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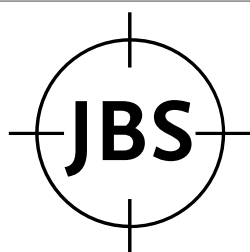
A Second Evil Empire

The James Bond Series, “Red China”, and Cold War Cinema

SEBASTIAN GEHRIG¹

On 17 September 1964, the James Bond film *Goldfinger* premiered at the Odeon Theatre, Leicester Square, London and was soon hailed by many critics as the archetypical Bond adventure (see Chapman 2007, 49). The film revolves around the villain Auric Goldfinger, superbly played by Gert Fröbe, who attempts to detonate an atomic device in the US gold depository of Fort Knox. Himself a millionaire and obsessed with gold, Goldfinger hopes to increase the value of his own gold reserves tenfold by rendering the US reserves unusable. Shortly before the assault on Fort Knox, Goldfinger reveals his plan to Bond, certain that the latter will die in the raid. Bond confronts Goldfinger with the fact that it is impossible to transport all of the gold deposited at Fort Knox to another place before the US military sends reinforcements to foil the scheme. Goldfinger then discloses to Bond that the “red-Chinese” have supplied him with an atomic device to carry out his plan, and that he does not intend to remove the gold bullion at all (1964, scene starting at 1:23:20). As in the first and fifth James Bond films, *Dr. No* (1962) and *You Only Live Twice* (1967), the People’s Republic of China

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(PRC) appears as the driving force behind Bond's opponent. The creators of the cinematic Bond linked the first few films in the series to the rising threat of "Red China" in Cold War politics of the time. Indeed, only one month after the premiere of *Goldfinger*, the PRC would test its first atomic bomb at the Lop Nur test site on 16 October 1964.

Recent scholarship has highlighted the pivotal role films have played in shaping Western imaginaries of the Cold War divide.² The role of cultural products in moulding popular understandings of the Cold War as an imaginary war is a crucial puzzle piece in understanding how people and societies have dealt with a conflict which would most likely have resulted in global annihilation had it ever turned "hot".³ In terms of shaping popular understandings of Cold War adversaries, the representation of the PRC in Western film has so far attracted little attention (a notable exception is Greene 2014, 95-150). Yet "Red China" became a central theme in one of the most prolific blockbuster series' in the 1960s, the James Bond franchise. The producers of the James Bond films built on an already well-established trope: "Red China" had served as one of the major threats to the West in representations of Asia in US films of the 1950s. The Bond series further played an important role in reconfiguring older literary and cinematographic tropes of the Yellow Peril into a distinctly communist "red-Chinese" threat (Dick 2016, chp. 8). The depiction of "Red China" in the James Bond series helped to reassure Western viewers of the First World's hegemonic position and, in particular, as Cynthia Baron has noted, represented "British strategies of self-definition in the 'post-colonial' era". Baron argues that James Bond's exploits remained steeped in the discourse of an "Orientalism which positioned the East as

2 For a discussion of the understudied aspect of audience reactions to James Bond films in particular see: Dodds 2006, 116-130. For the role of cinema in shaping imaginaries of Cold War adversaries between East and West see: Shaw and Youngblood 2010; Shaw 2007; Shaw 2001. Klaus Dodds has noted the importance of film in shaping "popular geopolitics" and popular understandings of "geographies of threat and danger". See: Dodds 2005. This scholarship ties into broader debates within historical scholarship on Cold War culture and how the cultural history of the Cold War is written about and documented. For studies centred on the US see: Whitfield 1996; Kuznick and Gilbert 2001. For a leading collection on Asia see: Zheng, Hong, Szonyi 2010. In recent years, a further debate has emerged as to the ways in which the cultural history of the Cold War has been written as a series of entangled perspectives from the geopolitical East and West. See: Vowinckel, Payk, Lindenberger 2012; Major and Mitter 2004.

3 Matthew Grant and Benjamin Ziemann have recently examined the Cold War as an imaginary war by exploring the central trope of the atomic bomb in post-war thought and culture. See: Grant and Ziemann 2016.

mysterious, incomprehensible, and pathologised in order to justify Western imperialism” (2003, 135). Read from this perspective, the James Bond films translated traditional, popular stereotypes of a mystical East depicted in the Yellow Peril literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (such as Sax Rohmer’s *Fu Manchu* series) into the Cold War era. The appearance of “Red China” in the James Bond film series marked the peak in popularity of Western filmmakers’ use of Maoist China as a Cold War antagonist to the West between the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the so-called Second Cold War in the 1980s.

