British Propaganda and the Threat from Chinese Communism, 1948-54.

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Abstract

On the 6th January 1950 Britain accorded *de jure* recognition to the newly formed People's Republic of China. The decision reflected a post war desire in Britain to protect its trade with China and the security of colonial Hong Kong. Yet in seeking diplomatic relations with a communist country, it not only diverged from its American ally, but appeared at odds with its own commitment to combat the perceived threat of communism. It is within this set of conflicting interests that the thesis is positioned.

The thesis reveals the use of British anti-communist propaganda in 'greater China', including China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, from 1948 to 1954. Until now this is a topic that has been largely ignored, an issue that this thesis seeks to redress.

The thesis advocates a new, holistic approach to the study of Britain's Cold War propaganda that demands the study of both negative and positive propaganda in order to fully understand London's anti-communist efforts. It demonstrates the need for a multi-agency method, one that looks beyond the well documented role and operation of Britain's Information Research Department.

In utilising this approach, the thesis shows that Britain did engage in anti-communist propaganda in 'greater China.' However, the aim and scope of the propaganda activities were challenged and shaped, not only by London's prioritisation of its relationship with the PRC, but also by a range of other factors, including the local environment, geo-strategic priorities, and funding. As a result the nature of anti-communist propaganda campaign altered over both time and space.

The thesis demonstrates there was no overarching propaganda policy for 'greater China.' What was achieved was uncoordinated and reflective of the differing aims and objectives of the many actors. The thesis offers an important contribution that both builds upon and challenges existing work on Britain's Cold War propaganda and Sino-British relationship in the early Cold War.

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List of Abbreviations

AC(O)	Official Committee on Communism (Overseas)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BIS	British Information Services
CAB	Cabinet (British) files
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CGO	Commissioner General's Office (Singapore).
COI	Central Office of Information
COID	Colonial Office Information Department
CIA	Central of Intelligence
CIPC	Colonial Information Policy Committee
CoS	Chiefs of Staff
CRD	Cultural Relations Department
CRO	Commonwealth Relations Office
FED	Far Eastern Department
FEID	Far Eastern Information Department
FO	Foreign Office
FOIR	Freedom of Information Request
HC	House of Commons
IPD	Information Policy Department
IRD	Information Research Department

KMT	Kuomintang (Nationalist Party)
LPS	London Press Service
MOI	Ministry of Information
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PMG	Post Master General
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRO	The Public Relations Office (Hong Kong)
PUSC	Permanent Under-Secretary's Committee
PWE	Political Warfare Executive
RIO (HK)	Regional Information Office (Hong Kong)
RIO (S)	Regional Information Office (Singapore)
ROC	Republic of China
SEA	South East Asia
TNA	The National Archives (Kew)
UN	United Nations
USIS	United States Information Services
VOA	Voice of Americ

Introduction

The British Government welcomed the Chinese Premier, Xi Jinping, on a state visit to Britain in 2015. The visit included an address to both Houses of Parliament, a carriage procession along the Mall and a banquet hosted by the Queen at Buckingham Palace. This was a culmination of work started in 2005 and designed to improve relations between China and Britain. The visit was seen as opening 'a golden era in UK-China relations featuring enduring, inclusive and win-win cooperation.'[1] The global partnership according to the British government was a 'spectacular celebration of our shared appreciation of heritage and culture.' [2]

China has been important to Britain for over two centuries. British interest has primarily been in terms of trade and investment. In the 1800s, British influence and power was prevalent around the world, and the sheer size of China in terms of area, raw and finished materials, and markets made it an important country with which to engage. In the early period, to a large extent, Britain was able to impose itself on trade with China, opening up trading posts and acquiring territory which was subject to British laws and justice. By the start of the twenty-first century all of this had changed with the decline of British global authority.

China is now one of the most powerful countries in the world, not only in terms of its manufacturing output, but in terms of its financial and political reach. While there has been some dissent about a close UK-China relationship, with concern over issues

[1] 'UK-China Joint Statement 2015,' 22/10/2015, available at <www.gov.uk>, accessed 11.7.2018.

[2] 'UK welcomes President Xi Jinping for China State visit,' 20/10/2015 available at <www.gov.uk>, accessed 11.7.2018

such as the Chinese record on human rights, freedom in Hong Kong, trading practices and intellectual property rights, it is clear China is an important partner for the UK. With the second largest global economy China offers a vast market for British goods and services, as well as the potential for inward investment to UK services.

Britain's so-called 'GREAT' promotional campaign has formed part of efforts to generate UK economic growth by showcasing the 'best of what our whole nation has to offer,' around the world. Building on the success of the London Olympics and the Diamond Jubilee in 2012 the campaign has promoted Britain as a 'fantastic place to visit, do business and study.'[3] The 'GREAT' Britain campaign has held a number of 'Best of Britain' showcase events in China, the most recent being in Shanghai, October 2018.

This is not the first time that Britain has sought a relationship with China by stressing the importance of shared interests and promoting the British way of life, its organisations and its values. As this thesis will reveal, the projection of 'Britain' formed a central role in Britain's anti-communist propaganda agenda in the early days of the Cold War in China as Britain tried to shape and secure beneficial relations with the new communist state.

Historical background

By 1948 it was clear that the alliances forged between the big three, Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin, during the Second World War, had disintegrated and instead a polarisation had formed in international relations. The threat posed by Soviet ambition and ideology had become more pronounced in the post-war climate. By 1946, Josef Stalin was speaking openly about the incompatibility

[3] 'GREAT campaign funding boosted to £30m,' 5/12/2012, available at <www.gov.uk>, accessed 7.11.2018.

between capitalism and communism, and making it clear that he would be very reluctant to give up territorial and political gains made from the war.

Despite emerging victorious from the war, Britain did not have the power to respond to this threat alone. Victory had come at a great cost. Britain's new Labour government faced with the expense from the last two wars and a retreating Empire struggled to maintain its global commitments that were quickly beginning to outstrip its resources. By 1947 it had been forced to retreat from Greece and Turkey. Meanwhile, Britain still remained heavily involved in the Middle East, seen as one of the essential pillars in British defence,[4] and in South East Asia, where it found itself confronting a communist insurgency in the Malayan Emergency of 1948.[5] Britain realised the need for American support in helping to contain the Soviet threat in Europe, viewed as the most immediate threat due to its proximity and post-war domestic instability.[6]

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[4] The Middle East served as one of the three pillars supporting Britain's defence in the post-war era. A firm hold of the region was important for economic recovery with the growing importance of oil. It was also a natural shield for British holdings in Africa, and maintaining channels of communication to the East. R. Ovendale, *British Defence Policy since 1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994).

[5] Malaya had been an important part of Britain's empire as it produced much of the world's rubber and tin. A loss to communist forces here would jeopardise these interests and also impact on other neighbouring regions where Britain still had influence. P. Deery, 'Malaya 1948, Britain's 'Asian Cold War'?,' *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 9/1 (2007), pp. 29–54.

For a broader understanding as to how and when the Cold War in South East Asia began, see: K. Hack and G. Wade, 'The origins of the Southeast Asian Cold War,' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 40/3 (2009), pp. 441-448.

[6] For a helpful overview of British Foreign Policy priorities post war see: M. L. Dockrill and J. W. Young (eds.), *British Foreign Policy, 1945–56* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989).

Such a commitment was by no means guaranteed. with America looking to be on the brink of a return to isolationism after the war. However, with President Harry Truman replacing Franklin Roosevelt in April 1945 and the provocative moves by the Soviet Union in Europe, America altered course. An early sign of its new policy was with the Truman Doctrine. The doctrine pledged American assistance to all democratic nations under the threat of external or internal authoritarian regimes. A few months later America announced an offer of vital economic assistance to Europe in the form of a European Recovery Programme, nicknamed the Marshall Plan.

While both the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Aid were important milestones in the development of American policy, the most important commitment America could make for Britain was a promise on the defence of Europe. It was a formidable task which the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, devoted himself to, helping to set essential groundwork in place with the Brussels Pact of 1948.[7] Eventually, in April 1949 the signing of the Atlantic Treaty and the subsequent creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) secured British aspirations for a firm political resolution and military commitment from America to Western Europe against outside threat, in a mutual defence arrangement.[8] Britain's reliance on America for defence was a vital factor affecting British policy in the early Cold War. Britain's subsequent policies were shaped therefore by the need to avoid any path which could cause a serious rift in Anglo-American relations.[9]

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[7]The Brussels Pact of May 1948 was a mutual defence arrangement between Britain, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Netherlands. See: Deighton, 'Britain and the Cold War', p. 122.

[8]NATO members were Britain, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, America, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Italy, Iceland and later Greece and Turkey.

[9] P. Lowe, *Containing the Cold War in East Asia: British Policies Towards Japan, China and Korea, 1948-53* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 265

Additionally, Britain looked to Europe and the Commonwealth as key entities in its defence policy. Churchill's popularised defence model of three interlocking circles, which emphasised the significance of Britain's unique position at the intersection of the United States, Europe and the Commonwealth in helping it maintain power and influence, characterised early Cold War foreign policy.[10]

Despite the old dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa increasingly pursuing independent foreign policies, the Commonwealth still offered a source of strength for Britain. [11] Britain hoped that it could still rely on the old ties of kinship to ensure cooperation in policy with the old dominions, and that the Commonwealth could be reimagined to incorporate newly independent British colonies, such as India, Ceylon (later Sri Lanka) and Burma. It was hoped that this new Commonwealth would be a kind of halfway house between empire and normal international relations, one that ultimately would be advantageous to Britain.[12] The Commonwealth not only offered an opportunity to create global partnerships, which would help protect Britain's trade interests, but also form a global resistance to the onrush of communist influence.

Bevin also saw Britain's ability to exercise its influence and power post war as reliant on a 'Western European system'. Referred to as 'the Third Force,' set out in Cabinet in 1948, the plan was to position Britain as an independent, socialist, foreign power,

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[10] L. Butler, *Britain and Empire: Adjusting to a Post-Imperial World* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002), p. 97.

[11] Lowe, *Containing the Cold War*, p. 125

[12] For more detail on Britain's hopes for the Commonwealth post war see: Lorna Lloyd, 'Britain and the transformation from empire to Commonwealth,' *The Round Table*, 86/343 (1997), pp. 333-360.

the middle ground between the two superpowers, leading Western Europe and its colonies. [13]

By late 1949, however, British hopes of being at the head of a new European bloc were dashed by the growing communist threat and the subsequent need for a close American security commitment.[14] Promises of a powerful and cohesive Commonwealth were looking increasingly unattainable, continually being undermined throughout the early Cold War with states acting independently, pursuing their own self-interest. The early post-war years marked, therefore, an increasing reliance on the maintenance of the Anglo-American relationship to further Britain's global endeavours. It was a relationship that increasingly became the pivot of British foreign policy. [15] Despite Britain's weakening position as a global power, diplomatic historians over the last generation have agreed that the country stood at or near the centre of the Cold War. [16] London activated a policy of Soviet

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[13] The First Aim of British Foreign Policy, 4 January 1948, CP (48) 6, CAB 129/23, The National Archives (TNA), Kew.

[14] For further detail of the 'third force' see literature review. Deighton, 'Britain and the Cold War,' p. 126.

[15] Ovendale notes that the Attlee Cabinet accepted the recommendation of the Permanent Under-Secretary's Committee (a long-term planning unit in the Foreign Office), that British foreign policy should be based on the maintenance of a close Anglo-American alliance. R. Ovendale, 'William Strange and the Permanent Under-secretary's committee', in John Zametica (ed.), *British officials and British Foreign Policy 1945-1950* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990), pp. 212-217

[16] For a general overview on how Britain's Cold War policy was shaped see: S. Greenwood, *Britain and the Cold war 1945-1991* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 2000); C. Keeble, *Britain, the Soviet Union and Russia* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 2000); J. Kent, *British Imperial strategy and the origins of the Cold War, 1944-49* (Leicester: LUP, 1993); David Reynolds (ed.), *The origins of the Cold War in Europe, International perspectives,* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994); *Klaus Larres,*

'containment,' which included an anti-communist propaganda campaign, well in advance of that of Washington.

The importance of propaganda to the Cold War has been well established in literature over the last thirty years. Scholars have shown how key international players, desperate to avoid a third world war which was considered as suicidal after the Soviet Union achieved nuclear parity with the US, looked for alternate ways to challenge each other's power (see the literature review for details of key contributions). The battle became one for 'hearts and minds' or, as John Jenks more practically asserts, a struggle for 'dominance in information and perceptions'.[17] Propaganda became the weapon of choice in this global conflict with mid-twentieth century technological advances in media, such as radio and later television, providing 'fertile ground for its [propaganda] dissemination'.[18]

Britain's own role in the 'Cold War' propaganda war has been a subject of growing interest. Britain's initial agenda for its overseas publicity and information services post war reflected the determination of the Labour government to secure Britain's global influence, the focus being on the projection of British achievements and values. Indeed, one of the first directives sent to British information officers by the Foreign Office in 1947 was entitled, 'The projection of Britain.' Sent by the newly created Information Policy Department (IPD) it explained the need for 'the spread of

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Churchill's Cold War: The politics of personal Diplomacy (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002); Michael F. Hopkins and G. Staerck, *Britain and the Cold War* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Ann Deighton (ed.), *Britain and the First Cold War* (London: Macmillan, 1990); Michael Dockrill and John W. Young (eds.), *British Foreign Policy, 1945–1956* (London: Macmillan, 1989).

[17] J. Jenks, *British Propaganda and News Media in the Cold War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p.3

[18] D. Welch, *Propaganda: Power and Persuasion* (London: The British Library, 2013), p. 2.

British ideas and British standards' abroad, some of its initial themes included industry, welfare and the new social legislation of the Labour Government.[19] As Lucas and Morris summarise, in the short term the approach would mask British weakness, in the long term, with an eye towards the communist threat, 'it would encourage other countries to look to London for moral and ideological leadership and to resist incorporation into the Soviet bloc, without demanding a significant increase in British military and economic commitments.'[20]

In 1948, however, the British Cabinet concerned by the threat from the Soviet Union and its Communist allies in eastern Europe gave the green light for an anti-communist propaganda campaign; the offensive was 'to oppose the inroads of Communism by taking the offensive against it.'[21] Led by the newly established Information Relations Department (IRD), propaganda activities, although now to be hidden from public eye, were to focus on exposing 'the myths of the soviet paradise.' It was here, with the formation of the IRD, 'where the real counteroffensive against communist front organisations and propaganda began.'[22] The Department grew rapidly as the Cold

[19] E. Bevin, Secretary of State, Foreign Office, Circular no 7. Information and publicity work in foreign countries, 15 January 1947, FO 930/498, TNA.

[20] W. S. Lucas, and C. J. Morris, 'A Very British Crusade: The Information Research Department and the Cold War,' in R. Aldrich (ed.), *British Intelligence, Strategy, and the Cold War* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 86.

[21] Memorandum by Ernst Bevin (Foreign Secretary) Future Foreign Publicity Policy, 4 January 1948, CAB129/23,TNA.

[22] A. Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda 1945-53: The Information Research Department: Propaganda, 1945-1958* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 26.

War intensified.[23] At its peak in the mid-1950s the IRD employed a staff of three hundred, researching, compiling, and distributing material throughout the world.[24]

As Whitehall readied its global campaign to confront the perceived communist threat, the Labour Government, under the premiership of Clement Attlee, sought to cultivate amicable relations with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) led by Mao Zedong, who were fighting the long-established Nationalist government (Kuomintang, or KMT) in the Chinese civil war. This was a policy decision that would not only put Britain out of kilter with its American ally but seemingly its commitment to confront the global threat posed by communism.

Britain's long history with China has been well documented. It was Britain who first forced China to open the treaty ports to trade during the mid-ninetieth century and to agree to a series of unequal treaties which helped Britain to establish and sustain dominance in the region for several decades. The first real challenge to Britain's position in China became apparent with the expansionist desires of the Russian Empire, leading to the Russo-Japanese war in 1905. This was followed with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the Second Sino-Japanese War of 1937 to 1945. Britain, preoccupied with the growing hostilities in Europe, had little choice but to leave China, under Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang, to protect itself from Japanese invasion.[25]

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[23] According to Schwartz the request resulted in increasing levels of funding being required for secret operations. L. Schwartz, *Political Warfare against the Kremlin. US and British Propaganda Policy at the Beginning of the Cold War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 51.

[24] N. J. Cull, D. H. Culbert, and D. Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopaedia, 1500 to the Present* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2003), p. 186.

[25] For information on early Sino-British relations from 19th to 20th century see: J. Osterhammel, 'Britain and China 1842-1914,' in A. Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, vol. 3: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) pp. 146-69; J. Osterhammel,

It was only after Pearl Harbor, in 1941, that China became quickly recognised as an important ally in the Second World War. Following the lead of America, now committed to war against Japan, China was recognised as one of the 'Big Four' allies. Between 1943 and 1947, Chiang concluded treaties with China's major allies and neutral countries under which the latter relinquished their special rights and privileges in China, this included Britain. [26] The Anglo-Chinese Treaty of January 1943 abolished the old treaty system and symbolised that China for the first time was treated as something vaguely resembling an 'equal' to the European powers. Not only were such treaties seen as a way to ensure a military alliance with China, but for Britain they were also important for the Anglo-American relationship as America was widely opposed to such colonial domination. As William Callaghan has commented, China entered international society, 'not as a result of a gradual process of ethical civilising to European norms but through pragmatic diplomacy that was spurred by the contingency, uncertainty and violence of war.'[27] The agreement meant that

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'China', in J. Brown and W. R. Louis (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, vol. 4: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 643-66; R. Bickers, The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832-1914 (London: Allen Lane, 2011); R. Bickers, Britain in China: Community, Culture and Colonialism, 1900-49 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); D. Scott, *China and the International System, 1840-1949: Power, Presence, and Perceptions in a Century of Humiliations* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2008).

[26] P. C. Chan, *China, State Sovereignty and International Legal Order* (Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2015)

[27] W. Callahan, 'Nationalising International Theory: Race, Class and the English School', *Global Society*, 18/4 (2004), pp. 305-323

For insight into China's role in the Second World War see: R. Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-1945* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013).

China's place in post-war international relations appeared secured.[28] The leadership of the KMT was recognised in China and in 1945 it was invited to take one of the five seats on the Security Council of the newly formed United Nations.

However, very quickly China's internal stability came into question. Chiang was not only dealing with the cost of war, the harsh demands by the USSR for its part in defeating the Japanese, but also the resumption of the civil war. The Chinese Communists, under Mao, were now moving swiftly to fill the vacuum left by Japan's departure from northern China.[29] The two emerging world superpowers, America and the Soviet Union, while favouring opposite sides in the conflict, initially pushed for negotiation and compromise. These efforts continued into 1947 but it was clear that the contest between the two parties would only be settled by force. Just less than a year after the defeat of Japan, civil war in China broke out. [30]

While Britain had kept its distance from the internal politics of the Chinese civil war, its support had remained with the Nationalist party. However, presented with the likelihood of Mao's victory, Britain's foreign policy towards China altered. In

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[28] The USSR, under the Yalta agreement agreed to declare war on Japan. They defeated the Japanese force in Manchuria leading to their surrender of China. As a concession for Soviet participation and agreement to recognise the KMT government as legitimate, it was accepted that the Soviets would be the de facto protectorate of Outer Mongolia and there would be Soviet control of strategically important territories in Manchuria - to the outrage of Chiang Kai-shek. See: D. Heinzig, *The Soviet Union and Communist China 1945-1950: The Arduous Road to the Alliance* (London: M. E. Sharpe, 2004).

[29] S. Rauchenko, 'China Lost World War II. Forget Beijing's victory parade: In 1945, China was a failed state', *Foreign Policy*, 3 September 2015: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/09/03/>, accessed 12.10.2015.

[30] For an impressive insight into the Chinese Civil War from a global history perspective see: O. Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

December 1948, Bevin put the China situation before Cabinet for the first time. The memorandum, in underlying the desire to protect British trade, advocated a 'foot in the door' policy. This meant that:

> …provided there is not actual danger to life we should endeavour to stay where we are, to have de facto relations with the Chinese Communists in so far as these are unavoidable, and to investigate possibilities of continued trade in China. It may be that that, in consultation with our friends, we shall have a bargaining counter by virtue of our being able to withhold certain essential imports which China must have if the Chinese Communists do not behave.[31]

This line of argument, combined with the desire to safeguard Colonial Hong Kong from a military attack, helped to ensure Cabinet's 'general approval' to a new approach towards communist China at the end of 1948.[32] The policy culminated in the decision on the 6th January 1950, following Mao's proclamation of victory a few months earlier, to recognise the newly formed People's Republic of China (PRC) as the *de jure* government.[33] Unfortunately for the British, Mao did not reciprocate, instead using it as a tool to negotiate.

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[31] Bevin had commissioned the paper on the consequences to the UK of communist domination on China a month earlier. It was drafted in the Far Eastern Department, under Mr Denning. Memorandum on the recent development in the civil war in China, No. 51, 9 December 1948, CAB 129/31, in Documents of British Policy Overseas [DBPO], Series I, Volume VIII, p 185.

[32] Extract from Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street on 13 December 1948, CAB 128/13, DBPO, p. 187. For more detail on Britain's decision to recognise the PRC see the Literature Review.

[33] For discussion on Britain's de jure vs de facto recognition, see: P. Lowe, *Containing the Cold War in East Asia: British Policies Towards Japan, China and Korea* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997).

Mao's main demand was that Britain should recognise the PRC as the rightful representatives of China at the UN. From March 1950, Britain, therefore, started probing other members, behind the scenes at the UN, on its position on the issue of China's representation. Although unwilling to make a move that would be interpreted as appeasing the Soviets, who continued to protest on the issue, Bevin agreed to vote for the Beijing government having a place in specialised UN agencies. The first opportune moment for Britain to put this intention into words was at the UN ECOSOC meeting on the 3rd July 1950.[34] However, events taking place in nearby Korea were to dramatically change relations between the two countries, Britain and China.

On the 25 June 1950, North Korean communist forces invaded the South, to the shock of the Western world. Britain supported America in its direct military action in Korea, under the auspices of an UN mission, based on collective security to support the South Koreans from this act of aggression.[35] The Chinese decision to commit troops to Korea and the crossing of the Yalu River on the 14th October 1950 signalled the end of negotiations for diplomatic relations between the two countries; the two nations were now technically fighting each other.[36]

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[34] J. T. Tang, *Britain's Encounter with Revolutionary China, 1949-1954* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992).

[35] For a review on how America gathered support for the Korean War see: S. Casey, *Selling the Korean War: Propaganda, Politics and Public Opinion in the United States, 1950-1953* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[36] Senior Foreign Office officials at first argued to keep China's position in the UN separate from the Korean War. Accordingly, on the 19th September 1950 the British voted in favour of an Indian resolution in the General Assembly which called for the admission of the Beijing government to represent China in the UN.

Britain continued, however, throughout 1950 and early 1951 to oppose any escalation of the Korean War by America, although, as the war continued and Western forces were set back by the influx of the Chinese soldiers into Korea, Britain gave way to America's demands. In 1951 Britain conceded to American demands to condemn and then sanction China over its actions in Korea. Not surprisingly, China also stepped up its vocal criticism of Britain, along with America, over action in Korea; Britain often being portrayed as weak and subservient to American imperialism.

The stalemate reached in Korea in June 1951, shifted attention from the military to a diplomatic background. Unfortunately, this did not appear to improve Anglo-Chinese relations. British trade continued to struggle under the PRC, so much so that on the 19th May 1952 the British government informed the Chinese government that all British firms in China had decided to close their businesses.[37] There seemed to be a general consensus from London that as long as there was fighting in Korea, establishing full diplomatic relations with Beijing was off the table. Yet despite being on opposing sides during the Korean War and later on in the Taiwan Strait Crises of 1954 and 1958, Britain nonetheless stayed committed to pursuing an Anglo-Sino relationship, of sorts. [38] Full diplomatic relations with an exchange of ambassadors between the two countries was not established until 1972.

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[37] This was not necessarily good news for the communists as they needed the firms in terms of product and trade and did not necessarily have the competencies to run them. For its part, therefore, the CCP were also cautious about how they dealt with British interests in China, initially. J. J. Howlett, 'The British boss is gone and will never return': Communist takeovers of British companies in Shanghai, 1949–1954', *Modern Asian Studies*, 47/6 (2013), pp. 1941-1976

[38] The Taiwan Crises centred on the islands of Jinman (Quemoy) and Mazu, which were in a strategic position in the Strait of Taiwan, being only a few miles off the coast of mainland China. Occupied by Nationalist troops on their retreat to Taiwan in 1949, they were a reminder of the Nationalist presence and threat to communist China. In 1954 the Communists shelled the islands. It was a time of heightened international tension coming just after the end of the Korean conflict.

It is in the midst of these complex, and evolving policies and relationships that this thesis seeks to engage, with Britain seemingly proposing two opposing British foreign policies: a commitment to anti-communist propaganda; and the pursuit of a relationship with Communist China. Despite Asia becoming the 'hottest' theatre in the global Cold War, there has been relatively little work that explores the role of early British propaganda efforts in the region.[39]

Definitions and scope of research

The term 'greater China' is a key one used in the thesis, and will be taken to refer to the region which includes Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The term came back into favour in the 1990s to help to discuss the expansive boundaries of the 'Chinese Community' emerging as a result of the developing economic integration, cultural interaction and political unification.[40] It is the geographical grouping that is useful for the thesis.

While Hong Kong and Taiwan (then Formosa) were independent of China in the early Cold War, their proximity to the Chinese mainland and their disputed independence have meant their inclusion in the study is necessary for any comprehensive understanding of how Britain's China policy was shaped. Macao is however excluded

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In the end the US agreed to defend the islands and the Nationalist troops were withdrawn. However the islands remained a bone of contention and hostilities occurred again in 1958. For detail of these events refer to: M. Gurlov, 'The Taiwan Strait Crisis Revisited: Politics and Foreign Policy in Chinese Motives, *Modern China*, 2/1 (1976), pp. 49-103.

[39] R. Aldrich, G. Rawnsley and M. Rawnsley (eds.), 'Introduction,' *The Clandestine Cold War in Asia, 1945-65: Western Intelligence, Propaganda and Special Operations* (New York: Frank Cass, 2000).

[40] For an interesting discussion on how the term has been used and the problems associated with it see H. Harding, 'The Concept of "Greater China": Themes, Variations and Reservations,' *The China Quarterly*, 136/136 (1993), pp. 660-686.

from discussion because of its minimal role in the Cold War and its relevance to Britain. Nor does this study pursue propaganda developments in South-East Asia, although references will be made to this region, where appropriate, as Britain still had colonial possessions and imperial interest here.

The period under study, will be referred to as the early cold war and marks the rise of Communist China and its consolidation of power, from 1948 as the CCP's victory looked inevitable, to 1954, when its position as an international player was established with its participation in the Geneva conference.[41] This time frame includes a series of critical events that tested British-Chinese relations such as the Amethyst incident, Mao's declaration of premiership, the Sino-Soviet pact and China's entry into the Korean War (1950-1953). [42] The same period also tracks the establishment and growth of Britain's anti-communist propaganda institution, the IRD. Although the period covers both Labour and Conservative governments, there was a broad continuity in their foreign policies and approaches to the Cold War. [43]

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[41] The Geneva conference (April- July 1954) was originally convened to discuss the post-war settlement for Korea. It was the first time that the PRC was invited to an international conference, ending its diplomatic isolation. For discussion on Britain's role at the conference see: Kevin Ruane, 'Anthony Eden, British diplomacy and the origins of the Geneva Conference of 1954', *The Historical Journal,* 37/1 (1994), pp. 153-172.

[42] In the Moscow Declaration of 1945, Britain, the USA and USSR had agreed not to interfere in the Chinese civil war. In 1949 Britain had posted a guard ship on the Yangtze River outside the British Embassy in Nanjing. When HMS Amethyst arrived to relieve the guard ship it was warned not to proceed and was then fired on by communist forces causing severe damage and loss of life. Other ships became involved and eventually the Amethyst escaped. The British Admiralty hushed it up so as not to cause a major international incident.

[43] J. Saville, *The politics of continuity: British Foreign Party and the Labour Government, 1945-46* (London: Verso, 1993).

It is also important to discuss the definition of propaganda here since it is a key term which underlies much of the research aims. While the concept is thousands of years old, propaganda has no universal definition and subsequently many scholars have grappled with a definition, some choosing to ignore the issue completely. Propaganda, in its literal sense, means to disseminate or promote particular ideas; it is derived from the Latin term *propagare*, meaning to propagate or sow.[44] Accordingly, for the purpose of this thesis 'propaganda' is defined as the active use of communications, conducted or initiated by government, to reinforce or change public opinion, domestic or foreign, achieved by either targeting the masses or just the influential few.

Historically, propaganda has long been seen as a pejorative term, often used synonymously for lies, distortion and manipulation. As a result of these negative associations, policy-makers have been reluctant to use the term. Instead, as is reflected in the language of this thesis, propaganda is often used interchangeably with 'information policy' or 'information work' and 'publicity.'[45]

In this regard, I am not following the tendency by some to differentiate between propaganda and public diplomacy, seeing one as synonymous for the other. Public

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[44] G. S. Jowett and V. J. O'Donnell, *Propaganda and persuasion* (London: Sage Publications, 2006), p. 1.

[45] Psychological warfare, while often associated with and occasionally confused with propaganda, has a different meaning, one that is very important to differentiate between. As Mark has summarised succinctly, 'Simply put psychological warfare employs all kinds of weapons to influence the minds of enemies such as propaganda, covert action and subversion.' C. Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War: Anglo-American Relations 1949-1957* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), p. 194.

