

Hong Kong's 1997 problem

Second of a Two Part Series

Hong Kong's lease with Britain runs out June 30, 1997. In their first article, Annie Tsai and Wei Ouyang of the U of A's Hong Kong Graduate Students' Association looked at the city-state's history. In this second article, Hong Kong's future is examined.

In the last year, China appears to be making some effort to soothe the apprehensions of Hong Kong's business community by assuring that Hong Kong investors have nothing to worry about. China feels that its relationship with both Britain and the British authority in Hong Kong is quite good. The government of mainland China believes that through negotiations, a satisfactory way can be agreed upon to settle the question of Hong Kong's true status. The negotiations got off to an unpromising start when the Chinese government reacted negatively to Margaret Thatcher's firm statement that the treaties that ceded leased territory to Britain were valid under international law. The unfortunate result was a strident ideological tirade from Beijing. The Chinese government there believes that China is not bound by these unequal treaties and claims that the whole of the Hong Kong area will be recovered when conditions are right.

Britain clearly recognizes that the legal basis for its presence in the New Territories expires in 1997, so both sides can sidestep the sovereignty issue and concentrate on practical questions. What kind of administration will Hong Kong have after Britain's colonial presence is ended? How much power will Hong Kong have to run its own affairs? And will the People's Republic try to impose its own administration on Hong Kong?

In the early stages of the talks concerning Hong Kong's future, China stated that Hong Kong was to become a 'special administrative zone' - that would even allow Britain to have a small managerial role. But in view of Thatcher's comments on sovereignty, Chinese officials now state that Britain may not have any role to play in the administration of Hong Kong - though they did not preclude employment of British experts to govern.

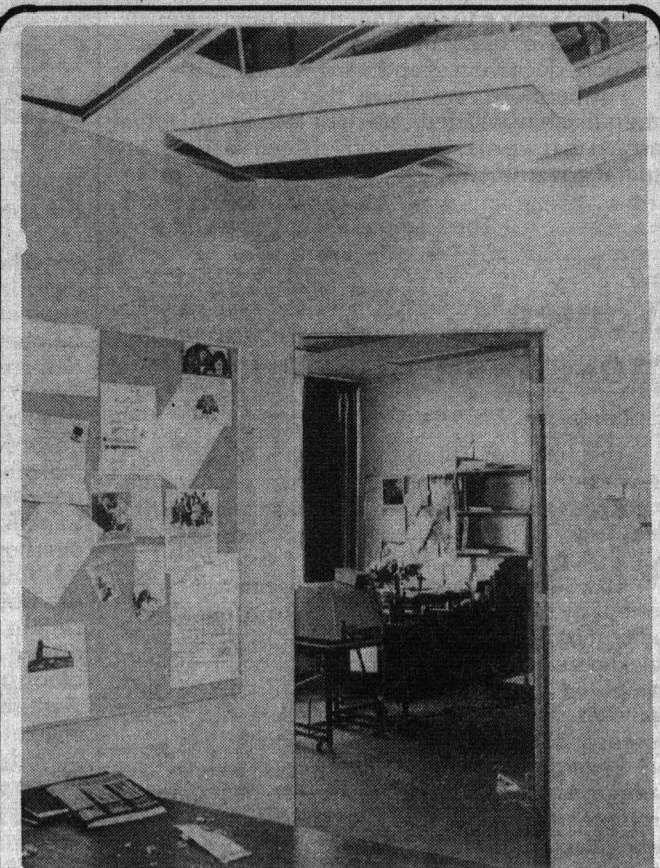
Several high-ranking Chinese officials have let it be known that Hong Kong will indeed become a special administrative region governed by Hong Kong people with its own social system, free port, and its role as a major financial centre intact. But many officials also expressed the possibility that if the economy continues to deteriorate or if social unrest (such as the December riot) grows, China might intervene before 1997.

Britain's negotiators are aware of a certain moral responsibility to the people of Hong Kong and they wish to get the best possible deal for the colony. They are also keenly aware of the weakness of their position. Britain can hardly be seen as perpetuating a colonial anomaly on the coast of the world's most populous communist state. The British government is also aware of their tenuous position in the colony and that most Hong Kong residents are reconciled to the idea that ultimately Chinese sovereignty will be reasserted. British politicians and the public find Hong Kong an irritating burden. There is no clearer demonstration of Britain's long-term intention to complete its responsibilities in Hong Kong than the British Nationality Act of 1983 denying citizens of Hong Kong the right to live in Britain.