However, there was no uniform manner in which China was depicted within Western cinema. Arthouse and left-wing filmmakers close to the emerging student movements of the late 1960s viewed the rise of Socialist China in a different light. When the Cultural Revolution began to inspire left-wing opposition to mainstream politics in Western Europe and the US, Maoist themes also had a short honeymoon amongst radical left-wing audiences (Connery 2008). Maoism (or Mao Zedong Thought) was central to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Maoist ideology was promoted as the “spiritual atom bomb” of the twentieth century (see Cook 2014a and Leese 2011). Radical left-wing activists across the West viewed this new revolutionary anti-imperialism as the ideological touchstone in their opposition to the Vietnam War, the remnants of the colonial era, and the conservative social mores which dominated their societies at home (Gehrig 2011; Gehrig, Mittler, Wemheuer 2008; Wolin 2010; Connery 2008; Elbaum 2002, 41-58; Cook 2014b). When adherence to Maoist ideology took hold in the West, cracks within the radical left emerged which caused diplomatic rifts between the PRC and some Western European governments. A comparison of those blockbuster films produced at the time (such as the James Bond series) and several arthouse and left-wing films demonstrates the extent to which cinematic stereotypes (such as the threat of the Yellow Peril) are simultaneously crafted, contested, and deployed for a number of political ends.

This article explores the ways in which the rise of Maoist China in international Cold War politics, as well as the ideological threat posed to the West by the Chinese Cultural Revolution, transformed China into a prominent geopolitical antagonist within Western post-war cinema. I contrast prolific Cold War films such as the James Bond series with films from European leftist directors to illustrate how the reimagined Yellow Peril of “Red China” impacted Western Cold War popular culture. While blockbuster cinema of the period had a broad appeal, arthouse and left-wing cinema was made for (and reached) a much smaller

cross-section of the public. However, these different types of cinema nevertheless formed an important part of the West's cultural production of Cold War imaginaries; these films became "critical determinant[s] of the Cold War"; not simply "adjunct[s] to diplomacy and military affairs", but a significant factor that "shaped the meaning and nature of the conflict for millions of people from beginning to end" (Shaw and Youngblood 2010, 6).

Western cinema anticipated and directly reflected the rise of the PRC in Cold War politics. In turn, images of Maoist China depicted in Western cinema impacted and shaped the cultural construction of the Cold War for Western audiences. Through this process, images of China merged with older Western imaginaries of the Far East into transcultural imaginaries (see Herren, Rüesch, Sibille 2012). In the studio films of the 1950s, European or American actors usually played "red-Chinese". Distinctions between Chinese, Japanese, Korean, or Vietnamese languages, costumes, and objects used in these films were seldom made. This changed with the beginning of the Cultural Revolution that sparked intense left-wing interest in Maoism as a new source of political legitimation (Gehrig 2011; Gehrig, Mittler, Wemheuer 2008; Wolin 2010; Connery 2008; Elbaum 2002, 41-58; Cook 2014b). With the rise of the PRC in world politics, Chinese themes were more accurately depicted than in the 1950s. By the late 1960s, the popularity of Red China reached its peak in Western cinema shortly before the PRC finally (and decisively) entered the world stage by taking over the UN Security Council seat from the Republic of China (ROC). It was in this historical moment that the James Bond film series assisted in the cultural transformation of "Red China" from a regional Asian threat into a danger to global stability within the Western consciousness.

THE CHINESE YELLOW PERIL: FROM FU MANCHU TO COMMUNIST BRAINWASHING

The orientalist threat of China to the West originated in the popular culture of the late nineteenth century. Chinese immigrants to the US and Britain sparked fears of an "Asian invasion" among Western audiences at the time. The film history of a Chinese Yellow Peril began with the creation of the definitive Chinese super-villain, Dr. Fu Manchu, in the early twentieth century. A creation of the British author Sax Rohmer, the Fu Manchu saga gained immediate popularity and resulted in a succession of thirteen novels, published between 1913 and 1959. After Rohmer's death, the novel saga lived on through continuation authors Cay Van Ash and William Patrick Maynard. The Fu Manchu books achieved their popularity through an effective publication strategy. Rohmer succeeded in pub-

lishing his stories simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic as newspaper serials. Their success quickly led to radio broadcasts, films, comic strips, and books.

Rohmer's novels formed part of a social discourse within Britain and the US on Chinese immigration, with clear racist undertones. Following the Chinese Exclusion Act passed by the US Congress in 1882, fear of immigration and a growing military threat originating from Asia took hold within the Western public imagination (Clegg 1994, 13-36; Mayer 2014, 21-6; Wu 1982, 164-82). In the 1932 film *The Mask of Fu Manchu*, Boris Karloff's performance shaped the look and style of Fu Manchu for future film adaptations (Mayer 2014, 4). With the introduction of the character of Fu Manchu to audiences, the archetype of the Asian villain striving for world domination became firmly embedded within Western popular culture by the 1930s. However, Fu Manchu was initially viewed as an archetype of the "evil oriental" rather than as distinctly Chinese (Mayer 2011, 117). The rise of Fu Manchu's cinematic popularity thus mirrored the resurgence of the century-old Yellow Peril scare that had emerged in the wake of Genghis Khan's threat to Europe. The film adaptation of Pearl Buck's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *The Good Earth*, which later earned her the Nobel Prize in Literature, marked the short-lived height of positive imagery of China in the 1930s (Greene, 50-94). Yet, this soon changed. In the interwar period, a growing but somewhat undefined "Asian threat" re-emerged within the European and US cultural imagination.