For a history of psychological warfare in the Cold War see: R. Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America, and Cold War Secret Intelligence* (London, Duckworth, 2006).

diplomacy, a term that became increasingly popular amongst practitioners as the twentieth century drew to a close, can be regarded as distinguishable from propaganda on the basis that, as a form of diplomacy, it is also a form of dialogue that invites the absorption of as much influence from foreign publics as it seeks to achieve, or that diplomacy is limited to government-to-government interaction.[46] However, increasingly such a distinction has been challenged in diplomatic literature, most robustly by Geoff Berridge and Nicholas Cull, who have outlined the flaws in such distinctions, asserting that the term public diplomacy is a practitioner's attempt to distance it from the negative connotations of propaganda. [47] Berridge summarised it by stating that, 'public diplomacy is what we call our propaganda, propaganda is what the other side does.'[48] Interestingly Gary Rawnsley's work on Chinese propaganda has questioned whether or not there is any real distinction between the two terms propaganda and public diplomacy, concluding that 'the activities are so blurred that a cynic might suggest that in the Chinese world public diplomacy is

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[46] This is an argument put forward by Chatterje Aneek, *International Relations Today: Concepts and Applications* (Singapore: Pearson, 2010), p. 81.

For a summary of the arguments put forward see: K. Hamilton and R. Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its Evolution, Theory, and Administration* (London: Routledge, 2011), and: N. J. Cull, D. H. Culbert and D. Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2003).

[47] For a discussion on the semantics between the two terms see G. Berridge, *Diplomacy Theory and Practice, 5th edition* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) and: N. J. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American propaganda and public diplomacy, 1945–1989* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[48] Berridge, Diplomacy Theory and Practice, p. 208.

merely a euphemism for propaganda.[49] Indeed the word *xuanchuan* in Chinese refers to both propaganda and publicity.

Propaganda is traditionally categorised into three types. These are defined according to whether the source of information is acknowledged, and the accuracy of the information being disseminated. 'White propaganda' refers to overt, factual and attributed information; 'grey propaganda' is associated with uncertainty about its factual nature and the source, its origin is often intentionally ambiguous or hidden; 'black propaganda' is that which is based on false information and is deliberately deceptive as to its origins. Both grey and black propaganda are covert in nature.

While this white/grey/black distinction has served scholars for many years, the thesis will assert that there is also a benefit in defining propaganda according to the content of the propaganda material being disseminated, a distinction that was being made by British policy makers in the early part of the Cold War. This approach advocates defining propaganda as either "negative propaganda," where material is used to criticise another state, actor, or ideology (either in an offensive or defensive manner), or "positive propaganda," often referenced as the 'projection of Britain,' where information is focused on projecting a positive image of the state, its actions, it achievements and underlying values. The latter, a concept traced back in policy to Britain's inter-war period, is discussed much less in existing literature. However, increasingly it can be identified in emerging discussions on cultural diplomacy, which, in the same sense as the relationship between 'public diplomacy' and 'propaganda', the term is commonly used as synonymous for 'cultural propaganda'.[50]

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[49] G. D. Rawnsley, '"Thought-Work" and Propaganda, Chinese Public Diplomacy and Public Relations after Tiananmen Square,' in J. Auerbach and R. Castronovo (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 148.

[50] Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. xi

Cultural propaganda can be defined as 'the dissemination of cultural practices as a mechanism to promote the interests of the actor' in this case the actor being the state.[51] Cultural practices can include such things as an international tour by a prominent musician, or the exchange of college students. It is seen as a branch therefore of positive propaganda.

Although these distinctions are not used regularly in mainstream propaganda literature, the thesis will show how British practitioners in the Cold War regularly made use of these terms, and set up departments to lead work on each type. Accordingly, the classification helps to show the magnitude and complexity of British anti-communist efforts in greater China during the early Cold War.

For the purpose of this thesis, "propaganda" will be used as an "umbrella term" to include acts of censorship, where apparent. Censorship is arguably 'the Siamese twin' of propaganda, 'inseparable and inextricably linked,' both working to achieve the same aim. While propaganda is the supply of information, censorship supresses information and ideas, often ones that are seen to jeopardise the interest of the state and/or are of value to an enemy.[52] In line with this approach, the thesis will also comment on the use of 'pabulum' as a means to control the information agenda.[53]

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[51] For another insightful discussion on definitions of cultural propaganda see: Cull, Culbert and Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopaedia*; and: J. R. Vaughan, 'The United States and the Limits of Cultural Diplomacy in the Arab Middle East,' in C. E. Gienow-Hecht and M. C. Donfried. (eds.), *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy,* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), pp. 162-185.

[52] P. M. Taylor, The Projection of Britain: British Overseas Publicity and Propaganda, 1919-1939 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 4

[53] In the Oxford English Dictionary, 'pabulum' is defined as 'bland or insipid intellectual matter,' and is associated with nourishment or feeding (derived from the Latin verb 'pascere' meaning to feed).

Pabulum material, of 'bland or insipid intellectual matter,' was supplied to radio broadcasts in an attempt to reduce the opportunity for the dissemination of information that would undermine the West. Thus, while its nature is not overtly political, in certain contexts it can be made to serve a political purpose. The thesis will show how this technique was deployed to counter the ultra-politicised nature of communist propaganda, in colonial Hong Kong.

Anti-communist propaganda is a useful term that is used throughout the thesis to encompass how British policy makers sought to counter what they perceived as the threat of communism. It can appear in a variety of forms and contexts. In archival material and existing literature the term anti-communist propaganda is usually seen as being synonymous with negative propaganda. However, the thesis will show that positive propaganda also contributed to efforts to counter a communist influence or agenda. To this end anti-communist propaganda can be seen as propaganda that is offensive, defensive or even positive in order to achieve its aim.

Research questions and sources

The overarching aim of the thesis is to reveal and analyse Britain's anti-communist propaganda efforts in greater China in the early Cold War. The key research questions shaping the thesis are:

- What was the extent of British anti-communist propaganda efforts in 'greater China' in the early days of the Cold War?
- How did they manifest themselves?
- What factors and which individuals shaped them?
- To what extent did they alter over time and/or with geographical location?

It is not the intent of the thesis to assess the impact of propaganda endeavours, a notoriously difficult challenge. However, where government officials have passed comment on the success or failures of propaganda activities this will be noted.

In exploring these questions, the thesis will advocate a new holistic approach to the study of British Cold War propaganda, one that looks at both positive and negative

propaganda, as defined above. In doing so it will go beyond the accepted methodology, that usually only investigates the IRD, to show the need for a multi-agency approach. It will discuss the role of other governmental departments and organisations, such as the B.B.C. and the British Council, in contributing to the anti-communist agenda.

In taking this new approach, the thesis will show that Britain did engage in anti-communist propaganda throughout 'greater China.' However, the aim and scope of the propaganda activities were challenged and shaped not just by Britain's prioritisation of its relationship with the PRC, but also the local environment, geo-strategic priorities, and funding. As a result, the objectives, activity and the messages of the anti-communist propaganda campaign altered over both time and space.

Finally in this complex and ever-evolving environment, a disparate approach from policy-makers to propaganda will be revealed. A number of key actors in overseas posts are shown to have exerted an influence on Britain's propaganda policies, often at odds with that of the home departments. The thesis thus offers an important, original contribution that will build and challenge existing work on Britain's Cold War propaganda and the Sino-British relationship in the early Cold War.

This study relies on a historical research design to reconstruct the events of the past and is based on the consultation of a large number of primary sources. The empirical data is presented in a qualitative manner. The majority of primary documents relied upon are those held at The National Archives (TNA), Kew Gardens, London. Though the files of various departments have been consulted, it is the Foreign Office's Information Research Department (FO 1110), Information Policy Department and Regional Departments (FO 953), General Correspondence (FO 371), and Colonial Official General Correspondence (CO 537)[54] series which have been the main focus

[54] Many of Hong Kong's Colonial archives do not appear to have made it to TNA, including the records of the Public Relations Office. The Colonial Office Information Department (CO 1027)

of study. Recently released Cabinet Office's Official Committee on Communism (Overseas) series (CAB 134) and successful Freedom of Information Requests (FOIRs) from the TNA have also been utilised.

Records from the B.B.C. and the Hong Kong Public Relations Office have also provided a wealth of information. The following private papers have also been valuable: Sir Malcolm MacDonald, the Commissioner General for Southeast Asia, Sir Ralph Stevenson, The British Ambassador to China, Henry Lamb, the Charge' d'Affaires to China.

Outline of thesis

This thesis looks at each part of 'Greater China' in turn, looking at the role of, first, negative and then positive propaganda. In particular, attention is devoted to China and Hong Kong where British interests were most at stake. The thesis will draw comparisons throughout with the concluding chapter pulling the threads of that analysis together to bring a more general, holistic view of the use of British propaganda in the region over the period from 1948 to 1954.

The chapters of this thesis can be summarised as follows:

- Literature Review – this analyses the existing work and debates on both the topic of propaganda and Sino-British relations to show where the thesis will contribute.
- Chapter One, Institutions - this set outs the role of the relevant government departments and their involvement in British propaganda. In doing so, the chapter sets out the basis for a multi-agency approach, which the thesis will build on.

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does hold some material on Hong Kong's information activities after the period of the thesis and offer some reflections on earlier propaganda work. Fortunately the BBC archives and HK public records office have captured much of the detail.

- Chapter Two, China and negative propaganda – this examines the efforts of the IRD in China. It will show the criticism they faced from the British Embassy in Nanjing and how its objectives and messages were forced to change in line with Britain's new policy towards Communist China.
- Chapter Three, China and positive propaganda – this chapter discusses the role of the IPD, the British Council and the BBC in combating communist influence.
- Chapter Four, Hong Kong and negative propaganda – this focuses on the role of the specially created Regional Information Office in Hong Kong, as a branch of the IRD, to counter communist influence.
- Chapter Five, Hong Kong and positive propaganda – this chapter demonstrates how the Colonial Government, through its Public Relations Office, sought to control the information sphere.
- Chapter Six, Taiwan - the chapter shows explores both negative and positive propaganda efforts under the changing political climate
- Conclusion- this draws together the findings and arguments from each chapter to provide an overarching view of Britain's propaganda efforts in Communist China and its wider implications.

Literature Review

This chapter discusses the most relevant contributions from scholars to understanding Britain's early Cold War propaganda policies and shows how the thesis will challenge and develop existing historiographical debates. The first section examines existing work on Britain's Cold War propaganda and distinguishes between different approaches. The second section then focuses on Sino-British relations, revealing the concentration on Britain's decision to recognise Communist China in 1950 and current debates within the literature. The two areas of the literature are distinct: so far there has been little attempt to explore British propaganda in China.

Section One. Propaganda and the Cold War

Studies on the subject of propaganda in the Cold War gained momentum as the Twentieth Century drew to a close. A number of key scholars on the topic, including Philip Taylor, Gary Rawnsley, W. Scott Lucas, Tony Shaw and Richard Aldrich,[55] have

[55] P. M. Taylor, *British Propaganda in the 20th Century: Selling Democracy* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999); G. Rawnsley, *Radio Diplomacy and Propaganda: The BBC and Voice of America in International Politics, 1956-1964* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996); G. Rawnsley (ed.), *Cold-War Propaganda in the 1950s* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999); W. S. Lucas, 'Beyond Diplomacy: Propaganda and the History of the Cold War,' in G. Rawnsley (ed.) *Cold-War Propaganda in the 1950s* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999), pp. 11-30; Shaw has shown this through the medium of Film. T. Shaw, *British Cinema and the Cold War: The State, Propaganda and Consensus* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001); R. J. Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand. Britain, America and the Cold War: Secret intelligence* (London: John Murray, 2001); R. J. Aldrich, 'The struggle for the Mind of European Youth: the CIA and European Movement propaganda, 1948-60,' in G. Rawnsley (ed.), *Cold-War Propaganda in the 1950s* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999), pp. 183-204; and R. J. Aldrich, 'Secret-intelligence for a post war world: Reshaping the British intelligence, strategy and the Cold War,' in R. J. Aldrich (ed.), *British Intelligence, Strategy and the Cold War, 1945-51* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.15-49.

shown how propaganda, rather than being an adjunct to foreign policy, became an integral part of Britain's and America's Cold War strategy.[56] They convincingly argue that an understanding of international relations during the Cold War can only be achieved by considering the role and importance of propaganda, in what had become 'a global propaganda conflict.' Propaganda 'came of age' during this period, aided by technological advances, as the nature of the Cold War forced powers to look for alternate ways to challenge each other's dominance.[57]

Despite failing to achieve the rank of a superpower, Britain was not removed from this 'soft' war. Although two world wars and the economic depression of the 1930s had eroded Britain's ability to project power in the more traditional sense, propaganda offered Britain a means by which it hoped to maintain influence. Taylor explains this best when he states:

The development of the Cold War and British role in the western alliance meant that promotion was required not just at home but also behind the iron curtain and in those allied and neutralised countries where the British case had to be made or answered, if economic and political influence was not to be eroded. Moreover, Britain's position as an imperial power, and the transition from Empire to

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[56] This apparent Cold War consensus in Britain has been the subject of much debate. Peter Weiler, influenced by revisionist views of the Cold War, has argued the incorporation of the powerful post-war Labour movement into the hegemonic values and ideology of the state, meant this was a manufactured and constructed response from 1946 onwards. However, others, such as Richard Thurlow and Hugh Wilford , have convincingly argued that while the government had a partial role in this consensus the relations with the state were more often 'symbiotic' than manipulative. See: P. Weiler, *British Labour and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988); H. Wilford, *The CIA, the British Left and the Cold War. Calling the Tune?* (London: Frank Cass, 2003). R. C. Thurlow, *The Secret State: British Internal Security in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

[57] T. Shaw, *British Cinema and the Cold War*, p. 1.

Commonwealth had to be explained more adequately, both within the mounting bipolar context, and in the countries themselves.[58]

Given America's predominance as a Western superpower leading the Cold War offensive, there has been a tendency to minimise Britain's own propaganda role. For example, in Francis Saunders's study of the role of the CIA in the Cold War, Britain's agency in propaganda efforts is dismissed; its propaganda efforts seen as a response to US pressure and direction.[59] These assumptions have however been effectively refuted, particularly in the conclusion drawn by Hugh Wilford in his book *The CIA, the British Left and the Cold War* (2003). By focusing on the non-communist British Left, including the Trade Unions, the Labour Party, and literary intellectuals, Wilford reveals not only the agency of the British government, but also sections within the state, in pursuing anti-communist actions. Wilford, in revealing a complex relationship between America and Britain, responds directly to Saunders's argument, concluding that the British response to the anti-communist threat 'far from being one of dumb subordination, involved a variety of reactions, including active cooperation, creative appropriation and outright resistance.'[60] Andrew Defty's most recent contribution on British and America propaganda co-operation has further helped reinforce Britain's agency in Cold War propaganda, by showing that not only was Britain the first country to formulate a coordinated response to the Cold War, through the Foreign Office's secret Information Research Department, but that there

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[58] P. M. Taylor, *British Propaganda in the 20th Century,* p. 234.

[59] F. S. Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta Books, 1999). See also Goodman's comparison to American McCarthyism era, in which he abates Britain's own propaganda initiatives in the domestic sphere: G. Goodman, 'The British Government and the challenge of McCarthyism in the Early Cold War,' *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 12/1 (2010), pp. 62-97.

[60] H. Wilford, *The CIA, the British Left and the Cold War. Calling the Tune?* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 159.

was extensive mutual collaboration between the two governments in the field of propaganda.[61] The work of Defty and Wilford rely to a large extent on the study of IRD papers of events at the time. Both recognise the IRD as an organisation of great importance in understanding Britain's Cold War propaganda effort. This reliance on IRD material is a recurrent theme in the majority of existing literature that seeks to examine Britain's Cold War efforts.

The literature on Britain's propaganda efforts during the Cold War is categorised in this thesis under three relatively distinct headings: 'pre-release of government records;' 'IRD records release;' and 'cultural turn.' The first of these refers to literature that was published during the Cold War era, and prior to the release of government records on the covert use of propaganda. Historians who produced work prior to the release of government records, under the thirty years rule, were few in number. They relied primarily on open sources and were limited in their discussions to Britain's overt organisations, which included official government departments as well as the British Council and the BBC.

The release of official Cold War records into the public domain in the 1990s heralded a new wave of publications. Here historians, armed with the new material, focused their work largely on the Information Relsearch Department (IRD), the organisation charged with co-ordinating Britain's anti-communist propaganda response. It was an organisation, whose existence had until then been hidden from public view. This work may be referred to under the heading of 'IRD records release.'

The field has also experienced something of a 'cultural turn,' with the emergence of the Cultural Cold War studies. Under this approach, historians examining cultural

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[61] A. Defty, *Britain, America, and Anti-Communist Propaganda, 1945-53: The Information Research Department* (London: Routledge, 2004). The book provides ones of the most extensive summaries of existing propaganda literature.

diplomacy in the Cold War have managed to provide a more holistic account of propaganda that includes and extends beyond that of the 'IRD records release' literature. Their work reveals the parts played by both positive and negative propaganda in Britain's anti-communist campaign. It is this trend on which the thesis will build in considering the use of propaganda in 'greater China.'

Prior to the release of IRD archival records, comments on Britain's peacetime propaganda operations were limited. John Black's book, *Organising the Propaganda Instrument* (1976), provides the most extensive comment on operations at the time. Utilising 'open sources' Black reveals Britain's overt 'overseas information activities,' which include the official information services, the Colonial Office of Information (COI), the BBC and the British Council. Black's contribution reveals how a number of British organisations were primed to be involved in peacetime propaganda, but he does not attempt to reveal the content or extent of the organisations' activities.[62] As a result, the usefulness of his work in exploring Britain's propaganda in the context of the Cold War is limited.

Ironically it was the closure of the IRD in 1977, an organisation whose purpose was to co-ordinate Britain's anti-communist response, which revealed its very existence to the public. Interest in this 'secret organisation' has since grown and marks the second set of literature on British propaganda. Researchers who have investigated British propaganda efforts since then have done so largely through an arguably IRD 'lens.'

Initial work on the IRD was led by investigative journalists who, perhaps not surprisingly, were critical of the Department specifically in its involvement in the

[62] J. B. Black, *Organising the Propaganda Instrument. The British Experience* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976).

domestic sphere and its attempted 'control' of the media agenda.[63] The first official release of documents from the IRD archives in 1995 encouraged a more reflective analysis of the organisation, its foundations and activities. With the exception of Lashmar and Oliver, these later contributions on the IRD including Lucas and Morris, Smith, Wark, Taylor, Carruthers, and Mayhew were less critical of the IRD, and to varying degrees contested the alleged top-down government deception of the media. [64]

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[63] See D. Leigh, 'Death Department That never was', *The Guardian*, 27 January 1978; R. Fletcher, G. Brock and P. Kelly, 'How the FO waged Secret Propaganda War in Britain,' *The Observer* , 29 January 1978; Fletcher, who was a journalist, offered an expanded account as a journal article. His findings align with the revisionist Cold War ideas that Western democracies were tricked into supporting the Cold War through the myth that communist threatened their survival. R. Fletcher, 'British Propaganda since World War II: A case study,' *Media, culture and society*, 4, (1982), pp. 97-109.

[64] P. Lashmar and J. Oliver, *Britain's Secret Propaganda War 1948 – 1977* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1998) [While the account provides more extensive analysis on the IRD, it repeats many of the criticisms voiced in the press at the time, for example: P. Lashmar, 'Covert in Glory', *New Statesman and Society*, 3 March 1995 and T. Utley, 'Orwell is revealed in the role of informer,' *Daily Telegraph*, 12 July 1996] ; W. S. Lucas and C. Morris, 'A Very British Crusade: the Information Research Department and the Beginning of the Cold War' in R. J. Aldrich (ed.), *British Intelligence, Strategy and the Cold War* (London: Routledge, 1992); L. Smith, 'Covert British Propaganda', *Millennium - Journal of International Studies,* 9/1 (1980), pp. 67-83 [Although Smith's article was written before the release of IRD material, it was based on a series of documents provided in confidence by Christopher Mayhew]; W. K. Wark, 'Coming in from the Cold: British Propaganda and Red Army Defectors, 1945-1952', *The International History Review*, 9/1 (1987), pp. 48-72 [Wark's article was also published before the official release of IRD archives, however he utilised America archives to gain an insight into the organisation]; Taylor, *British propaganda in the 20th century*, pp. 236-240; S. L. Carruthers, '"A red under every bed": Anti- communist propaganda and Britain's response to colonial insurgency', *Contemporary Record*, 9/2 (1995), pp. 294-318; C. Mayhew, *A War of Words: A Cold War Witness* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998) [Mayhew was the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office during the period who advocated

Over the last twenty years, work on the IRD has continued, investigating various areas of the organisations' activities, with case studies of events in Poland,[65] Korea,[66] the Middle East,[67] and the colonial insurgencies in Malaya, Kenya and Cyprus.[68] Interest has also been sparked as to the relationship between the IRD, the British Secret Services, and the CIA.[69] The most comprehensive overviews on the IRD have been

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and oversaw the establishment of the IRD. His memoirs, while therefore likely to be preferential in its review of the IRD, provided a worthy contribution to the topic.].

[65] J. Tebinka, 'British propaganda directed at Poland between 1947 and 1956,' *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 95, (2007), pp. 101-137.

[66] Tony Shaw's one-off article on the IRD and the Korean War highlights the challenges for the IRD in dealing with the conflict, both with propaganda disseminated at home and abroad. T. Shaw, 'The Information Research Department of the British Foreign Office and the Korean War, 1950-1953,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34/2 (1999), pp. 263-282; S. L. Carruthers, ''Not just washed but dry cleaned:' Korea and the 'Brainwashing' scare of the 1950s,' in G. Rawnsley (ed.), *Cold-War Propaganda in the 1950s* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), pp. 47-66.

[67] T. Shaw, *Eden, Suez and the Mass Media* (I.B Tauris, London, 1996); J. Vaughan, *The Failure of American and British Propaganda in the Arab Middle East, 1945–1957: Unconquerable Minds* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); J. Frazen, 'Losing hearts and minds in Iraq: Britain, Cold War propaganda and the challenge of communism, 1945-58', *Institute of historical research,* 83/222 (2009), pp. 747-762; S. M. W. Collier, *Countering Communist and Nasserite Propaganda: the Foreign Office Information Research Department in the Middle East and Africa, 1954-1963* (Doctoral thesis, University of Hertfordshire Online, 2014) < https://uhra.herts.ac.uk/handle/2299/14327>, accessed 24.02.2017.

[68] S. L. Carruthers, *Winning Hearts and Minds: British Governments, the Media and Colonial Counter-Insurgency 1944-60* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1995), p. 102.

[69] On the Labour government and IRD's relationship with intelligence see N. J. Cull, D. H. Culbert, and D. Welch , *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present,* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2003), p. 187; R. J. Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand. Britain*; D. W. B. Lomas, *Intelligence, Security and the Attlee Governments, 1945-51: An Uneasy Relationship*

provided by Andrew Defty in his comparison of Britain's and America's propaganda, and John Jenks in his study of propaganda and the news media in the Cold War.[70] Cumulatively, this work has helped to reveal the global extent of IRD operations and helped to expose key characteristics of the organisation's propaganda in terms of the nature of its material, methods, and limits (see Chapter One on the machinery of propaganda for details on the activities of the IRD).

Significantly for this thesis, the existing literature on the IRD, in providing an insight into Britain's main propaganda organisations in the Cold War through various case studies, delivers a helpful backdrop for any study on British propaganda. In exploring propaganda efforts in greater China in the early Cold War, a subject yet to be explored, the thesis will further develop the current understanding of the nature and scope of the IRD's work. However, it is the over-reliance on the IRD, in exploring British Cold War propaganda, with which the thesis takes issue. It is a reliance that has resulted in a tendency in current literature to ignore or minimise the role of those overt organisations which were tasked with the positive projection of Britain abroad.

As part of the narrative on the origins of the IRD, the roles of positive propaganda to promote post-war Britain and the intentions of the new Labour government are frequently referenced. For example, Defty notes his agreement with Taylor that 'the projection of British power and achievements through propaganda' was seen as being important in not only securing domestic support but also global influence, post-war.[71] Defty, along with Morris and Lucas, Smith and Wilford cite the part that the

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(Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016); P. Davies, *The Authorised History of British Defence Economic Intelligence: A Cold War in Whitehall, 1929-90* (London: Routledge, 2018).

[70] A. Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda;* J. Jenks, *British propaganda and news media in the Cold War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).

[71] A. Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda,* p. 28; P. M. Taylor, *British Propaganda in the 20th Century.*

proposed use of positive propaganda played in 'selling' the concept of the IRD to the Labour Government.[72] The model put before the Labour government, was that the IRD would, in part, promote Britain as a socialist 'third force' in world politics, alongside its offensive and defensive branches, attacking and replying to Communist attacks. As summarised by Assistant Under-Secretary Christopher Warner in 1947 the IRD was to have:

- an offensive branch attacking and exposing Communist methods and policy and contrasting them with 'Western' democracy and British methods and policy;
- a defensive branch, which would be concerned with replying to Soviet and Communist attacks and hostile propaganda;
- a positive branch which would deal with the 'build-up' of the Western Union conception.[73]

However, as existing IRD literature explains, once the IRD was in operation the positive angle was quickly forgotten. [74] Hopes of Britain acting as an independent third force between the two superpowers, America and the Soviet Union, was quickly deemed to be unrealistic, as British foreign policy shifted decisively towards support for an American-led coalition of the Atlantic powers. As Young and Kent have

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[72] W. S. Lucas & C. Morris 'A Very British Crusade;' L. Smith, 'Covert British Propaganda'; H. Wilford, 'The Information Research Department: Britain's Secret Cold War Weapon Revealed,' Review of International Studies, 24/3 (1998), pp. 353-369.

[73] W. S. Lucas & C. Morris 'A Very British Crusade, p 87.

[74] Agreeing to this third force as a core activity of the IRD has since been recognised as a mechanism that was used to help convince sceptical left-wingers of the need of the organisation to be an integral part of a grand strategic design, based on socialist principles. For an interesting discussion on whether the Labour Left were therefore 'hoodwinked' into accepting the IRD see: H. Wilford, *The CIA, the British Left and the Cold War*.

highlighted, the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1949 signalled the demise of the third force, and with it the relevance and role of positive propaganda in the Cold War diminished.[75] Comment on positive propaganda in existing literature is therefore largely limited to the period around 1948 and the setting up of the IRD. Whereas the IRD grew substantially over the next decade, the positive information efforts were subject to a number of cuts (see Chapter One on institutions). This narrative has been challenged recently from those investigating Britain's Cultural Cold War.

A significant amount of work on the 'Cultural Cold War' has been undertaken in recent years, with a 'renewed interest in the wider, social, political and cultural implications and consequences of cold war policies in the west'.[76] This interest has been provoked in part by work on propaganda and psychological warfare.[77] As Scott

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[75] For further detail on the creation and life span of Bevin's third force concept see: J. Kent and J. W. Young, 'British Policy Overseas: The 'Third Force' and the Origins of NATO — in Search of a New Perspective,' in B. Heuser and R. O'Neill (eds.), *Securing Peace in Europe, 1945–62* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), pp 41-61; J. Kent and J. W. Young, 'The Western Union concept and British defence policy,' in R. Aldrich (ed.), *British intelligence and strategy and the cold war, 1945-1951* (London: Routledge 19992) pp. 166-192; J. Schneer, 'Hopes Deferred or Shattered: The British Labour Left and the Third Force Movement, 1945-49,' *The Journal of Modern History*, 56/2 (1984), pp. 197-226,

[76] G. Scott-Smith and H. Krabbendam (eds.) *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe, 1945-1960* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 1.

For a good introduction to the topic see: R. Mitter and P. Major (eds.), *Across the Blocs: Cold War, Cultural and Social history* (London: Frank Class, 2004); and P. J. Kuznick and J. Gilbert (eds.), *Rethinking Cold War Cultur*e (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute Press, 2001).

[77] Gordon Johnson's article on the Cultural Cold War identifies four reasons for the turn to the cultural component of the Cold War. Besides interest in propaganda, he also notes: interest in the ordinary people's role in the Cold War; the way in which the Cold War ended, abruptly and peacefully, which led many to argue that ideas needed to be taken much more seriously than was

Lucas has asserted, the Cold War period saw the first major move in peacetime towards the development of a 'comprehensive strategy' which 'incorporated culture into the campaign to defeat its adversary.' Tony Shaw is in agreement, having declared in his introduction to *Contemporary British History's* special series on cultural studies, that 'virtually everything, from sport to ballet to comic books and space travel, assumed political inference.'[78] The term cultural diplomacy can be used to reference the attempts by government to utilise cultural practices for the purpose of propaganda, and can be seen as a branch of positive propaganda (for a full definition see Introduction).

Many of those who have focused on the IRD have recognised the significance of cultural Cold War studies, noting the IRD's interaction with the 'cultural sphere' through radio, film and various media publications, the BBC, universities, intellectuals, editors, politicians, trade unions, as being key to the success of its operations.[79] However, given the primary aim of revealing the activities of the IRD

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conventional in 'old' Cold War history; and the older tradition of culturally-based explanations of politics and 'national characteristics.' G. Johnston, 'Revisiting the Cultural Cold War', *Social History*, 3/3 (2010), p. 291.

[78] Both authors have been involved in emerging work on the Cold War revealing British and Western state inference being used to influence both domestic and foreign audiences, in culture such as the arts, plays and drama. W. Scott Lucas, 'Beyond Freedom, Beyond Control: Approaches to Culture and the State-Private Networks in the Cold War', G. Scott-Smith and H. Krabbendam (eds.), *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe, 1945-1960* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), pp. 53-72; T. Shaw 'Introduction: Britain and the Cultural Cold War', *Contemporary British History*, 19/2 (2005), pp. 109-115.

