the U.S. government's use of the media for anti-Communist propaganda, arguing that the promotion of true intellectual freedom was more important than the short-term goal of spreading anti-Communist messages.⁷² Similarly, the NGOs' choice of Hong Kong as a neutral space revealed a commitment to intellectual freedom, even as they sought to contain Communism's influence. The entire educational project of the NGOs in Hong Kong—caught between advocating free thought and wanting correct thought, between promoting anti-Communism and desiring nonpartisanship—thus belied a deep-seated ambivalence over the very nature and purpose of education.

The ambiguity and ambivalence created by the NGOs' perceptions and actions in Hong Kong had the potential not only to confuse but to threaten the goal of containment. Their ambivalence created distance between themselves and U.S. official policy and caused an internal rift in their own logical and behavioral cohesion. The NGOs' support of New Asia in Hong Kong was unquestionably inspired by Cold War motivations and conditioned by the Cold War, but the intentions and strategies of the NGOs went considerably beyond containment parameters. By demonstrating concerns, preferences, and goals in tension with official ideology and policy, the NGOs created an educational situation rife with divergent meanings, which in turn made for complex, unintended, and ambiguous results, both for politics and for culture.

71. Harry Truman, "Address on Foreign Policy at a Luncheon of the American Society of Newspaper Editors," 20 April 1950, in *Public Papers of the Presidents—Harry S. Truman, 1950* (Washington, DC: Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1961–1966), pp. 260–264; quoted in Tuch, *Communicating with the World*, p. 15.

72. Reiko Maekawa, "The Allied Occupation, the Cold War, and American Philanthropy: The Rockefeller Foundation in Post-War Japan," in Soma Hewa and Philo Hove, eds., *Philanthropy and Cultural Context: Western Philanthropy in South, East, and Southeast Asia in the 20th Century* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc. 1997).