The end of the Second World War, which had been dominated by anti-Japanese sentiments in the US and Britain, as well as the emerging Cold War, transformed the Yellow Peril into a distinctly Chinese threat. The American public, in particular, struggled to accept that China had been "lost" to the communists in 1949 (Greene, 95-150). At the end of the Korean War in 1953, the American public was shocked when news spread that twenty-one GI soldiers who were released from Prisoner of War camps had opted against repatriation in favour of remaining within Asia. It seemed incomprehensible for Americans that US soldiers could renounce the American way of life with all its luxuries and move to an impoverished Asian country. In attempting to explain away the soldiers' behaviour, the journalist Edmond Hunter spoke of communist "mind murder" and promoted the idea of "brainwashing" in Chinese internment camps. Although CIA director Allan Dulles had attempted to prepare the American public for the possibility that some American soldiers might decide against repatriation, nevertheless public anger within the US was sparked following news coverage of the soldiers who elected to remain in the PRC. The US public seemed to care little

for the fact that, in turn, 22,000 North Korean and Chinese soldiers equally refused repatriation. While the GIs were waiting for their release to the PRC in the Indian camp Panmunjom, US media coverage slandered them as “invalids”, “dupes”, “rats”, and “cheese-eaters”. At the same time, GIs returning to the US were also met with growing suspicion as fears of “reprogramming” and “brainwashing” within the internment camps suggested that Americans could not necessarily trust those soldiers who had successfully be repatriated (Carruthers 2009, 174-6).

Driven by the intense anti-communism of the early 1950s, suspicions of effective “oriental” torture and brainwashing struck fear to the hearts of many Americans. It is no wonder, then, that an increasing number of films and television series adapted these culturally-prevalent themes. For one, the trope of communist brainwashing became central to many of the Cold War films produced during this period (see Burton 2013). In September 1953, NBC released *The Traitor*, which was soon followed by ABC’s *POW* (part of the US Steel Hour series funded by the US Steel Corporation). When one particular broadcast of *POW* was interrupted due to technical problems in the Detroit area, some angry viewers called the television station switchboard to notify the network of suspected communist sabotage (Carruthers, 198). In 1954, the Ronald Reagan-led *Prisoner of War* and *The Bamboo Prison* continued to peddle the themes of communist maltreatment of POWs and brainwashing. These films were increasingly met with negative responses from critics and the US Army (Carruthers, 200). When a number of those twenty-one GIs who had initially refused repatriation began to return to the US from the PRC in the 1950s, their very public defence of the PRC’s political and social system further provoked the ire of the American public, thus embedding within that culture the notion that communism was a pervasive, insidious threat very much at risk of taking hold within the US (Carruthers, 219).

By the mid-1950s, the expression “Bamboo Curtain” came to define the schismatic divide between the geopolitical East and West in global politics in much the same way that Winston Churchill’s famous diagnosis of the “Iron Curtain” delineated the topography of Europe (Spence 1990, 627-33; Shaw 2001, 65; Roberts 2006). Show trials across the socialist bloc as well as further cases (and suspicions) of “brainwashed” POWs ensured that the threat of the Chinese Yellow Peril was kept alive. Such themes inspired a generation of “communist films” such as *The Master Plan* (1954), *The Blue Peter* (1954), *The Gamma People* (1955), *The Mind Benders* (1963), and John Frankenheimer’s famous *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962) (Greene, 107-20). The use of the definite article in all of these titles seems

to offer some assurance to the viewer of the very legitimacy of the threat of communism. Other such films – *Operation Malaya* (1953), *The Yangtze Incident* (1957), and *The Devil Never Sleeps* (1963) – followed suit, and the threat of the Yellow Peril, sublimated by fears of “Red China”, was further enhanced. These films also renewed interest in the figure of Fu Manchu, and, in 1956, Republic Pictures, part of Paramount Pictures, produced a thirteen-episode television series called *The Adventures of Dr. Fu Manchu*. Of course, Dr. No, who appeared in the film of the same name in 1962, became the first archetypical villain in a long line of James Bond’s cinematic adversaries. That the Bond filmmakers should elect to open the franchise with a loosely-disguised reconfiguration of the Fu Manchu character is no coincidence.

Western anti-communist hysteria at the time had already fuelled a number of critical responses. In 1957, Raymond A. Bauer, an expert in Soviet psychology, pleaded for a more “mature, confident acceptance of diversity of political views” on the part of the American populous, in particular, and condemned the mass panic that had resulted from the suspicions of communist brainwashing. For Bauer, Chinese attempts to persuade Americans of the efficacy of their particular ideologies did not constitute “demonology”, as many sensationalists in the American press liked to suggest. Bauer dismissed American fears that “nothing less than a combination of the theories of Dr. I.P. Pavlov [a Soviet scientist] and the wiles of Dr. Fu Manchu could produce such results” as ludicrous, arguing that such an opinion suggested more about the nature of the American people themselves (and their misconceptions of the Yellow Peril) than their supposed enemies (1957, 46). For Bauer, the hysteria directed against brainwashing was a sign of America’s own ideological uncertainties and political doubts. After the censure of Joseph McCarthy by the US Senate in 1954, Bauer reflected on a period of heightened anti-communism during which any sympathy for communist ideology had been branded “Un-American”. He emphasised that Americans needed to be prepared for the fact that disaffection with their own political system would lead some to convert to communism.