[79] Those who have engaged most with the Cultural Cold War come from the monographs: A. Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda*; J. Jenks, *British propaganda and news media in the Cold War;* J. Vaughan, *The Failure of American and British Propaganda in the Arab Middle East, 1945–1957: Unconquerable Minds* (London: Palgrave, 2005).

much of the existing literature on propaganda has largely failed to engage more widely with the cultural aspect of institutions during the Cold War.[80] Conversely those authors working on aspects of the British Cultural Cold War, such as the experiences of the Church[81] or Youth groups[82] in the Cold War have failed to show how they fit in with Britain's propaganda agenda. Until recently the two related studies on propaganda and the cultural Cold War have remained largely distinct.

It is James Vaughan's 2005 article on British Cultural Diplomacy in the Middle East that offers a true step change to existing trends in the study of propaganda.[83] In

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[80] In his examination of the so-called 'British Left,' including Trade Unions and the Labour left, Hugh Wilford comes the closest to applying cultural studies to the study of British propaganda. However, given his intent of distinguishing Britain's agency from that of America in its response to a communist threat, Wilford's narrative focuses on how 'the left' interacted with American institutions, and the IRD's relationship with 'the left' as an example of British independence. It does not truly examine the government's cultural diplomatic efforts. H. Wilford, *The CIA, the British Left and the Cold War.*

[81] For references on the Church, see: D. Kirby, 'Ecclesiastical McCarthyism: Cold War Repression in the Church of England,' *Contemporary British History*, 19/2 (2005), pp.187-202; E. McFarland and R. Johnston, 'The Church of Scotland's Special Commission on Communism, 1949- 1954: Tackling "Christianity's Most Serious Competitor,"' *Contemporary British History*, 23/3 (2009), pp.337-361.

[82] On youth groups see: R. J. Aldrich, 'Putting Culture into the Cold War: The Cultural Relations Department (CRD) and British Covert Information Warfare,' in G. Scott-Smith and H. Krabbendam (eds.) *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe 1945-1960* (London: Frank Cass, 2003)*;* J. Kotek, (2003) 'Youth Organizations as a Battlefield in the Cold War' in G. Scott-Smith and H. Krabbendam (eds.) *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe 1945-1960* (London: Frank Cass, 2003)*;* S. Mills, 'Be prepared: communism and politics of scouting in 1950's Britain', *Contemporary British History*, 25/3 (2011), pp. 1-21.

[83] J. R. Vaughan (2005) '"A Certain Idea of Britain": British Cultural Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1945–57', *Contemporary British History*, 19/2 (2005), pp. 151-168.

focusing on the cultural dimension of propaganda, Vaughan reveals not only the role of the IRD and its negative propaganda in the Cold War but the use of positive material. Vaughan's work demonstrates how the positive material was distributed by Information Officers and the British Council overseas with the intent of countering Soviet propaganda. These services, according to Vaughan, 'sought to mobilise pro-democracy committees, education and exchange programmes, commercial magazine publishing and book distribution as well as the British film industry in a bid to bolster British prestige and facilitate the wider policy making progress.'

Sarah Davies (2013) and Hilary Footit (2013) have followed a similar approach in their respective studies to that of Vaughan. Davies, who uses the term 'soft power' to refer to state attempts to attract and persuade through its values, culture and way of life, focuses on the Foreign Office produced, magazine *Anglia,* distributed in the USSR from 1962 to 1992, to examine Britain's cultural diplomacy. Her exploration of the magazine shows that its aim was to 'project' an image of Britain, yet with an understanding about the need for 'subtle' propaganda.[84] Footit's article aims to study British propaganda efforts in France in the early Cold War. Referring to the work of Vaughan, Footit takes a more comprehensive view of British propaganda. The article reinforces the role of positive propaganda in the early Cold War; it shows how the IRD and its use of negative propaganda put it at 'loggerheads' with the embassy in France and the BBC, who instead advocated positive material associated with a projection of Britain.[85]

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[84] S. R. Davies, 'The soft power of Anglia: British Cold War cultural diplomacy in the USSR,' *Contemporary British History*, 27/3 (2013), pp. 297-323.

[85] Footit shows that although the IRD's explicitly anti-communist information material did secure regional radio time for the Embassy the IRD's anti-communist work was largely outdated, and no longer in step with a changed political situation in France, in which the Communist Party had lost

This thesis does not propose a study of cultural diplomacy, however, as it forms part of wider British propaganda efforts, it will advocate the need to take a holistic approach to the study of British propaganda. A central theme of this thesis is that, in employing such a methodology, multiple organisations beyond the IRD can be identified as part of Britain's anti-communist propaganda effort. The current understanding of the role of these organisations and their relationship with the IRD will be developed throughout.

Section Two. Sino-British relations

There have been a number of monographs that have assessed the Anglo-Sino relationship in the early Cold War. Contributions in the 1960s and 1970s, from Evan Luard (1962), Robert Boardman (1976), Jangish Jain (1976) and Brian Porter (1967) provide an early general overview of the series of British foreign policy decisions towards China as it turned from a Nationalist into a Communist country.[86] However, it was not until the 1990s with the release of relevant Foreign Office documents that work was able to provide a more detailed overview and assessment of the Sino-British relationship in the early Cold War. Literature largely splits between diplomatic and economic history that focuses on Britain's recognition of the PRC. Authors discussing the development of British foreign policy include Feng (1994), Tang (1992), Lowe (1997), and Watson (1996).[87] Whereas Clayton (1997), Shao (1991), Shai (1996),

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a great deal of its former prestige and influence. H. Footitt, '"A hideously difficult country": British propaganda to France in the early Cold War', *Cold War History*, 13/2 (2013), pp. 153-169.

[86] E. Luard, *Britain and China* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1962); R. Boardman, *Britain and the People's Republic of China, 1949-1974* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1976); J. P. Jain, *China in World Politics A study of Sino-British relations, 1949-1975* (New Dehli: Radiant Publishers, 1976); B. Porter, *Britain and the Rise of Communist China: A study of British Attitudes, 1945-1954* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976).

[87] Z. Feng, *The British Governments China Policy 1945-1950* (Keele: Ryburn Publishing, 1994); J. T. Tang, *Britain's Encounter with Revolutionary China, 1949-54* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992);

and more recently Howlett (2015), have focused more narrowly on British economic interests. [88] Xiang (1995), Zhai (1994), and Kaufman (2001), have explored British policy in China within the larger Sino-British-American context.[89]

Cumulatively, these contributions have helped reveal how Britain's new China policy was primarily a result of determination to protect its trade and financial interests in China, and secondly a way to safeguard its Hong Kong colony from a military affront. The decision, as David Wolfe effectively summarises in his article exploring Britain's decision to recognise the PRC, was formed against a background of: Britain's post war economic and military constraints, uncertainty as to how a 'Communist China' would materialise and its policies towards the West, and the Anglo-American 'special

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P. Lowe, *Containing the Cold War in East Asia: British Policies Towards Japan, China and Korea, 1948-53* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); R. Watson, *The Foreign Office and policy making in China 1945-1950. Anglo American relations and the recognition of communist China*, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 1996), pp. 126-127;

[88] D. Clayton, *Imperialism Revisited: Political and Economic Relations between Britain and China, 1950-1954* (London: Macmillan, 1997); W. Shao, *China, Britain and Businessmen: Political and Commercial Relations, 1949-1957* (London: Macmillan, 1991); A. Shai, *The Fate of British and French Firms in China, 1949-54* (London: Macmillan, 1996); J. Howlett, 'Decolonisation in China,' in J. Howlett and J. Bickers (ed.), *Britain and China, 1840-1970: Empire, Finance and War* (Routledge Studies in the Modern History of Asia, 2015), pp. 222-241.

[89] L. Xiang, *Recasting the Imperial Far East: Britain and America in China, 1945-1950* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1995); Q. Zhai, *The Dragon, the Lion, and the Eagle: Chinese-British-American Relations, 1949-58* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1994); V. S. Kaufman, *Confronting Communism: U.S. and British Policies toward China* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001).

relationship,' its American ally looking increasingly likely to follow suit in recognising the PRC.[90]

While full diplomatic relations were not established and relations worsened, with the two countries taking opposite sides in the Korean War[91] and later the Taiwan Strait

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[90] These factors will be investigated in more depth in Chapter Two. D. C. Wolf, '"To Secure a Convenience": Britain Recognizes China – 1950,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18/2 (1983), pp. 299-326.

For other articles specifically on Britain's decision to recognise Communist China see: R. Ovendale, 'Britain, the United States, and the Recognition of Communist China', *The Historical Journal*, 26/1 (1983), pp.139-158; and Z. Zhongfei, The British decision to recognize the People's Republic of China-and its aftermath,' American Asian Review*,* 21/1 (2003), pp. 143-164.

[91] For insight on Britain's role in the Korean War and its impact on the Anglo-American relationship see: M. Dockrill, 'The Foreign Office, Anglo-American Relations and the Korean Truce Negotiations, July 1951 - June 1953', in J. Cotton and I. Neary (ed.) *The Korean War in History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp. 100-119; M. Dockrill, 'The Foreign Office, Anglo-American Relations and the Korean War, June 1950 - June 1951', *International Affairs,* 62/3 (1986), pp. 459-76'; P. Farrar, 'A Pause for Peace Negotiations: The British Buffer Zone Plan of November 1950' in J. Cotton and I. Neary (eds.) *The Korean War in History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp. 66-79; A. Farrar-Hockley, *The British Part in the Korean War: Vol.1 and Vol 2* (London: HMSO, 1990, 1995); C. MacDonald, *Korea: The War before Vietnam* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986); R. Foot, 'Anglo-American Relations in the Korean Crisis: The British Effort to Avert an Expanded War, December 1950 – 1951', *Diplomatic History,* 10/1 (1986), pp. 43-57; R. Jong-yil, 'Special Relationship at War: The Anglo-American Relationships during the Korean War', *Journal of Strategic Studies,* 7/3 (1984), pp. 301-317; W. Stueck, 'The Limits of Influence: British Policy and American Expansion of the War in Korea', *Pacific Historical Review,* 55/1 (1986), pp. 65-95.

crises,[92] Britain maintained its recognition of the PRC and pursued a policy of quiet diplomacy, often trying to temper any American escalations. [93]

In more recent contributions, debate has focused on the assessment of Britain's China policy from 1948 onwards. Steve Tsang (2006) offers an alternate take on Sino-British history by focusing on Britain's relations with the Republic of China over Taiwan in the Cold War. Tsang asserts that a 'de facto' strategic partnership had emerged between Britain and the ROC, partly as a result of the failure of Britain's policy towards China. He concludes 'by the end of the decade none of the UK's original objectives for recognising the PRC in January 1950 had been achieved.'[94] Such a conclusion, arguably, is based on a narrow view of success. It is Chi-wan Mark's most recent work (2017) on the *Everyday Cold War: Britain and China*, which challenges this conclusion.

Mark provides one of the most comprehensive studies of the Sino-British, Cold War relationship, which besides Boardman's 1976 contribution, utilises both British and Chinese material and looks beyond the 1950s. Mark shows how Britain and China were involved in the 'everyday Cold War' or a 'continuous process of contestation and cooperation,' with the two powers being neither real enemies nor permanent

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[92] For a discussion on the offshore island crisis see: M. Szonyi, *Cold War Island: Quemoy on the Front Line* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), and; N. B. Tucker (ed.), *Dangerous Strait: The U.S.-Taiwan-China Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

[93] There is much debate in existing literature as to Britain's ability to influence America's policy in East Asia. Peter Lowe, in providing a highly detailed commentary on British dealings more widely in all East Asia between 1948 and 1953, shows that, despite being reduced to a 'second fiddle' to America, Britain did play a role in East Asia, often as moderator, a role that should not be diminished. P. Lowe, *Containing the Cold War in East Asia.*

[94] C. Mark, *The Cold War's Odd Couple: The Unintended Partnership between the Republic of China and the United Kingdom, 1950-1958* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

friends. Through the 'normalisation' of the 'everyday Cold War,' Mark asserts that the two countries were able to achieve some (if not all) of their respective policy objectives in the short and medium term, while leaving the door open for normal relations in the long run. Rather than showing a failed policy of 'appeasement,' it can be seen that British decision-makers had regarded patient and persistent engagement with China as the best way of fighting the 'everyday Cold War.'[95]

The study of Britain's relationship with Chinese territories outside of mainland China in a Cold War context is minimal. Any comments on the subject are often indirect, forming part of PRC-British-American conversations.[96] Recently this omission has been challenged partly by Priscilla Roberts and John Carroll in their edited collection of articles on Hong Kong in the Cold War, which helps to assert Hong Kong's role in the Cold War [see respective Chapters for further analysis of literature that deals with the other territories].[97]

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[95] R. Boardman, *Britain and the People's Republic of China;* C. Mark, *The Everyday Cold War: Britain and China, 1950-1972* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

[96] In particular there is very little comment on Britain's relationship with Macau or Taiwan, besides Steven Tsang's *The Cold War's Odd Couple*. While there is more published on Hong Kong, as a British Colony, the majority of the work either focuses on revealing Hong Kong's strategic importance to Britain post war or its impact on the Anglo-America relationship as America used the colony as a base for intelligence and propaganda. For example see: Cheuk-wah Chan, 'Hong Kong and its strategic values for China and Britain (1949-1968)', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 28/3 1998, pp.346-365; F. Yi-hua Kan, 'The position of Hong Kong in Britain's policy towards the two rival Chinese regimes during the early years of the cold war,' *Civil Wars,* 2/4 (1999), pp.106-137; C. Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War: Anglo-American Relations 1949-1957* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); C. Mark, 'American "China-Hands,"' in C. Chu (ed), *Foreign Communities in Hong Kong, 1840s-1950s* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 171-93.

[97] P. Roberts and J. Carroll (eds.), *Hong Kong in the Cold War* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016).

In exploring this new aspect of Britain's foreign policy, the thesis will build on these existing understandings of Sino-British relations. It will support Mark's conclusion, as to the perceived success of the semi-diplomatic relationship, by showing how London continued to restrict its anti-communist propaganda operations in greater China, even after it failed to establish diplomatic relations. Moreover, it will show that 'other' Chinese territories played a role in the Cold War, although to varying extents, and how this is an area worthy of further study.

Conclusion of chapter

The chapter has focused on examining British Cold War propaganda literature, with three fairly distinct categorises identified as: 'pre-release of government records;' 'IRD records release;' and 'Cultural Turn.' In doing so, it has demonstrated how the thesis will challenge the existing understanding of the IRD and the nature of its work. More significantly, however, the chapter has shown how emerging work by historians focusing on cultural diplomacy, have helped illuminate the role that other, overt organisations played in utilising positive propaganda methods as part of this Cold War effort. It is this approach which the thesis will utilise. It will further challenge the reliance on IRD material, by historians, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of British Cold War propaganda. The thesis will expose the role of a number of other organisations in Britain's anti-communist propaganda efforts in greater China. As a consequence the thesis will build a fuller understanding of Sino-British relations in the early Cold War.

Chapter One. The Institutions of British propaganda

In March 1946 the Ministry of Information (MOI), charged with Britain's domestic and foreign propaganda during the Second World War, closed. Its existence was deemed 'inappropriate' for peacetime conditions.[98] Yet, encouraged by the post-war environment, propaganda operations continued, now with new objectives and largely under the domain of the Foreign Office.

Employing the definition of propaganda set out in the Introduction, this chapter will identify the extensive state machinery that was involved in Britain's propaganda operations in 'greater China' in the early Cold War. The chapter will show that British Cold War propaganda was not the domain of any one organisation. Nor, despite various cross-government committees, were the organisations involved co-ordinated by an overarching, consistent or coherent plan, the various actors often having competing agendas and ideas as how to combat communism effectively. The chapter will therefore demonstrate the importance of adopting a multi-agency approach in the study of British propaganda, whether positive or negative, in the early Cold War. Crucially, the chapter will set out an institutional framework upon which the rest of the thesis will build.

The propaganda machinery included, with varying degrees of involvement: the Colonial Office Information Department (COID); the British Information Services (BIS); the Central Office of Information (COI); the Information Research Department (IRD); the Information Policy Department (IPD); the Regional Information Office (RIO); the Cultural Relations Department (CRD); the intelligence services, MI5, and MI6; and specifically for Hong Kong, the Public Relations Office (PRO). There was also the Far

[98] M. Grant, 'Towards a Central Office of Information,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34/1 (1999), p. 52.

Eastern Information Department (FEID), which operated for a short period advising both the IRD and IPD until it was effectively replaced at the end of 1949 by the expanding IRD. The roles played by the British Council and the BBC will be considered, as well as other key departments that helped to shape immediate propaganda policy. The Far Eastern Department (FED) dealt with Britain's relations with China, Taiwan, Macao, Japan, Korea (China was a separate Department until 1949 and briefly returned as such with the establishment of the China and Korea Department for the year 1953 only), and with British diplomats. For Hong Kong, a crown colony, the Colonial Office and the Colonial Government were the two main policy departments. This chapter will firstly outline the cross-governmental bodies that shaped Britain's Cold War propaganda agenda. It will then identify the relevant departments and other British organisations that were tasked with carrying out the government's propaganda efforts.

Cross-government bodies

The Russia Committee, set up by the Foreign Office in 1946, marked the British government's earliest attempt to develop a coordinated policy to oppose the perceived threat emerging from Communist Russia in the post-war environment. Policy considerations of the committee included the use of propaganda as a form of response. Its creation demonstrated the department's desire to go beyond the pure intelligence reports being developed by the Secret Services and, arguably, the desire of the Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, to hold exclusive control of the policy on communism.[99] The membership of the Russia Committee was controlled by the Foreign Office and included all of its relevant departments, with external membership limited to the Cabinet Secretary, the head of the BBC Overseas Service,

[99] W. S. Lucas, and C. J. Morris, 'A Very British Crusade: The Information Research Department and the Cold War,' in R. Aldrich (ed.), *British Intelligence, Strategy, and the Cold War* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 87.

and eventually to the Chiefs of Staff (CoS).[100] For some, this committee was in practice, though not in name, the resurrected Political Warfare Executive (PWE).[101]

The Russia Committee, however, soon faced criticism for its lack of a planning capability. This resulted in the setting up of an alternative committee in 1949, the Permanent Under-Secretary's Committee (PUSC). The PUSC was tasked with producing a long-term, foreign policy outlook, and made up of the most senior officers across departments with the Joint Intelligence Committee and Foreign Office controlling the agenda. The Russia Committee continued to exist for a while, however, even after being superseded by the PUSC, to whom it reported. [102]

While the broad, Cold War strategy was being developed at one level, there were various interdepartmental committees to guide the specific propaganda response at a strategic level. The most relevant of these for this thesis was the Cabinet's Colonial Information Policy Committee (CIPC), which consisted of Parliamentary

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[100] For further discussion on the Russia Committee, its origins, role and association with intelligence see: P. Davies, *The Authorised History of British Defence Economic Intelligence: A Cold War in Whitehall, 1929-90* (London: Routledge, 2018); W. Scott Lucas and C. J. Morris, 'A Very British Crusade,' pp. 85-111; R. Merrick, 'The Russia Committee of the British Foreign Office and the Cold War, 1946-47,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 20/3 (1985), pp. 453-468.

[101] Lucas and Morris, 'A Very British Crusade,' p. 106.

[102] The Permanent Under-Secretary's Department (PUSD) was the Foreign Department which liaised with the intelligence services. It supported the PUSC which was created in 1949 by Bevin, with responsibility over intelligence and other covert matters. See: R. Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence* (Woodstock, The Overlook Press, 2001), p. 157, and; Davies, *The Authorised History of British Defence Economic Intelligence.*

Undersecretaries at the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office and the newly formed Commonwealth Relations Office.[103]

Established in July 1948, the CIPC was chaired by Christopher Mayhew, the Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office. It was comprised of parliamentary under-secretaries, officials from the three departments, the Director General of the Central Office of Information, and the Director General of Overseas Broadcasts at the BBC. While the initial terms of reference for the CIPC included the collection and presentation of publicity material regarding British colonial and policy administration, this changed in November 1948 to cover all overseas anti-communist information work. Following Bevin's warning of the need to counter communist drives in Africa, the terms of the committee were changed, 'to stimulate and concert the dissemination of publicity designed to counter communist propaganda in countries overseas, especially in the self-governing and colonial countries of Commonwealth and neighbouring territories.'[104] At an official, working level there was also the recently discovered, Official Committee on Communism (Overseas) (AC

[103] The Commonwealth Relations Office, formerly the Dominions Office, was named in 1947 to reflect the changing structure of Britain's Empire. Previously responsible for relations with the self- governing dominions Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa, and Zimbabwe. It took on greater responsibility, post-war, as colonies were granted independence, including those of Indian and Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Burma. The power and responsibilities of the Colonial Office however diminished, and in 1966 the two offices merged to form the Commonwealth Office. For a useful insight into how diplomatic relations differed between the Commonwealth Office and its High Commissioners with that of the Foreign Office and its Ambassadors, see: Lorna Lloyd, *Diplomacy with a Difference: The Commonwealth Office of High Commissioner, 1800-2006* (Leiden: Martinus NijHoff, 2007).

[104] Mayhew to Secretary of State, 27 November 1948, FO 1110/22, The National Archives (TNA), Kew.

(O)).[105] This body was tasked 'to stimulate and co-ordinate…all anti-communist activities (including those related to information) overseas.' This official-led committee reported to the CIPC on matters of propaganda and on all other matters to the Ministerial Committee on Communism.[106] While these bodies enabled cross-government collaboration, the day-to-day propaganda work was controlled by the relevant individual departments.

The Central Office of Information

The closure of the MOI at the end of the Second World War marked a significant change in the field of government propaganda. It permitted individual departments to take back control of propaganda policy in their respective domains, and also led to the creation of a new department, the Central Office of Information (COI).[107] The

[105] Access to these papers is a result of Rory Cormac's successful Freedom of Information request published online as part of work undertaken by the Centre for Conflict, Security and Terrorism (CST), < https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cst/research/most-unusual-measures>.

[106] The Committee on Communism reported to the CIPC on matters of information and on all other matters to the Ministerial Committee on Communism. G. Young to N. Brook, 31 January 1955, CAB 21/5003; Memorandum by the Prime Minister, 'Cabinet: Counter subversion', 4 December1955,<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cst/research/most-unusual-measures/documents/foi-1.pdf >, accessed 31.06.2016

For more information on the ACO and Ministerial Committee chaired by Attlee see: R. Cormac, *Disrupt and Deny: Spies, Special Forces, and the Secret Pursuit of British Foreign Policy* (Oxford, 2018), and; R. Cormac, 'The Pinprick Approach: Whitehall's Top-Secret Anti-Communist Committee and the Evolution of British Covert Action Strategy,' *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 16/3 (2014), pp. 5-28.

[107] Grant shows how the creation of the COI as a service department was as much a political decision as a lesson from wartime on the difficulties in centralising propaganda operations. M. Grant, 'Towards a Central Office of Information,' pp. 49-67. Similarly Taylor traces the COI from

creation of the COI reflected the Labour Government's determination to avoid accusations of impropriety in peacetime Britain with the continuation of its wartime propaganda machine. However, it still retained some information capacity to support the day-to-day running of government. As the Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, announced in parliament, there remained a need for the public to 'be adequately informed about the many matters in which government action directly impinges on their daily lives.'[108]

Accordingly, the remit of the COI was limited, compared to that of its predecessor the MOI. The COI was designed with no policy capability. Instead, it was intended as a common service department to supplement the information needs of home and overseas ministerial departments; all of which were, in theory, able to commission work on specific themes and topics.[109] The COI produced and published movies, magazines, photographs, newspapers, magazines and books as well as running the

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its origins up to Winston Churchill's interest in propaganda: P. M. Taylor, *British Propaganda in the 20th Century: Selling Democracy* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

[108] For details on MOI activities in Britain see: P. M. Taylor, *The Projection of Britain: Overseas Publicity and Propaganda 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[109] There is evidence to suggest that there were limits to what the COI would commission in regard to what could be considered as negative propaganda of the IRD. While Vaughan's work on the Middle East has shown how every COI produced magazine carried two to three IRD sponsored items this type of agreement was not consistent. Defty has shown that, despite the IRD's initial instructions to rely on the existing information apparatus of the COI, it faced a push-back from the COI on anything overly critical, the result being that the IRD increasingly had to produce its own material and commissions. J. R. Vaughan, 'A Certain Idea of Britain': British Cultural Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1945–57, *Contemporary British History*, 19/2 (2005), pp. 151-168; A. Defty, *Britain, America, and Anti-Communist Propaganda, 1945-53:The Information Research Department* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 87.

London Press Service (LPS) and its Far East regional service (FEASTCO).[110] However, the COI did not have its own overseas staff, and while it distributed some material directly to the Embassies, it relied largely on the Colonial Office, the Commonwealth Relations Office, and the Foreign Office to disseminate material.[111]

In the wake of the post-war re-organisation the Foreign Office was quick to seize control of its new propaganda capability. This was achieved primarily through three organisations: the IRD, the IPD and the CRD.

The Information Research Department

The Information Research Department (IRD) was set up by the Foreign Office in 1948, directly in response to the perceived Communist threat.[112] Initially it had been imagined that the IRD would be used to promote Britain as a 'third force' in world politics to rival the two superpowers in offering a socialist alternative which Western Europe would rally behind. However, by the time the IRD came into being British

[110] The LPS was the successor to the pre-World War Two 'British Official Wireless' and the wartime MOI press services. It was sent to British Missions who then sent it on to their contacts. It was a current news service but was designed to provide hard news that could be used for Embassy Bulletins. There is in contrast very no reference to FEASTCO, archives reveal it was a regional LPS service and also sat under COI. J. B. Black, *Organising the Propaganda Instrument: the British Experience* (Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), p. 44; J. Jenks, *British propaganda and news media in the Cold War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 2; Defty, *Britain, America, and Anti-Communist Propaganda, p 84. There*

[111] T. Shaw, *British Cinema and the Cold War: The State, Propaganda and Consensus* (London, I. B. Tauris, 2001), p 25; Defty, *Britain, America, and Anti-Communist Propaganda, 1945-53,* p. 86.

[112] The concept for the department can be traced to the spring of 1946, when senior officials in the Foreign Office, such as assistant under-secretary Christopher Warner first raised possibility of anti-communist propaganda campaign. H. Wilford. *The CIA, the British Left and the Cold War. Calling the Tune?* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 355.

foreign policy had shifted towards support for an American-led coalition of the Atlantic powers, and as such a third force was no longer relevant. Its focus, therefore, changed to one of producing both offensive and defensive anti-communist propaganda, for audiences at home and overseas.[113]

Existing literature on the IRD has exposed some key characteristics of this negative propaganda agenda, including the scope, method and nature of its work. The IRD gathered and analysed confidential information about communism to produce factually based anti-communist propaganda.[114] Its existence was, however, kept secret and it was funded from the annual sum granted by parliament for intelligence activities, referred to as the 'secret vote'. In order to make its material persuasive and credible propaganda, the organisation favoured grey propaganda material, often factual but with disguise of the government's origin, avoiding 'unnecessary diplomatic and political repercussions.'[115] The emphasis of the material was often on news and information, the "shock troops of propaganda."[116] Rather than just being aggressive, the IRD often preferred to use material of a defensive qualitative, as opposed to quantitative, nature. This would be material with values and ideas that people could readily relate to, for example by contrasting the benefits of Britain and the West, to those of communism, which, in the early Cold War, was used as a synonym for the actions and activities of the Soviet Union and Russia.

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[113] The 'third force' was a position that had been advocated by Bevin. Refer to the Literature Review for further details on the 'third force'.

[114] H. Wilford. *The CIA, the British Left and the Cold War.*

[115] Lucas and Morris, (1992), 'A very British Crusade,' p. 98, and; R. Fletcher, 'British Propaganda since World War II - a Case Study', *Media, Culture & Society April,* 4/2 (1982), pp. 97-109.

[116] Taylor, *British Propaganda in the 20th Century*, p. 234.

The IRD's principal target was opinion-makers, rather than the opinion itself. It disseminated work directly to 'trusted' organisations, and influential figures, such as MPs, journalists, and broadcasters who were willing to make use of IRD briefs in their engagement with the public. The IRD also printed, commissioned and used, where appropriate, existing articles for propaganda purposes. It then placed them in appropriate periodicals or purchased the rights for overseas distribution, where its operations primarily functioned. In general, for an overseas influence it relied on the Foreign Office's overseas Information Officers. These officers were known as the British Information Services (BIS),[117] and were posted 'at practically all Embassies and legations and a good number of Consular posts' around the world.[118] It was essentially 'a peacetime psychological warfare organization of almost unlimited scope,' as is evident in its involvement with several colonial, counter-insurgency campaigns.[119]

Unsurprisingly, given its size and purpose, the IRD organisation has become synonymous with Britain's Cold War propaganda efforts in current day literature, as can be seen, for example, in the most recent monographs on British propaganda by Andrew Defty in *Britain, America, and Anti-Communist Propaganda,* and by John Jenks in *British propaganda and news media in the Cold War*. Yet, while the aims, mechanisms and style of IRD operations at home and abroad have been well covered, there has been little work on its efforts in 'greater China.' The Far East is an area that

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[117] The British Information Services (BIS) were a legacy from World War Two and post-war came under Foreign Office control. Information officers were attached to various diplomatic missions and were initially tasked with the presentation of British policy abroad.

