

**The Colonial State and Black Market Schools
in Postwar Hong Kong**

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戰後香港黑市學校的歷史個案

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ABSTRACT

After World War II the number of school-aged population in Hong Kong increased dramatically. Perceiving these children as mostly transient residents, the colonial regime chose to limit their role in education provision. This policy made private schools, which received no financial support from the government, significant providers of educational opportunities in the colony. To ensure that private schools would not operate in a manner hazardous to the pupils' health and safety, the colonial regime intensively regulated them through a string of stipulations. These policies raised the cost of maintaining schools, checked the supply of private institutions, and, as a result, led to the emergence of unregistered schools. This situation put the colonial government under a contradictory condition. If they took strong action against black market schools, the number of unschooled children would be even higher. However, conniving with unregistered schools would be problematic too. This is because it would provoke registered private institutions and some unregistered schools were operated by organizations with objectionable political backgrounds. The colonial government handled this problem by, first of all, loosening some stipulations, allowing many black market schools to register under more lenient conditions, and then forcing those institutions failing to register to close. Nevertheless, as the colonial government continued to assume a limited role in education provision and schooling facilities remained insufficient, the British authorities were unable to resolve the problem of black market schools. This article reveals the paradox of state intervention, as it demonstrates that the Hong Kong colonial state's decision to limit its role in education provision subsequently forced it to assume a more active role in regulating the school system. It also suggested that hamstrung by the situations resulted from previous policies, interventions from the state might not bring about the expected results.

The Colonial State and Black Market Schools in Postwar Hong Kong

The colonial state of Hong Kong has long been portrayed by scholars as having maintained disengagement from societal affairs and having sought only a limited reach in society. For instance, Lau Siu-Kai, in his seminal book on Hong Kong politics, postulated that the colonial regime, which had neither the intention nor the resources to carry out large-scale social reform, adhered to the doctrines of *laissez-faire* and social non-interventionism.¹ This quality of self-restraint by the ruling authorities, according to Lau, helped preserve political stability in the territory. For by confining its intrusion into society, the secluded colonial state successfully insulated itself from interferences from social and political forces and prevented social issues from becoming political demands that the ruling authorities were unable to satisfy.² This depiction, being one of the earliest scholarly endeavors to anatomize ruling power in British Hong Kong, has been a dominant narrative about the Colony for decades. It is against this context that the volume edited by Tak-Wing Ngo published in 1999 makes a crucial contribution to the debate on the nature of the colonial state in Hong Kong.

The book compiled by Ngo sought to reexamine and debunk a number of established views, including the narrative of the secluded state, about colonial Hong Kong.³ Through some in-depth historical research, he and his colleagues revealed that the British authorities, instead of being non-interventionist, had intruded deeply into Hong Kong colonial society. They demonstrated that the ruling regime, in order to consolidate their power, had actively solicited the support of Chinese collaborators, maneuvered against recalcitrant opponents in the New Territories, suppressed the rising class of Chinese manufacturing capitalists, and spread an interpretation of economic

history that was favorable to the maintenance of the colonial status quo.⁴ These historical cases forcefully illustrate that the British painstakingly sought to assert themselves in the social fabric of an alien populace and that the reach of the colonial state was far deeper than previously suggested.⁵ They furnish us with a more sophisticated view of ruling power in British Hong Kong.

This contribution notwithstanding, Ngo and his colleagues' works are not without inadequacies. Perhaps because they were too eager to refute the narrative of social non-interventionism and to demonstrate that political order in Hong Kong was a result of intense state interference, the colonial state they sketched appears to have been nearly omnipotent. Throughout the volume, readers can easily get the impression that the colonizers in Hong Kong were able to intrude as deeply into the local Chinese society as they desired and that they were constantly successful in achieving their goals. Moreover, Ngo and his contributors seem to have assumed the coherence of the state and ignored the fact that state intervention might consist of multiple and even contradictory activities. Under their depiction, actions of the Hong Kong colonial regime were never fettered by conditions engendered by previous or other ongoing state interventions, or by state actors with diverse views and conflicting interests.⁶

As a first step toward overcoming these problems, this essay takes a different approach by discussing the issue of black market schools in Hong Kong during the two decades following the Second World War. Black market schools, in the context of Hong Kong, were schools that did not register with the education authorities of the Colony. After the war, the number of school-age children in Hong Kong swelled dramatically and the colonial government faced immense pressure to expand educational opportunities. The British, however, viewed its populace as transient dwellers and thus did not

regard large-scale state investment in education as justified. This policy of a restricted government role in educational provision made private schools the chief providers of schooling facilities in the Colony. Although the government did not develop an expansive role for itself in education or provide financial assistance to private schools, it established many strict regulations for schools; these were aimed at covering health and safety in schools and at helping to preserve the political stability of the territory. These policies checked the growth of private institutions and thus left much educational demand unsatisfied. Consequently, black market schools, which were run in conditions unregistrable from the British authorities, emerged to fulfill those unmet needs. The colonial regime was under strong pressure to suppress these unlawful institutions, because some of them were maintained by pro-Beijing or pro-Taipei organizations. In addition, unregulated by the state, unregistered schools were able to operate with lower costs, charge less tuition, and enroll a large number of pupils. Accordingly, owners of registered private schools perceived their interests as being threatened and pressured the government to suppress unregistered institutions. Nevertheless, as Hong Kong continued to have insufficient educational facilities, a substantial section of the general public as well as some actors within the colonial state regarded unregistered schools as delivering essential services to the community and opposed suppressing them. This pressure prevented the governing regime from subduing black market schools.

The Making of an Insufficiently Provided but Negatively Regulated Educational System

The problem of black market schools in Hong Kong stemmed from the government's insufficient provision of schools and stern regulation of education. Although the problem mushroomed after the

Second World War, its roots are in policies that predate the war. In the prewar era, the Hong Kong colonizers aimed at using the school system only to groom a limited number of middlemen to serve in the government or in business firms. They had no intention of extending educational opportunity to the Chinese masses, who were mostly transient residents from the neighboring area in southern China. Hence, the colonial government's annual spending on education throughout the 1920s and 1930s never exceeded 6 percent of its yearly expenditure.⁷ This approach of the colonial state also meant that most schools received no financial assistance from the government. In 1938, for example, when 86,464 students went to schools in the territory, about 60 percent (52,464) of them attended private schools, which got no funding from the colonial state.⁸

Despite limiting their commitment to educational provision, state authorities continued to encroach on the educational field during the prewar era. In the earliest decades of British colonization, only government schools were within the jurisdiction of the ruling authorities. But in 1873 the system of grant-in-aid was introduced. Henceforth, the colonial regime stipulated the conditions for institutions to receive governmental grants. In 1913 the British, intending to enhance the efficiency of private schools and shield local schools from political influences from China, extended its power to all schools—including private institutions—through enacting the Education Ordinance. The legislation decreed that all schools must register with the Education Department (ED) and adhere to the rules made by the Governor-in-Council regarding proper sanitation, discipline, and efficiency.⁹

Conditions in the early postwar years continued to shape the education system in Hong Kong into one that was insufficiently supplied and negatively regulated. Although the British had vowed to expand educational opportunities in its dependencies after the war,¹⁰

specific circumstances in Hong Kong prevented the government from adequately satisfying the education demands of its populace. First, because of civil war in China, Chinese refugees inflated the population of Hong Kong from less than 600,000 in 1945 to over 2 million in 1950.¹¹ This drastic demographic change stretched the educational resources of the government. Second, the postwar colonial regime faced a dire financial situation. In July 1946 the government announced that the first postwar budget had a total deficit of HK\$115,425,965 and that a huge budget deficit would continue for another two or three years because of postwar rehabilitation.¹² This situation depleted the colonial state's capacity for educational provision. Third, the British were reluctant to give schooling opportunities to what they thought an impermanent population, as they eschewed the idea of free and compulsory schooling, insisting that such policy would be feasible only with a stable population.¹³ Because of this attitude, the colonizers committed only 11 percent of estimated expenditure in education for the financial year of 1949/1950.¹⁴