Ever since the October Revolution in 1917, Hollywood studies had actively participated in the construction of anti-communist ideologies, and, as such, the PRC increasingly came to represent within the studio films the threat of the East, particularly during the Hollywood films of the 1950s (Shaw 2007, 65). After the Korean War ended in a military stalemate in 1953, the US Secretary of State, John Forster Dulles, pointed to an Asian communist threat in a speech on 29 March 1954. Almost immediately prior to Dulles’ speech, on 13 March of the same year,

the Vietnamese army had engaged in a besiegement of French troops in the valley of Dien Bien Phu. The US administration was not willing to commit troops to another war in Asia against hostile public opinion at home, as the trauma of the costly Korean War still dominated US debates. President Eisenhower and Dulles hoped to prevent the deployment of Chinese troops to Vietnam after the French defeat. Dulles threatened the PRC government by publicly announcing his Domino Theory, in which he admonished the Soviet Union and the PRC as powers looking to expand their territories. His rhetoric suggested that the US would not tolerate any further expansion of Soviet or PRC influence within South-East Asia (Immerman 1999, 92). Dulles painted the Chinese threat as regionally confined to South-East Asia. This assumption was closely mirrored in US and British cinema at the time. In Fred T. Sear's *Target Hong Kong* (1953) for example, Richard Denning plays an American adventurer who is recruited by US officials and Chinese nationalist agents to prevent a communist attack on Hong Kong. In the film, the PRC is depicted as the driving force behind a growing threat to the US and Western alliance in Asia, and through Hollywood the geopolitical importance of Vietnam was asserted. Hollywood blockbusters of the period prepared the ground for an increased presence of US troops in Asia. By the mid-1960s, the US government eventually dispatched more than half a million US troops to Vietnam when the conflict spiralled into open war (Immerman, 92).

In this public atmosphere, films such as Sam Fuller's romantic adventure *China Gate* (1957) and James Clavell's *Five Gates to Hell* (1959) paved the way for the later Cold War propaganda classic *The Green Berets* (1968). In *China Gate*, American willingness to intervene in the growing conflict in Asia is realised when two US veterans of the Korean War (played by Gene Barry and Nat King Cole) join the French Indo-Chinese Army. Serving as mercenaries in the French Foreign Legion, they set out to destroy a Vietcong ammunition depot at the border to the PRC. In *Five Gates to Hell*, the threat of the Yellow Peril reached new levels, as "red-Chinese" mercenaries kidnap, maltreat, and rape a group of nuns who are working for the Red Cross in French Indochina (Shaw 2007, 209). In British cinema of the same period, Maoist China was depicted as a threat to the declining British Empire in Asia as well as on the British Cold War home front. The plot of *Little Red Monkey* (1954), for instance, suggests that the Chinese are behind certain acts of political subversion. The film depicts the defection of a scientist called Leon Duschenko, who is from the Soviet bloc. After Duschenko successfully escapes from East Berlin to London, he is captured by an underground communist organisation masquerading as an "international friendship club", run

by the Chinese. At the end of the film, Duschenko is rescued by Western secret agents. The film was notable for its cautionary warning to Britons at the time against subversive attempts by the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) to indoctrinate British subjects through documentaries which claimed to showcase the “good life” of Eastern Europe, the USSR, and the PRC. Public defections of Soviet agents to the West only weeks prior to the film’s release nonetheless reaffirmed in the British consciousness the ideological superiority of the West’s political system (Shaw 2001, 49, 82). The arrival of British Secret Service agent James Bond a short number of years later would further affirm the attributes of Western (and, specifically, British) political doctrine.

007 AGAINST “RED CHINA”

The first Bond film, *Dr. No*, was released against the backdrop of Cold War tensions in 1962. In Ian Fleming’s novel, which was based on the adaptation of a screenplay treatment for the American television producer Henry Morgenthau III, Bond is sent to Jamaica to recover from a KGB poison attack. During his stay, he discovers underground facilities through which the sinister Dr. No. is sabotaging US missile tests at nearby Cape Canaveral, Florida. In the novel, Dr. No is working for the Soviet Union. For the plot of the film, however, screenwriters Richard Maibaum, Johanna Harwood, and Berkely Mather adapted the screenplay to the contemporary Cold War climate in order to increase the political frisson for the audience (Baron, 136). Dr. No became the son of a German missionary father and a Chinese mother, a hybrid figure who straddles the political East-West divide of both the Bamboo and Iron Curtains. To accommodate West German audiences for the film, however, the nationality of Dr. No’s father was changed from German-Chinese to British-Chinese in the German-language version of the film. The characterisation of Dr. No draws heavily on Fu Manchu, and the film plays with stereotypes that were widely in use in popular culture of the period. All of Dr. No’s accomplices are of Chinese origin, and while each of the women in his employ wear Chinese-style attire, the uniforms of Dr. No’s guards resemble elements of the Japanese Army and German storm-trooper uniforms. Most significant in terms of the film’s geopolitics is the switch in Dr. No’s allegiance: in the film, he no longer works for the Soviet government (as he does in the novel); now he works for SPECTRE, the Special Executive for Counter-Intelligence, Terrorism, Revenge, and Extortion, an international, de-politicised terrorist network. Thus, while Dr. No uses missile toppling equipment supplied to him by the Chinese, his ultimate goal is wealth and personal supremacy rather than