[118] Cabinet Committee on Communism, Foreign office information activities with special reference to anti-communist propaganda, 31 May 1949, CAB 134/53, TNA.

[119] T. Shaw, 'The Information Research Department of the British Foreign Office and the Korean War, 1950-1953,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34/2 (1999), pp. 263-282.

has as yet to be fully explored and thus forms an important part of this thesis. The thesis will develop and build on existing work on the IRD to show its intentions and propaganda operations in this area.

While the immediate efforts of the IRD had been focused on Europe, it soon expanded its lens and overseas capabilities with the setting up of Regional Information Offices in the Middle East and more pertinently for this thesis in South East Asia. Following the outbreak of the Malayan Emergency in 1948, there was a growing concern about the spread of communism in the South East Asian region.[120] As a result, the IRD found itself in discussions with the Commissioner General's Office (CGO) in Singapore about the establishment of a regional office to act as a Far Eastern branch of the Information Department. The office was to be established in Singapore as the centre for British defence forces, east of Suez, and to work with the local centres of British intelligence and the security services.[121]

Eventually, in June 1949, it was agreed to set up the Regional Information Office for Singapore (RIO (S)). Despite attempts by the Commissioner General in Singapore for the office to have a Far East remit, it was decided that the office should lead propaganda in South East Asia, excluding the Chinese Mainland and Taiwan.[122] The

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[120] For an insightful discussion on the struggle between the spread and containment of communism in South East Asia, see Meredith Oyen in: M. Oyen, 'Communism, Containment And The Chinese Overseas,' in Z. Yangwen, H. Liu and M. Szonyi (eds.), *The Cold War in Asia,* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2010), pp. 59-83.

[121] For comment on the use of intelligence in RIO (S) see: T. McGuire, *British and American intelligence and anti-communist propaganda in the early Cold War Southeast Asia, 1948-1961*, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2015).

[122] A factor in this decision appears to be a concern that RIO (S) had the potential to great an authority in the region and would therefore be able to challenge the IRD. I. Aitken, *The British Official Film in South-East Asia,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 90.

RIO (S) was to distribute and translate IRD anti-communist propaganda materials for use by British information centres and other organisations in the region, as well as produce its own negative and positive material. According to Aitken, in his study of British Official Film in South-East Asia, these positive materials were envisioned principally to emphasise: the 'third force'; commonwealth cooperation and partnership; and the positive role being played by Britain in the world. Importantly, this positive side also offered a public-facing camouflage for the IRD's more clandestine efforts.[123]

However, by the time of the RIO (S)'s first conference in July 1949, Hong Kong had been excluded from the organisation's direct remit. With the prospect of a communist victory in China, Hong Kong was to be developed as a major centre for combating Chinese communist propaganda, and would be granted its own RIO liaison office and officer. The office was to be known as the Regional Information Office, Hong Kong (RIO (HK)).[124]

The RIO (HK) was developed to respond to the anti-communist threat to the colony that was emerging from China. The office was to report directly to the RIO (S). Chapter four provides more detail on the relationship between the two offices and their strategic importance with regard to China and the Far East. RIO (HK) too was to disseminate both negative propaganda, to counter Chinese communist propaganda, and positive propaganda about British and Western democratic achievements. More specifically it was to disseminate similar publicity and information about the Hong Kong Government.[125] While it was considerably smaller than the RIO (S), even at its

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[123] Aitken, *The British Official Film in South-East Asia.* (See chapter three for more detail on activities of the RIO (S).

[124] Colonial Office Information Committee, Minutes, 30 June 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

[125] Grantham (Colonial Governor Hong Kong) to John Rayner (RIO (S)), 15 November 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

height it only had two full time staff and officially only had the remit of propaganda dissemination in Hong Kong, the thesis will show how it also attempted to exert influence in Taiwan.

Both of these Regional Offices will be discussed throughout the thesis in relation to the anti-communist propaganda campaign, as they came to represent a key arm of the Foreign Office in 'greater China.'

Information Policy Department

After the war, the Foreign Office also created a department that was responsible for positive propaganda initiatives, the Information Policy Department (IPD). However, there has been substantially less literature written on the IPD than its sister department, the IRD. John Black's 1976 contribution on Britain's overt propaganda instruments provides one of the earliest studies on the IPD. Black shows how the IPD, created in 1947, was made up of staff drawn largely from the MOI. It was designed to assist in the implementation of British foreign policy and ultimately 'put forward the British viewpoint.'[126] Black's work, however, is limited to the initial, organisational set-up of the IPD.

More recent comments on the IPD, largely appearing as background notes in the study of the IRD, have shown how the remit of the IPD was initially tied up with the Labour Government's desire to strengthen and regain British global influence, post-war. As part of these conversations it has been revealed that the IPD, like the IRD, distributed material through the BIS. Despite it being an overt information branch, it urged a degree of discretion around its operations and the manner in which it publicised Britain's achievements. In 1947, the IPD issued a directive to posts cautioning the need for discretion on questions concerning the organisation,

[126] J. B. Black, *Organising the Propaganda Instrument: The British Experience* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), p. 12.

requests for information were to be used as an opportunity to publicise Britain by describing the output of these services rather than the organisation itself.[127]

The importance of positive propaganda in the Cold War was certainly recognised by the government. For example, in 1951 the Cabinet Overseas Information Services Committee stated that: 'all experience shows that negative propaganda fails largely of [sic] its effect unless it is accompanied by at least as great a volume of positive material, that is to say, material showing what is going on in the Western democracies and what hopes their example offers to the world. In other words, vaccination without food is not enough.'[128]

The following year a Ministry of Defence memorandum asserted that 'the activity variously called presentation of democratic case, battle of ideas, cold war, ideological warfare, propaganda and psychological warfare (and sometimes 'information and cultural activities') is capable of being discussed in negative or positive aspect... the two aspects cannot however be completely divorced.'[129] The IPD focused on 'policy' propaganda, distributing posts with information on life and points of view in Britain and other Western democracies, rather than on strictly 'cultural' activities. Both, arguably, fitted under the positive propaganda umbrella (as defined in the introduction). Even so, Taylor argues that cultural propaganda is distinct from political propaganda.[130]

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[127] Defty, Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda 1945-53, p. 28.

[128] Foreign Office draft memorandum on 'Propaganda, Information and the "Cold War"', 17 November 1951, for Cabinet Overseas Information Services (Official) Committee, FO 953/1051, TNA; Tony Shaw, 'The Information Research Department of the British Foreign Office,' p. 280; Lucas and Morris, 'A Very British Crusade,' p. 104.

[129] Sir Maurice Dean to Nicholls, 28 January 1952, FO 953/1216, TNA.

[130] Taylor, *The Projection of Britain.*

While the IRD grew in size, to over 300 staff in the 1950s, the IPD along with the other information services including the COI, BBC and British Council, all faced successive budgetary cuts. Between 1948 and 1950, in a period of post-war austerity, their funding declined from 11.7 million in 1948 to 10.8 million.[131] In 1952, the overseas information services were facing more financial restrictions. With disagreement in government over the requirements of the services the Conservative government established an independent committee led by Lord Drogheda to report on their role and activities.[132] The committee's review, published in 1953, ultimately recognised the importance of cultural activities.[133] Unfortunately the Drogheda recommendations could not solve the financial issues faced by Government and as a result were never properly implemented. This meant that positive propaganda activities were left to bear the brunt of continuing financial cuts during the 1950s.[134] As noted in the literature review this helped to encourage a trend in propaganda scholarship to ignore the role of the IPD in the Cold War battle, despite the

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[131] L. Schwartz, *Political Warfare against the Kremlin. US and British Propaganda Policy at the Beginning of the Cold War*, (Palgrave, 2009).p. 51.

[132] Lord Drogheda, who had served during the war in the Ministry of Economic warfare, led the survey 1952-1953. Lord Drogheda, *Double Harness, memoirs by Lord Drogheda* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978,).

[133] It recommended a re-prioritisation of some services, particularly for some in Western Europe in line with the government's Cold War priorities. For example for the BBC overseas service, as Webb notes, the review suggested BBC overseas broadcasts in French, Italian, Danish, Dutch, Norwegian, Portuguese and Swedish be eliminated, while services in Middle East and Far East be strengthened. See: Webb, 'London Calling,' p. 96.

[134] For further details of cuts impact on information officers, British Council, BBC and the outcome of the Drogheda review services see: J. M. Lee, 'British cultural diplomacy and the Cold War: 1946-1961,' *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 9/1 (1998), p. 114. Also: F. L. Donaldson, *The British Council: the First Fifty Years* (London: Jonathon Cape, 1984), p. 173. and; A. Webb, 'London Calling,' p. 90.

organisation operating from 1947 until the merger of the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Office in 1968 to form the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Commonwealth Office had been formed by the merger of the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Colonial Office in 1966.

Links between the IPD and Britain's anti-communist propaganda agenda have only recently been explored, following the emergence of academic study of Britain's Cultural Cold War. James Vaughan's article exploring cultural diplomacy and the national projection of Britain's Middle East policy, during the formative years of the Cold War, has shown that the IPD launched a *Picture Post*-style Arabic magazine, *Al Aalam* [The Globe], in June 1952. Published by the Central Office of Information it was to 'provide an alternative to the extremely nationalist, trashy, but attractively produced pictorial magazines printed in Egypt, which, since the abolition of our own Arabic magazines after the war, have completely monopolised the field.' The article reveals how the IPD wrote to the IRD liaison officer in the US, noting its desire to conceal for as long as possible the official British connection with the magazine. Vaughan is also able to trace IRD material within the publication. For Vaughan this link with the IRD is instructive, connecting Britain's Middle Eastern cultural diplomacy offensive to the semi-clandestine Foreign Office department which was established in 1948 and specifically charged with the task of taking the Cold War propaganda battle to the Soviet Union.[135]

While clearly both the IRD and IPD contributed to anti-communist propaganda, even using similar machinery, there does not appear to have been any overarching attempt to co-ordinate their work on this same agenda. Instead, the IPD and the IRD appear to have divided the work between the two departments, where appropriate, on an ad hoc basis. As Ralph Murray, the first head of the IRD, noted rather concisely,

[135] Vaughan, 'A Certain Idea of Britain,' pp. 151-168.

after a wrangle with the IPD over British publicity in the colonies, 'This is your baby, not mine...Positive, not negative.'[136]

Work revealing the role of the IPD as part of Britain's Cold War propaganda effort, and its relationship and collaboration with the IRD is an important breakthrough. It is a development that this thesis will build on to show how the IPD operated in greater China, as well as its collaboration with the IRD and other departments where apparent. It will conclude that the IPD, arguably, played a larger part in shaping overseas Cold War propaganda than elsewhere, due to the effective exclusion of the IRD from China.

Cultural Relations Department

While the IRD and IPD led on supplying 'information,' the Cultural Relations Department (CRD) focused on countering Moscow's international movements, federations and assemblies. Rather than being born out of a wartime heritage, the CRD, formed in 1943, was created as a result of pressure for support from agencies, such as the British Council, that had been developed for cultural propaganda in the inter-war period. The initial remit of the CRD was 'to give political direction to the British Council and to manage the political and policy aspects of the growing scale of organised international intellectual, cultural, societal and artistic contrasts, with a view to promoting allied good will.'[137] Post war, however, the CRD focused on a new

[136] Lucas and Morris, 'A Very British Crusade,' p 101.

[137] Aldrich's paper on the CRD, offers the most substantial comment on the organisation and its operations. R. J. Aldrich, 'Putting Culture into the Cold War: The Cultural Relations Department (CRD) and British Covert Information Warfare,' *Intelligence and National Security,* 18/2 (2003), pp.109-133. Other authors who include comments on the CRD are: J. M. Lee, 'British cultural diplomacy and the cold war: 1946-61,' *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 9/1 (2007), pp. 112-134. and; Lowell Schwartz, *Political Warfare against the Kremlin. US and British Propaganda Policy at the Beginning of the Cold War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

role, that of countering Communist infiltration of international movements that were rapidly evolving into front organisations for the Soviet Union.[138] The CRD did this by utilising state-private networks to create its own 'fronts,' for example in the form of youth organisations.[139] Aldrich asserts that this early realisation put the CRD at the cutting edge of Britain's information Cold War during the interregnum in British propaganda activities, at a time when the wartime Special Operations Executive (SOE) and Political Warfare Executive (PWE) had been largely wound up and were not to be replaced until the advent of the IRD in 1948.[140]

However, the CRD, similarly to the IPD, faced financial constraints, and struggled to fund the counter-front organisations. While some of the work of the CRD could be considered propaganda, its role in overseas events in China is minimal. Moreover, as the IRD emerged much of the CRD's responsibilities passed to the IRD.[141] Comment on the CRD throughout the thesis is therefore limited.

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[138] Front organisations are seemingly independent organisations that claim to represent particular opinions. They are, however, secretly controlled or heavily influenced by another organisation, as in this case by the government.

[139] Aldrich shows how the World Assembly of Youth did try to extend their reach globally, with a second general assembly planned for Singapore in 1954, but faced severe cuts by the British government. Support for the organisation passed to the Americans. Aldrich, 'Putting Culture into the Cold War,' pp. 125-126.

[140] Aldrich, 'Putting Culture into the Cold War.'

[141] Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand,* p. 11.

The IRD's sponsorship and influence, most noticeably in the Trade Unions, has led to further investigations of supposed Cold War fronts. For discussions on such relationships see: Wilford, *The CIA, the British Left and the Cold War*; L. Smith, 'Covert British Propaganda: the Information Research Department, 1947-77,' *Millennium,* 9/1 (1980), pp. 67-83: p. 71; P. Weiler, *British Labour and the Cold War,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 216.

Colonial Office Information Department

The closure of the MOI allowed the Colonial Office to assume control of British propaganda activities in its own domain, just as the Foreign Office and the Commonwealth Relations Department did in their respective domains. For this thesis it is the work of the Colonial Office's Information Department (COID) that is most relevant. The Colonial Office instructed the colonial governments on the agenda, which their own 'public relations departments,' or as in the case of Hong Kong the Public Relations Office, would then put into operation, working with the COID for material and other resources.[142] It is not surprising with such a top-down approach that tensions existed between the Colonial Office and colonial governments, as Leslie James has hinted. The COID operated on a much smaller scale than the IRD and its initial functions fitted into the role of providing a positive agenda. The Information Department's main functions initially were:

- To keep the public informed of the policies and actions and achievements of the government
- To assist with the machinery for community education and mass literacy campaigns
- To co-op with external bodies, including the Info department in the colonial office, in maintain a two-way flow of information between the people in the colonies and the people in the UK
- To supply information about the colony which can be used in foreign and commonwealth countries[143]

[142] This will be an important theme in this thesis. L. E. James, 'Playing the Russian Game': Black Radicalism, the Press, and Colonial Office Attempts to Control Anti-Colonialism in the Early Cold War, 1946–50, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 43/3 (2015), pp. 509-534.

[143] Circular dispatch (Colonial Office), 15 July, 1948, HKRS 160-1-23, Public Records Office (PRO), Hong Kong (HK).

Despite this early, 'positive' information agenda of the COID, it was soon forced to reconsider its position with the realisation that colonial territories would be in jeopardy of being implicated in the Cold War battle. There had already been a rise in communist movements in some British territories and continuing communist attacks on western 'colonial exploitation.'[144]

The change to a negative propaganda approach was led by the IRD; although early IRD attempts for a direct role in the Colonies were successfully rebuffed, the Foreign Office was able to exert a formal influence over the Colonial Office's positive propaganda agenda at the strategic level through the CIPC (see above). This change in propaganda approach was supported by many colonial officials as they increasingly recognised the practicality of using anti-communist material. However, tensions remained over the different agendas of the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office in the period of the early Cold War. [145] As Simon Collier has shown in his analysis of the IRD in the Middle East, the Colonial Office insisted on using IRD's negative material only 'as and when' they saw fit. Also, while the CIPD relied on the IRD for negative material, it continued to prepare its own material for 'projecting the British way of life.'[146]

The differences that existed between the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office, and their apparent agendas, are a key theme for the thesis. For example, the study of

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[144] Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda,* p. 83.

[145]James, 'Playing the Russian Game,' pp. 509-534, and: S. L. Carruthers, *Winning Hearts and Minds: British Governments, the Media and Colonial Counter-Insurgency 1944-60* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1995).

[146] S. M. W. Collier, *Countering Communist and Nasserite Propaganda: the Foreign Office Information Research Department in the Middle East and Africa, 1954-1963*, (doctoral thesis, *University of Hertfordshire Online,* 2014), *<https://uhra.herts.ac.uk/handle/2299/14327>, accessed 24.02.2017.*

Britain's anti-communist, propaganda efforts in Hong Kong will reveal how the Colony's own information office, at times, had conflicting opinions with the IRD's RIO (HK) over how best to confront the communist threat to the Colony.

British Council

The British Council, founded in 1934, is often acknowledged as Britain's principal vehicle for cultural diplomacy. The works of Taylor (1981) and Donaldson (1984) offer the most comprehensive comments on the organisation, its origins and early struggles. They have revealed how the Council, formed in response to a growing instability in the 1930s, used 'cultural diplomacy' as a 'new and alternative approach to the traditional conduct of foreign affairs…[the] dissemination of British ideals and beliefs…to enhance British influence and prestige abroad.'[147]

A comprehensive statement of the British Council's aims was drawn up:

To make the life and thought of the British peoples more widely known abroad; and to promote a mutual interchange of knowledge and ideas with other peoples. To encourage the study and use of the English language, both in foreign countries and the Crown Colonies and Dependencies; to assist overseas schools in equipping themselves for this purpose; to enable students from overseas to undertake courses of education or industrial training in the United Kingdom. To bring other peoples into closer touch with British ideals and practice in education, industry and Government; to make available to them the benefits of current British contributions to the sciences and technology; and to afford them opportunities of appreciating contemporary British work in literature, the fine arts, drama and music. To co-operate with the self-

[147] Taylor, *The Projection of Britain*. and; F. L. Donaldson, *The British Council: the First Fifty Years* (London: Jonathon Cape, 1984).

governing Dominions in strengthening the common cultural tradition of the British Commonwealth.[148]

The British Council was funded by the taxpayer, and was thus ultimately responsible to government. However it was given control over its own administration and activities.[149] In 1938 it had sufficient funds to set up its own overseas representative to supervise cultural propaganda 'on the spot.'[150] This arrangement, arguably, suited the Foreign Office who preferred disseminating propaganda discretely, disguising its official origin.[151]

More recent contributions on the British Council have come from Peter Mackridge and David Ricks, and Edward Corse.[152] They have focused on assessing the British Council's activities overseas. Using private papers and foreign archives they have looked at the 'natural' elite audience of the British Council rather than the masses,

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[148] Draft Memorandum and Articles of Association, 1934-5. BW 2/121, TNA.

[149] Initially British Council funding was supposed to have been supplemented with private capital. This didn't materialise and requests for cultural activities exceeded available resources. As a result the British Council was forced to rely heavily upon the co-operation of diplomatic representatives abroad for the conduct of any work in foreign countries, functioning as an annex of the Foreign Office News Department. It relied on the Department until 1938. Taylor, *The Projection of Britain*, and: J. M. Lee, 'British cultural diplomacy and the Cold War,' p. 177.

[150] Interestingly, its first officer was C. A. F. Dundas, sent to supervise the Middle East from an office in Cairo, and who was later to lead the Hong Kong expansion in the 1950s (see Chapter Five). Taylor, *The Projection of Britain*, p. 127.

[151] Taylor, *The Projection of Britain*, p. 128.

[152] P. Mackridge and D. Ricks (eds.), *The British Council and Anglo-Greek Literary Interactions, 1945-1955* (Routledge, 2018), and; E. Corse, *A Battle for Neutral Europe: British Cultural Propaganda during the Second World War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

and its methods of dissemination.[153] However, despite the British Council's own agenda, comments on its efforts as part of Britain's Cold War agenda are still surprisingly rare.

It is again Vaughan's assessment of British cultural diplomacy in the Middle East during the Cold War that helps to bridge this gap in the current literature. He shows that the British Council was not only active, but in seeking to bolster British influence and prestige it was considered to be the most valuable arm of British cultural diplomacy in the region. While he notes the frequent, 'glowing' reports of the British Council and cultural initiatives, he asserts that officials failed to reconcile the essential incompatibility between, on the one side, nationalist movements 'committed to the politics of anti-colonialism, anti-Zionism and non-alignment and, on the other, the Western objective of incorporating the Arab states within an anti-Soviet, 'free world' alliance.' For Vaughan, while this distinction was strikingly clear to Western leaders, it was less immediately apparent in the Arab world. The failure to comprehend this led Western propagandists to strike consistently at the wrong targets. Vaughan concludes, that while ultimately the efforts of the British Council were unsuccessful, revealing the role of the British Council during this period offers an important basis for much needed work on the Council's role in the Cold War.[154]

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[153] Corse also points to other studies conducted by overseas authors that have focused on particular countries and aspects of the British Council's work during the Second World War, such as the Spanish articles of: J. F. Berdah, 'La propaganda cultural británica en España durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial a través de la acción del "British Council," in J. T. Gomez (ed.), *El régimen de Franco, 1936-1975: política y relaciones exteriores*, 2, (1993), pp. 273-286 and: S. Llano, 'Starkie y el British Council en España: música, cultura y propaganda,' E. C. Rodicio and J. S. Pajares (eds.), *Música española entre dos guerras, 1914-1945*, (2002). Corse, *A Battle for Neutral Europe*, p. 2.

[154] Vaughan, 'A Certain Idea of Britain.'

This thesis will show that the British Council was utilised by both Foreign and Colonial Officials in combatting communism.[155] As an IPD report assessing the need to combat communism forces in China in 1948 concluded, 'The cultural activities of the British Council are an indispensable part of the (information) background…Information work is only effective if it is focussed clearly on its objectives and if it is conducted against a background of cultural endeavour by the British Council.' [156]

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

The utilisation by the government of radio broadcasting for the dissemination of propaganda during the Cold War has gained increasing attention in the last thirty years. A number of studies on this subject have shown how radio broadcasting made by far its largest contribution at this time as it offered an alternative channel for the flow of new information and ideas that importantly had the potential to reach mass audiences.[157] The part played in all of this by the British Broadcasting Corporation

[155] The first opening of the British Council's office post war being in the colonial territories. F. L. Donaldson, *The British Council: the First Fifty Years* (London: Jonathon Cape, 1984).

[156] J. Pilcher (Foreign Office), Report on visit to the Far East, 1947, FO 953/ 294, TNA.

[157] Key texts on the general use of radio in the Cold War see: A. R. Johnson and R. E. Parta (eds.), *Cold War Broadcasting: Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: a Collection of Studies and Documents*, Volume 610 of Report (National Cooperative Highway Research Program, (Central European University Press, 2010); R. H. Cummings, *Radio Free Europe's "Crusade for Freedom": Allying Americans Behind Cold War Broadcasting, 1950–1960* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010); R. E. Parta, *Discovering the Hidden Listener: An Assessment of Radio Liberty and Western Broadcasting to the USSR During the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2007); A. R. Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty: The CIA Years and Beyond* (Stanford University Press, 2010). Linda Risso, (2013), 'Radio Wars: Broadcasting in the Cold War,' *Cold War History,* 13(2), pp. 145-152; Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (London: Brasseys, 1997).

(BBC), the monopoly broadcaster for the United Kingdom, has been well covered in the existing literature.

Like the British Council, the BBC had its origins in the inter-war period. From the launch of the Empire Service in 1932, the BBC quickly became an adjunct to the British diplomatic service. 1938 saw an extension of its use with the broadcast of the speech of the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, ahead of the Munich Conference, to the peoples of Europe in a number of other languages besides English. Although, like the British Council, the Corporation was funded by the government through Grant-in-Aid, the BBC's editorial independence was enshrined in various official documents, including the BBC's Charter(s) and Licence and Agreement.[158] As a result a delicate balance of power and relationship existed between Whitehall and the Corporation during the Cold War. This relationship has been the subject of much interest, including those exploring Britain's use of Cold War propaganda.

Several authors, exploring the IRD, have shown how the political warfare experience of the BBC's External Service made it a near perfect vehicle for the spread of propaganda.[159] Not only did the BBC have a basic requirement for it to be able to broadcast in the 'national interest,' in accord with its Charter, but its broadcasts had become associated with a degree of credibility and popularity achieved through its 'truthful and objective manner' during the Second World War.[160] The close

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[158] G. Rawnsley, *Radio Diplomacy and Propaganda: The BBC and Voice of America in International Politics, 1956-1964* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996); p. 8.

[159] Jenks, *British propaganda.*; L. Schwartz, *Political Warfare Against the Kremlin: US and British Propaganda Policy at the Beginning of the Cold War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009); Andrew Defty, *Britain, America, and Anti-Communist Propaganda 1945-1953: The Information Research Department* (London: Routledge, 2004); J. Vaughan, *The Failure of American and British Propaganda in the Arab Middle East, 1945–1957: Unconquerable Minds* (London: Palgrave, 2005).

[160] J. Jenks, *British Propaganda.*

collaboration between the government and the BBC, that had been developed during the war, continued with the External Service's Director General, Sir Ian Jacob, having been invited to sit on both the Russia Committee and the CIPC. This meant he was fully apprised of the new policy, including the existence of the IRD, and thus, arguably, helped to maintain a degree of consistency on the Cold War narrative, shaping both BBC thinking and its subsequent tone of broadcast. [161] Collaboration also occurred at a working level, with regular contact between the Corporation and the IRD having been identified. [162] The IRD is shown to have kept the BBC up to date about its projects and provided 'factual material' for the use of the BBC in its overseas broadcasts, particularly to Europe. [163] While the BBC's overseas broadcasts were not comparable in tone to that adopted by their American opposite, the Voice of America (VOA), which was overtly critical of Communism and the Soviet Union, in using IRD material the BBC's broadcasts were, arguably, predisposed to give a negative portrayal of the Soviet Union. However, as Christopher Mayhew, the Under-Secretary

[161] It is worth noting that Murray, who was the Head of the IRD, was previously at the BBC. He joined in 1934 as the BBC's foreign correspondent at the League of Nations before becoming Regional Director for the Political War Executive. Thus Murray was best placed to report in 1948 that, "the BBC might be geared into the policy much more than it is at present." For further detail see: Hugh Wilford, 'The Information Research Department: Britain's Secret Cold War Weapon Revealed,' *Review of International Studies*, 24 (3), (1998), p 364.

[162] Collaboration also extended to the BBC and the intelligence services. See: L. M. Calkins, 'Patrolling the Ether: US-UK Open Source Intelligence Cooperation and the BBC's emergence as an Intelligence Agency, 1939 – 1948,' *Intelligence and National Security,* 26/1 (2011), pp. 1–22; R. Dover and M. S. Goodman, 'British intelligence and the British Broadcasting Corporation. A snapshot of a happy marriage,' in R. Dover and M. Goodman (eds.), *Spinning Intelligence. Why intelligence needs the media, why the media needs Intelligence,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 117–132.

[163] Jenks, *British Propaganda*.

of State at the Foreign Office, under Ernest Bevin, and a champion of the IRD, noted, there was always a 'freedom to it (IRD briefs) or leave it.'[164]

The consensus of opinion, among authors on this state of affairs, is that this was not simply a case of top-down relations from the IRD to the BBC. Jacob was not seen as a 'puppet' of the state, rather he had his own ideas on propaganda and on more than one occasion he faced and rebutted criticism from the Foreign Office for not doing more.[165] Following the release of Foreign Office papers in 1999, it was reported that the IRD could be seen as having repeatedly criticised the BBC's news bulletins in its Russian Service, and that the material was 'unrepresentative' of the views of Her Majesty's Government in failing to be critical of the Soviet regime and in attacking western politicians, such as US Senator Joe McCarthy. While BBC executives acknowledged that some news bulletins may have been 'open to misinterpretation,' they rejected criticism of the tone of the broadcasts, insisting that this sprang from a 'misconception of the role the broadcasts should play.' [166]

The two-way relationship between the BBC and the government, and the BBC's own anti-communist agenda, can be seen when the BBC requested that the security services vet its employees. The security services appeared reluctant to carry out such a vetting, due to a shortage of staff, work overload and the fact that any actual communist influence at the BBC was considered slight, especially by the 1950s. None-the-less they did eventually acquiesce.[167]

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[164] C. Mayhew, *A War of Words: A Cold War Witness* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998), p. 30.

[165] Wilford, 'The Information Research Department,' p. 364.

[166] R. Norton-Taylor, 'FO upset by BBC's cold war bias to Soviet Union,' Guardian, 24/09/1999, https://www.theguardian.com/media/1999/sep/24/bbc.uknews, accessed 18.7.2018.

[167] C. Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorised History of MI5* (London: Penguin, 2010), p. 396.

Scholars who have focused on the history of the BBC itself have further exposed the BBC-government relationship. Looking more broadly at the organisation, beyond the scope of the IRD's propaganda operations, key contributions have been made by authors such as: Tony Shaw in his history of the Suez crisis;[168] Gary Rawnsley in his comparative studies of the overseas broadcasting by the BBC and VOA;[169] Linda Risso in her edited collection on 'Radio Wars;'[170] and, arguably most significantly, Alban Webb in his 'London Calling,' which explores the wider context of the World Service's editorial and institutional response to the Cold War.[171] Webb's analysis is able to show how Christopher Warner, at that time in charge of the IPD, invested a great deal of energy in cementing a relationship of mutual trust between himself and Jacob. Further, Webb asserts, it was the IPD, not the IRD, which was more influential in the formative stage in reorienting the BBC's overseas services and in continuing to advise the Corporation of the Foreign Office and the Government's opinions. In contrast, the IRD was at this point 'a generator of material to be used under the rubric of anti-communist publicity rather than the architect of that policy.'[172]

The value of the BBC's contribution to the 'projection of Britain' has been recently reinforced by Hilary Footitt in her 2013 article on British propaganda in France during

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[168] T. Shaw, 'Government Manipulation of the Press during the 1956 Suez Crisis', *Contemporary Record*, 8/2 (1994), pp. 274-288.