One can sympathize with the Hong Kong dwellers. Their future is on the line. Wealthy Hong Kong dwellers have already made arrangements to move their families and assets abroad before the deluge. There can be little doubt that the prospect of imminent British withdrawal from Hong Kong will stimulate the already large flow of capital out of the territory, and will lead to an exodus that may ultimately reach the scale of the refugee exit from Vietnam.

It is not only the economic threats that worry Hong Kong. It is a question of political freedom as well. Chinese leaders have admitted that some freedoms in Hong Kong will not be permitted once sovereignty is restored.

In the light of China's commitment to recovery of full sovereignty, the best that Hong Kong can hope for is special economic or administrative status under Chinese control, with a degree of self-management.



by Gilbert Bouchard

Vandals broke into the Instructional Systems Group and Plato Services early Sunday morning, causing over one thousand dollars worth of damage.

SU VP Internal Peter Block says that the vandals "gained entrance by climbing through the ceiling in the hallway, making their way over the door, breaking through the ceiling, and jumping into the offices."

Block estimates that they broke into the offices at approximately 3:10 Sunday morning, since a clock broken during the break-in stopped at that time. Block notes, however, that "they could have changed the setting of the clock to fool us."

Damage included a broken computer terminal screen, broken ceiling tiles and light fixtures, and a damaged door leading to the SUB roof.

Nothing was believed to be stolen, although Block has received no formal report.

The office was vacated today, since asbestos was exposed when the ceiling tiles were broken.

DON'T JUST HIGHLIGHT IT, "BOSS" IT!

Put **STABILO BOSS** to work and get attention. "BOSSING" is highlighting at its best. Computer printouts, book reviews, graphs and maps. To colour-code or emphasize, "BOSS" them all! Insist on the original. **STABILO BOSS**, available in transparent ink in 8 fluorescent colours at a special introductory price of \$1.69 on **STABILO BOSS** and \$2.09 on **STABILO BOSS 2**. Save 25%.

Refillable pocket model.

Schwan-STABILO

at **VARSITY DRUG, HUB MALL, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA**

Distributed in Canada by: **HEINZ JORDAN AND COMPANY LIMITED, 900 Magnetic Drive, North York, Ont. M3J 2C4**

Eventual self-government for natives

Waterloo, Ontario (CUP) - The Ontario government supports native rights, but has questions about equal rights and aboriginal self-government, the Minister for

Resource Development said recently.

Norman Sterling told a Wilfred Laurier University audience Jan. 31 that determining who Canada's native people are is a difficult problem.

There are 70,000 status Indians in Ontario and an undetermined number of Metis and non-status Indians. There are 173 bands living on 115 reserves, plus a large number of Indians living off the reserves in the province.

The Ontario government is concerned with discrimination against women in the existing definition of native people, Sterling said. Currently, a native woman who marries a non-native man loses her Indian status and all possible benefits, but a man does

not lose his rights if he marries a non-native woman.

The Ontario government wants the federal government to repeal that section of the Indian Act to demonstrate its "conviction towards the entrenchment of equality rights in the Constitution."

The government supports eventual self-government for natives, but has some reservations over jurisdiction, Sterling said. Canada's new constitution recognizes existing aboriginal and treaty rights, and requires the Prime Minister to convene periodic conferences to meet native leaders.

Sterling said Ontario's support of native rights is not in question, but how the province will recognize them is the issue.

Entertainment List for the North Power Plant Dining Lounge & Cafeteria March 1st - 17th

- Wed. March 7 - U of A Jazz Quintet
- Thurs. March 8 - Jazz by Starlight
- Fri. March 9 - Lance Jack & His Disco Shack
- Sat. March 10 - Bunnie's Disco
- Wed. March 14 - Jazz by Starlight
- Thurs. March 15 - U of A Jazz Quintet
- Fri. March 16 - Bunnie's Disco
- Sat. March 17 - Live Blues Band

Entertainment starts from 8 PM - 12 PM
Public Welcome until 3 PM
GSA members and guests 3 PM - Midnight
Social memberships available to all staff and undergraduates.
Call office 432-2175. After 2 PM call North Power Plant 432-3101.

ACCORD STENO SERVICE

Typing & Photocopying Service

North end of HUB Mall
433-7727

GRADUATION PORTRAIT SPECIAL

Two for the price of one plus \$1.00

GARNEAU STUDIO
10909, 86th Ave.
433-4491

Three Blocks from Campus
offer ends April 30th/84