the political sovereignty of Maoist China. Klaus Dodds has noted that explicit references to “Red China” in early versions of the screenplay for *Dr. No* were removed precisely to avoid political controversy and so that the character of Bond’s first nemesis could more aptly fit the generic mould of the nation-less “evil genius”, a trope that had been dominant in Victorian novels (2005, 277). When, in the film, Bond accuses Dr. No of “working for the East”, Dr. No retorts: “East. West. Just points of the compass, each as stupid as the other” (scene starting at 1:31:09). While the PRC supplies Dr. No with the technology he needs to topple American missiles, the film makes it clear that No wishes to achieve personal autonomy and that he is only aided by communist powers. The racist stereotypes of the character (a diabolical Chinese nuclear scientist) very much played into colonial racial prejudices of the period and reflected growing concerns that the PRC was soon to acquire atomic capabilities.

In the third Bond film, *Goldfinger*, the PRC is seen to have a much more expanded role in the plot. Though the original source novel (published in 1959) makes no reference to the PRC, in the film it is the mysterious Chinese agent, Mr. Ling, who provides Goldfinger with the atomic device necessary to radiate the US gold depository. Also significant is the choice of costume for Goldfinger’s henchpeople: their attire closely resembles the uniforms of the People’s Liberation Army of China. Thus, the film can be read as part of a more overarching trend within Hollywood and big-budget studio filmmaking at the time to portray the PRC as a much greater threat to Cold War stability (and the American economy) than the Soviet Union, particularly in the wake of American and Soviet détente after the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), which ensured an uneasy but relatively stable period of relations between the two countries. In the next Bond film, *Thunderball* (1965), references to the PRC continued, albeit less explicitly: it is noted briefly that SPECTRE sells Chinese narcotics in Western countries – an aside that is most evocative of the insidious threat of Fu Manchu and the iniquitous opiate dens of Victorian England. Non-Bond films such as *Battle Beneath the World* (1967) and *The Chairman/The Most Dangerous Man in the World* (1969) further succeeded in demonising the PRC. In the former, the Chinese harness the power of a gigantic laser to plant atomic bombs underneath major American cities; in the latter, Gregory Peck plays a scientist, Hathaway, who is sent to China to retrieve a scientific formula. When Chairman Mao himself agrees to meet with Hathaway personally, Hathaway’s superiors secretly plant a bomb in his head to assassinate Mao during the meeting (Chapman, 110). The absurdity and outlandishness of these plots (no less absurd than many of the Bond films) speaks to the

extreme paranoia, ignorance, and fear which characterised Western visions of China and the communist Far East.

In the fifth Bond film, *You Only Live Twice*, the threat of “Red China” and Mao’s alleged attempts to rule the world became most apparent. The screenplay for the film, by children’s author Roald Dahl, largely departed from Fleming’s original novel published in 1964. The original novel centred on Japan, where Bond has tracked his nemesis Ernst Stavro Blofeld, the head of SPECTRE, after two previous encounters (in the novels *Thunderball* [1961] and *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service* [1963]). In the filmic adaptation, which is still set mostly in Japan, the PRC’s role as the dominant new threat to Cold War détente is emphasised. In 1957, Mao Zedong had given a speech in Moscow, in which he remarked that half of China’s population might perish in a nuclear Third World War, but, he asserted, the rest would survive and live to rebuild the world in its image. The speech was subsequently published in the *Beijing Review* on 6 September 1963. Most harrowing for Western commentators was how little fear Mao seemed to express at the prospect of a nuclear war:

Let us imagine how many people would die if war breaks out. There are 2.7 billion people in the world, and a third could be lost. If it is a little higher it could be half [...] I say that if the worst came to the worst and one-half dies, there will still be one-half left, but imperialism would be razed to the ground and the whole world would become socialist. After a few years there would be 2.7 billion people again. (qtd. in Dikötter 2010, 13)

Mao’s apparent readiness to engage in a nuclear war seemed to have fuelled Dahl’s imagination while writing the screenplay for *You Only Live Twice*. At the time, many articles in the Western press expounded on Mao’s ignorance of the dangers of nuclear war and accused him of blatant disregard for human life. Given Soviet commitment to the policies of détente with America, as well as a shared understanding of the threat of mutually-assured destruction, China now seemed to be positioned as the dominant threat not simply to Western economic interests in Asia but global political interests, and these increasing hostilities were most acutely felt at the European front-line of the Cold War: the geopolitical divide between East and West (Jaspers 1967, 15-28).