[169] G. Rawnsley, *Radio Diplomacy and Propaganda: The BBC and Voice of America in International Politics, 1956-1964* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996).

[170] L. Risso, 'Radio Wars.'

[171] A. Webb, *London Calling: Britain, The BBC World Service and the Cold War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

[172] Webb, *London Calling.*

the early Cold War.[173] Footitt shows how in discussions, distinctions were made between the negative, anti-communist, IRD material and the positive material projected on the BBC, with information officers preferring the radio broadcasts that projected 'the British way of life' and 'virtues of western democracy.' In fact, so valued were these broadcasts that the officers sought regional radio contacts to disseminate material on the subjects. The programmes, Footitt notes, covered an eclectic mixture of topics: from aviation and atomic energy, to the marriage of Princes Elizabeth, all-in-wrestling and T.S. Eliot.[174] The political aspects of the BBC's broadcasts at this time were also evident in Italy, argues Lee, where in addition to the work of the British Council, the BBC broadcast material that reflected the broad, cultural diplomacy efforts of the British, to counter the efforts of the Italian government to undermine Britain's position in the Middle East through Radio Bari.[175]

While there is much more in existing literature on the BBC's Cold War behaviour than that of the British Council, comment so far has tended to concentrate on Europe and the Middle East, reflecting Britain's national priorities at the time. This thesis, in exploring greater China, will build on the more progressive and comprehensive literature that is available on the BBC in the Cold War, which not only looks at its

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[173] H. Footitt, 'A hideously difficult country': British propaganda to France in the early Cold War, *Cold War History*, 13/2 (2013), pp. 153-169. The same article also appears in L. Risso's, 'Radio Wars' (2017) collection, above.

[174] Although the IRD's explicitly anti-communist information material did secure regional radio time Footit's article shows how the IRD and the British Embassy in France were at loggerheads as to the effectiveness of what actually was being done. For the Embassy the IRD's anti- communist work was largely outdated, and no longer in step with a changed political situation in France, in which the Communist Party had lost a great deal of its former prestige and influence.

[175] J. M. Lee, 'British cultural diplomacy and the Cold War,' p. 177. See also R. Aldrich, 'Putting culture into the Cold War: the Cultural Relations Department (CRD) and British Covert Information Warfare,' *Intelligence and National Security*, 18/2 (2003), p. 111.

relationship with the IRD, but goes further to reveal the perceived value of the BBC to the British government in its anti-communist agenda and the complexity of their relationship.[176]

Conclusion of chapter

The end of Second World War presented an opportunity for departments to control their own propaganda agenda. However, with the start of the Cold War and a perceived Communist threat emerging, a number of committees were created, both at a political and at working level, to co-ordinate the anti-communist propaganda response of departments. The chapter has shown how the Foreign Office, largely through the IRD, dominated these propaganda conversations and the setting of agenda. Nonetheless, this chapter has crucially shed light on a plethora of other departments and organisations who also contributed to overseas, anti-communist propaganda. A number of these have so far received little scholarly attention.

Following the abandonment of the idea of the 'Third Force' during 1948, the IRD was allowed to concentrate on 'offensive' propaganda while leaving other departments, most notably the Information Policy Department (IPD) and the British Council and the BBC to 'project' a positive image of Britain and its values. Yet, despite various acknowledgments of the importance of the propaganda efforts of these organisations, by ministers and government officials, as this chapter has highlighted, there was a lack of any formal overarching co-ordination in the joining up of negative and positive propaganda work on the anti-communism agenda.

[176] For an interesting contemporary review on the BBC and Chinese audiences see: J. Tong and H. Mackay, 'Discussions on BBC Chinese Have your Say forums: national identity and international broadcasting in the interactive media era,' in M. Gillespie and A Webb (eds.), *Diasporas and diplomacy, Cosmopolitan contact zones at the BBC World Service (1932-2012)* (London, Routledge, 2013), pp. 230-247.

Work between various government organisations appears to have been split on an ad hoc nature. As this thesis will show, this environment allowed key foreign office officials to influence and shape the anti-communist propaganda approach. A key finding of the thesis is therefore that an aggregation of parts does not always lead to an efficient and effective propaganda operation.

Ultimately, in identifying and considering those organisations that were at some point and to varying degrees part of Britain's anti-communist propaganda the chapter shows that there is a clear need for a multi-agency approach. This approach allows one to study the contributions of the various organisations to produce a more comprehensive view of propaganda operations, including both positive and negative strategies, at the beginning of the Cold War.

Chapter Two. The Information Research Department and anti-communism propaganda in China

In 1948 China was engulfed in a civil war between Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists (Kuomintang, KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Following the Moscow Declaration in 1945, Britain's official stance towards China was one of non-interference. However, it recognised and provided moral support to the Kuomintang. Over the next two years the Foreign Office's position changed, culminating in the decision in January 1950 to recognise the communist People's Republic of China (PRC) as the rightful government of China. The policy change occurred as the CCP, under the leadership of Mao Zedong, gained the upper hand in the civil war. In the context of the continuing military advance by the communists, Britain, which still had vested interests in China that it wanted to protect, reconsidered where its allegiances should lie. The decision was formed against a background of uncertainty about the nature of CCP rule, a perceived limited impact on the Anglo-American relationship, and the military and financial constraints on post-war Britain.

While much has been written on British policy during the Chinese civil war and its recognition of the PRC, there has been little exploration, until now, of the role of Britain's anti-communist propaganda efforts during this same period. This chapter will focus on the aim, approach and scope of the Information Research Department's (IRD) anti-communist campaign in China. In doing so, it will ultimately show that the IRD was unable to disseminate any propaganda in China in the early Cold War, despite repeated efforts.

The chapter is split into four sections, firstly it will outline the initial challenges the IRD faced working in a country whose make-up, priorities, and views of Britain were dissimilar to those of the more familiar European audiences. The second section will show how Britain's commitment to cultivating a fruitful relationship with the communist forces in China, from the end of 1948, forced the IRD to alter its approach in China. Rather than confronting communism in general, propaganda now focused

on encouraging a Sino-Soviet split. Here criticism was to focus directly on the Soviet Union.

The third section will reveal how the Foreign Office considered external means to tackle the communist influence in China. While chapters four and five will address propaganda within Hong Kong, this section will focus on the idea of using Hong Kong as a base from which to launch propaganda targeted at the mainland, the main instrument for dissemination here being the radio. However, once again, concerns over the implication of this on Britain's relationship with Communist China will be seen to have restricted any such plan. In other words, Britain's relationship with communist China was prioritised over its commitment to the fight against communism in the global Cold War.

Finally, in helping to understand why one of the biggest hurdles initially to IRD operations came from its own overseas colleagues, the chapter will paint a turbulent and strained relationship between the IRD and the British Embassy in China. It will reveal a relationship which challenged the stereotypical interpretation in diplomacy that the Foreign Office in London acts as the 'brain' of Britain's foreign policy apparatus, with embassies acting as the nerve endings.[177] It will suggest that the tensions were a response to fundamentally different perceptions of communism, the communist threat, and the form of communism that was emerging in China in the late 1940s. These perceptions were, to some extent, the result of the different experiences of officials in the two offices in London and Nanjing. Bureaucratic ambiguities as to the definition of communism and the imagined nature of anti-communist propaganda further confused matters between the two.

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[177] G. R. Berridge, *Embassies in Armed Conflict* (London: Continuum, 2012).

Section One. The IRD's introduction to the Far East and China.

On the 23rd of January 1948 a circular was issued to all British Missions explaining the new publicity policy as defined in the in the Cabinet paper on 'Future Foreign Publicly Policy'. The circular explained that to prevent 'inroads of communism' the new broad directive was to encourage posts to advertise the principles and ways of life of Britain and other democratic countries. This was to include civil liberties and the influence of Christian and democratic values. Under the Labour government, which was keen to present Britain as a socialist society, the circular also stressed the benefits to workers of life under social democracy. These 'positive' principles and practices of the British were, crucially, to be compared to the dangers and evils of communism. Whilst energy was not to be spent reacting and responding directly to Russian propaganda, broad misrepresentations of Britain were to be corrected. Criticism was to be voiced regarding communism and its 'moral weaknesses, social injustice, poor standards of living, association with unrestrained capitalism, the loss of liberties and human rights' that were comparable to 'Hitlerite' systems.' Communism and the foreign policy of communist countries were to be presented as a hindrance to international co-operation and world peace. Russia itself was to be shown as an imperialist power. The audience was the 'broad masses of workers and peasants.' [178] The directive set the general tone for the IRD's approach to the Cold War threat and use of 'communism' as a term to refer to communist ideology and the actions of the Soviet Union.

The IRD dictate, however**,** quickly met with scepticism from a number of British officials operating in the Far East, a region which had experienced British rule, both

[178] Foreign Office (FO) Circular Telegram, No. 6, 23 January 1948, FO1110/1, The National Archives (TNA), Kew; Memorandum by Ernst Bevin (Foreign Secretary) Future Foreign Publicity Policy, 4 January 1948, CAB129/23,TNA.

directly and indirectly, over the preceding one hundred years. British rule in parts of the region had often proved to be un-democratic and restrictive. The directive, therefore, was seen to lack any real understanding of the environment that British officials in East Asia were operating in or the audiences that this material would be delivered to.[179] Thus, from the very start, IRD competence in the Far East was undermined.

Admittedly, for the IRD, as a result of the Foreign Office's determination to tackle the perceived threat of Communism associated with Soviet Russia, its principal target area was not the Far East. For the Foreign Office, the dangers that the Soviet Union posed in early 1948 were primarily in Europe, and secondly in the Middle East.[180] This priority was reflected and acknowledged in the circular, which stated that its target area was 'Europe and the Middle East'. The wording, however, that a special application of the policy 'might' be required for Far Eastern audiences indicates that the applicability of the proposed propaganda approach to the region there had been underestimated.[181]

In the months following its inception, the IRD, in line with this strategic prioritisation, continued to concentrate on Europe.[182] However, with the looming communist

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[179] Ralph Stevenson (British Ambassador to China) to Foreign Office, 12th May 1948, FO 1110/9, TNA.

[180] See Alan Bullock's biography on the Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, for an insight into the challenges facing the Foreign Office in post-war Britain. A. Bullock, *Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

[181] Circular Telegram, 23 January 1948, FO1110/1, TNA.

[182] In the early days of the IRD, special attention was devoted to European listening posts such as those in Berlin, Vienna and strategic areas such as the Middle East, France and Italy. J. Jenks, *British propaganda and news media in the Cold War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 86.

threat in the Far East, the strengthening of communist parties in Korea and China, Indian Independence and critically the escalation of events in Malaya, where British troops were now fighting a communist army and emergency measures had been bought in, it was not long before the IRD decided to expand its operations and revisit the issue of the Far East.

On the 31st July 1948 the Foreign Office, issued a special directive for propaganda in the Far East. The directive was drawn up with the approval of the Foreign Office's IRD, the Information Policy Department (IPD), Far Eastern Information Department (FEID) and the Japan and Pacific, Chinese and South East Asia policy departments. It ran along lines parallel to those laid out in the original circular. Posts were to compare British and Western principles and ways of life to those under a communist regime.[183] However, the new approach was to be mindful of the sensitivities of the Far East, with 'memories of imperialism and racial discrimination, defeats at the hands of the Japanese and nationalist [nationalism] feeling' still fresh in people's minds.[184]

As an example, Far Eastern propaganda was to stress British social justice, rather than openly criticise the defects of unrestrained capitalism. This tactic recognised that Britain, despite the fact that the new Labour government promoted itself as a socialist power, was regarded and often condemned, as a capitalist power. This was particularly relevant in the light of the communist insurgency in Malaya. If capitalism was attacked outright it would appear to be attacking British dependencies and friends in the area and therefore offering weapons to communist opponents. The

[183] Under the Japanese occupation of the Far East in the Second World War, except for 'Free China', British services had effectively been suspended in the region. However, post war there was a concerted to rebuild these services including the information sections within British Missions and consulates. John Pilcher (Foreign Office), Report on visit to the Far East, 1947, FO 953/ 294, TNA.

[184] Foreign Office (FO), Circular Telegram No. 116, Publicity Policy in the Far East, 31 July 1948, FO 1110/12, TNA.

circular concluded that by stressing British achievements in social justice, 'we remove weapons from them [i.e., the communists]'.[185]

The importance of detailing the civil liberties enjoyed under British and Western concepts of the state, in contrast with those existing under the USSR, was also repeated. However, now a greater emphasis was to be given to a comparison between these two lifestyles. It was explained that 'many countries in the Far East have not enjoyed civil liberties, as we understand them, and are not likely to be horrified by the Soviet example.' It was decided that propaganda in the Far East should stress the benefits of a positive life of the wider British colonial administration and of the Dominions, whereas, 'the central Asiatic Republics enjoy only the shadow and not the substance of free and autonomous trade.' Soviet expansion plans should therefore be feared and resisted.[186]

Linked to the potential loss of civil liberties, the directive also noted the importance of effective propaganda in exploiting the theme of growing Asian nationalist sentiment in the region. The British administration was to be painted as one that listened and responded positively to such a sentiment. Propaganda was to focus on the improvements that could be made to the lot of the masses while preserving and encouraging local institutions, customs and culture. This was to be compared with the stultifying uniformity of communism. In the wake of Indian independence in 1947 any possible threat of Asian nationalism to British interests was not to be taken lightly by the British government. As a telegram stated, 'we have chosen to ride with nationalism in that area: we should therefore be true to our own civilisation and urge others to be true to theirs.'[187] This reference is an indication of how anti-communist

[185] Publicity Policy in the Far East, 31 July 1948, FO 1110/12, TNA.

[186] Publicity Policy in the Far East, 31 July 1948, FO 1110/12, TNA.

[187] Publicity Policy in the Far East, 31 July 1948, FO 1110/12, TNA.

propaganda and the Cold War more generally often served Britain's colonial interests.

The main targets were again peasants and workers but this Far East directive recognised in particular the role of the intellectual and educated. It was thought that the 'will to resist' communism of intellectuals could only be influenced by the educated. As a result, cases of the special treatment of 'influential Asiatics' by British governments was to be stressed. To do that effectively the IRD would largely rely on print, in newspapers, articles, and leaflets.[188]

Within the audience categories, the 'youth' was also highlighted as an important target for IRD material. College students were regarded as having been responsible for much of the ideological disruption in the previous few years.[189] The circular submitted, therefore, that attention should be paid to those youth organisations that might be influenced. Religious masses were another targeted area of interest. Recognising that religion in the Far East was more diverse than in Europe, the IRD asked the posts in the region to focus on a wider array of religions. For example It was recommended that communism's godlessness needed to be emphasised to Muslims, who would be most affected by such ideas. On the other hand, communism's intolerance was to be stressed to Buddhists, since 'Its belief in the regeneration of man through the material organisation of life, instead of through an inward spiritual struggle in each individual, is likely to prove antipathetic to all

[188] While radio was of growing importance and a way to directly engage with the masses, during this period the British radio service was relatively poor, in the region, with some officials doubting the general effectiveness of radio as a means to influence - see below for more information. John Rayner (Signapore) to J. C. Rennie (Foreign Office, IRD) 22 March 1954, FO 1110/709, TNA.

[189] This disruption was noted in reference to the Chinese situation. G. Stockley (Head of the Far Eastern Information Department [FEID]), Minute, 23 October 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA.

religious bodies.' [190] Broadly speaking, religious propaganda was to be used to show how communism was an affront to all religions. [191]

This Far East directive reflected the growing concern over the region, but despite its efforts to tailor the approach the department faced a new wave of criticism from its overseas posts in the region.

The loudest voice of concern regarding the propaganda policies set out in the new Far Eastern circular came from British officials operating in China. The Ambassador in Nanjing, Sir Ralph Stevenson, had initially noted his discontent about the prospect of the propaganda initiative being delivered in China in the middle of a civil war, in which one side was communist. He warned with issues of nationalism bubbling close to the surface it could lead to criticisms of interference by the KMT but secondly it could be interpreted by Mao's forces as a direct attack on them, something he believed should be avoided. While British policy at this time was supportive of the KMT government, Stevenson had begun to advocate to the Foreign Office the benefits of pursuing relations with the communist party in China. His caution on the proposed propaganda approach reflected these views.[192] Despite these concerns having previously been voiced to the Foreign Office in May 1948, as far as the Embassy was concerned, the new Far Eastern circular failed to address these points.

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[190] Publicity Policy in the Far East, 31 July, 1948. FO 1110/12, TNA.

[191] The leverage of Asian religions as part of the Cold War is a subject scholars have recently started to address. In particular, on US efforts to win over Buddhists in Southeast Asia in the 1950s see E. Ford, *Cold War Monks*, (Newhaven CT: Yale University Press, 2017).

For broader arguments on the importance of religion in the Cold War see: D. Kirby (ed.), *Religion and the Cold War,* (London: Palgrave, 2013) and: P. E. Muehlenbeck (ed.), *Religion and the Cold War: A Global Perspective* (Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012).

[192] Stevenson to Foreign Office, 12 May 1948, FO 1110/9, TNA.

On the 14th September 1948 the Chargé d'Affaires at Nanjing, Henry Lamb, issued a lengthy dispatch to the Foreign Office, in response to the IRD's Far East circular. He outlined why the Embassy saw the Far East propaganda proposal as inappropriate and incompatible with the local conditions existing in China and more broadly Britain's relationship with KMT.[193] For example, Lamb's telegram urged against the suggested comparisons between Western and Soviet Union regimes on the lines of capitalism and social legislature. He explained that an emphasis on the benefits of socialist policies would endorse the campaign of those critics of the current regime who had long stressed the need for the implementation by the Kuomintang of Sun Yat-sen's 'Three Principles of the People'.[194] Equally, emphasis on the evils of communist rule would only reinforce similarities to current Kuomintang 'methods and political trends.' Such propaganda would therefore 'be capable of interpretation as a criticism against the present government' to whom Britain currently offered its support and recognition.[195]

The Embassy's telegram also warned of the dangers of appealing to nationalist tendencies. Experience in China had shown how nationalist feelings had so far been traditionally expressed in forms of xenophobia and an impulse to exclude all foreign influence from the country. Britain's interests were likely to be disadvantaged by any such movement. Britain was still seen as an imperialist figure, second only to that of Japan. Moreover Britain's abandonment of the region, following the fall of Singapore, had further encouraged anti-British resentment in China, now regarded

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[193] Sir Lionel Henry Lamb (Chargé d'Affaires at Nanjing) to Foreign Office, Application of the new publicity policy in China, 12 September 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA.

[194] The principles, formed by Sun Yixian (Yat-sen)'s revolutionary group in the early twentieth century, had spoken of nationalistic, socialist and democratic China. Both Chiang and Mao had asserted themselves to be the spirit of these principles. A. Wells, *The Political Thought of Sun Yat-sen, development and impact* (Switzerland AG: Springer Nature, 2016).

[195] Lamb, Application of the new publicity policy in China, 12 September 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA.

as widespread.[196] Chiang Kai-shek had himself maintained a long-held animosity towards Britain dating from his years as a revolutionary in the 1920s. [197] In comparison, the United States had come out of the war looking to many in the East as liberators. Moreover, with the end of 'unequal treaties' having been agreed between Britain and China in 1943 (meaning British businessmen would no longer enjoy the extraterritoriality they had enjoyed prior to the war), there was a legitimate concern as to how British interests would fare in China. As Lamb set out, for British officials in China, propaganda engaging in nationalist rhetoric was a risk not worth taking.[198]

In regard to the suggested target audiences, doubts were raised about the focus on both the youth and religious groups. On the subject of religion, Lamb cautioned that 'even if it were possible for the information secretariat of this embassy to steer their way carefully through the many subtle difficulties of Chinese religious concepts and primitive superstitions [sic], I doubt whether any useful practicable results would be achieved by this means.' With regard to the 'youth', Lamb explained that youth groups which originated under the patronage of the government had tended to be fascist, showing intolerant and violent tendencies, and as a result, 'a great and increasing number of students in all the universities have come to regard the communists as the only hope for China.' For Lamb, it was clear that youth

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[196] K. Blackburn and K. Hack, *War Memory and the Making of Modern Malaysia and Singapore* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012).

[197] Years of British interference and domination in China did not fit Chiang Kai-Shek's staunch anti-imperialistic and nationalist rhetoric, which meant that Britain was not to be viewed as a treasured ally by the KMT. Chiang later went on to blame Britain, in part, for the Truman administration's waning support for the KMT. For further discussion see: J. Taylor, *The Generalissimo. Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 190.

[198] Lamb, Application of the new publicity policy in China, 12 September 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA.

organisations, which were associated with xenophobic characteristics and the current government, should not be used as a tool of influence.[199]

Arguably, to pre-empt future pressure from London, Lamb's telegram underlined why any anti-communist initiatives proposed by the IRD, irrespective of topic, would be a clear mistake. Lamb explained that the National Government of the Republic of China, itself, had been studiously careful to abstain from provocative comments about the USSR. Kuomintang propaganda was seen as avoiding making any connection between Mao's movement and ideas of Soviet inspiration and the direction of communism. Rather Lamb asserted the KMT had taken pains to describe the Chinese communists of the current civil war as 'traitors' and 'bandits.' In his telegram Lamb concluded that any British anti-communist propaganda would need to be 'under considerable handicap and restraint' to avoid Kuomintang offence. The telegram reflects an escalation in the Embassy's concern and push-back against the IRD's proposed anti-communist agenda in China. [200]

There was an element of sympathy within the Foreign Office for the 'undoubtedly very delicate' situation that the Embassy in Nanjing was faced with and a general agreement with the need to 'avoid a head-on attack on the Chinese Communists.'[201] However, officials in London, in both the China Department and Far Eastern Information Department (FEID), regarded Lamb's comments as uninformed and were quick to point out what they saw as flaws in his reasoning.

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[199] Lamb, Application of the new publicity policy in China, 12 September 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA.

[200] Lamb, Application of the new publicity policy in China, 12 September 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA.

[201] J. P. Cloake (Foreign Office), Minute, 8 November 48 FO 1110/121; R. S. Stockley (FEID, Foreign Office) Minute, 23 October 1948 FO 1110/121, TNA.

For example, P. D. Coates, a prominent figure in the Foreign Office's China Department and later the Far Eastern Department, questioned whether the dangers of nationalism in China meant that a 'nationalist' appeal could not be used in practice. Despite agreeing that Chinese xenophobia was innate and dangerous, Coates argued that it had always seemed to be useful in one respect, namely that many middle-of-the-road educated Chinese preferred the Kuomintang to the communists precisely because the former, even with all its faults, was a genuinely Chinese manifestation and that Chinese communists were seen by many as "running dogs" of a foreign (i.e., Russian) imperialism. Thus, for the Foreign Office's policy team in Whitehall, it was considered beneficial to encourage the milder form of xenophobia, if it was likely to assist in preserving 'us' from the more virulent form. [202]

Furthermore, the suggestion that comparisons between British and Soviet Union policies were unsuitable because of the 'tendency towards authoritarianism' under the KMT was roundly condemned. Coates noted how other countries which were not ruled by democratic government (e.g., Portugal) nevertheless managed to put forward criticisms of the communist way of life. The importance of approaching Chinese students who increasingly 'dance under the Communist tune' was re-emphasised.[203] Arthur L. Scott, also from the Chinese department, poured scorn on the idea that just because youth organisations 'support the government and vie with their rivals in acts of violence and intolerance should not, in my view, deter (us) from trying to influence the students and their teachers as a whole within the limits of our ability'.[204]

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[202] P.D. Coates (China Department, Foreign Office), Minute, 8 October 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA.

[203] Coates, Minute, 8 October 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA.

[204] Arthur Scott (China Department), Minute, 28 October 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA.

Reproach was in particular directed at Lamb's conclusion that no negative lines on Soviet Communism could be issued in China. This showed a marked difference from earlier conversations with Stevenson in which, while he had warned the IRD against the unsuitability of making a specific target of the Chinese communists, he had agreed that it was possible 'to assail Communism' in some way.[205] Lamb's comments were met with both criticism and confusion by those at the Foreign Office, with Stockley, the Head of the FEID, struggling to believe that this was really 'his [Lamb's] intention.'[206] Both Scott and Coates pointed to flaws in Lamb's argument, questioning whether the KMT would really be against propaganda which would illuminate the dangers of communist regimes elsewhere. In particular, Coates notes an article in the *Times* (27th October 1948), which reported an interview with Dr Wang Shih–chieh, Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, where Wang argued that there were comparisons 'not only between communist risings in the east but between these and strike movements in Europe, all of which… was no accident but amounted to a general offensive'.[207]

Although there was a measure of consensus with Lamb's explanation of the difficulties of a religious approach in China, it was clear from discussions within the Foreign Office that it was not prepared to yield to the Embassy's proposition; to block any negative anti- communist propaganda in China. For those in the China and the FEID, the reasons given by Lamb for not engaging in anti-communist propaganda were either at best 'out of date' or more critically, 'superficial.' The latter opinion was put forward by Christopher Warner, the Assistant Under-Secretary of State, and responsible for Foreign Office information services, when it was bought to his attention. Warner was doubtful as to the validity of the justifications being put

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[205] Stevenson to Foreign Office, 12th May 1948, FO 1110/9, TNA.

[206] R. S. Stockley, Minute, 23 October 1948 FO 1110/121, TNA.

[207] A. Scott, Minute, 28 October 1948, FO 1110/121; Coates, Minute, 8 October 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA.

forward. [208] This was perhaps not surprising given the fact Stevenson was lobbying the Foreign Office at the time for a new approach to China, a relationship with the CCP, and as noted above had previously expressed concern that anti-communist propaganda would only serve to damage any such a relationship. Yet Lamb's telegram surprisingly made no reference to a communist relationship, only arguing as to the unsuitability of anti-communist propaganda.

Nonetheless, Warner agreed that any response from the Foreign Office to the post should await the considerations of the forthcoming Singapore conference. The Bukit Serene conference was to bring together representatives of His Majesty's Government and of colonial governments in the Far East and South East Asia to consider and exchange information on the changing landscape in the region and the emerging threat of communism. However, by the time the record of the conference had reached the Foreign Office, in March 1949, Britain's foreign policy towards China had changed and with it the propaganda requirements[209]

What is apparent is that the Embassy, whilst never admitting to an outright refusal to follow orders from London, was able to effectively challenge the orders of the Foreign Office and thus put a halt to the implementation of the propaganda directive from the IRD in China. As a result of these ongoing conversations, no negative anti-communist propaganda was issued in China during the year 1948. The biggest challenge for the IRD in the implementation of its new Far East anti-communist propaganda campaign was from their overseas colleagues in the British Embassy in

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[208] Coates, Minute, 8 October 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA; Christopher Warner, Minute, 22 November 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA.

[209] While the conference at Bukit Serene, Singapore took place on the 18th and 19th November 1948, they were not received by the Foreign Office until March 1949, the delay being due to 'pressure in work.' Commissioner General Office (Singapore) to Foreign Office, Minutes of Meeting, 5 March, 1949, FCO 141/15625, TNA; Warner, Minute, 22 November 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA.

China. Fortunately for the Embassy, the Foreign Office's changing position towards Communist China, meant that a new propaganda approach was to be proposed, one that addressed concerns about offending the CCP.

Section Two. The Foreign Office's new China policy.

Throughout 1948 and in the early parts of 1949 China's civil war escalated. Mao's forces were gaining ground and by the middle of 1948 all of northern China, except for the Beijing/Tianjin corridor and some areas in Manchuria, had fallen under communist control. Chiang Kai-shek's failure to reform or lead his regime effectively meant that the Foreign Office considered the days of the central government in its present form to be numbered, 'notwithstanding a massive injection of American aid.'[210] It was against this background that the Foreign Office began to reconsider its approach to communism in China.

In December 1948, the Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin put the China situation before Cabinet for the first time. The memorandum outlined how communist domination of China was now only a matter of time and that Britain must look to protect its trade and commercial interests.[211] The Cabinet agreed to a new China policy that looked,

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[210] America's commitment to and patience for Kai-shek appeared to be diminishing. The failure of the Marshall Mission to China in 1947 had increased divisions within the Truman government and by the end of 1948 it seemed unlikely that the administration would attempt to seek the level of funds and American involvement necessary to defeat the communist forces. The US reluctance to become more involved in China had become clearer when the US declined Ching Kai-shek's request for foreign powers to mediate between the warring Nationalists and Communists. R. E. Watson, *The Foreign Office and policy-making in China, 1945-1950: Anglo-American relations and the recognition of Communist China.* PhD thesis (unpublished), University of Leeds, (1996), pp.126-7; D. C. Wolf, '"To Secure a Convenience": Britain Recognizes China – 1950', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18/2 (1983), p. 305.

[211] Memorandum on the recent development in the civil war in China, No. 51, 9 December 1948, CAB 129/31, in Documents of British Policy Overseas [DBPO], Series I, Volume VIII, p. 185.

as Lu Yan has aptly summarised, to 'accommodate not confront' the emerging communist power.[212] The agreement marked a significant change in Britain's foreign policy. The path towards an ultimate recognition of the CCP, although by no means a foregone conclusion, was set. Significantly, for the IRD, it signalled a need to tailor its approach to one that was mindful of avoiding lines that would risk offending the Chinese communists with whom Britain now sought a positive and meaningful relationship.