Due to these factors, the educational facilities in the Colony were insufficient. In 1948, for example, when the territory had a total school enrollment of 112,611, the government estimated that about 45,500 school-age children were unschooled.¹⁵ The state's limited input in education prolonged the numerical predominance of private schools—in 1949, when the Colony had a total school enrolment of approximately 130,000, about 80,000 (60 percent) of them attended private institutions.¹⁶ Without financial input from the state, most private schools were maintained under very difficult circumstances: most teachers in these schools were untrained and less than 5 percent of private institutions were in buildings constructed for education purpose.¹⁷

Realizing the problems of an under-funded school system, some actors within the colonial state attempted to rectify the situation. In March 1950, Man-Kam Lo, an unofficial member of the Legislative Council, urged the government to review the policy of education spending. With this suggestion later being espoused by the Director of Education (DoE) and the Board of Education—the chief education consultative body in the Colony—in October the British authorities invited N. G. Fisher, the Chief Education Officer of Manchester, England, to examine educational expenditure in Hong Kong.¹⁸ After finishing the inquiry, Fisher proposed an immediate objective of having 30,000 extra places in primary schools within the next seven years. He also recommended instituting an educational tax to augment financial resources for education. Furthermore, in view of the fact that private schools were playing such a significant role in education provision, he advised the government to adopt a more positive approach to support them. As a first step toward this direction, Fisher urged the government to sponsor the fees of certain students in selected private institutions.¹⁹

Though the Board of Education and the DoE later endorsed Fisher's proposals of increasing school places and installing an educational tax,²⁰ these recommendations were vetoed by more powerful sectors within the colonial state. The Deputy Financial Secretary maintained that government could not afford the recommended addition of 30,000 places in primary schools—at an estimated capital expense of HK\$19 million plus HK\$3 million per year in maintenance costs. He said an educational tax would violate the general financial principles of the Colony, and he summarily rejected it. The Deputy Financial Secretary also refused to subsidize the fees of any students in private schools. He averred that if this proposal was adopted, the government would have to set up some cumbersome procedures to ensure that public money would not go to swell the profits of private schools.²¹ Most of these opinions were

later concurred by the Executive Council, the paramount policy-making body in the Colony.²² When the Fisher Report was finally tabled to the Legislative Council in December 1951, the government made it clear that it would neither launch the educational tax nor sponsor students at private schools. Though the colonial authorities agreed to increase educational facilities, they qualified that the extent and timing to which this recommendation could be implemented must depend upon such factors as other priorities and the availability of funds.²³

This reserved gesture in education expansion notwithstanding, the colonial regime intensified its control over the private institutions during the early postwar years. For instance, right after the war it increased the minimal floor area for each pupil from 8 square feet to 10 square feet.²⁴ In the academic year of 1947-48 the government authorized the DoE to control the fees of private schools and raised the minimal requirement for a teacher from a junior middle school certificate to a senior middle school diploma.²⁵ In late 1948 the British empowered the DoE to keep a register of teachers and managers and made it an offence to teach without registration from the ED.²⁶ Furthermore, in 1952 the government replaced the old Education Ordinance. The new legislation, *inter alia*, extended compulsory registration to all school managers, stipulated the minimum academic and professional qualifications of teachers, and specified the conditions under which the registration of a school, school manager, or teacher would be refused or cancelled.²⁷ These interventions were made chiefly because the British attempted to curb the malpractices of private schools and to prevent them from endangering either the physical safety of pupils or the political stability of the Colony. They, nevertheless, imposed more stringent requirements, augmented the cost of maintaining legal private schools, and, as a result, precipitated the problem of black market schools.

The Emergence of Black Market Schools

Reports of black market schools began to appear sporadically in newspapers in the late 1940s. For example, in December 1949 an English newspaper revealed that in September the educational authorities uncovered an unregistered institution, the Dairy Farm Employees' Association School. This institution accommodated some 40 students in classes divided into three levels: Primary 1, 2, and 4. It was subsequently closed by the ED on the grounds that its premise was unsuitable for use as a school, and its manager was prosecuted for maintaining an unlawful establishment and hiring unregistered teachers. The school manager was later bound over in HK\$500 to be of good behavior for two years.²⁸

More or less at the same time another two illegal institutions were unearthed in Kowloon. According to the prosecuting officer, the first school, run by the Fai Chung Luen Yee Society, used a single flat with no sanitation; and another, the San Wan Free School, had poor ventilation. Tuition at these two institutions, which was HK\$2 and HK\$5 respectively per month,²⁹ was much cheaper than at most registered private schools, which charged each pupil about HK\$10 to HK\$25 per month.³⁰ Although in both cases the court stressed that operating unregistered schools and teaching without permission from the ED were serious offences, the magistrate imposed on each defendant (the managers and teachers in the schools concerned) only moderate fines of no more than HK\$100 on the grounds that these were their first offences.³¹ This verdict might indicate that the colonial authorities did not view black market schools as a severe problem yet.

But later, when the British found that a substantial number of unregistered schools were operated by trade unions with suspicious political inclinations, they become more wary of the situation. The

first such school was discovered on the premises of the Hong Kong Government Hospital and Armed Forces Chinese Workers Union—a pro-Beijing body—in May 1952.³² More worrisome to the British, subsequently the manager of this establishment was shrewd enough to circumvent the Education Ordinance and avert prosecution. When the DoE was preparing its case, the union’s chairman argued craftily that his union was maintaining not a school but a crèche, which did not need to be registered under the Education Ordinance. He asserted that since many members of his union had to work all day and had no time to take care of their children, the union launched the crèche and appointed some officers to look after the children in turn and individually teach them calculation, word-recognition, and play. This organization, he insisted, was definitely not a school, for it had no fixed curriculum, timetable, regular pupils, and regular staff. The chairman also astutely blamed the government, asserting that it had not only failed to provide enough schools but also taken oppressive actions against workers’ schools, and thus leaving his union with no choice but to open a crèche for its members.³³ The Legal Department later informed the ED that there was insufficient evidence to support a case against that school.³⁴

In subsequent months, when other unlawful schools on union premises were uncovered, the managers invariably enlisted the “crèche argument” and asserted that these classes came into being because many children of their members failed to gain admittance to other schools. Though the DoE contended that this claim was merely an evasion of the Education Ordinance, he hesitated to launch prosecution because he foresaw that such a move would likely elicit a strong outcry from the public.³⁵ Not being purged by the colonial authorities, unregistered schools on union premises grew swiftly. By the end of 1953 the Special Branch disclosed that there were 35 such institutions—with 28 of them being maintained by pro-Beijing unions and another 7 belonging to the pro-Taipei

quarter. Although the enrollments of these establishments totaled only 2,143, an extremely small fraction of total school population in the territory, the colonial authorities believed that political indoctrination took place in these institutions and considered the development a matter of serious concern.³⁶

While the education authorities were in a quandary about dealing with unlawful schools with union affiliations, policies initiated by other sectors of the colonial state inadvertently imposed greater difficulties upon private schools and further stimulated the growth of unregistered institutions. The first such instance was the rent-decontrolling scheme proposed in 1952 by the Rent Control Committee (RCC). Shortly after the war, rents in Hong Kong skyrocketed because of severe shortage of domestic and business buildings. To protect the livelihood of people and facilitate the normal operation of business, the British restricted the rentals of both kinds of premises built before the war to standard rent—the amounts payable in December 1941.³⁷ In 1952 the colonial government set up the RCC to review this policy. A year later the committee recommended scrapping rent control on a gradual basis on the grounds that, with the remarkable economic recovery in the Colony, the existing policy deprived property owners of a fair return on their investment.³⁸ The RCC was especially keen on decontrolling the rent of business premises, declaring that “business must stand on their own feet.”³⁹ It proposed an immediate increase of 50 percent, to be followed a year later by another increment of 50 percent, and a year after that with a further rise of 100 percent on the standard rent of business premises—all these in addition to the 100 percent that had already been allowed.⁴⁰ In other words, the RCC recommended that in two years time businesspeople utilizing prewar buildings pay 300 percent more than the amount payable in December 1941.