In the original source novel of *You Only Live Twice*, Japan is depicted as a suicide-obsessed nation, and the negative portrayal of Japanese culture revived the anti-Japanese sentiment which had guided propaganda efforts during the Second

World War. In Dahl's screenplay, Japan is presented as an eminently modern country (Chapman, 110). The head of the Japanese secret service, Tiger Tanaka, assists Bond in his mission, and it is clear that Dahl's revisioning of Japan as technologised and, above all, friendly to the interests of the British Secret Service, signals the new alliance between Japan and the West against the PRC. Much like Dr. No in the first Bond film, Blofeld and SPECTRE's interest is aligned with the Chinese government. The fuel for Blofeld's space rocket is shipped out of Shanghai on board the tanker Ning-Bo; the rocket itself is designed to interfere with US and Soviet space missions and to instigate conflict between both nations; and Blofeld's financial backer is a "foreign power" embodied by Chinese secret agents who demand war "between Russia and the US". In a key scene, Blofeld explains to Bond that "in a matter of hours, when America and Russia have annihilated each other, we shall see a new power dominating the world" (scene starting at 1:39:05). In 1967, when *You Only Live Twice* was released in cinemas, the PRC had just tested its first hydrogen bomb and, incidentally, Kingsley Amis, the first Bond continuation author (writing under the pseudonym "Robert Markham"), was working on *Colonel Sun*, the first of the Bond novels to introduce "Red China" as a major antagonist. The James Bond series, then, played an instrumental role in elevating China from a regional Asian threat to a major player in world geopolitics.

Running concurrent to the rise of "Red China" in the James Bond series, the figure of Fu Manchu was also undergoing a revival on screen. From 1965 onwards, producer Harry Alan Towers released a new Fu Manchu film each year, starring Christopher Lee as the Chinese villain. *The Face of Fu Manchu* (1965), *The Brides of Fu Manchu* (1966), *The Vengeance of Fu Manchu* (1967), *The Blood of Fu Manchu* (1968), and *The Castle of Fu Manchu* (1969) all premiered throughout the mid-to-late Sixties while the Cultural Revolution raged in the PRC. In these films, traditional Chinese motifs are blended with a form of "techno-orientalism" in which the villainous Fu Manchu uses mass media technologies in order to control Western minds. The intersecting themes of brainwashing, the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction, and distrust of mass communication technologies coalesced in these films and spoke to contemporary fears of "a global empire of streamlined creatures" controlled by the Chinese which took the place of "national communities of self-determined individuals" (Mayer 2014, 97). While the Bond films had a global reach, the Fu Manchu films of the 1960s attracted a mainly European audience. The films were produced in the UK and drew on the visual traditions of the old *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* productions. Over the course of the five films, the threat of a Pan-Asian conspiracy, though prominent in

earlier iterations of the stories, was abandoned. In *The Face of Fu Manchu*, for instance Fu Manchu is supported in his schemes by a European organisation known as “Wireless International”; while in *The Vengeance of Fu Manchu* his actions are backed by the “gangs of America”. The plots of these films all play with the theme of the atomic bomb scare of the period and the fears that mass communication devices could be transformed into potential weapons. The Sixties’ iteration of the Fu Manchu stories formed part of the shifting position which the PRC occupied within the European Cold War imaginary (Gehrig 2014). In the US market, orientalist characters modelled after Fu Manchu, such as Yellow Claw and Ra’s al Ghul, were popularised in the *Captain America* and *Batman* comic universes, respectively, extending the threat of China to American nationalism into a new generation (Mayer 2014, 139-47,168).

Around 1970, the “Red China” theme reached its peak in Cold War cinema. John Huston’s *The Kremlin Letter* (1970) dramatised the threat of Maoism to the world. In the film, a group of US agents is sent to Moscow to retrieve an unauthorised letter sent to the Soviet government. In the letter, it is promised that the US will aid the Soviet Union in an armed conflict with the PRC, and the letter’s phrasing reads like a declaration of war against China. When British and US authorities discover the potential danger of this, they send their agents to retrieve the letter. Since the Sino-Soviet split, confrontations between the two communist giants had continued to accelerate. On 2 March 1969, military clashes ensued between the Soviet Union and the PRC at the Ussuri River (Yang 2000). The story of *The Kremlin Letter* made use of the tension between the two leading socialist powers and suggested further reconciliation between the US and the Soviet Union who, together, were both facing the threat of “Red China”. However, in terms of *realpolitik*, US president Richard Nixon’s 1972 visit to the PRC seemed to signal the opposite, as his visit marked the beginning of a more amicable period in US-China relations, while the Second Cold War would again accelerate US-Soviet tensions only a few years later.

By the mid-1970s, the end of the Cultural Revolution, the rapprochement of the PRC with the US and other Western countries, as well as the beginning of economic reforms following Mao’s death brought a decline in the use of “Red China” and the Yellow Peril as sensationalist themes within Western cinema. While the PRC reappeared in the Bond series in *Tomorrow Never Dies* (1997), the Cold War divide between East and West had vanished and the film’s depiction of the PRC itself was ambivalent. In the film, though a female Chinese Secret Service Agent (played to much acclaim by Asian action star Michelle Yeoh) aids

Bond in his mission, the film's British villain conspires with with a rogue Chinese general in order to topple the sitting PRC government. *Tomorrow Never Dies* thus very much belongs to a geopolitical era in which the West was retrospectively evaluating its position within the Cold War (Shaw 2013, 1).