The Joint Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Orme Sargent, first alluded to this new approach in November 1948**.** Noting a preliminary study on the implications of the developing situation in China, Sargent made the point that if Mao was to win a complete victory then 'achieving ultimately a partial or complete detachment of communist China from Moscow's hegemony' would be a key task for British propaganda.[213] The premise being that restricting the Soviet influence would undermine communist ideology and make the CCP more amenable to Western influence.

The strength of the relationship between the two communist actors had become an increasing source of debate within the Foreign Office as talks took place on the future of British interests under communist rule in China. Before the conclusion of World War Two, people in Britain (except for a small number of Left-wing intellectuals) had little knowledge of the Chinese communists. This situation stemmed partly from the inaccessibility of the CCP in North China and partly from the blockade launched by

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[212] L. Yan, 'Limits to Propaganda: Hong Kong leftish Media in the Cold War and beyond', in Z. Yangwen, H. Liu and M. Szonyi (eds.), *The Cold War in Asia: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (Leiden: Koninkliijke Brill, 2004), p. 98.

[213] 16th November 1948. Personal, Orme Sargent. FO 1110/121. TNA.

the Chiang Kai-shek government.[214] Knowledge of the CCP only changed during the last years of the Second World War, when foreign correspondents reached the area. While Foreign Office officials were rarely seen to endorse suggestions that Mao and his followers were agrarian reformers, there appeared to be a sympathetic attitude towards them, in line with a general pro-Left sentiment in Britain at the time.[215]

As the lines of the Cold War became more apparent, opinions changed. There were now questions as to whether the CCP were in fact 'true' communists and about the Party's relationship with Moscow, or more precisely the relationship between Mao and Stalin. As the Second World War drew to a close in China, the Kuomintang and CCP prepared to renew their attacks against each other. However, despite protests from Mao, the CCP were instructed by Stalin to start negotiations rather than recommence the civil war. Relations improved after the summer of 1946, as failures in negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek meant that Stalin now offered support for the CCP fight against the KMT forces. As Arne Westad has since noted, Soviet aid from 1946-1949 to the CCP was substantial and helped solidify an alliance with the CCP, dispelling earlier animosity between the two.[216]

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[214] Q. Zhai, *The Dragon, the Lion, and the Eagle: Chinese-British-American Relations, 1949—1958*, (London: The Kent State University Press, 1994), p. 30.

[215] Zhai, *The Dragon, the Lion, and the Eagle: Chinese-British-American Relations, 1949—1958,* p 30; B. Porter, *Britain and the Rise of Communist China. A Study of British Attitudes 1945-54* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 2.

[216] The type of relationship between the Soviet Union and CCP, its origin, formation and influence is a huge area of debate. The key text is by: O. A., Westad (ed), *Brothers in Arms: The rise and fall of the Sino-soviet alliance, 1945-1963*, (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998). For an extended discussion see: J. Chen, *Mao, China and the Cold War*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); J. Garver, *Chinese-soviet relations, 1937-1945: The diplomacy of Chinese nationalism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); M. M. *Sheng, Battling Western imperialism: Mao Stalin And The United States*, (Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1997); G.

Yet the visibility of the Soviet Union's support to China was minimised to the outside world. Stalin had staunchly refused to meet Mao, turning down a number of requests during 1948 and into 1949. The British Embassy in Nanjing repeatedly raised doubts with the Foreign Office about the strength of the relationship between the two communist powers. They asserted the two communist regimes were mutually incompatible in the long term. Indeed at the beginning of 1948, Stevenson had argued that Mao's New Year message offered proof that his party was 'diluting the pure milk of Communist doctrine' as it supposedly advocated conciliation towards the rich peasants and small businessmen.[217] Doubts were also raised by the Ambassador as to whether peasants would overcome a desire to own their land and if individual instincts for private enterprises could be suppressed, such as an orthodox communism regime would dictate.[218] Nor did China's inherent nationalistic and xenophobic character seem to accord with Soviet expansionist tendencies.[219] Such arguments gained particular support from those on the 'Left' of British politics, who viewed the KMT regime as 'tyrannical, inefficient and thoroughly corrupt', while Mao's forces were seen as having earned the right to represent a new 'democratic' China. [220] The Tito-Stalin split in June 1948 only furthered the belief that the CCP could be independent of Soviet Russia.

H. Chang, *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China and the Soviet Union*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

[217] S. R. Ashton, 'Keeping a Foot in the Door: Britain's China Policy 1945-50,' *Diplomacy and Statecraft,* 15/1 (2004), p. 81.

[218] Watson, 'The Foreign Office and policy-making,'

[219] Watson, 'The Foreign Office and policy-making,' pp. 137-138.

[220] This statement was put forward by the Labour MP Major Wilfred Vernon in 1948, as he contrasted the two regimes to parliament. He was one among many in the Left to speak of China in such a way. For further discussion on the feelings of the Left towards communism post war

However those in the Foreign Office seemed more doubtful. For some officials the appearance of poor relations between Soviet and Chinese communists was, in fact, a propaganda trick initiated by Russia to fool the West, and asserted, therefore, that a relationship between the two should be assumed. [221]

Sargent summarised the cautious feeling within the Foreign Office at the end of 1948:

> ...it would be…dangerous to harbour any more comfortable theory than that the communist China leadership, which is fully indoctrinated by Moscow, will be fundamentally and unremittingly hostile to the 'imperialist' powers and will endeavour to bend China (and also the overseas Chinese) to the Kremlin's doctrinally-inspired design of overthrowing these powers and of territorial expansion of communist rule.[222]

While the debate on the strength of the Sino-Soviet relationship continued, it was agreed that there was no harm in pursuing a strategy that would worsen relations between communist China and the main threat in the Cold War, the Soviet superpower.[223]

It was the Director of the IRD, Ralph Murray, who took on the task of devising a new propaganda initiative based on this proposed Sino-Soviet line. Murray, who had previously been head of the FEID and therefore had knowledge of the region, voiced

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see: T. Buchanan, *East Wind: China and the British Left, 1925-1976* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 106-107.

[221] Odd Arne Westad, 'Losses, Chances, and Myths: The United States and the Creation of the Sino–Soviet Alliance, 1945–1950', *Diplomatic History*, 21/1 (1997) p. 110.

[222] Orne Sargent, Minute, 16 November 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA.

[223] Discussion continued within the Foreign Office on the Soviet- Sino relationship. C.F.A Warner to Sir W. Strang No.55, 13 January 1949, DBPO, p. 194.

concern and frustration about the complete inactivity in this field so far as a result of the Embassy's protestations. He asserted that the issues at stake were too great to allow further inactivity on this topic. Reflective of the approach for British propaganda in China, Murray proposed that IRD material should focus on Soviet encroachments in China. [224] Murray suggested that attention could be drawn to Northern China: the Russian penetration of Xinjiang; the tightening of the Russian grip on Inner Mongolia; and, the intention of Russia to 'divide and rule' in Manchuria. In the same minute, Murray also proposed two other associated themes, that of Chinese communist subservience to Moscow, and the threat to Islam in China from communist opposition.

It is worth noting here the connection between Soviet encroachments and Islam. The UK and Russia, later the USSR, had been vying for control of Xinjiang, from the 19th century right through until Wold War Two. For Britain it offered a vantage point from which to observe developments across the Soviet border but also a checkpoint to stop Russian and later Soviet expansion. [225] The region also contained significant Muslim communities that had, during World War Two and the Chinese civil war, demonstrated a tendency to side against any central Chinese government. Such a tendency would be threatened by Soviet advances into the region.[226] Propaganda on these lines therefore offered a way to undermine the ideological threat of

[224] Murray, Minute,10 March 1949, FO 1110/194, TNA.

[225] M. B. Share, 'The Great Game Revisited: Three Empires Collide in Chinese Turkestan (Xinjiang)', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 67/7 (2015), pp. 1102-1129.

[226] Muslims in the Western XingJiang were keen to create an independent Muslim state, to be known as the East Turkestan Republic; as such they were prepared to rebel against the authority of the central Chinese government. For further details see: L. Benson, *The Ili Rebellion: Muslim Challenge to Chinese Authority in Xingjiang, 1944-49* (London: Routledge, 1989).

communism through encouraging a Sino-Soviet split, but one that also addressed the tangible strategic concern over Soviet expansionism.

Questions, however, were raised internally in the Foreign Office as to how this approach would be received by their overseas colleagues, who had so far prevented the dissemination of IRD material in China. In discussions in Whitehall it was thought that the Embassy, which had been vocal in its doubt as to the ideological nature of the CCP, would in fact welcome the new propaganda focus.[227] In terms of Murray's proposal, it was therefore agreed that propaganda that highlighted Russian encroachments into China, which, whilst 'unexceptionable,' would appeal to Chinese patriotism and xenophobia, and crucially would meet with the agreement of the Ambassador.[228] However, doubts were raised by officials as to the likely reception from the Embassy on Murray's other two lines of propaganda, that of subservience and religion.

For Murray, stressing the subservience of Mao to the Kremlin might either hasten the disillusionment of other communists or else help to bring about the adoption by Mao of a deliberate policy of deviation. Either of these developments could then be exploited profitably. However, Stevenson had continued to voice his staunch rejection of any direct criticism of the Chinese communist regime in propaganda. Stevenson asserted that such propaganda would put the British business interests and its community, now mainly missionaries and business men, in China at risk.[229]

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[227] A letter from the Embassy at the start of 1949 revealed they had reverted back to the original position, in May 1948, that as long as criticism focused on Soviet communism proper there was scope for anti-communist propaganda. Stevenson to Foreign Office, 17 January 1949, FO 1110/194, TNA.

[228][228] Coates, 16 March 1949, FO 1110/194, TNA.

[229] For an insight into the relationship between British business and the CCP before and after coming under communist control refer to: J. Howlett, The British boss is gone and will never

The Ambassador also explained his belief to the Foreign Office that any attempt to discredit Mao, before there was disillusionment with him from among the Chinese people and before there was evidence of how Mao intended to govern, would be a tactical mistake. For Stevenson those who were not communist but supported the Chinese communists as a party against the KMT 'might become so injudicious or over aggressive as the result of propaganda on our part.'[230]

While Murray argued that Stevenson was 'controversial' in his position, others in the Foreign Office recognised that the Ambassador's caution was in line with the new 'foot-in-the-door' approach being put forward by the Cabinet. Noting that the benefits of 'a cautious sowing of the seeds of Titoism' were apparent, Cloake warned against discrediting the Chinese communist leaders themselves. He argued that this could be dangerous if, as a result, there was any likelihood of more direct Kremlin control, 'I feel that the encouragement of Titoism and the discrediting of Mao should be alternative rather that complementary aims'. This did not mean, as Coates later added, it would prevent the Foreign Office from adopting such a line at a later date, nor should it prevent them from continuing our confidential indoctrination of other governments. This was an important point for those operating in the Far East and Southeast Asia, where anxiety over the perceived threat from communism in China was growing.[231]

Although, as noted above, the Embassy had been against the subject of religion in propaganda, it was agreed in the Foreign Office, that Stevenson would most likely accept propaganda on the communist treatment of Islam as a form of compromise.

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return': Communist takeovers of British companies in Shanghai (1949–1954), *Modern-Asian-Studies,* 47/6 (2013), pp. 1941-1976.

[230] Stevenson to Foreign Office, 17 January 1949; Stevenson to Foreign Office, 11 February 1949, FO 1110/194, TNA.

[231] J. P. Cloake, Minute, 26 February 1949; Coates, Minute, 16 March 1949, FO 1110/194, TNA.

It was stipulated however that the IRD must adhere to the Ambassador's wishes that propaganda should not overtly attack the Chinese communists by name. Hence, material that was to be issued would focus only on the Soviet treatment of Islam. This would allow Chinese Muslims themselves to draw the conclusion that they would not be treated any better and might well be worse off under a communist regime.[232]

After sixteen months of debate an agreement was reached with compromises on both sides. Murray agreed on the 5th April, followed by Stevenson on the 23rd of April 1949.[233] Anti-communist propaganda was to be issued in China on two themes: the first being Soviet encroachments in China and the second being Soviet Russia's treatment of Muslims. Compromises had been agreed by both sides from their earlier positions. The IRD agreed that no propaganda that the Embassy deemed as antagonistic to the CCP, Nationalist or more broadly at odds with the Chinese environment and history would be issued; on the other hand the Embassy agreed that anti-communist propaganda specifically referring to the Soviet Union could be issued.

However, this agreement between the Embassy and Whitehall came too late in the day. As Mao's forces advanced Britain's consular and information offices, in areas still under KMT control, were met with restrictions and censorship. After the capture of Guangzhou by communist forces in September 1949, all British information services were ordered to close down. The result was that any real chance to deliver effective anti-communist propaganda messages in China rapidly reduced (see chapter three for further details).

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[232] Murray, Minute, 10 March 1949, FO 1110/194, TNA; Coates, 16 March 1949, FO 1110/194, TNA.

[233] Murray, Minute, 5 April 1949; Stevenson to Foreign Office 23 April 1949, FO 1110/194, TNA.

Discussions on British anti-communist propaganda in China did continue. A memorandum by the overseas planning section to the Official Committee on Communism, in August 1950, confirmed that propaganda was to focus on ways to 'loosen the ties between China and Russia' while avoiding as far as possible 'saying or doing anything likely to increase Chinese hostility towards us and to drive China further into Russian arms.' Reflective of worries over the ambitions of the emerging new, Chinese communist state the memorandum also noted the need for propaganda 'to deter the Chinese government from embarking on adventures outside its frontiers.' [234] But how the latter was to be achieved was not made clear. It was unlikely that any criticism of Chinese communism would have been accepted by the Embassy and the policy teams in the Foreign Office. Despite failed attempts to establish diplomatic relations, and worsening relations with the PRC with the start of Korean War in July 1950, the government continued its pursuit, if now more passively, of a fruitful relationship with the communists.[235]

Section Three. Propaganda from Hong Kong

Besides relying on British information services within China in the fight against communism, the IRD also looked to Colonial Hong Kong. On China's doorstop, the colony offered a base from which to infiltrate China with anti-communist propaganda.

Radio Hong Kong, established under British rule in 1928, and funded by Hong Kong colonial government was the most obvious means to do just that. The broadcaster,

[234] Memorandum by Overseas Planning Section, Official Committee of Communism, 'Anti-communist measures in the Far East', 15 August 1950, CAB 134/4, TNA.

[235] See Mark's recent publication on the day-to day relationship that existed and became normalised between Britain and China, after Britain's recognition in January 1950. C. Mark, *The Everyday Cold War: Britain and China, 1950-1972* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

under the responsibility of the Post Master General (PMG), Hong Kong, produced material for both English and Chinese listeners and relayed BBC's Far Eastern Service.

In November 1948, at the Commissioner-General's conference with the Heads of Missions and Governors, the Foreign Office submitted suggestions to increase Hong Kong's broadcasting reach into China. The quickest and simplest way to get an effective radio signal to China was thought to be by converting mediumwave transmitters to shortwave and then use shortwave transmissions. Seven and half kilowatt transmitters belonging to the Foreign Office in Singapore could be transferred to Hong Kong. If favourably sited in Hong Kong the radio waves were thought to be capable of reaching Guangzhou. [236]

Crucially this range was thought to be not too high that it could lead to accusations that Britain was trying to interfere in China's civil war. The installation could be justified as an attempt to make local services more effective within the Colony itself. The need to disguise Britain's intention was an important consideration not only for political reasons connected with China, but also due to an international agreement. The agreement, to which the UK was party, prescribed that the power of a mediumwave service shall not be greater than is necessary to give the country concerned a reasonably effective domestic service.[237]

The potential for Radio Hong Kong to improve and influence was not a matter missed by Foreign Office officials, nor by backbenchers themselves in the face of communist victories through 1948-1949. Questions on the issue were put forward in the Commons on a number of occasions. For example, in February 1949, Leonard Gammans, Conservative MP for Hornsey, and Sir Walter Fletcher, Conservative MP

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[236] Broadcasting from Hong Kong to China, Foreign Office paper, 1949 [author unknown], CO537/5132, TNA.

[237] Extract from Post Master General's Annual report, for year ended 31 March 1950, CO 537/7540, TNA.

for Bury, questioned both the effective content and strength of Radio Hong Kong in regards to influencing China. The Colonial Office's response underscored that while there was no commitment to the Radio broadcaster being used in this manner, it was under consideration and that discussions were taking place with the Governor of Hong Kong. Arthur Creech Jones, Secretary of State for the Colonies, stated that the 'possibility of an increase in power, which would improve the service to all parts of the Colony, was now being examined'.[238]

Months later, however, the Colonial Office's response to questions raised in the House of Commons showed that there was an unwillingness to discuss the possibility of Radio Hong Kong broadcasting to China. For example David Rees-Williams, the Under-Secretary of State, stated that it was not the responsibility of Radio Hong Kong to extend its range to China.[239] The following day, in a debate on Government Policy on China, Harold Macmillan, MP for Bromley, again raised the issue with Prime Minister Clement Attlee, stating:

Do not let us forget the importance of the radio for propaganda as a weapon in the defence of Hong Kong. Let the Chinese people know the truth, both on the mainland and in Hong Kong itself, because we must beware of a fifth column, of which there is a real danger.

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[238] House of Commons Debate (HC Deb), Hong Kong Broadcasting Station, (16 February 1949), Vol, 461, cc1115-6.

[239] HC Deb, Radio Station, (04 May 1949), vol, 464, cc1002-3.

Attlee's response offered little in terms of a committal and instead brought the attention of the House back to the issue of the Amethyst incident.[240] Comparisons between the Colonial Office responses in the House of Commons indicate that as time progressed there was a reluctance to publicly discuss the prospect of any radio broadcasts being directed inside China.

The change in response was reflective of behind-the-scenes discussions. The colonial authorities had now asserted that radio could not cover the area desired if transmitters were erected on the existing site. The creation of a new site for the transmitters robbed the project of its principal virtues, namely that of speed and economy, and hence it could not be justified in terms of the relatively small increase of coverage that would be obtained. In response, the Foreign Office put forward the idea of establishing a more powerful medium wave transmitter of fifty kilowatts that could cover a radius of several hundred miles into China. This would supplement the current shortwave transmissions from Singapore. This powerful transmitter would take time to install, need ministerial approval and importantly could not be disguised as improvements for the domestic service only. These problems brought back to the surface concerns on negative propaganda and the relations with Communist China.[241]

The issue came to a head on the 7th July 1949 at a meeting of the Colonial Information Policy Committee. Here it was reported that Bevin,

> ...was very doubtful whether, in view of the trend of events in China this was at all the right tone to adopt. [He thought] Our publicity line should surely be guided by and fit in with the public statements made by Ministers regarding

[240] HC Deb, CHINA (BRITISH POLICY), (05 May 1949), vol, 464, cc1224-349.

[241] Broadcasting from Hong Kong to China, Foreign Office paper, 1949 [author unknown], CO537/5132, TNA.

> our desire to maintain friendly relations with China, and to reach amicable arrangements with whatever authority might emerge in that country.

An early ministerial submission to Bevin and the Secretary of State for Colonies was urged.[242] The Colonial Office officials, equally concerned about the state of relations with a communist China, fearing for the fate of Hong Kong, were happy to support Bevin's change of mind (see chapter four for more on colonial concern). The Colonial Office agreed that it was a Foreign Office matter and that the present radio station adequately served the population of Hong Kong itself.[243] By October the matter of using Hong Kong Radio to directly broadcast into China had been ruled out, and that 'to all intents and purposes the local station will have only a local coverage'.[244]

The outbreak of the Korean War led to renewed calls from Ministers to utilise Radio Hong Kong. Sir Walter Fletcher urged for a greater expenditure on the Hong Kong station, to encourage those in China to fight communist aggression.[245] However, by then the Foreign Office appeared to have resigned itself to relying on the use of the BBC's Far Eastern Service to broadcast to China (see chapter three).[246]

Beside radio, the Foreign Office also considered other ways that Hong Kong could be used as a base to target mainland China. The IRD, in its agreement to commission a Regional Information Office in Hong Kong in August 1948, made it clear that its approval was based on two points: that any work performed in Hong Kong must

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[242] R. Watson to Paskin, 6 July 1949, CO537/5132, TNA.

[243] D. R. Rees-Williams to Foreign Office, 7 July 1949, CO537/5132, TNA.

[244] W.S. Morgan (Colonial Office) Minute, 21 November 1949, CO537/5132, TNA.

[245] HC. Deb, Korea, (05 July 1950), vol 477, cc485-596.

[246] BBC or see Fletcher's estimate. CHINA (BRITISH POLICY). HC Deb, (05 May 1949), vol 464, cc1224-1349.

produce an effect in some degree in South East Asia generally; and that any work performed in Hong Kong must have some effect in China.[247]

Practical concerns were, however, voiced in terms of what could be realistically achieved. For example, Stevenson explained to the Foreign Office that they would be unable to disseminate material in the Chinese press in China where official control of political expression and direction of the press was even stricter under the communists than it had been under the Kuomintang.[248] Rather than a direct assault, London appeared to accept a 'grapevine' approach; that is material distributed by the RIO (HK) would be given currency in the colony and eventually be disseminated across the border into China itself.[249] However, the application of this trickle-down approach can be questioned. As will be discussed in chapter four, by the summer of 1950 the activities of the Regional Information Office had changed from creation and dissemination of propaganda to monitoring and collection of information regarding mainland China. By the end of 1950, the utilisation of Hong Kong as a base from which to launch British propaganda into China appears to have been negligible.

Section Four. Policy development and internal confusion

While the chapter so far has demonstrated how the British Embassy opposed the IRD's publicly policy, this section will focus on understanding the reason for this opposition and why their opinions diverged so drastically with policy officials in

[247] Foreign Office to Commissioner General's Office (Singapore) 16 August 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

[248] Stevenson to Foreign Office, 2nd August 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

[249] Foreign Office to Commissioner General's Office (Singapore) 16 August 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA;

CAB 134/4, 'Anti-communist measures in the Far East', Memorandum by Overseas Planning Section. Official Committee of Communism. 15/08/1950.

Whitehall. The findings will provide a comprehensive picture of the hurdles that the use of negative propaganda faced in attempting to operate in 'greater China.'

Throughout this chapter, British overseas officials in China are shown to have cautioned against a policy of using negative propaganda as it would have jeopardised any meaningful relationship with the CCP. They were doubtful that communist China would truly follow a communist ideology and its relationship with the Soviet Union would only be short-term. There was also a belief that daily Chinese life and British interests would be better served under the communists than the KMT. Indeed, Stevenson in a telegram to the Commissioner General for South East Asia on 21st December 1949 summarised that:

...many of the Chinese Communist present adherents are not themselves communists, having merely chosen to support the Party against the Kuomintang as the lesser of two evils… This section of the Chinese people, which probably represents a large percentage, is more likely to be weaned from sympathy for the Moscow type of communist practices by an appeal to self-interest rather than by dogmatic arguments or ideological appeals.[250]

This opinion was a cause of concern to the Foreign Office, who was much more cautious of what life under the communists would mean. As Wolf highlights in his article on Britain's recognition of China, in early 1948 officials in Whitehall vocalised their unease that 'the Embassy are so obsessed with the defects of Kuomintang that they feel any change, even communist, is for the better'.[251]

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[250] Stevenson to Commissioner General for South East Asia, 21 December 1949, FO 1110/194, TNA.

[251] D. C. Wolf, '"To Secure a Convenience": Britain Recognizes China – 1950', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18 /20 (1983), p. 303.

Coates, in a response to Lamb's telegram of October 1948 which outlined his reasons against anti-communist propaganda, urged that there was a need to remind the British Embassy:

> ...that in Kuomintang China the educated classes can indulge in a certain amount of spoken and written criticism of government, without being liquidated; can meet foreigners without being executed as spies; and are free to live and work as they like. They can think what they please, send their children to whatever schools they approve of, profess any religion; and they are not told what music is bourgeois and decadent and what is not… [252]

In exploring these divergent positions on communist China, it is important to acknowledge the impact of experience on the individual actors, such as the 'Old China hands' Lamb and R. F. J. Harris, the First Secretary (information) in Shanghai. Both had seen at first-hand the hardships suffered by the Chinese people in the bitter civil war and KMT corruption, incompetence, and authoritarianism. It is perhaps not surprising that their perception of life under the communists was that it could only be better.[253]

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[252] Coates, Minute, 8 October 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA.

[253] The term 'Old China hands' is used to refer to British diplomatic officials known for their in-depth knowledge and experience in China, from the 1920s throughout the Second World War.

Lamb for example had been appointed to China as a student interpreter in the consular service in 1921. He remained in China for the next twenty years serving in a number of positions whilst rising up through the ranks. Eventually, Lamb was promoted to Foreign Service Officer and *Charge d'Affaires* in 1947. Lamb's private papers give an interesting insight into life as China turned towards Communism from a British official. *News reports, bulletins and Chinese press items from Nanking,* MS 380730/02/19 ; *Chinese Communist government* MS 380730, Papers of Sir Lionel Henry Lamb, 1873-1988, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Archives, University of London.

Although Stevenson had arrived in China much later than his colleagues, following his appointment as Ambassador in Nanjing in June 1946, he too had seen the extension of power and abuse of authority by the KMT. Moreover, Stevenson's own previous Ambassadorial experience in Yugoslavia is likely to have further dispositioned him to form doubts over the Sino-Soviet relationship and the future of communist China.[254]

Prior to Nanjing, Stevenson served as the British ambassador to the Yugoslavian government, being based in Cairo during the war before moving to Belgrade in 1945. Here, Stevenson had dealt with Josip Tito, as the Yugoslav leader, whose distrust of and disillusionment with his Soviet allies became increasingly apparent. It is possible to assert therefore that Stevenson's experience with this communist country led the Foreign Office to place him in China and that this in turn affected his approach towards the CCP, particularly as to whether they could be independent of the Soviet Union. It is important to emphasise here that there is no single piece of evidence that confirms this cause and effect. [255]

Harris' role as lead Information Office China is more prominent in discussion on positive propaganda efforts and will be discussed in detail in chapter three. Harris, Minute, 4 July 1949, FO 1110/195, TNA.

[254] Stevenson never received a rebuke as a result of his continued questioning. He went on to be considered for the post of Ambassador to the US, only to be beaten by the highly qualified Roger Mankins. Stevenson ended up in Cairo in 1951.

[255] Stevenson's Private papers consistently reveal how he saw life under a communist regime as more promising, especially for Britain once recognition had been accorded. Meeting held in the Office of the Chamber of Commerce, Minutes, 26 October 1949, 10859/3/3, Papers of Sir Ralph Stevenson, Manx National Heritage and Library Archive, Douglas, Isle of Man.

Caution also must be urged against any generalisation that experience of living in China led to a divergence of opinion of between overseas and London-based officials as to the future of communist China. For example, Scott and Coates, principal advisors on China in 1948, had had cumulatively over 30 years of experience in China between them. However, they had both left China before the civil war had developed fully.[256] On the other hand, Gerald Stockley, who arrived at the Foreign Office from China to head the FEID in October 1948, also had had first-hand experience of the civil war. While he was generally critical of the Embassy's positioning on the issue of propaganda, it is notable that his criticism was much less damning than that of his contemporaries, still in China.[257] Therefore one can suggest, albeit tentatively, that the type and degree of experience of China had an impact on their approach to the issues of communism and anti-communist propaganda in that country.

On reflection, Embassy doubts as to the longevity of the relationship between the Soviet Union and China relationship would be proved correct. From 1956 onwards there was a marked deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations. This would eventually lead to a formal split in 1962, with the two powers eventually threatening each other with war a few years later.

In explaining why the Embassy's position differed to that of Whitehall it is also worth pointing to the apparent confusion between the two offices as to the exact nature of the anti-communist propaganda being proposed in London. Throughout 1948, the Foreign Office did little to help qualify and address some of the Embassy's misunderstandings as to the nature of the propaganda that the IRD had proposed. For example, Stevenson appeared to be uncertain of the nature of the anti-

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[256] The role of Scott and Coates in Foreign Office policy in China has been recognised in existing literature. Watson labelling Scott was 'severely anti-communist.' Watson, (1996), 'The Foreign Office and policy-making,' pp. 137-138; Z. Feng, *The British Government's China Policy, 1945-1950* (Keele: Ryburn Publishing, 1994).

[257] Stockley, Minute, 23 October 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA.

communist propaganda when it was first announced. Upon first hearing of the Foreign Office's new publicity policy, Stevenson had argued that the propaganda proposed would be criticised by both sides of the civil war in China, being seen as overt inference in internal policies. Such remarks underline the fact that there was an assumption that the anti-communist propaganda would not be covert in nature and therefore the British government's association would not be hidden.[258] Interestingly there was no qualification in the original publicity policy or the later Far Eastern directive on publicity that the propaganda would be covert in nature. Up to this point propaganda towards China had been both positive and overt (see chapter three).

By late 1948, conversations between the two offices, suggested that the Embassy now did understand that the propaganda suggested by the IRD was to be covert. However, Stevenson continuously reiterated his concern over the discreetness of any anti-communist propaganda. Even in early 1949 he urged caution against propaganda that would lead to retaliation towards British communities and Britain's remaining interests in China. While Stevenson's distrust of the use of this type of propaganda is clear, the issue was only finally addressed eight months later by Warner.[259] In a telegram to Sir William Strang, the Joint Permanent Under-Secretary, Warner asked him to address 'the misunderstanding between ourselves and Stevenson.' Warner emphasised that in proposing overt action 'we are not envisaging anything violent or acknowledgeable. We fully realise (for in the meantime the policy of staying put in China has been decided on) that our first interest is the physical

[258] This is perhaps not an uprising assumption. Up to now covert propaganda had been confined to wartime periods. There was a reluctance and moral dilemma for many in official circles in post-war Britain to issue propaganda, something which had become associated with subversion and falsehood in peace time. See the Introduction for further discussion.