This suggestion was bound to put an additional burden on private schools, both because private schools were defined as business enterprises by the 1947 Inland Revenue Ordinance and the 1952 Ordinance of Business Registration and because many private institutions leased prewar premises for their operations.⁴¹ The RCC's proposal, if passed, would substantially raise their maintenance cost. Although subsequent oppositions from the public and the unofficial members of the Legislative Council forced the government to lower the permitted increments of rent—when the Ordinance for Landlords and Tenants was finally revised in July 1953, the government allowed business premises a rise of only 25 percent on the standard rent in September 1953 and another 25 percent in March 1954—the increment still raised sizably the expenditure of private schools.⁴² Worse, this rental accretion was untimely, as it came into effect when many private institutions encountered difficulties in student recruitment because of economic recession.⁴³

The problem of unlawful schools further deteriorated after the execution of the new rent policy. In the first quarter of 1954, 14 unregistered schools without trade union affiliation were unearthed. Together with the 29 “crèches” in union premises that were already on the ED's record, these discoveries brought the total number of known unregistered schools to 43.⁴⁴ In subsequent months, 14 unregistered schools in the Kowloon Walled City and “a certain number” of black market institutions in resettlement areas were reported.⁴⁵ By the end of September 1954, when the number of “crèches” rose to 52, it was quite certain that the number of black market schools in the Colony had already exceeded 100.⁴⁶

Despite these developments, the hardships of private schools were further aggravated when the colonial state enacted the Building Ordinance in December 1955. This bill stipulated that the

Building Authorities must be notified of any intended change of use in a building and empowered the Authorities to prohibit the proposed alteration, should they deem the building concerned unsuitable for the intended or present use. During that time, as many private institutions were operated in tenement buildings constructed only for domestic purposes, the floors of those schools were not designed to take the weight of a large class of pupils. As such, their premises were unlikely to be adjudicated by the Building Authorities as appropriate.⁴⁷ This new bill made new schools in adapted buildings increasingly difficult to register and further retarded the growth of legal private schools.⁴⁸

The number of black market schools soared further after the enactment of the Building Ordinance. In October 1956 the ED disclosed that there were about 600 known unlawful institutions and that their total enrolments were about 30,000.⁴⁹ Less than a year later, in mid 1957, the number of illegal schools on the government's records surged to an astounding 1,005, with 288 of them being maintained on union premises. The educational authorities estimated that these establishments accommodated approximately 60,000 pupils.⁵⁰ By this time, illegal schools without union affiliation far outnumbered those operated by trade unions. Most of these institutions were run by individuals purely as a mean of earning a living for teachers and their organizers, though some of them were under the auspices of organizations like the Hong Kong and Kowloon Tenants' Association (HKKTA)⁵¹ and the Plantation Society.⁵² Most of these illegal schools rented a single unit in residential buildings for operation; had poor ventilation and substandard hygienic and teaching facilities; and taught basic literacy or provided an education roughly equivalent to the levels at junior primary.⁵³

Conflicts and Contradictions

The proliferation of black market schools generated tensions that pressured the colonial state to subdue these institutions. In the first place, a considerable proportion of these schools were controlled by forces with suspicious political inclinations: In October 1956, when there were about 600 known illegal schools in the Colony, the ED estimated that one-third of these establishments were under the influences of either left-wing or right-wing forces.⁵⁴ As such, black market schools put a substantial number of children under undesirable political influences. Hence, it was imperative for the colonial government to suppress these institutions, or at least put them under closer state surveillance.

Moreover, the multiplication of black market schools threatened the survival of private schools and provoked their owners to urge the colonial state to dampen the unlawful institutions. This was because unregistered schools, unregulated by state stipulations on such matters as the minimal floor area for each student, hygienic conditions, teachers' qualifications, and structural suitability, were able to operate at much lower cost and charge less tuition.⁵⁵ Hence, many parents who failed to get their children admitted into government or subsidized schools yet at the same time could not afford the tuition of private schools sent their children to these institutions.⁵⁶ This development, regarded by owners of private schools as resulting in the decrease of their student intakes, triggered a string of campaigns against black market institutions. For instance, in September 1956 the Hong Kong and Kowloon Private Vernacular Schools Association (HKKPVSA) urged its members to report unregistered schools in their districts.⁵⁷ A year later, in August 1957, a group of 93 headmasters from private schools petitioned the government to enforce the Education Ordinance by ordering all unlawful institutions to register.⁵⁸ Afterward, the Hong

Kong English Private School Association and the Chinese Division of the Hong Kong Teachers Association—a conservative teachers' organization closely aligned with the government—publicly supported the cause of the HKKPVSA.⁵⁹

Facing these pressures, the British authorities sought to be tougher against black market institutions. In the second quarter of 1956 the government contemplated revising the Education Ordinance to facilitate greater control over unregistered schools.⁶⁰ In late 1956 the colonial authorities planned to permit stronger actions against organizations running unregistered schools by amending the Societies Bill.⁶¹ In the last quarter of 1957 the ED ordered 12 black market schools to close and raided another 3 with a view to prosecution.⁶²

Nevertheless, a number of factors attenuated the colonial government's aggressiveness against unregistered institutions. The British authorities appreciated that so far as they were unable to provide sufficient schooling facilities, it would be inappropriate to be too oppressive against illegal schools. In addition, a substantial section of the colonial society saw the value of unregistered schools. For instance, at a forum organized by the United Nations Association of Hong Kong⁶³ in October 1957, some speakers averred that since the government had failed to provide enough school places and many parents could not afford the fees of private institutions, unregistered institutions were indispensable for the Colony. They also contended that the quality of some black market schools was actually quite high, for some of their teachers had been famous scholars in China.⁶⁴ The colonial authorities soberly realized that these opinions by no means represented only a small minority of the general public, because they saw that after the issue of unregistered schools became an important talking point in the press, public opinion on this issue was evenly divided.⁶⁵ Furthermore, even

the judiciary sector of the colonial state was sympathetic to unlawful schools: In February 1957 the Central Magistracy dismissed a summons against the headmaster of Shing Yin Children's Literacy School, an unlawful institution uncovered in Shaukiwan, Hong Kong Island. When announcing his verdict, the judge, though ordering the headmaster to follow the instructions of the Education Ordinance, admitted that the school, despite having standards unacceptable to the authorities, filled a real need.⁶⁶ These pressures trapped the colonial state into a contradictory position when dealing with black market schools.

Registering Black Market Schools by Relaxing the Conditions for Registration

As the number of black market schools continued to mount, the government attempted to handle the problem by enticing these establishments to register through loosening the regulations for registration. This strategy emerged after a series of oppositions and compromises made the British authorities to mellow their initially tough approach against unlawful schools. The colonial regime intended to achieve two goals through this policy, namely, to put the hitherto unregistrable institutions under closer state surveillance and to avoid a further worsening of the school shortage that would result from a large-scale closure of black market schools.

In late 1957 the British authorities moved to revise the Education Ordinance. By doing so, the government attempted to, among other things, bring the Ordinance in line with the 1955 Building Ordinance and grant the educational authorities more power to deal with unregistered schools. The amended Ordinance laid down very stringent codes concerning such matters as building materials, architectural designs, fire precautions, ventilation,

illumination, latrine facilities, and other sanitary arrangements for institutions in buildings not specifically designed for the purposes of a school. It decreed that when schools in adapted buildings applied for registration, their owners should submit documents from the Director of Public Works and the Fire Brigade certifying their premises' suitability for the use of a school. In case the Director of Public Works considered the premises inappropriate, the school owners would be required to submit a certificate annually from an authorized architect to testify to the structural soundness of the buildings. The revised bill also stipulated that landlords should be responsible should the magistrate discover a black market school in their premises.⁶⁷ This legislation, if passed, would hand the colonial authorities a firmer leverage against black market institutions.