SUBVERSIVE REVOLUTIONARY FUN AND CULTURAL REVOLUTION IN THE WEST

The Cold War image of “Red China” promoted in the James Bond series and other Hollywood films did not remain uncontested in Western cinema of the period. Since the mid-1960s, left-wing activists demanded fundamental political changes in Western Europe and the US. Across Europe and the US, subcultural leftists developed new protest methods that were rooted in the Situationist thinking of the 1910s and 1920s. In stirring public spectacle and irritating social authorities, activists hoped to gain publicity within their societies (Gehrig 2011; Holmig 2007, 107-18). The playful and ironic nature of initial social and political protests soon also inspired left-wing filmmakers. In 1965, Louis Malle's *Viva Maria!* captured the imagination of revolutionary student protesters, who were quick to associate Malle's vision with Mao's call for a permanent revolution. In their memoirs, leading West German student activists Rudi Dutschke and Dieter Kunzelmann, for example, detailed the significance of *Viva Maria!* in founding the first West German terrorist group, which was a firm adherent of Maoist rhetoric. Malle's film fascinated left-wing males across Europe – not least of all because of the two lead actresses Brigitte Bardot and Jean Moreau. Film stars such as Bardot and Uschi Obermaier came to define a radical, chic fashion which marked the increase of Maoist iconography within revolutionary Western cinema, fashion, and art (Koenen 2002, 145; Wolfe 1970).

Increased police surveillance and violence quickly radicalised left-wing protests in the late 1960s. In the eyes of radical left-wingers, the “fascist” Western states now revealed their true faces while the US engaged in fighting a costly war in Vietnam. The New Left turned to Third World liberation movements as their new role models for protest and resistance to state authorities. Within the Third World coalition, the PRC had meanwhile assumed a leadership role and had advocated a revolution against Soviet “social imperialism” (Cook 2014a; Friedman 2011). European left-wing cinema followed suit, now openly incorporating Maoist ideology. In 1967, Jean-Luc Godard's *La Chinoise* (1967) famously depicted a Maoist commune living within a shared apartment and planning for the revolution. Resembling Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel *The Possessed* (1872), Godard depicts the life of a group called the “Aden Arabie” cell, named after the novel

Aden Arabie by Paul Nizan. The five members of the group debate the virtue of terrorist resistance to the state. In a short appearance, one “Comrade X” visits the group. Comrade X is clearly modelled after the leader of the Black Power movement, Malcolm X, another link to Third World revolution and Maoism (Johnson 2013, 233-57). After one commune member has been singled out for Soviet revisionism, the leading member, Veronique, sets out to assassinate the Soviet Minister of Culture on a visit to Paris. By mistake, Veronique plants the bomb in the wrong hotel room and kills an innocent man. Godard’s film interrogates the dangers of political violence and the failure of its ultimate aims. Yet, *La Chinoise* makes extensive use of the contemporary debate in radical left-wing circles between supporters of political violence and proponents of cadre party-building. The Chinese Cultural Revolution served as the ideological point of reference for both factions and highlighted the importance of Maoist ideology as one of the major political trends within radical subcultures in the late 1960s and early 70s (Gehrig 2011). In *Le Monde*, Godard explained his intentions behind the film as follows:

Why *La Chinoise*? Because everywhere people are speaking about China. Whether it’s a question of oil, the housing crisis, or education, there is always the Chinese example. China proposes solutions that are unique [...] What distinguishes the Chinese Revolution and is also emblematic of the Cultural Revolution is Youth: the moral and scientific quest, free from prejudices. One can’t approve of all its forms [...] but this unprecedented cultural fact demands a minimum of attention, respect, and friendship. (qtd. in Wolin, 114)

Here, Godard highlights the appeal of the Cultural Revolution to Western left-wing activists: the Chinese model seemed to speak to almost any issue young left-wing protesters were concerned with. To many left-wing activists, the Cultural Revolution appeared to be the ideal blueprint for protests in Europe. Godard soon produced two other pro-Chinese films. In 1969, *The Wind From the East* was released, followed soon after by *See You at Mao* in 1971. When the French government led by George Pompidou closed down the French Maoist newspaper *La Cause the Peuple* in 1970, Godard was with Jean-Paul Sartre and other prominent French intellectuals who protested against the newspaper’s ban and the imprisonment of its editors (Wolin, 116).

While French leftist cinema could rely on the support of a strong political Left since the 1950s, activists in other Western European countries and the US quickly became disassociated from popular cinema. In West Germany, Maoist themes entered the short films of student radicals such as Harun Farocki's *Die Worte des Vorsitzenden* (*The Words of the Chairman*, 1967), but these were quickly banned from public screening. Farocki's film glorified Maoist slogans which insinuated that militant action was legitimate. Holger Meins, a later member of the terrorist group Red Army Faction (RAF), served as director of photography for the film. In the film, the protagonist is dressed like a member of the Chinese Red Guard. Making a paper dart from one of the pages of the Little Red Book, he throws it at another actor, who is playing the Shah of Iran in the scene, and says: "The words of Mao Zedong have to become weapons in our hands" (scene starting at 1:00 min). The film was shot in the context of the infamous visit of the Iranian Shah to West Berlin, which triggered large-scale student protests in the Federal Republic. When a small group of West German student activists turned to terrorist action in 1970, short films such as Farocki's endorsement of militancy were quickly banned by the government.