[259] Stevenson first raised concerns on nature of propaganda in letter to the Foreign Office, 12 May 1948, FO 1110/9, TNA.

survival of our Foreign Service posts and British communities.'[260] Warner then went on to explain why overt publicity was not suitable for their task. It is rather startling that the need to make such qualifications and reassurances was only realised by the IRD so late.

To confuse matters further, the IRD had continually failed to provide any of its posts with a definition of communism. From the start, Stevenson had emphasised the need to differentiate between propaganda launched against Chinese communists, the Soviets and communism more broadly. While IRD circulars in 1948 showed no indication that Chinese communism was to be a target subject itself, the department failed to grasp that criticism of communism as an ideology and Soviet-Communism needed to be differentiated. The former was still considered a criticism of China's communist forces by the Embassy. This was only addressed in 1949, when it was agreed that propaganda would now focus on the Sino-Soviet split, and specifically the activities of the Soviets.

The Embassy was not blameless in the confusion and discord between the two offices, as has been detailed throughout this chapter. For example, many of explanations initially put forward by Lamb were ill-informed and dishonest. This helped to encourage confusion. Moreover, Stevenson appeared to change his mind throughout 1948 as to whether any criticism of general anti-communism propaganda was to be permitted. Both offices can be seen as being at fault in failing to secure a compromise in 1948 when there still remained a window of opportunity for the dissemination of negative propaganda.

[260] Discussion continued within the Foreign Office on the Soviet- Sino relationship. C.F.A Warner to Sir W. Strang No.55, 13 January 1949, DBPO, p. 194.

Conclusion of chapter

This chapter has shown how the IRD ultimately failed in its attempts to introduce anti-communist propaganda into China in the early Cold War. From the very start the department faced a number of hurdles that hindered its efforts. While their overseas colleagues rallied against the proposals it was the government's China policy, agreed by the end of the 1948, which eventually forced the IRD to alter its aims. A general attack on communism, as proposed by the IRD, no longer fitted in with the government's desire to engage with the communist forces in China. In the end it was agreed that only IRD propaganda criticisms of Soviet Union encroachments in China could be voiced, there was to be no attempt to attack communism as an ideology.

This overall finding is not striking given the background of Sino-British affairs and the importance that post-war Britain gave to maintaining relations in China, communist or not. Indeed Britain chose to recognise communist China in an increasingly 'hot' period of the Cold War, at a time when its Western allies refrained from doing so (see literature review). However, crucially this is a conclusion that as yet has to be fully noted. It provides an important example of where the IRD failed to show even a 'tinge of anti-Communist colour.'[261]

Moreover, in reaching this conclusion and investigating the development of policy, a number of findings have been made which have repercussions on the current understanding of Britain's Cold War China policy. For example, as seen above, the Embassy was able to delay the implementation of anti-communist propaganda under the KMT regime. In doing so the Ambassador effectively challenged the stereotypical relationship between the Foreign Office and its Embassies where power moves downwards; the Embassies carrying out the orders of the Foreign Office. There have been a number of cases in the twentieth century where Ambassadors have chosen

[261] Stockley, Minute, 23 October 1948, FO 1110/121, TNA.

to ignore orders from Whitehall.[262] However, even in comparison to these infrequent case studies, Stevenson's actions are still a rare case in diplomatic history and worth noting. While by the end of 1948 there was push-back from senior IRD officials, such as Murray and Warner, in his continued questioning of instructions from Whitehall Stevenson effectively prevented anti-communist propaganda from being delivered in China during the late 1940s.

In exploring these marked divisions between the Ambassador and his colleagues in Whitehall, the thesis has highlighted the impact of first-hand observation of the KMT in shaping views and policy advice. The overseas officials repeatedly, and often with little evidence, reporting of potential benefits of a Communist regime. Yet, the existing historiography generally agrees that Britain's recognition was based on practical convenience rather than sentiment, the decision a result of trade priorities. While it recognises Stevenson's role in this policy and that his view of life under a communist China is recognised as having been rather 'optimistic,' the nature of his influence on the development of the British Government's China policy in the Cold War, is a striking omission in the literature. The impact of sentiment and influence on

[262] The Ambassador's role in influencing policy, along with other civil servants, has long been a topic of interest. However it is their refusal to comply with orders from Whitehall that is less prevalent. Examples include Sir Brian Barder, who admitted that as British Ambassador to Nigeria in the 1980s, he ignored requests to press Nigerians to buy defence equipment from the Defence sales team, under the MoD at the time. Barder notes 'he 'conspicuously' chose to do so because it was at odds with the British national interest in Nigeria's economic development. B. Barder, *What Diplomats Do: The Life and Work of Diplomats* (Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2014), p. 126. More recently the United Kingdom's Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Craig Murray was removed from his post in October 2004 after exposing appalling human rights abuses by the US-funded regime of President Islam Karimov. C. Murray, *Murder in Samarkand- A British Ambassador's Controversial Defiance of Tyranny in the War on Terror* (Edingburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2006).

British actions are two points that have, up to now, failed to be joined together.[263] Although this chapter does not suggest that economic factors were not the prime reason for recognition, it has shown that there is a need to consider the diplomatic machine beyond Whitehall when understanding how policy was formed.

[263] Many authors such as Feng, Wolf and Ovendale have highlighted how Stevenson, along with Sir Alexander Grantham, the governor of Hong Kong, were able to convince British representatives and governors of South East Asia and the Far East at the Burkit Serene conference in November 1949, of the need to recognise communist China. Something that was regarded as quite an achievement given the concern held by many that recognition could spur on nationalist feelings within the sizeable overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia. The agreement reached at this conference is often seen as important step in strengthening Bevin's decision to recognise communist China in 1950. Z. Feng, *The British Government's China Policy, 1945-1950*, (Keele: Ryburn Publishing, 1994); D. Wolf, 'To Secure a Convenience: Britain's Recognition of Communist China', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18 (2), (1983), pp. 299–326; R. Ovendale, 'Britain, the United States, and the Recognition of Communist China', *Historical Journal*, 26 (1), (1983), pp. 139–58;

Chapter Three. The 'Projection of Britain' in China

In 1947 a Foreign Office review of British information activities in the Far East noted that work was being carried out 'with vigour' to 'assist in the rebuilding and advancement of British prestige throughout the area which in turn benefits our trade position.' The report reveals how, before the creation of the Information Research Department (IRD), the Foreign Office was utilising its information network in the Far East for propaganda purposes. As the quote reveals, the aim of the propaganda was to promote Britain, to strengthen and regain British global influence, an essential task for the post-war Labour government. This was particularly relevant in the Far East given the loss of face after Britain's failure to defend Singapore against the Japanese in February 1942. [264] The chapter will explore how this positive propaganda approach came to be regarded as part of Britain's anti-communist effort in China.

While the previous chapter on British propaganda in China focused on the IRD and the challenges it faced in trying to introduce negative anti-communist propaganda into China, this chapter will instead focus on the activities of the Information Policy Department (IPD). The chapter will show how the work of the IPD, in its 'Projection of Britain' was seen to complement the anti-communist propaganda agenda in China.

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264 It was explained that post war 'a new relationship exists between Great Britain and the peoples of the Far East. We were for a space defeated by the Japanese. This fact, it may be assumed, gave satisfaction to all orientals, since it shewed that the East could beat the West at its own game. Further we were seen to have failed in our duty to shield 'British Protected Persons.' Then the United States appeared to play the major role in the Far Eastern war and in the final defeat of Japan. We seemed to return very much at the tail of the Americans (despite our successes in Burma) and in our wake again came lesser colonial powers, the French and the Dutch.' John Pilcher (FEID, Foreign Office), Report on visit to Burma, Siam, Indonesia, Indochina, China, Japan, the Philippines, The Special Commissioner's Office at Singapore, Tibet and Afghanistan, 1947, FO 953/320, The National Archives (TNA), Kew.

The chapter is split into two sections. The first will show how the IPD, with advice from the Far Eastern Information Department (FEID), aimed to confront the communist threat from China through its promotion of Britain's social democracy, positioning the British system as a viable alternative to communism. It will reveal the difficulties the British information officers faced in the context of the Chinese civil war, and then, later, by a hostile communist regime. Despite promises of what British recognition of the People's Republic of China (PRC) could offer a post-war Britain, in the absence of diplomatic relations between His Majesty's Government (HMG) and the PRC, the environment for British officials operating in China remained challenging.

The second section will show how in projecting Britain in China, the Foreign Office looked towards both the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the British Council. Both organisations had already been involved in the 'projection of Britain' elsewhere, and in 1948 they were seen as having the potential to play an important role in China. While these two semi-independent organisations showed resistance to the dissemination of what they considered to be clear, government 'information propaganda,' they worked with the Foreign Office to pursue 'cultural' means to influence the Chinese audience.[265] The environment in China was however hostile to their presence.

Section One. The Information Policy Department and China

From 1947, under the instruction of the newly created IPD, all British Information Services (BIS) overseas were tasked with rebuilding and advancing British prestige that had been undermined by the events of World War Two. This policy was designed

[265] The terms information and cultural would use by propagandists to identify the difference between the propaganda of the BIS and cultural focus on the British Council. See introduction and Chapter one for further definitions. Pilcher, Report on visit, 1947, FO 953/320, TNA

to explain British policy and aid in 'the spread of British ideas and British standards' abroad. Initial themes included industry, welfare and the new social legislation of the Labour Government.[266] From early on the value of propaganda along these lines was recognised in the context of the rise of a communist influence in China.[267]

John Pilcher, a Foreign Office official, wrote of the worrying influence of communism in the region in a substantial review of the Far Eastern Information Services which he compiled in 1947. He asserted that the 'state of confusion' in the country was likely to tempt many Chinese towards communism as 'a readymade way out of their problems.' He therefore emphasised the need to combat the threat of communism in China. His solution was that this could be achieved through the strengthening of current propaganda activities. His report also contended that positive propaganda, in showing the 'basic principles of our own and Western European civilisation' would demonstrate to the Chinese population that a viable alternative to communism was not only desirable but attainable. [268] In this vein, IPD material on the British Labour Party's achievements was particularly useful in showing that a successful middle ground could exist between capitalism and communism. This suggestion, arguably, was aligned with the Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin's, own vision for Britain as a socialist 'third force' in world politics, where Britain could be presented as an alternative between the two superpowers (see literature review).[269]

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[266] E. Bevin, Secretary of State, Foreign Office, Circular no 7. Information and publicity work in foreign countries, 15 January 1947, FO 930/498, TNA.

[267] For a good, but brief, overview on the setting up of the IPD post war, see A. Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda 1945-53: The Information Research Department: Propaganda, 1945-1958* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 29.

[268] Pilcher, Report on visit, 1947, FO 953/320, TNA.

[269] For further detail on the creation and life span of Bevin's third force conception see J. Kent and J. W. Young, 'British Policy Overseas: The 'Third Force' and the Origins of NATO — in

Support for the viability of this approach in China can be seen in information reports coming out of China, which recorded that throughout 1948 there was an increase of interest in the internal policy of the British Labour government. For example, a report from the Information Office in Shanghai, noted that 'it cannot be too strongly urged that the socialist domestic policy of the Labour Government is the one great thing that arouses interest in Britain (and often admiration for Britain) among those Chinese.' [270]

Accordingly, in response to these findings the IPD throughout 1948-1949 tailored the propaganda messages on Britain for the Chinese audience. It reduced material that projected 'another sort of England', full of inequality of wealth and social privileges, to one that showed a progressive and reforming Britain.[271] The IPD also agreed to limit the use of material in China regarding Britain's external policies in its colonies. Britain's behaviour in Malaya was a particular point of anxiety. Information Officers reported that the general opinion in China condemned Britain's behaviour, seeing the country as carrying out an unjust war in exactly the same way that the French were doing in Vietnam. News stories of troops beating up overseas Chinese in Malaya

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Search of a New Perspective,' in B. Heuser and R. O'Neill (eds.), S*ecuring Peace in Europe, 1945–62* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), pp 41-61.

[270] Information Department (British Consulate-General, Shanghai), to Foreign Office, Report for the quarter ending December 1948, FO 953/577, TNA.

[271] Information officers in China noted that 'for one picture of a coalmine or of a municipal library, we are sent half-a-dozen of the Thames at Windsor or of a group of beefeaters'. It was clear that such images of Britain were not well received in a revolutionary China. Information Department (Shanghai) to Foreign Office, Report for the quarter ending December 1948, FO 953/577, TNA.

was seen as countering efforts to present Britain in a favourable light and as a viable alternative to communism.[272]

Besides working to ensure that the content of messages being disseminated resonated with the Chinese audience, the IPD also attempted to extend the reach of its service between 1948 and 1949. The IPD co-ordinated its operation primarily through the Information Office based in the Consulate-General in Shanghai. Information distributed included photographs, pictures and posters, books and pamphlets, and films. In 'projecting' Britain, efforts were focused on keeping China informed of current British news with the dissemination of transcriptions of BBC music and talks, newspapers and periodicals from the British commercial service, stories from the London Press Service (LPS) and FEASTCO (the Far East Asian arm of The London Press Service).[273] In addition daily and weekly press releases on comments relating to home affairs and news items involving Sino-British relations were produced. Exhibits and displays were arranged and a reference library was made available in Shanghai for questions on British affairs. A number of these amenities were available both in English and Chinese.[274]

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[272] Betsy (FEID) to Information Department (Shanghai), 3rd May 1949, FO 953/577, TNA.

[273] Both the LPS and FEASTCO (regional service) were run by the Central Office of Information (see Chapter One). Documents reveal how the LPS produced a supplement for Far Eastern consumption, giving details of British views on Far Eastern questions and appreciation of Far Eastern activities. It had a wide circulation in China. As many newspapers struggled to afford to subscribe to news agencies, British bulletins based on the LPS found wide acceptance in the local press. Pilcher, Report on visit, 1947, FO 953/320, TNA.

[274] Similar services were available, but on a smaller scale, from the Consulate-General at Guangzhou, which was regarded as a centre of supply for the provinces of Guandong, Fujian and Guangxi. Lamb (Chargé d'Affaires, Nanjing), Annex: List of the services available from the Shanghai Office of the Embassy Information Department, Circular letter to Consuls, No 147, Confidential, 29 November 1948, FO 953/290, TNA.

With Shanghai as the communication, commercial and media centre of China, the office there was well placed to develop and maintain relations with the press and broadcasting services, who would then broadcast at advantageous times or include their prearranged segments in the Chinese press. In a country the size of China, such relationships were important. Like the IRD, the IPD hoped to influence the general population but saw that 'in order to reach even a modest fraction of her [China's] 460 million inhabitants' with the resources available the focus needed to be on those who had most control over Chinese opinions.[275] In distributing information via the Chinese press and journalists it shows that although the IPD existence was overt, it preferred, like the IRD, that its activities should be discrete and have a subtle influence. Disguising the British origin of certain reports with the use of 'Asiatic voices,' was seen as a way to increase the effectiveness of the propaganda.[276]

By 1948, the Shanghai operation was regarded by London as an efficient machine, increasingly able to pre-digest material for use anywhere in China, ensuring its effective distribution with the extensive use of airmail. Nonetheless attempts were made to improve the productivity of this information machine operating in China as the potential communist threat loomed. Pilcher's report urged that more needed to

[275] It was estimated these were around 10,000 opinion formers to target, although it did not detail who and what categories they were. Pilcher, Report on visit, 1947, FO 953/320, TNA.

[276] Pilcher noted 'the Chinese in their present frame of mind do not welcome ostentatious foreign effort in their country. In addition they dislike intensely being placed under an obligation. This sense impels them at once to bite the hand that gives. For these reasons, therefore, Information work in China should be as unobtrusive, if as pervasive as possible. A lavish approach and the generous distribution of gifts are both unwise.' Report on visit to China (supplement to Far East report), December 1947, FO 953/294, TNA.

be done by the other British consulates in carrying out information work.[277] Although, like Shanghai, it was reported that all of these information posts maintained close personal relations with leading figures in the world of journalism, and cultivated all those dealing in the 'mass media.' However, they were seen to be making little use of the information being distributed to them from London. It was thought that by encouraging posts to be more active, it would not only extend the reach of IPD services but increase the effectiveness of the distribution across China. This would allow for the better placing and control of Information and publicity activities in specific areas and thus ensure that the best use was being made of the materials available.

Initial progress was somewhat slow, as a letter to the consulates from the Chargé d'Affaires, Henry Lamb, reveals. Almost a year on from Pilcher's recommendations, Lamb emphasised that whilst progress had been made in the expansion of Information work at consular posts, more needed to be done, as this was an 'increasingly important activity.' Lamb pressed the consulates to become more involved in the task of distributing publicity material, noting that the material was being supplied for them to distribute.[278]

It is unclear from Foreign Office records how effective the consulates were perceived to be in taking up information roles or in the impact that positive propaganda,

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[277] With a lack of central government in China, until the PRC, there were a number of British consulates across China in order to ensure a level of contact. The main consulates of relevance were Guangzhou, Hankow and Tianjin. The others were Xiamen, Chongqing, Kashgar, Yarkand, Shenyang, Shantou, Tamsui, Qingdao, Ürümqi and Kunming. Pilcher (Foreign Office) Report on visit to China, FO 953/294, TNA.

[278] It was noted however if this was 'inconvenient or uneconomical' distribution it could be led by Shanghai, but with a qualification that it had to be at the consulate's request and only to recipients designated by themselves. Lamb, Circular letter to Consuls, No 147, Confidential, 29 November 1948, FO 953/290, TNA.

disseminated from Shanghai, was having in presenting Britain's political framework as desirable (and thus helping to tackle the perceived communist threat). The overall success of the campaign to boost British prestige can, to some extent, be questioned. While initial reports from Shanghai noted that the 'Chinese press had openly declared that the British government is the only government in the world which knows how to fight against communism,' opinion quickly shifted. As Britain's foreign policy shifted decisively towards support for an American-led coalition of the Atlantic powers, its ability to position itself as a legitimate 'third force' suffered. A report from Shanghai noted how the Chinese 'now think that Britain has become a junior partner of America, and that any Western European union or Atlantic Pact will be, like the Marshall plan itself, merely an instrument of a bellicose American policy.' Tellingly the report warned that with the likelihood of there being little support for America in a communist China, 'our work is bound to suffer as a result of this Chinese belief that Britain is committed to following a policy laid down by America.'[279]

It is important to recognise that despite all of this, the IPD was able to disseminate material in China throughout 1948 and 1949. In fact, in the absence of the IRD, the IPD arguably had a greater authority and role in China than, for example, in Europe where the IRD largely dominated the propaganda agenda. The IPD faced no objections from the Embassy and were able to collaborate and establish strong relations with British information officials in China to improve operations both in content and in dissemination. Even as the CCP declared victory, this positive propaganda approach was still being pursued.

As has been discussed in chapter two, the aim of Britain's anti-communist propaganda changed in 1949 in the face of the likely communist victory. The aim was no longer to counter Chinese communism but to encourage a Sino-Soviet split, the focus of material moving from a general criticism of communism to details of Russian

[279] Information Department (Shanghai) to Foreign Office, Report for the quarter ending December 1948, FO 953/577, TNA.

encroachments in China. Positive propaganda efforts still complemented this new aim. Rather than a means to combat the spread of communism in China, the projection of Britain offered an ability to ultimately shape the policies of the communist government. It was hoped that an appreciation for Britain's political system would guide the regime towards a socialist rather than nationalist footing.[280] There was no apparent attempt by the IPD to alter the messages about Britain in response to the establishment of the PRC.

Unfortunately for the BIS, the effectiveness of their operations was increasingly hampered by the civil war, as Chiang Kai-shek's KMT began to lose its grip on power. As more regions came under communist control, the conditions for the dissemination of material became more uncertain, especially as Chinese airlines stopped servicing communist-held areas. Even where the KMT regime remained in control an easy distribution of material was not guaranteed. Both the economic crisis and press censorship under the KMT dramatically impinged on the ability of the Information Office to get positive propaganda from London into the Chinese press and therefore to Chinese audiences. [281]

The economic regulations enforced by the KMT plagued many media outlets and increasingly led newspapers to commence publishing joint editions or to reduce their newspaper size in order to save money.[282] The financial constraints were so bad for some foreign correspondence offices that they were forced to close, as can be seen in the case of Reuters. Reuters, with its head office in Shanghai, was the only British news agency still functioning in China in 1948. However, during the June-September

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[280] Information Office (Shanghai) to Foreign Office, Report for the quarter ending December 1948, FO 953/577, TNA.

[281] Information Office (Shanghai) to Foreign Office, Report for the quarter ending December 1948, FO 953/577, TNA.

[282] Information Office (Shanghai) to Foreign Office, Report for the quarter ending December 1948, FO 953/577, TNA.

quarter of that year, the agency had come up against a virtual boycott by the Chinese press. Despite successfully wrestling with inflation and its attendant problems during the three post-war years, Reuters' troubles had intensified following the KMT's introduction of a new Chinese currency, the Gold Yuan, and the harsh economic restrictions designed to enforce the stability of this currency. Under these restrictions, Reuters was forbidden to make their charges in US currency and, as inflation of the Chinese currency proceeded apace, they encountered the problem of having to double and redouble their charges in the Chinese National Currency (CNC) in order to meet their current expenses. Chinese press representatives were vociferous in their objection to paying such charges, and eventually a point was reached when payments from newspapers did not even cover the paper purchasing cost of agencies. While this state of affairs was readily accepted by English language newspapers, with whom the agencies had reached an equitable solution, Chinese newspapers, backed by the Newspaper Guild, remained intransigent and refused to pay rates that were even remotely reasonable. Matters had been made worse by further economic regulations which meant that general business traders were now seen as being too afraid to operate. By the end of 1948 a number of subscribers who had taken Reuters' ticker service for years had thrown the machines out, concerned that they might be regarded as 'speculators' and subjected to the rigid penalties of the new economic laws. With Reuters working at a loss, it was eventually forced to retreat from China in July 1949. [283]

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[283] Information Department (Shanghai) to Foreign Office, Report for the quarter ending 30 September 1948, FO 953/577; Information Department (Shanghai) to Foreign Office, Report for the quarter ending December 1948, to FO 953/577; Information Office (Shanghai) to Foreign Office, 26 July 1949, FO 953/579, TNA.

For a general history of Reuters see: D. Read, *The Power of News; The History of Reuters, 1849-1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); For details on the economic crisis under the

Besides economic instability, as Kuomintang control over China began to weaken, their attempts to control and censor the press rose sharply. For example, in response to the Kowloon affair in 1948, where colonial Hong Kong authorities decided to demolish a number of overcrowded dwellings in Kowloon, there were a number of demonstrations. Radio station XORA in Guangzhou (formerly Canton) suspended BBC new bulletins both in English and in Mandarin.[284] In defending their actions to the British Embassy, the director of the station noted that in relaying the BBC version of the Kowloon affair they would not only lay themselves open to criticism from the public but be reprimanded by the Chinese government (as a government station).[285]

The IPD tried to react to the perils of operating in such a complex environment by cautioning Macfarlane, the First Secretary (Information), on the news articles that they wished to promote. They also asked that daily news releases were in general to avoid comment on local conditions under the KMT or Chinese communist activities. An agreement was made with the COI that FEASTCO would exclude any reference to the purely official activities of the Chinese Ambassador and any other individuals identified with the Kuomintang.[286] However, it was apparent by the end of 1948 that the domestic situation was so chaotic that little could be done directly by the information officers to improve the situation, until one side or the other in the civil

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Kuomintang and the repeated attempts to stabilise the currency, see: O. A. Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

[284] The forcible eviction of residents in 1948 led to an outburst of anti-British feelings and a number of demonstrations in nearby Guangzhou and the burning of the British consulate and other Western buildings. See Reuters report in: *Sydney Herald*, January 17 1948, 'Attack on British', < https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/18057721>, accessed 26.12.2018.

[285] Macfarlane (First Secretary (information) to Foreign Office, Report on Relays of BBC by Shanghai Broadcasting Station, 3rd March 1948, FO 953/293, TNA.

[286] G.S. Stockley (FEID) to Macfarlane (British Embassy, Nanjing), 18 December 1948, FO 953/290, TNA.

war became victorious. Reports from Shanghai showed that the number of acceptances of their material was drastically reduced throughout 1948.[287] The situation deteriorated for the IPD with further communist advances in 1949 and the retreat of the KMT.

In May 1949, the recently appointed First Secretary (Information) in Shanghai, R. F. J. Harris, who was awaiting the arrival of the communist forces, detailed the limiting environment within which they were trying to operate. Harris explained that while the daily news releases continued, almost half of the local newspapers had closed down. Film shows had been reduced due to the difficulty of attracting any 'decent audiences' at a time when everyone was preoccupied with finding even enough money for a tram fare. It was therefore suggested that the number of photographs should be 'drastically' cut down and that film strips be halted completely, since in such circumstances there was 'enough to carry on with.'[288] In such circumstances, some believed that British information posts would fare better under an established communist regime.

While the experience of operating in the Soviet Union suggested that Britain's presence and activities would be extremely limited under a communist regime, British officials in China advocated a different view. The new Head of Information in China, Donald Macfarlane, now in Nanjing, explained in a letter to Gerald Stockley (FEID) that 'there are many factors, such as the long-standing educational, commercial and other ties, which link us with China, as well as this country's long seaboard, which lead us to hope that in the event of the Chinese communists governing the country, our Information activities will be allowed more scope than in

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[287]Reports for 1948 demonstrated that the effectiveness of their work was measured by the amount of pieces that got accepted into newspapers. However it was noted that in the environment of the civil war this level of recording was hard to manage. Information Department (Shanghai) to Foreign Office, Report for the quarter ending December 1948, FO 953/577, TNA.

[288] Harris to Stockley, 4 May 1949, FO 953/579, TNA.

those behind the curtain countries of Eastern Europe.' [289] British intelligence reports in 1948 supported this view in signalling that the communist takeover in China would be accompanied with little anti-British reaction.[290]

Initial reports from British consuls, who had come under communist control as the CCP advanced through North-East China, also encouraged hope that British posts would be able to continue to operate under a communist regime. For example, in May 1949, Harris reported from Shanghai that the new reading room in their library continued to be crowded and there were good reasons to believe that this would continue since both United States Information service (USIS) branches in Tianjin and Beijing had reported a steady attendance at their libraries following the exclusion of anti-communist books. Harris clarified that broadcasting might be affected, as the station they used for relaying British radio broadcasts was commercially sponsored by the Americans, and therefore would certainly be closed down by the communists.[291] Unfortunately for the British, predictions that the information offices would be able to continue under a communist leadership proved to be ill-founded.[292]

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[289] Macfarlane (Nanjing) to Stockley, 17th January 1949, FO 953/578, TNA.

[290] Keith Jeffery paints the picture of a rather dismal intelligence service in China post war. While there were posts in Hong Kong, Tianjin, Shanghai, Nanjing and Urumchi in the North-West, the SIS (Secret Intelligence Service) had few assets of its own and was for the most part dependent on the nationalist Chinese Kuomintang for intelligence. Only in 1948, did the SIS begin to seriously make plans in the face of communist conquests in China. Reference: K. Jeffery*, MI6: The History of the Secret Intelligence Service 1909-1949* (London, Bloomsbury, 2010), p. 698.

[291] The British were not optimistic as to the continued existence of the American's information services, (known as USIS), under a communist regime due to their ties to the Kuomintang. Harris (Shanghai) to Stockley, 12 May 1949, FO 953/579.

[292] Watson, in his review of Foreign Office policy making in China, notes how reports from Consuls who came into contact with Communist advance forces, noted the CCP's fair treatment of western missionaries, and their attitude to the rich being justified as just the same. R. Watson,

In July 1949, Harris was called to a meeting with the communist authorities, where he was told that as there was no diplomatic relationship between the communist authorities and His Majesty's Government, the activities of agents in the country would no longer be permitted. He was therefore instructed to close down all activities immediately.[293] This was to include the printing and issue of news releases, presentation of books and newspapers, display of books and newspapers, the posting of posters or photographs, the exhibition of films, the putting on of concerts, and any other forms of activity.[294] The United States Information Service (USIS), who were the public relations office for US foreign policy aims and likewise engaged in propaganda activities, received similar instructions.

At first, some officials believed that these closures would not be universally applied to all information posts. While a letter from Nanjing to the Foreign Office noted that all USIS posts throughout communist China had received similar instructions, Britain had not. British posts at Nanjing and Beijing had so far suffered no interference and only certain restrictions had been noted in Tianjin. This was not to last. Over the next few months the information offices in all communist areas faced the same fate as had befallen USIS. On 21 July 1949, the Foreign Office received a note that the Tianjin Consulate had also been ordered to cease the remaining activities of British public information services. On 1 September, the Foreign Office was notified that Guangzhou, the last remaining information centre, was closing down and that the

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The Foreign Office and policy-making in China, 1945-1950: Anglo-American relations and the recognition of Communist China (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 1996).

[293] Harris (Shanghai) to Macfarlane (Nanjing) repeated to Foreign Office, 15 July 1949, FO 953/579, TNA.

[294] These details were confirmed with the closure of Tientsin a few days later. British Consulate-General (Tientsin) to Foreign Office, 21 July 1949, FO 953/579, TNA.

Consulate-General had been instructed that no more information was to be sent from the post. [295]

Thus, despite the hopes of British staff in the information offices in China, their work was not met by an accommodating communist party. By the time that Mao declared the founding the People's Republic of China on the 1 October 1949, all of HMG's information offices and activities had been closed. Hopes of being able to shape communist China through positive propaganda were not, however, dismissed altogether.