Immediately after the first reading of the amended Education Ordinance in Legislative Council in early December 1958, operators of unlawful schools voiced vehement opposition to the bill. The HKKTA, which had some 50 black market schools under its name, convened a meeting to discuss the proposed new rules. Participants in the conference, who were mostly headmasters of illegal institutions under the auspices of the HKKTA, averred that once the new ordinance was passed, all unregistered schools would be closed, 200,000 children then attending such institutions would be deprived of schooling opportunities, and several thousand teachers working at black market schools would become unemployed. The forum resolved to form a 15-person committee to study the proposed bill and to organize all black market schools for enlarged action.⁶⁸ The HKKTA subsequently petitioned the Legislative Council. Proclaiming that black market schools should be given a chance to shoulder the responsibility of popularizing education, it urged the Council to stop the second and third readings of the amended ordinance.⁶⁹

Facing this opposition, the colonial authorities shifted to a more concessionary gesture. The Attorney General explained that the government, while committing to the goal of expanding educational opportunities, had to protect students from physical and educational hazards. He pronounced that the bill, rather than making things difficult for unregistered schools, provided practical measures for such institutions to register. The Attorney General also hinted that many of the existing unlawful schools were likely to be accepted for registration should they make a proper application. He guaranteed that as long as there was a shortage of school places the DoE would be as lenient as possible when handling the matter.⁷⁰

The Legislative Council approved the revised Education Ordinance on January 8, 1958, amid this controversy. This development immediately put illegal institutions under tremendous pressures. On January 10, just two days after the passing of the bill, a vernacular newspaper revealed that the landlord of Chi Keung School on Hong Kong Island requested that the school manager to show the school's license. This demand was made because the owner of the premise was wary of encountering legal entanglements by renting his property to an illegal school.⁷¹ Also, in the first few months of 1958, it was reported that a number of landlords had asked the unregistered schools on their properties to vacate and that some black market schools were terminated because of conditions that had changed as a result of the new legislation.⁷² Furthermore, operators of registered private schools exerted pressure to ensure that illegal schools would be difficult to survive under the amended legislation: In early 1958 a representative of vernacular private schools urged the ED to strictly enforce the new ordinance. Should the government act otherwise, the delegate threatened, some registered schools might well decide to operate as unlawful institutions, thereby freeing themselves from all the bindings of state regulations.⁷³

Nevertheless, because of the dearth of schooling facilities in the territory, the educational authorities soberly realized that they could not afford to lose any school places, including those in low standard schools.⁷⁴ Hence, they decided to adopt a more compromising approach toward unregistered institutions. For instance, on January 13, 1958, L. G. Morgan, the Acting DoE, sought to loosen the rules for registration decreed by the new bill. He asked the Colonial Secretary to approve the registration of schools on premises that, albeit not entirely suitable from the viewpoint of the Fire Brigade, did not entail a major fire and panic risk. Morgan stressed that this alteration of regulation would allow as many tenement premises as possible to be used for educational purposes and avoid the closure of a great percentage of unregistered schools.⁷⁵ The Colonial Secretary approved this recommendation in the next month.⁷⁶ In April the DoE proposed to provide training courses that lasted from six months to a year for unqualified teachers of unlawful schools seeking for registration. With such a program, the DoE maintained, the government could avoid dismissing many unqualified teachers and forcing too many black market schools to terminate. The Colonial Secretary later approved this suggestion too.⁷⁷ In the same year the colonial regime also appointed a technical committee to advise on the relaxation of structural requirements of school premises. In October 1958 Morgan announced that since the structural and fire stipulations of the Education Ordinance had by then been moderated as far as possible, schools meeting the new minimum requirements would have little difficulty in obtaining registration.⁷⁸

This stance of the colonial state provoked reactions from registered private schools. In December 1958 some operators of private institutions accused the government of being too lenient toward unlawful establishments but too strict toward legal schools. The HKKPVSA planned to convene all headmasters of private

schools to discuss the problems occasioned by unregistered institutions and to submit another representation to the government. This cause of HKKPVSA was espoused by the Civic Association, one of the major pressure group in Hong Kong then.⁷⁹

Despite these protests, the ED moved to register black market schools under the relaxed rules. The department dispatched inspectors to visit a selected number of unlawful institutions. These visits were followed by letters drawing attention to the provisions of the Education Ordinance concerning such matters as fire hazard, sanitation, floor stress, and teachers' qualification and indicating that the school should either apply for registration or close. Should a school seek registration, it would be inspected again. The ED would normally approve the application if the institutions concerned had reached the minimum standards. If an unlawful school continued to operate after being judged by the ED as not registrable, the government would prosecute its owner. The British authorities wished that these endeavors would gradually bring all unregistered schools fully under their jurisdiction.⁸⁰

These actions of the colonial state did turn a sizeable number of illegal schools into registered institutions. In April 1959 a vernacular newspaper disclosed that since the amendment of the Education Ordinance in early 1958, the government had permitted some 300 black market schools to register and ordered only about 100 unlawful institutions to close, mainly on the grounds of structural or fire risks. The same report also revealed that the applications of approximately 200 illegal schools were then being considered by the colonial state.⁸¹ Owing to these developments, the number of black market schools on the records of the ED plummeted from 1,263 in December 1958 to 556 a year later.⁸²

Nevertheless, the colonial regime failed to bring all unregistered schools under its control merely by relaxing the conditions for registration. In the first place, even after the relaxation of standards for registration, an appreciable percentage of illegal schools still failed to meet the requirements. Also, some black market schools, though in buildings registrable under revised codes, chose not to register in order to avoid having to substantially reduce enrollment in line with the Education Ordinance's restriction on permitted number of pupils.⁸³ The colonial regime realized that it was injudicious to force all these schools to either register or terminate, for such a move would result in the closures of a massive number of unregistered schools and deprive many children of their only means of education. Furthermore, political circumstances of the Colony hindered the British authorities from strictly enforcing their policy of school registration. This is because, to avoid conflicts with Beijing, Taipei, and their local supporters, the colonial government had been refraining from compelling black market schools with left- or right-wing political backgrounds to register. Hamstrung by these factors, the ruling regime was unable to fully exercise the strategy of registering unregistered schools under relaxed conditions. Thus, in August 1960 Hong Kong still had 431 known black market schools, about 180 of which were under the auspices of either pro-Beijing or pro-Taipei trade unions.⁸⁴

The Return of a Tougher Approach

In 1960 two developments spurred the colonial government to switch to a sterner approach to tackle the problem of black market schools. First, the British authorities had come to believe that the Colony was no longer suffering from a dearth of schooling facilities. This view was held because six years earlier, in October 1954, the government launched a seven-year program to expand primary school education. Through this project, the colonial authorities

endeavored to create 26,000 additional places in primary schools annually by increasing the class size of primary schools, encouraging voluntary bodies to inaugurate subsidized schools, and urging subsidized and private institutions to operate bi-sessionally.⁸⁵ This scheme progressed well. In October 1960 the DoE announced that the territory had 390,000 primary school places, which surpassed the original target of 375,000 places. The DoE also anticipated that by the end of 1961, when the seven-year plan would be officially ended, the Colony would have enough educational facilities for every child of primary school age.⁸⁶ Perceiving that educational facilities in Hong Kong were no longer insufficient, the Governor averred that closing an unregistered school could no longer be said to be depriving pupils of an education.⁸⁷ This view of the British, however, emanated from a misjudgment of the educational situation of Hong Kong, as will be discussed below.