By the early 1970s, many radical left-wingers began to see the PRC much more critically, while others entrenched themselves further and founded Maoist cadre parties. In 1974, Jean Yanne's *Les Chinois à Paris* caused a scandal in France. Yanne used the popular theme of Maoist China to mock French society for its refusal to face the legacies of the Vichy regime. The film depicts the invasion of France by the Chinese People's Liberation Army. The film serves as an allegory of French society's behaviour under Nazi occupation in the Second World War and points to the then still unaddressed legacies of French collaboration with the Nazis during the Vichy regime. While the PLA is shown to occupy France without military resistance, Parisian society quickly adapts to its new rulers' lifestyle. Meanwhile, the Chinese occupiers choose the Galleries Lafayette as their headquarters. The invasion happens as Chinese Secret Service intelligence has determined that the French are the world's greatest *fumistes* ("stove fitters" but also "sluggards"). Consequently, the French are ordered to produce stoves by their Chinese occupiers. Eventually, a small French group forms a resistance movement. Meanwhile, a French woman seduces the leading Chinese commander, while members of the Parisian society undercut the morals of their Chinese occupiers with their decadent lifestyle. In reaction, the Chinese leave the country fearing for their moral integrity. After their departure, the French resistance is seen to take over Paris.

Such satirical Western adaptations of Maoist themes did not go unnoticed by the PRC government. Yanne had a reputation of being a satirical commentator of current political affairs in Europe. In 1972, he had completed a persiflage of the French Left with the film *Moi, y'en a vouloir des sous*, which mocked the orthodoxy of French unions. While his focus on French political affairs was obvious for European audiences, Yanne's record as a public critic of French politics was of no consequence for the PRC government. The Beijing government took the depiction of their country in *Les Chinois à Paris* literally. In the insecure political climate towards the end of the Cultural Revolution, no PRC official abroad or at home could be seen to ignore an attack on Mao. The Chinese ambassador to France immediately filed an official complaint to the French government, in which the PRC government demanded that the film be banned. The Chinese complaint encompassed three aspects: first, it argued that the film paralleled Nazi Germany; second, it alleged that the honour of the PLA was slandered; and third, it argued that Chinese culture was mocked. As such, the PRC government attempted to protect the Cultural Revolution both at home and abroad. The constant vilification of the PRC, spearheaded by the James Bond films of the 1960s, had taken its toll on officials in Beijing. The initial interest of radical left-wing groups in Maoist ideology, which was once incorporated into arthouse and left-wing cinema, was now waning, paving the way for a much more critical perspective on the PRC in radical circles, following Mao's death in 1976.

CONCLUSION

In the 1960s, Western fears of a rising Chinese threat to Cold War stability were galvanised in the James Bond franchise. The Bond films focused on the PRC's capability of building nuclear power stations, atomic bombs, and long-range missiles, and Western fear at such prospects became thematic of the Cold War arms race in the mid twentieth century. The rise within Western cinema of "Red China" and the threat of the Yellow Peril was fuelled by the fear of Cold War confrontations. While studio films from the 1950s presented the PRC as a regional threat within South-East Asia, the advent of the atomic bomb meant that "Red China" was transmuted into a major threat to global welfare, and the Bond films were instrumental in re-imagining (and heightening) the perceived threat of the PRC to Western audiences.

The engagement of arthouse and left-wing cinema with Maoist China reflected the deep rifts within Western societies in the late 1960s and 70s. While the danger of "Red China" was undisputed in films of the 1950s and early 1960s,

when anti-communism still prevailed as the dominant public mood across Western countries, the conflicts caused by the rise of the New Left and student movements showed a much closer engagement with Maoist ideology. Initial left-wing endorsement of the PRC's revolutionary politics contrasted with a more critical distance towards the PRC shown in later adaptations of Maoist themes in art-house and left-wing cinema. Contrasting blockbuster studio films and films made for narrower audiences allows for the exploration of political frictions of the late 1960s and early 1970s within Western countries, as well as an examination of the ways in which products of popular culture transformed the PRC from a national-regional threat to a wider global and ideological threat.

Cold War cinema not only shaped the imaginaries of the Western public but also global *realpolitik*. Examining the relationships between Ian Fleming, CIA director Allen Dulles, and US president John F. Kennedy, filmmaker Christopher Nolan has argued that Fleming's James Bond novels have served as a catalyst, though not necessarily as a blueprint, for such risky operations as the invasion at the Bay of Pigs (Moran 2011, 208-15). The President of Walt Disney Studios, Richard Frank, even insinuated in a US Congress hearing in July 1989 that film directors and movie studios had played a vital role the 1989 Tiananmen uprising. Frank noted that "I won't be so bold as to say that American movies are responsible for the popular uprising in China. But I am willing to bet that for more than a few Chinese citizens our films served as an inspiration to strike for something better" (qtd. in Shaw 2007, 301). Hollywood films undoubtedly captivated the imagination of Western audiences and shaped their imaginaries of "the enemy" during the Cold War. This was especially true for a large number of the global populous for whom the Cold War was experienced not as a "hot conflict" but as a more abstract, continuous, and pervasive threat, the likes of which was fuelled by the James Bond films.

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