The second reason behind the colonial government's switch in 1960 to a sterner approach toward black market schools was a transformation of the relationship between Hong Kong and China. As mentioned above, the Hong Kong government, in order to avert confrontation with Beijing and Taipei, had hitherto been restraining itself from forcing schools with leftist or rightist affiliations to apply for registration or close. In the late 1950s, however, after the failure of the Great Leap Forward and the decline of Sino-Soviet relations, Beijing attempted to forge a more normal relationship with the Western world.⁸⁸ Against this context, the British authorities, conceiving that the tension between the colonial government and Beijing had reduced, reckoned that it was time to cease the immunity from the requirements of the Education Ordinance that unlawful schools with political backgrounds had so far enjoyed. In addition, the colonial authorities appraised that as they had already taken actions against a large number of non-political black market schools, their failure to deal with establishments run by left- or right-

wing sectors would be misinterpreted as a sign of weakness.⁸⁹ Out of these diagnoses of the situation, the ruling regime commissioned the Ad Hoc Committee on Communist Activities to evaluate the feasibility of taking action against unregistered schools run by pro-Beijing and pro-Taipei forces.⁹⁰

In 1960 the colonial government switched to a stiffer approach toward unregistered schools. Beginning in February the ED prosecuted a number of black market schools and imposed more severe punishments against their operators and teachers. Before then, the court usually ordered managers of unregistered institutions to pay a moderate fine of no more than several hundred Hong Kong dollars. But in the second quarter of 1960 the operators and instructors of Saint Kwong English Tutorial and Fung Wah Schools were enjoined to pay a total fine of HK\$18,600.⁹¹ Also, in the same year many managers of illegal institutions were sentenced to either pay a fine of more than HK\$1,000 or serve several months in prison.⁹² The colonial government continued to exercise this stringent approach in the coming years. In August 1961 the educational authorities announced that they had executed punitive inspections against more than 100 unregistered schools in the past six months and that, as a result of these inquiries, 65 such institutions were ordered to close and 18 school managers and teachers were prosecuted.⁹³ In late September the ED also disclosed that it would soon inspect another 100 black market schools with a view to prosecution.⁹⁴

Meanwhile, the colonial regime also embarked on actions against unregistered schools with political backgrounds. Following the advice of the Ad Hoc Committee on Communist Activities, the British authorities inspected six such schools—three with left-wing trade union affiliations and three from the right-wing sector—on June 28, 1961.⁹⁵ These schools were chosen both because they were in

areas in which it was possible for the children concerned to find alternative schools and because their general situations would allow the government to proclaim that refusal to register these institutions was based purely on technical grounds, such as the risk of fire hazard and structural unsuitability. The British authorities intended to use these six schools to test the reactions of pro-Beijing and pro-Taipei sections to such action.⁹⁶ When executing the inspections, the ED found that one right-wing school had already closed, and they instructed another five institutions to either seek registration or cease operation. Afterward, one pro-Taipei institution discontinued and the pro-Beijing schools, after some agitation, eventually applied for registration. However, the ED subsequently discovered that the premises of the three left-wing schools failed to meet the requirements of the Fire Brigade and Public Work Department and, as a result, ordered them to cease operation.⁹⁷ The colonial government afterward continued its actions against black market schools with political backgrounds. In September 1960 it selected another six unregistered union schools for a further round of actions.⁹⁸ Also, from 1961 to 1963 the educational authorities inspected no fewer than 31 unlawful institutions with trade union alignments. As a result of these actions, 20 of these schools were eventually closed or ordered to terminate.⁹⁹

These tough actions notwithstanding, the British authorities were unable to fully resolve the problem of black market schools because the educational system remained basically unchanged: Fundamentally, it was still insufficient and negatively regulated. Although the government did augment the total school enrolments phenomenally through the seven-year program in education expansion, this growth, contrary to the appraisal of the colonial authorities, was not enough to satisfy the educational demands in the Colony. In 1961 the total number of primary schools places in Hong Kong (540,000) did exceed that of children of primary school

age (about 500,000 children between 6 and 11 inclusive).¹⁰⁰ With some 100,000 over-age pupils occupying places in primary schools, however, about 120,000 children of primary school age failed to attend these lawful schools.¹⁰¹

The British authorities, nevertheless, did not seem determined to rectify this deficiency in primary education. In the first place, the government kept spending only moderately on education, as from 1961 to 1965 it committed only about 14 percent of annual spending on education,¹⁰² little more than in the early 1950s. In addition, the colonial regime had repeatedly ignored calls from civic bodies, such as the Hong Kong Reform Club and the Hong Kong Civic Association, for universal and compulsory education.¹⁰³ Furthermore, in the 1960s the government's resources in expanding primary education were further stretched, as growing demands on secondary education forced the colonial state to divert more funding to develop secondary schools.¹⁰⁴ These developments prolonged the dearth of places at primary institutions and perpetuated the problem of black market schools.

Moreover, the government kept on regulating private schools in a negative manner, even though it relied heavily upon these institutions to provide education. In 1964 the Colony had 1,563 private primary schools, which accommodated 262,960 pupils, or about 47 percent of total primary school enrollments.¹⁰⁵ Following the practice in the 1950s, however, the ruling authorities provided these institutions with almost no financial assistance.¹⁰⁶ Worse, the colonial state continued to regulate them by rules that, even after being relaxed, many private schools found excessively restrictive. Hence, in 1963 the ED received complaints that the standards of health and sanitation stipulated by the Education Ordinance were too high.¹⁰⁷ Also, during the Urban Council debate in the same year, some elected members urged the government to assist private

schools by further loosening education regulations and imposing controls to halt the increase of rent.¹⁰⁸ Similar requests for the government to support private schools were made the next year, too.¹⁰⁹ These petitions, however, went largely unheeded. Furthermore, many registered private schools founded themselves subjected to stern discipline from the government, as in the last quarter of 1963 the ED asked the police to prosecute a number of private institutions that had continued to accommodate a large number of excess pupils after repeated warnings from the educational authorities.¹¹⁰ As such, managers of many black market schools were discouraged from seeking registration, for becoming lawful would bring them only constraints, not benefits, from the colonial state.

As the school system remained insufficiently provided but negatively regulated, the relatively tough approach of the colonial regime failed to reduce, let alone eliminate, the sector of unregistered schools. For instance, records from the ED suggest that some 214 illegal schools ceased operation between April 1962 and December 1965, mostly because of actions of the colonial state. In the same period, however, fresh reports revealed the existence of no fewer than 612 unregistered schools. These discoveries kept the total number of known black market schools almost the same throughout the period—in mid 1962 the Colony had 476 such establishments; by the end of 1965 it had 480.¹¹¹ Equally worrisome to the British authorities, unlawful institutions on union premises also grew phenomenally, as in June 1960, when the colonial government began to launch actions against unlawful schools with left- or right-wing backgrounds, only 111 such institutions were on the ED's records; but some three years later, in December 1963, the figure had soared to 201.¹¹² This impasse prompted the British authorities to contemplate further relaxing the conditions for school registration.¹¹³

The New Territories: Further Setbacks of the Tough Approach

With the problem of black market schools showing no sign of receding, the colonial regime embarked upon another round of action against unregistered institutions. On April 18, 1966, the DoE issued a letter to solicit the consents of the officers concerned about visiting 83 illegal schools with a view to warning them to seek registration or close. As 10 of these establishments were in the New Territories, the rural hinterland of Hong Kong, the letter was also sent to the District Commissioner for the New Territories (DCNT), the officer in charge of that area, and his lieutenants, who included the District Officers of Tsuen Wan, South, Yuen Long, and Taipo.¹¹⁴ Later, various officials, such as the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, the Registrar of Trade Unions, and the Commissioner of the Police, indicated that they had no objection to the DoE's proposed action.¹¹⁵

Officers of the New Territories, however, opposed the DoE's plan. T. J. Bedford, the District Officers of Taipo, pointed out that while only one primary school and one kindergarten in Taipo were chosen by the DoE for action, a survey conducted in 1964 indicated that the same district had at least six illegal primary schools and 61 unregistered kindergartens. He questioned why the two institutions were singled out for action and contended that if they were selected because they had recently applied for registration without success, it would be unfair because other black market schools, which continued to operate without applying for registration, would then be better off. Bedford also cited an agreement between the officials in the New Territories and the ED to strengthen his oppositional stance. He averred that a meeting between District Officers and an ED representative in December 1960 had agreed that illegal schools that provided needed services would be tolerated unless they were definitely in dangerous premises. Bedford also argued that it was difficult to take closure action against unregistered institutions in

Taipo, especially kindergartens, because the growing number of such establishments clearly indicated that the demand for these schools was tremendous.¹¹⁶ The District Officers of Yuen Long and South swiftly espoused Bedford's position.¹¹⁷ These officials probably took this stance because, with the New Territories having a representative system that functioned through Heung Yee Kuk, Rural Committees, and a large number of locally elected councils, they had to reckon with public opinion in their areas when giving their views on the DoE's proposal.¹¹⁸

The DCNT endorsed the position of his lieutenants several days later. In a letter to the DoE, dated May 16, he maintained that it was not clear why a few schools had been singled out for prosecution when in Yuen Long and Taipo no fewer than 38 illegal primary schools and 120 kindergartens were known to exist. The DCNT pointed out that this decision seemed to be contradictory to the proposal by the DoE in a letter dated March 23, 1964, which suggested dealing with unregistered schools by selecting the worst cases for rectifying action. He contended that if this recommendation was meant as a beginning to such a policy, he would suggest that the DoE proceed more prudently, noting that there might be worse offenders who deserved immediate prosecution. The DCNT also asserted that prosecution alone might not provide the best solution to the problem of unlawful schools, because their number alone demonstrated that there was a need for them.¹¹⁹

Despite this resistance, the following month the DoE made further moves to subdue black market schools. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary and the governmental departments concerned, he requested approval to take action against those schools that disregarded his warnings to apply for registration or close, as well as against those institutions in the New Territories that appeared on the attached lists of the last letter. The DoE also attempted to simplify

the procedures for prosecuting unlawful schools by suggesting that in the future he would go ahead and take action if he received no objection one month after writing a letter to consult with the officers concerned. In cases in which the premises of targeted schools were adjudicated as being a fire hazard or structural risk, the DoE proposed to shorten this consultation period to a week.¹²⁰ The Colonial Secretary, the Registrar of Trade Union, the Commissioner of Police, and the Director of Social Welfare, swiftly concurred with this suggestion.¹²¹

Nevertheless, the officials of the New Territories again demurred at the DoE's recommendation. The District Officer of Yuen Long contended that it would be very unwise of the government to close down unregistered schools unless all displaced children could be accommodated elsewhere immediately on a place-to-place basis. And he maintained that, as far as Yuen Long was concerned, it was extremely doubtful whether this could be achieved.¹²² The District Officer of South averred that except in cases of dangerous building or other hazards, no action should be taken until it was certain that the children being affected could be absorbed by registered schools nearby.¹²³ The District Officer of Taipo cleverly opposed the DoE's plan by stating that he had no objection to it if all practical difficulties were considered fully and the worst offenders were chosen in case closures had to be made.¹²⁴

The DCNT soon supported his lieutenants again. He pointed out to the DoE that according to recent surveys in Taipo and Yuen Long, the two districts had a total of 40 unregistered primary schools and 120 unlawful kindergartens, and he queried if the four schools selected by the ED for action were the worst offenders out of these 160 known unlawful establishments. The DCNT reiterated that the existence of these illegal institutions clearly indicated people's demands for their services. He also recommended that if the

majority of these 160 schools were found to be far from being registrable, the DoE should consider modifying the conditions for registration.¹²⁵

Beleaguered by so many difficulties, the British authorities' endeavors to subdue black market schools continued to deliver but limited success. In September 1966 the Colony had a total of 730 known unregistered institutions.¹²⁶ More than a year later, in December 1967, the number of such establishments had dropped substantially to 397, both because the educational authorities had undertaken a considerable number of inspections and because a certain number of known black market institutions in the New Territories were found as "not in fact schools."¹²⁷ Nevertheless, the government discovered that the remaining schools were catering to a greater number of pupils than ever before. In October 1967, ED inspectors visited three schools and found that these institutions had an enrolment of over 1,000 each, with one of these schools having more than 2,300 students and 40 teachers. Because of this discovery, the educational authorities surmised that although black market schools with 20 or 30 pupils still existed, the majority appeared to have reached an average of 300 to 400 students. The colonial government also estimated that the total population in known unregistered schools was over 100,000.¹²⁸

Conclusion

This paper has discussed state policies on black market schools in postwar Hong Kong. After World War II the number of school-age children in Hong Kong increased dramatically. The colonial government, however, restricted its role in educational provision and left private schools to be the chief providers of schooling facilities. Although the government did not assist these institutions financially, it set up many strict regulations to regulate

them. These policies checked the growth of private institutions, left much educational demand unsatisfied, and led to the emergence of black market schools. Unregulated by the state, these unregistered schools were able to operate with lower costs, charge less tuition, and enroll a large number of pupils; owners of registered private schools accordingly perceived their interests as being threatened and pressured the government to subdue these institutions. In addition, the colonial regime was under additional strong pressure to suppress these unlawful institutions because some of them were maintained by pro-Beijing or pro-Taipei organizations. Nevertheless, as the Hong Kong government continued to fail to provide sufficient educational facilities, a substantial section of the general public as well as some actors within the colonial state regarded unregistered institutions as indispensable to the community and opposed suppressing them. As a result, the colonial authorities' moves to subdue black market schools had only limited success.

This historical case of black market schools bears some significant implications concerning the nature of the colonial state in British Hong Kong. In the first place, by documenting repeated attempts by the British authorities to subdue unregistered schools in the two postwar decades, it endorses the claim of Tak-Wing Ngo and his collaborators that the Hong Kong colonial regime, rather than being aloof from the social domain, intervened intensively upon the colonial society in order to consolidate its domination.¹²⁹ The historical case in this paper, however, also reveals that, instead of being constantly capable in achieving its objectives and intruding into Chinese society as deeply as it desired, the interventionist colonial state could be fettered by conditions engendered by previous and other ongoing state policies as well as by state actors with diverse interests: Although the British authorities tried repeatedly to subdue black market schools, these endeavors were not successful, both because the colonial government failed to

provide sufficient schooling facilities yet imposed regulations that made legal private schools difficult to operate, and because state actors such as the officials in charge of the New Territories resisted the schemes of purging unlawful institutions. These findings urge scholars studying ruling power in Hong Kong to pay due attention to the facts that state interventions entail multiple and contradictory actions and that the state consists of actors with diverse views and different interests. By doing so, we can more readily detect the constraints circumscribing the effects of state intervention in a colonial society.

¹ Lau Siu-Kai, *Society and Politics in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1984).

² Lau Siu-Kai, *Society and Politics in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1984).

³ Tak-Wing Ngo, ed., *Hong Kong's History: State and Society under Colonial Rule* (London: Routledge, 1999).

⁴ John M. Carroll, "Chinese Collaboration in the Making of British Hong Kong;" Stephen W. K. Chiu and Ho-Fung Hung, "State Building and Rural Stability;" Alex H. Choi, "State Business Relations and Industrial Restructuring;" and Tak-Wing Ngo, "Industrial History and the Artifice of *Laissez-Faire* Colonialism;" all in Ngo, ed., *Hong Kong's History*.

⁵ Tak-Wing Ngo, "Colonialism on Hong Kong Revisited," in Ngo, ed., *Hong Kong's History*, 3.

⁶ For the notions that state intervention consists of multiple and conflicting activities and that actions of the state are constrained by contradictory pressures from both inside and outside of the state, see, for instance, Michael W. Apple, *Education and Power* (Boston, Massachusetts: ARK, 1982); Michael W. Apple, ed., *The State and the Politics of Knowledge* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003); Martin Carnoy and Henry Levin, *Schooling and Work in the Democratic State* (Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press, 1985); Roger Dale, *The State and Education Policy* (Boston, Massachusetts, 1989); and Claus Offe, *Contradictions of the Welfare State* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1984).

⁷ Bernard H. K. Luk, "Hong Kong Education in the 1930s: An Overview," in Ng Lun Ngai-Ha and Chang Chak Yan, eds., *Overseas Chinese in Asia between the Two World Wars* (Hong Kong: Overseas Chinese Archives, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1989), 191.

⁸ Figures derived from *Report of the Director of Education for the Year 1937* (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1938), 26.

⁹ Ng Lun Ngai-Ha, "Consolidation of the Government Administration of Schools in Hong Kong," *Journal of the Chinese University of Hong Kong* 9, 1 (1977): 159-6, 166, and 170-6.

¹⁰ John Holford, "Mass Education and Community Development in the British Colonies, 1940-1960, A Study of the Politics of Community Education," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 7, 3 (September 1988): 163-183; Clive Whitehead, "The Impact of the Second World War on British Colonial Education Policy," *History of Education* 18, 3 (September 1989): 267-

293.

¹¹ *A Report on Government Expenditure in Education, 1950* (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1951), 8.

¹² *Hansard: Reports of the Meetings of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong*, session on July 25, 1946; *South China Morning Post*, July 26, 1946.

¹³ *South China Morning Post*, April 20 and May 6, 1950; Anthony Sweeting, ed., *Education in Hong Kong, 1941 to 2001: Visions and Revisions* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 141.

¹⁴ *Hong Kong Education Department, Annual Report, 1949-50* (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1950), 12.

¹⁵ *Hwa Sheung Pao*, June 16, 1948.

¹⁶ Anthony Sweeting, *A Phoenix Transformed: The Reconstruction of Education in Post-War Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1993), 44.

¹⁷ *Hong Kong Education Department, Annual Report, 1946-47* (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1947), 19-20.

¹⁸ *South China Morning Post*, September 17, 1950.

¹⁹ Minutes, Board of Education Meeting, March 30 and April 6, 1951, HKRS 163/1/1351.

²⁰ *Ibid.*; and Memorandum: Fisher Report, prepared by Douglas J. S. Crozier, Director of Education, April 17, 1951, HKRS 163/1/1351.

²¹ Comments on Fisher Report, Deputy Financial Secretary, June 19, 1951, HKRS 163/1/1351.

²² Executive Council Meeting, August 7, 1951, HKRS 163/1/1351.

²³ *A Report on Government Expenditure in Education*, 5.

²⁴ *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, June 30, 1949.

²⁵ *Hansard*, sessions on August 21 and September 4, 1947; *Hong Kong Education Department, Annual Report, 1947-48* (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1948), 12.

²⁶ Hitherto, the Director was authorized only to register and cancel the registration of schools. *Hansard*, session on December 22, 1948.

²⁷ CO 1023/109; *Hansard*, session on December 3, 1952; *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, December 3 and 29, 1952.

²⁸ *South China Morning Post*, December 13, 1949.

²⁹ *South China Morning Post*, January 12, 1950.

³⁰ For a list of fees of private schools permitted by the Education Department in the late 1940s, see *Hwa Sheung Pao*, February 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20, and March 21, 26, 27, and 28, 1948.

³¹ *South China Morning Post*, January 12, 1950.

³² Appendix A: summary of the development of illegal schools in union premises under the guise of "crèche," progress report, Registration Branch, Education Department, quarter ending September 30, 1953, HKRS 935/1/9.

³³ Tse Kwong, vice- chairman, Hong Kong Government Service Workers Union, to Douglas J. S. Crozier, Director of Education, May 28, 1952, HKRS 935/1/9. Workers' schools were operated by the Education Advancement Society (EAS), an association formed in 1946 to provide educational facilities for children from working-class backgrounds. The EAS was launched by some trade unionists, with the espousal of the Anglican Church and the colonial government. In the late 1940s, when victory of the Chinese Communist Party in the Chinese Civil War seemed imminent, the EAS became more leftist. This development prompted the British authorities to withdraw their support and frequently harass workers' schools afterward. George She, "Schools for Workers Children: An Experiment in Co-operation," *The Path of*

Learning: Journal of the Hong Kong Teachers' Association 1 (June 1948): 56-60; Sweeting, *A Phoenix Transformed*, 197-98.

³⁴ Appendix A, progress report, quarter ending September 30, 1953, HKRS 935/1/9.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Progress report, quarter ending December 31, 1953, HKRS 935/1/9.

³⁷ *Rent Control: Report of a Committee Appointed by the Governor in February 1952* (Hong Kong: The Government Printer, 1953), 11.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 68. Before the Committee made this suggestion in 1953, the colonial authorities had permitted increments of rent on prewar premises on two occasions: 1947, when the government approved a rise of 45 percent of the standard rent, and 1949, when the previous 45 percent was replaced by 100 percent.

⁴¹ Memorandum on some difficult problems of private vernacular schools, by Yatt-Chao Fogg, discussed in the Board of Education Meeting, October 3, 1958, HKRS 41/1/3878.

⁴² For the resistance from the Legislative Council and various civic bodies to the original RCC proposal, see *South China Morning Post*, May 5, 18, and July 7, 1953. For the rent increment ultimately approved by the government, see *South China Morning Post*, July 16, 1953.

⁴³ *Wen Wei Pao*, February 3 and 4, 1953.

⁴⁴ Progress report, quarter ending March 31, 1954, HKRS 935/1/9.

⁴⁵ Progress report, quarter ending June 30, 1954, HKRS 935/1/9.

⁴⁶ Progress report, quarter ending September 30, 1954, HKRS 935/1/9.

⁴⁷ Speech made by the Attorney General in the second reading of the Education (Amended) Bill, January 8, 1958, HKRS 163/1/2198.

⁴⁸ Progress report, quarter ending September 30, 1956, HKRS 935/1/9.

⁴⁹ Conference of the South East Asia Director of Education, October 1956, CO 1030/47.

⁵⁰ Progress report, quarter ending June 30, 1957, HKRS 935/1/9.

⁵¹ The proclaimed objective of the HKKTA was to "alleviate the problems of local residents by helpful advice and suggestions," but the British authorities considered that that body was manipulated by people with bad reputations and no roots in the Colony. In the late 1950s there were some 50 unregistered schools under the name of the HKKTA. The ED, however, believed that the HKKTA did not actually run these institutions but instead acted only as an umbrella association taking a fee from schools that sought its protection. About the background and the colonial government's view of the HKKTA, see HKRS 41/1/7195; HKRS 163/1/2198; and the pertinent report from the *South China Morning Post*, February 5, 1951.

⁵² The Plantation Society organized the poor peasants in the New Territories with class-struggle propaganda and encouraged resistance to eviction and forced collection of rents throughout the 1950s. It was outlawed by the Hong Kong government in May 1959. Gary Wayne Catron, *China and Hong Kong, 1945-1967* (Doctoral Dissertation, Harvard University, 1971), 222-23.

⁵³ *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, August 10, 1956.

⁵⁴ Report of the Seventh Annual Conference of Directors of Education of Commonwealth Territories in Southeast Asia held in Hong Kong, 22, 23, and 24, October, 1956, CO 1030/47.

⁵⁵ In 1956 it was reported that black market schools charged each pupil a monthly fee of HK\$5 to HK\$ 8; while registered private schools collected HK\$16 to HK\$22 per student per month. *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, August 10, 1956.

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- ⁵⁶ *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, August 10, 1956.
- ⁵⁷ *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, September 9, 1956.
- ⁵⁸ *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, August 28, 1957.
- ⁵⁹ *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, September 18, 1957.
- ⁶⁰ Progress report, quarter ending June 30, 1956, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ⁶¹ Progress report, quarter ending December 31, 1956, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ⁶² Progress report, quarter ending December 31, 1957, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ⁶³ The United Nations Association of Hong Kong was a member of the World Federation of United Nations Association. Its objective was to publicize the United Nations to Hong Kong people. Members of this body were prominent residents of the Colony. Shortly after its inauguration in 1953, Alexander Grantham, then the Governor of Hong Kong, became its patron. *South China Morning Post*, March 24, 1954.
- ⁶⁴ *South China Morning Post*, October 15, 1957.
- ⁶⁵ Progress report, quarter ending September 30, 1957, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ⁶⁶ *South China Morning Post*, March 1, 1957.
- ⁶⁷ *Education Ordinance* (Hong Kong: The Government Printer, 1958); *Hansard*, session on December 18, 1957.
- ⁶⁸ *Wen Wei Pao*, December 21, 1957.
- ⁶⁹ Petition from the Hong Kong and Kowloon Tenants' Association to the Legislative Council for stopping the second and third reading of the 1957 Education Ordinance, January 1959, HKRS 163/1/2198.
- ⁷⁰ *Hansard*, session on January 8, 1957.
- ⁷¹ *Wen Wei Pao*, January 10, 1958.
- ⁷² Progress report, quarter ending March 31, 1958, HKRS 935/1/9; *Wen Wei Pao*, February 7 and April 2, 1958.
- ⁷³ Progress report, quarter ending March 31, 1958, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ⁷⁴ L. G. Morgan, Acting Director of Education, to Colonial Secretary, January 13, 1958, HKRS 457/3/7.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁶ E. B. Teesdale, Deputy Colonial Secretary, to Director of Education, February 24, 1958, HKRS 457/3/7. .
- ⁷⁷ Director of Education to Colonial Secretary, April 25, 1958, HKRS 457/3/7.
- ⁷⁸ Minutes, Board of Education meeting, October 3, 1958, HKRS 41/1/3878.
- ⁷⁹ *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, December 12 and 21, 1958.
- ⁸⁰ Robert Black, the Governor of Hong Kong, to Iain Macleod, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, August 12, 1960, FO 371/150398.
- ⁸¹ *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, April 8, 1959.
- ⁸² Progress reports, quarters ending December 31, 1958 and December 31, 1959, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ⁸³ Progress report, quarter ending March 31, 1958, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ⁸⁴ Black to Macleod, August 12, 1960, FO 371/150398.
- ⁸⁵ Minutes, Board of Education meeting, December 10, 1954, HKRS 41/1/3878.
- ⁸⁶ Progress report, quarter ending December 31, 1960, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ⁸⁷ Black to Macleod, August 12, 1960, FO 371/150398.
- ⁸⁸ Catron, *China and Hong Kong*, 226-48.
- ⁸⁹ Black to Macleod, August 12, 1960, FO 371/150398.

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- ⁹⁰ Progress report, quarter ending March 31, 1960, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ⁹¹ Progress report, quarter ending June 30, 1960, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ⁹² About these prosecutions and verdicts, see pertinent reports from the *South China Morning Post*, April 27, July 6, August 16, 17, and 20, 1960; *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, February 26, 1960; and *Wen Wei Pao*, February 10, May 11, June 14, and July 5, 1960.
- ⁹³ *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, August 29, 1961.
- ⁹⁴ Progress report, quarter ending September 30, 1961, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ⁹⁵ Progress report, quarter ending June 30, 1960, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ⁹⁶ Black to Macleod, August 12, 1960, FO 371/150398.
- ⁹⁷ Progress reports, quarters ending June 30 and September 30, 1960, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ⁹⁸ Progress report, quarter ending September 30, 1960, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ⁹⁹ Progress reports, from March 1961 to September 1963, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ¹⁰⁰ These 540,000 places in primary schools included 480,000 in registered institutions and another 60,000 in schools pending registration. Report of the Select Committee on the Estimate for 1962-63, Legislative Council, March 30, 1962, CO 1030/917.
- ¹⁰¹ Extract, Address by the Governor in Legislative Council, February 28, 1962, CO 1030/917.
- ¹⁰² *Wah Kiu Pat Pao*, February 4, 1965.
- ¹⁰³ Progress report, quarter ending December 31, 1960, HKRS 935/1/9; *South China Morning Post*, February 25, 1962; and *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, November 16, 1964.
- ¹⁰⁴ Report of the Select Committee on the Estimate for 1962-63, Legislative Council, March 30, 1962, CO 1030/917.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, May 24, 1964.
- ¹⁰⁶ In 1960 the government supported a limited number of private schools by sponsoring the tuition of pupils through the form of “aided places,” granting allowances to some of their qualified teachers, halving the upset price of crown land especially auctioned for school purposes, and extending the ten-year repayment period for loans to private institutions for school buildings to 21 years. Private primary schools, however, by and large did not benefit from this policy for two reasons: Only “non profit-making” private secondary schools were entitled to the schemes of aided places and teachers’ salary subsidization; and only a few private schools with “respectable backgrounds” were eligible for crown land and government loans for school building projects. For the development of these assistance programs, see the *South China Morning Post*, July 8 and 9, 1960; and *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, October 10 and November 6, 1961.
- ¹⁰⁷ Progress report, quarter ending September 30, 1963, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ¹⁰⁸ Progress report, quarter ending December 31, 1963, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ¹⁰⁹ Progress report, quarter ending March 31, 1964, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ¹¹⁰ Progress report, quarter ending December 31, 1963, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ¹¹¹ Figure derived from progress reports between June 1962 and December 1965, HKRS 935/1/9. The number of unlawful schools in official records remained almost the same during this time span even though the number of fresh reports far outnumbered those of institutions being closed; this is because some black market schools successfully sought registration and some reports were found to be incorrect.
- ¹¹² Progress reports, quarters ending June 30, 1960, and December 31, 1963, HKRS 935/1/9.
- ¹¹³ Progress report, quarter ending March 31, 1965, HKRS 935/1/9; *South China Morning Post*, June 19, 1965.
- ¹¹⁴ Director of Education to the Secretary for Chinese Affairs and others, April 18, 1966, HKRS

935/1/9.

¹¹⁵ HKRS 935/1/9.

¹¹⁶ T. J. Bedford, District Officer, Tai Po, to the District Commissioner, New Territories, April 28, 1966, HKRS 935/1/9.

¹¹⁷ David Akers-Jones, District Officer, Yuen Long, to District Commissioner, New Territories, May 2, 1966; and J. D. de Pury, District Officer, South, to District Commissioner, New Territories, May 9, 1966. Both in HKRS 935/1/9.

¹¹⁸ For the system of representation in the New Territories, see Norman J. Miners, *The Government and Politics of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1975), 160-63.

¹¹⁹ K. K. Yeung, for the District Commissioner of the New Territories, to the Director of Education, May 16, 1966, HKRS 935/1/9.

¹²⁰ M. R. George, for the Director of Education, to the Colonial Secretary, June 27, 1966, HKRS 935/1/9.

¹²¹ HKRS 935/1/9.

¹²² K. S. Hardy, for the District Officer, Yuen Long, to the District Commissioner, New Territories, July 18, 1966, HKRS 935/1/9.

¹²³ J. D. de Pury to the District Commissioner, New Territories, July 14, 1966, HKRS 935/1/9.

¹²⁴ T. J. Bedford to the District Commissioner, New Territories, July 20, 1966, HKRS 935/1/9.

¹²⁵ District Officer, New Territories, to the Director of Education, August 2, 1966.

¹²⁶ Progress report, quarter ending September 30, 1966, HKRS 935/1/9.

¹²⁷ Progress reports, quarters ending December 31, 1966, and September 30 and December 31, 1967, HKRS 935/1/9.

¹²⁸ Progress report, quarter ending December 31, 1967, HKRS 935/1/9.

¹²⁹ Ngo, ed., *Hong Kong's History*.