As Britain's information offices were being forced to close, London considered what means it had for retaliation.[296] However, the consulates in Nanjing and Shanghai urged against any such move, their view being that the closure of the information offices was only likely to be temporary. The ostensible reason for closure given by the communists was the absence of diplomatic relations between Britain and the new Chinese government. It was thought, therefore, that once Britain recognised the communist party as the government of China, a path that Britain was heading towards by the end of 1949, diplomatic relations would then be established and its information activities could continue. As such the Information Department in Shanghai, while having ceased all activities on the instructions of the CCP, maintained its identity, equipment and premises, but with minimal staff, in anticipation of resuming operations when recognition took place. The Consulate-General at

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[295] Consulate-general (Tientsin) to Foreign Office, 21 July 1949; Canton to Foreign Office, 15 September 1949, FO 953/579, TNA.

[296] In response to the 'first attack' on Shanghai the Foreign Office considered closing the New China News Agency in London. For the Foreign Office while this was considered a risk as the communists in turn would likely choose to close Reuters, it was seen as a risk worth taking. Press correspondents had already been forbidden in North China, and therefore it was likely that prohibition would be expected elsewhere._Foreign Office to Nanking, Repeated to Shanghai, Washington and Paris, 16 July 1949, FO 953/579, TNA.

Guangzhou also made it clear that, with the exception of the Chinese Information staff, everything was to be left as it was so that it would be possible to reopen the information section of this Consulate with a minimum of delay.[297] However, the hopes and promises of what recognition of China would afford Britain and its information offices were quickly dashed.

On the 6th January 1950 Britain accorded the PRC de facto recognition. Unfortunately for the British, this recognition did not accord the establishment of normal diplomatic relations with the new Chinese government.[298] The Chinese insisted that discussions between the two countries were needed before any formal diplomatic contact was established. The British Ambassador to China was removed in the absence of diplomatic relations. It was left to Sir John Hutchinson to act as Chargé d'Affaires in the interim. However, Hutchinson and his staff had far from easy relations with their communist counterparts, and struggled to even arrange for an audience with

[297] FEID had made it clear, in a telegram in December 1948, of the inherent difficulties of completely halting the information activities. Restarting the process of collecting and despatching material from so many sources would be a lengthy process that they wanted to avoid. Stockley to Macfarlane, 18 December 1948, FO 953/290, TNA.

[298] While policy-makers had not anticipated that the Chinese would demand prior negotiations before agreeing to the establishment of diplomatic relations, the Chinese reply was not a complete surprise to London. The other two countries that had already offered recognition, India and Burma, had pre-conditions to the establishment of diplomatic relations, as a result of their relations with the KMT. Equally, it is worth noting, as Feng points out, China's communism naturally put it against western capitalist states. Z. Feng, *The British Government's China Policy, 1945–1950* (Keele: Ryburn Publishing, 1994).

communist officials. They often had to wait several months before getting any reply to correspondence.[299]

While China tried to use diplomatic relations as a negotiation tool to steer the UK towards recognition of its representative at the UN, it proved unpalatable for the British after the Chinese commitment of troops to Korea, with the crossing of the Yalu River on the 14th October 1950. The two nations were now directly fighting each other.

Section Two. Organisations

Pilcher's report in 1947 made it apparent that the 'considerable effort' needed to advance British prestige in the Far East was to be done by 'means available to Foreign Office and through the B.B.C. and the British Council.'[300] As identified in Chapter One, both these semi-autonomous organisations had become regarded as key cultural components of the UK's diplomatic infrastructure during the Second World War. This section will reveal the role and the relationship of these organisations to the Foreign Office in the projection of Britain in China. The environment in China, however, proved to be the biggest hurdle for both in their ability to spread British influence.

BBC's Far Eastern Service

The importance of radio broadcasts during the Cold War is something that has been increasingly explored in the academic literature. For the West, broadcasting offered an alternative channel for the flow of new information and ideas behind the Iron

[299] Mark explains that the China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs sought to discipline the activities of British diplomats over such daily issues as interviews and travel. C. Mark, Hong Kong and the Cold War: Anglo-American Relations 1949-1957 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), p. 5.

[300] J.Pilcher, Report on visit, 1947, FO 953/320, TNA.

Curtain, seen as a way of getting information to the masses.[301] Britain's own radio warfare effort is largely taken as being synonymous with the work of the BBC, the British monopoly broadcaster. As identified in the literature review, the BBC had been used as a vehicle for some IRD material, yet for reasons set out in Chapter Two there is no evidence to suggest that this was the case in China. However the BBC did play a role in the 'Projection of Britain' in China in the early Cold War.

There were two main British broadcasting stations operating in the Far East at the time. Both were based in Singapore and relied on shortwave radio: Radio Malaya, which broadcast to the Federation of Malaya as well as the Colony of Singapore; and the British Far East Broadcasting Service, which was operated by the BBC and relayed BBC transmissions to other countries in the Far East. The BBC's Far Eastern Service provided news and specially prepared comment in regional languages such as English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Burmese, Malay, Thai, Japanese, Indonesian and Vietnamese. It was generally regarded as a useful branch of overseas propaganda by the Foreign Office in the region, reinforcing the work of information officers, consuls and the British Council.[302] According to John Pilcher, in his 1947 review of information activities in the region, the BBC resources, if 'turned to account,' offered the potential to be 'the greatest value in spreading British influence throughout the Far East'.[303]

For British officials in China, the Far Eastern Service was able to provide: a weekly review of comment in the British press; talks on British traditions and the British way

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[301] For a general outline of Western broadcasters in the Cold War see: M. Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (London: Brasseys, 1997).

[302]A. Webb, *London Calling: Britain, The BBC World Service and the Cold War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 93; S. Carruthers, Winning Hearts and Minds: *British Governments, the Media and Colonial Counter- Insurgency 1944–1960* (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), p. 102.

[303] John Pilcher, Report on visit, 1947, FO 953/320, TNA.

of life; magazine programmes on the arts and sciences; topical talks; and 'Chinese viewpoint', where Chinese men and women living in or visiting Britain expressed their personal views on every aspect of life there.[304] Information officers looked to publicise details of the BBC's output to a wider public, distribute transcriptions of certain programmes provided by the BBC, and arrange with local stations to relay the corporation's broadcasts.[305]

Besides purely promoting the BBC, Foreign Office officials also tried to influence the content of the BBC's broadcasts. In May 1949, the British Ambassador to China, Ralph Stevenson, asked London to ensure the Far Eastern Service give the fullest publicity to the fact that the Nationalist authorities had forcibly commandeered British flag vessels for the transport of troops, regarding it as an important step to 'safeguard our position vis a vis the Communist.' Equally, Stevenson demanded the BBC be reprimanded when the General Overseas Service's '*News Analysis'* broadcast suggested that the communist policy in North China to de-industrialise China would put the clock back a generation.[306] As the BIS struggled to operate, a focus and therefore criticism of the China service only grew.

By the start of 1950 the information officers in China argued that a Western point of view was lacking in the Chinese news. The CCP had begun to censor the news, with the official Chinese news agency, the New China News Agency (NCNA), substituting British, American and French news items with those from the Soviet Union which

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[304]Anonymous minute, Chinese Section, BBC Official, E1/614/4, BBC archives, Caversham Park, Reading.

[305] The Information Department in Shanghai, argued that because of nature of the BBC's broadcasts, efforts spent disseminating the transcriptions should be the work of the British Council. Information Department (Shanghai) to Foreign Office, 8 April 1948, FO 953/118, TNA.

[306] Stevenson to Foreign Office, 26 May 1949; Stevenson to Foreign Office 27 May 1949, FO 953/576, TNA.

included news also from Bulgaria, Romania and Poland. Harris, in a telegram to the Foreign Office in early 1950, questioned whether the BBC was taking full advantage of the situation, as Chinese audiences continued to look to the Western broadcaster for news. For Harris, one way for the BBC's Far Eastern Service to capture a greater audience was to present news of events in China itself. The Voice of America, an American media source fully funded by the US government, and an Australian news broadcaster, *Radio Australia,* both did and were regarded as more popular than the BBC as a result.[307] Although there was recognition in the Foreign Office that 'one cannot dictate to the B.B.C.,' Donald Macfarlane, who had recently left his position as First Information Officer in Shanghai to join a new post in London in the IPD, agreed to raise this with the BBC. [308]

The BBC did not react favourably to these requests. John Morris, Head of the Far Eastern Service for the BBC, expressed an unwillingness to produce more news about China on the English overseas broadcast, as this would be to the benefit of just a few listeners in China, at the disadvantage of irritating their much bigger audience in other countries. Morris also underlined the fact that, in general, information about China was difficult to obtain, was likely to be exaggerated and was inaccurate. According to the BBC, this was a trap that the Americans had fallen into and they were not willing to risk doing the same, despite requests from the Foreign Office.[309]

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[307] Harris to Foreign Office, 5 January 1950, FO 953/842, TNA.

[308] Stockley to Lamb (Nanjing), 25 June 1949, FO 953/576; Macfarlane (FEID) to Morris (Regional advisor BBC), 14 February 1950, FO 953/842, TNA.

[309] Webb has shown that there had been some consideration within the BBC as to whether the service could include more local news. The BBC's Patrick Ransome considered whether improvements could be made by engaging more directly with these events, 'I realise, of course, that it would be dangerous to give colour to charges of interference in the purely internal affairs of highly nationalistic states, but the fact remains that our Far Eastern Service itself says nothing to Malaya about her Communist warfare, to Burma about her minority troubles, to Japan about

As the British struggled to negotiate diplomatic relations with the PRC, attempts were made by the Foreign Office in 1950 to improve the discordant relationship between the Foreign Office and the BBC's Far Eastern Service. With the blessing of Christopher Warner, the Assistant Under-Secretary of State supervising the IRD and the FEID, the Foreign Office reached an agreement with the BBC's Sir Ian Jacob, the director of the overseas service, and Mr J.B. Clarke, controller of the overseas service. This was to hold more regular meetings between representatives of the two offices on matters affecting South East and East Asia. However, according to Macfarlane, the Foreign Office's staff were offended by the behaviour of the BBC representatives as they appeared to take little interest in the proceedings, asked no questions and left before the meeting was over.[310]

Weeks later, after having agreed to a joint meeting, relations were further strained when the BBC attempted to arrange for a member of a Chinese delegation touring the country under the sponsorship of the pro-CCP British-China Friendship Association, to broadcast on the BBC's Chinese Service. Although the delegation refused, the Foreign Office made it clear that consultations should have taken place even before such an approach, and the text of any broadcast needed to be approved beforehand. The Foreign Office had to consider the reaction to such a broadcast, such as awkward questions that could be raised in the House of Commons, or possible American reactions. This incident only served to confirm the unsatisfactory relations between the Foreign Office and the Far Eastern Service. Macfarlane exclaimed 'they have throughout given an impression of being most unwilling to entertain the idea

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her reparations or to China about her civil war…is not this pushing caution to the point of evasion?" A. Webb, *London Calling: Britain, p. 93;* Morris (BBC) to Macfarlane, 17 February 1950, FO 953/842, TNA.

[310] Macfarlane, Minute, 12 October 1950, FO 953/841, TNA.

that anyone other than themselves have any knowledge of South East and Far East Asian affairs, or of what HMG's policy should be.'[311]

While the BBC did not appear to welcome government interference in terms of political content, in other areas, relationships seemed more conducive. Besides a general sharing of information apparent through Foreign Office and BBC records, it is clear that the BBC did listen and act on Foreign Office advice to improve the quality of broadcasting. One of the main criticisms that the BBC had faced was the standard of the Chinese language in its programmes. Varying reports in 1951 show a criticism of the Chinese news speaker whose 'accent and vocabulary was deemed 'old fashioned.' The impact of the BBC Chinese broadcasts was once again brought into question. The BBC, while commenting that their programmes also went to a large number of Chinese overseas, 'who do not adopt, or even understand, every passing linguistic fad', accepted that both issues had troubled them. It explained that the accent was 'as a Thorny issue' as they struggled to recruit appropriate staff. However in regards to the vocab, the BBC asserted that the Chancery and Chinese Counsellor could help them rectify the issue by ensuring Hong Kong Chinese newspapers reach them as quickly as possible. [312] This would allow the BBC services time to ensure that their use of political terms was as up to date as possible. The Foreign Office complied with this request.[313]

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[311] Minutes, Macfarlane, 12 October 1950, FO 953/841, TNA.

[312]In regards to the vocab, it is likely the newsreader was struggling with lexicon of the CCP. The CCP used a very specific set of vocabulary that was relatively new. The accent however is a different issue between the North and South divide (the CCP media favouring a northern Chinese accent). Macfarlane to Eric Roberts (Far Eastern Service), 4 April 1951, E1/614/4, BBC.

[313] MacFarlane to J. Morris (BBC), Extract of interview with Mr Tarr, recently returned from China, and with Walter Graham, China Section, 27 October 1951, E1/614/4,BBC.

Foreign Office reports also highlighted the poor coverage of the BBC's broadcasts in China throughout 1950-1951. The broadcasts were at times inaudible from direct reception or from a relay in Singapore.[314] However, this was not a new issue. The government had agreed in 1948 to provide the BBC with funding for the construction of a new relay station at Tebrau in Malaya, to help ensure that the 'Voice of Britain' was constantly being heard throughout the Far East. However, the construction took some time,[315] with broadcasts only coming on-line in May 1951.

The reach of the BBC service was also challenged by internal politics within communist China which pushed anti-western propaganda. In February 1951, the Chancery in Peking reported that 'it is now, if not actually illegal, most unwise for any Chinese to listen to Voice of America broadcasts and by extension to the B.B.C.' This was an official attack by the Chinese government on Western broadcasts; anyone who was found listening to them would likely be 'in trouble with the police and possibly in jail'.[316]

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[314] Macfarlane to Eric Roberts (Far Easter Service), Extracts from report on conditions in Shanghai in February 1951, 4 April 1951, E1/614/4 , BBC.

[315] Pilcher's report in 1947 noted difficulties with the BBC's Far Eastern Services. The reception was poor and BBC broadcasts were not constant., Report on visit, 1947, FO 953/320, TNA; Pilcher (FO), Historical brief for the Minister, 3 September 1948, 1051 E1/1055/1, BBC.

[316] Macfarlane to Eric Roberts (Far Easter Service), Extracts from report on conditions in Shanghai in February 1951, 4th April 1951, E1/614/4 , BBC. Also commented on in: United States Senate, *Overseas Information Programs of the United States: Hearings before a subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations United State Senate, Eighty-Second Congress, Second Session,* November 1952 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1953), p. 1309.

Comments on VOA broadcasts can be seen in Y. Guo, 'Soft containment: US psychological warfare against China in the 1950s and 1960s,' in P. Roberts (ed.) Going Soft? The US and China Go Global (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2014), pp.141-56.

Moreover, shortwave radio sets were becoming progressively scarcer and their possession frowned on. Only officials in the communications sector, government officials and the military, who listened to the programmes as part of their work, were allowed access to them, although questions were raised in the BBC as to whether 'official monitors' would resist the temptation 'to twiddle the knobs.'[317] Nonetheless, the hostile environment was clearly a limiting factor in regards to the reach of the Far Eastern Service and thus the effectiveness of its projection of Britain.

The British Council

As with the BBC, the British Council's potential role in the projection of Britain in the Far East had been noted by the Foreign Office.[318] The Council's emphasis was on the 'cultural spectrum', with a focus on the local engagement and understanding of British language, literature, education, art, music and science (see chapter two on this).[319] This 'soft' cultural approach, rather than presenting the audience with 'hard facts' and information, meant that from early on the British Council had come in for some measure of criticism from members of the FEID. Pilcher, in a review of the British Council's services, exclaimed that 'no Chinese of consequence will be won over to Western Europe and to sound sense or will alter his opinion of the British way of life as the result of concerts or picture exhibitions, useful as such things are as

[317] Peter Hume (Chinese Programme Organiser, Head of Far Eastern Service) Minute, 26 April 1950, E1/614/4, BBC.

[318] The British Council is often viewed in a similar way to how the BBC is often framed - as the 'mouthpiece' of the British Government. Both receive funds from the British taxpayer or licence-fee payer despite being editorially independent: E. Corse, *A Battle for Neutral Europe: British Cultural Propaganda during the Second World War* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), p. 19.

[319] M. Fiore , *Anglo-Italian Relations in the Middle East 1922-1940* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 72

adjuncts.'[320] Nonetheless, the Council's activities, which included the staging of plays, organisation of concerts, and hosting of lectures, were in the main regarded as an essential background activity for effective information work in China.[321] In 1948, the British Council maintained offices in Beijing, Nanjing and Shanghai.

A close relationship developed between the British Council and the British Information Services (BIS) in China. Despite an agreement that in order to spread the net as widely as possible, information offices and offices of the British Council should not be established in the same towns. In Shanghai, due to the size and importance allotted to the city, an exception was made. Throughout 1948 the two offices in Shanghai had become more intertwined and in an attempt to become more efficient had started pooling resources including the new library in Shanghai.[322] Moreover, there is evidence that the consulates carried out the work of the British Council in the regions where the council did not operate, as was the case in Guangzhou in 1948.[323]

This closeness carried on under the PRC, where to the surprise of many in the Foreign Office and the Council alike, the Council's offices in China escaped forced closure. This was put down to the Council's technical independence from the Foreign Office. As a result, immediate pressure was exerted by the IPD on the Council to open new offices. In a telegram from Macfarlane to the consul in Guangzhou on the 27 July

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[320] The Chinese in particular were highlighted as a race where such an emotional approach was seen as misguided. Pilcher argued that while there are countries in the Far East which are emotionally relatively 'soft' and which may possibly be moved to express pro-British sentiments by listening to a soiree of, say, Vaughan Williams's music: not so the Chinese – they are controlled 'by their head.'

[321]Pilcher, Report on visit, 1947, FO 953/320, TNA.

[322] For a range of discussions on the success and difficulties of the joined up library see FO 953/579, TNA.

[323] Pilcher, Report on visit, 1947, FO 953/320, TNA.

1949 it was emphasised that every effort should be made for the Council to open up an office before the communists captured an area. If this was possible then the bulk of the information from the Information Office could be transferred across, including the library and gramophone recordings. While the British Council in Guangzhou failed to open before the communist takeover, one month later, there was a clear expectation that the Council could take on the activities of BIS as well as its own.[324] When the Information Department closed in Shanghai, its collections and equipment were transferred to the British Council. The onus was then on the Council to take over some of the information activities.

However, the Council's staff in China voiced concern about such mergers and the blurring of roles. A Miss Grier, based in Shanghai, urged that while the Council could take over some of BIS operations, its propaganda work should be handed over to the Embassy Press Attaches.[325] From current archival material it is hard to quantify just what and how much of the information office's roles were taken on by the British Council in 1950.

First-hand accounts show that the British Council did continue to operate relatively successfully, putting on regular events in Shanghai that were 'well attended.'[326] Maria Yen, a young college student during the initial years of PRC rule, recalls her and her

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[324] Macfarlane to Canton, 27 July 1949, FO 953/579, TNA.

[325]For Miss Grier, the new division of functions between the Information Department and the Council should be readjusted as it opened the door to suspicion as 'does the fact that some of its activities are frankly propagandist', Miss Grier (British Council, Shanghai) to Mr Shreeve (British Council, London), 19 September 1949, BW 23/52, TNA.

[326] A diary account from A.J.S. white states 'At the end of 1951 the council centres were still having packed houses for their lectures, film shows, music retails and exhibitions, and the libraries and reading room were more crowded that ever', quoted in F.L. Donaldson, *The British Council: the first 50 years* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984), p. 158.

peers' attendance at a British Council exhibition that was celebrating Shakespeare.[327] However an overview of the scope and effectiveness of the Council's own cultural activities in the projection of Britain **is** missing. Whatever the nature and extent of the Council's activities, unfortunately for the British, it was not to last long in communist China.

As Frances Donaldson has noted in her study of the British Council, the Council's days in China were numbered following the formation of the PRC.[328] From early on the function of the British Council was brought into question by opinion-makers in the communist regime. In September 1949, in a letter to the editor published in one of the big Shanghai Chinese-language dailies, the *Ta Kung Pao*, it was argued that the activities of the British Council needed to be stopped. Besides offering a base from which to carry out espionage, the Council's purport to be merely publicising English culture was questioned. The letter cited as evidence the example of a British magazine, on display in the Council's library, which included images of the recent Amethyst crisis with captions that labelled British officers who had shot and killed communist soldiers as 'heroes.' The letter's author recorded this as an example of the Council's undercover activities, and urged that the British Council should face the same fate as USIS. While the British Council in Shanghai asserted that the magazine was never actually displayed in the library (having been withdrawn after it was placed on the Chinese librarian's desk), it was clearly concerned about the article. A British official noted that not only did the article point to the existence of a communist on the staff of the library; it also signalled possible future action against the Council. It was recognised that 'letters to the editor' were now usually written by the paper's

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[327] M. Yen, *The Umbrella Garden: a picture of student life in Red China* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1954).

[328] Donaldson, *The British Council,* p. 158.

staff as instruments of policy and that they now saw themselves as representing the 'will of the people'. [329]

As negotiations between the British and Chinese governments stalled, the British Council's student exchange programme was halted; and entry visas and permits to travel within China for Council staff were refused.[330] Thus, while the British Council was not directly forced from China, it was decided that with a limited budget the Council's resources should not be wasted where its efforts were not 'profitable'.[331]

In July 1951, the British Council in Nanjing was closed. Permission to send its books and periodicals on to Peking and Shanghai were refused by the authorities, and the library was forced to hand over its belongings to the local Cultural Bureau. The Beijing and Shanghai Office followed suit.

Conclusion of chapter

In his report of 1947, Pilcher had concluded that:

> We must lose no possible opportunity, whether by 'Information' or 'cultural' methods, of placing before the Chinese the basic principles of Western European civilisation and of our own contribution to it. All other activities at

[329] J. Evans (British Council, China) to Shreeve (British Council, London), 27 September 1949, BW 23/52, TNA.

[330] Foreign Office to Peking, 26 January 1952; (Lamb) Peking to Foreign Office, 19 February 1952, BW 23/52, TNA.

[331] Jon Howlett has shown a similar experience for British businesses in China, the PRC simply made it impossible for them to continue to operate rather than giving some 'order' to close it down. J. Howlett, The British boss is gone and will never return': Communist takeovers of British companies in Shanghai (1949–1954), *Modern-Asian-Studies,* 47/6 (2013), pp. 1941-1976.

> the moment pale into insignificance before this [the rise of communism in China]. [332]

This chapter has shown how during the early Cold War, positive propaganda in China did form part of Britain's global anti-communist agenda. In projecting a certain kind of Britain an alternative to communism could be demonstrated.

Unlike the IRD, the IPD (given the content of its messages) faced no objections from the British Embassy in its propaganda operations. It was able to collaborate and establish strong relations with BIS in China to improve the content and reach of propaganda. These propaganda services were however severely limited by the effects of the Chinese civil war. Once again, as shown in Chapter Two, British overseas officials proved to be 'optimistic' in their prediction of life under the PRC, specifically this time in regards to the continuation of information services. However, all information offices had been forcibly closed down by the end of 1950.

The second section of the Chapter has shown the role played by the Council and the BBC through 'cultural means' in the projection of Britain in China. While relations between the organisations and the British Government were far from harmonious, with refusals to carry out the 'information' service of the IPD, both worked with the Foreign Office to try to improve the reach and effectiveness of their services. The hostile environment in communist China can be seen to ultimately have limited any pretence of influencing the Chinese population.

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[332] Pilcher, Report on visit, 1947, FO 953/320, TNA.

Chapter Four. Hong Kong and negative propaganda

In May 1949, Sir Walter Fletcher, the Member of Parliament for Bury, stood in the House of Commons debate on China and warned:

> The plum is ripening and there may be greedy hands that want to pluck it. We may be able to counter that…by persuading those hands that the plum would rot in them, and that they would be quite incapable of getting the best out of it.[333]

The plum in question was Hong Kong and the 'greedy hands' were the growing communist forces in China. Just what the British could do to keep Hong Kong from falling into the grasp of the Chinese communists is the focus of the chapter.

Following the defeat of Japan in the Second World War Britain was determined to re-establish colonial rule in Hong Kong, in place since the Treaty of Nanking of 1842. Yet with limited resources and extensive overseas commitments, post-war Britain's ability to retain Hong Kong was far from certain. Questions were raised by government and the military over what Britain, with its scarce resources, would be willing to do in order to protect its place in Hong Kong if challenged again.[334] For the

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[333] Fletcher had experience of the region, working for the Special Operations Executive during the Second World War, where he ran an operation called *Operation Remorse*. He worked to smuggle items out of Japanese-occupied Malaya and Indo-China through the Chinese black market. See the works of Richard James Aldrich and Neville Wylie: R. J. Aldrich, *Intelligence and the war against Japan: Britain, America and the politics of secret service* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 287; and N. Wylie, The *politics and strategy of clandestine war: Special Operation Executive, 1940-1946* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), p. 193; Mr. Fletcher, MP for Bury, House of Commons Debate (HC Deb), CHINA (BRITISH POLICY), 5 May 1949, vol. 464, cc1224-349.

[334] Concern at the centre of the British Government as to whether and how to protect Hong Kong in the perceived threat from Chinese communists can be seen through a number of Cabinet minutes and conclusions throughout 1949. Cabinet Conclusions, 28 April 1949, CAB 128/15/30;

British, Hong Kong was too valuable to be abandoned in peacetime yet too peripheral to be worth committing scarce resources to for its survival. Its vulnerability became ever more acute as communist forces continued to make gains in China, coupled with America's continued refusal to commit to the future protection of Hong Kong.[335] While the British Cabinet did approve the sending of reinforcements to Hong Kong in May 1949, this was essentially to provide some psychological relief against an anticipated external attack; few in the corridors of Whitehall suffered any illusions as to Hong Kong's fate in the event of a large-scale Chinese Communist attack.[336] Hong Kong was essentially indefensible. The late 1940s was a period of heightened anxiety for the Colonial Government as they looked for alternative ways to safeguard Hong Kong's future under British rule.[337]

Cabinet Conclusions, 26 May 1949, CAB 128/15/38; Cabinet Conclusions, 29 August 1949, CAB 128/16/11, The National Archives (TNA), Kew.

For comment on the military defence options in Hong Kong, see: R. Gregorian, 'To the Last Round': the Defense of Hong Kong, 1948–50,' in *The British Army, the Gurkhas and Cold War Strategy in the Far East, 1947–1954* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

[335] With America's reluctance the British government also turned to the Commonwealth for support of its position in Hong Kong, particularly Australia, but again no outright commitment was offered. Cabinet Conclusions, 9 May 1949, CAB 128/15/33; Cabinet Conclusion, 22 July 1949, CAB 128/15/42, TNA.

[336] The reinforcements included soldiers, artillery and aircraft, see: A. Cathcart and A. N. Shaw, 'No space for democracy, Political dissidence in colonial/contemporary Hong Kong,' *Asia Research Institute*, Hong Kong Free Press, 23/07/2017 <https://www.hongkongfp.com/2017/07/23/>, accessed 7.6.2018; Cabinet Conclusion, 9 May 1949, CAB 128/15/33,TNA.

[337] For an excellent account of the anxiety in Hong Kong which accompanied this period see: W. R. Louis, 'Hong Kong, the critical phase,' *American Historical Review,* 102/44 (1997), pp. 1052-1084.

The main threat for the colonial government was not the launch of an external onslaught by the Chinese communists on the colony itself but rather the threat of internal unrest and the overthrow of the colony from within.[338] As migration into Hong Kong from the mainland grew during the Chinese civil war, a range of groups with different ideologies developed in the colony. These included Kuomintang (KMT) troops and loyalists; wealthy Shanghai and Guangzhou industrialists; anti-communist and pro-communist intellectuals; and many from various walks of life who supported or endorsed communism, some of whom were later feared to be 'fifth columnists.'[339]

China's unfinished civil war continued in colonial Hong Kong beyond 1949, with both the CCP and the KMT (now having fled to Taiwan) attempting to extend their influence in the colony.[340] Hong Kong was a place where both sides could 'freely disseminate information and disinformation and seek to reach out to as many

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[338] For an insight into why an external onslaught was never conducted by Communist China, see: P. Roberts, 'Cold War Hong Kong: Juggling Opposing Forces and Identities', in P. Roberts and M. Carroll, (eds.), *Hong Kong in the Cold War* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016), pp.26-59.

[339] For debates on the impact and make-up of refugees, see: L. Yan, 'Limits to Propaganda: Hong Kong leftish Media in the Cold War and beyond', in Z. Yangwen, H. Liu and M. Szonyi (eds.), *The Cold War in Asia: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (Leiden: Koninkliijke Brill, 2014), p. 98; I. Aitken and M. Ingham, *Hong Kong Documentary Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014); C. Mark, 'The "Problem of People": British Colonials, Cold War Powers, and the Chinese Refugees in Hong Kong, 1949-62', *Modern Asian Studies*, 41 (6), (2007), p. 1179; and C. Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War: Anglo-American Relations 1949-1957* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).

For an interesting discussion on who the fifth columnists were and their roles see: Y. Qian, 'Beijing's Fifth Column and the Transfer of Power in Hong Kong: 1983–1997,' in R. Ash et al. (eds.), *Hong Kong in Transition* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

[340] Mark, 'The "Problem of People"', pp. 1145-1181.

Chinese as possible,' albeit within the confines of the colonial legal structure.[341] It was the infiltration of communist ideology and associated attacks on the Western world that were seen to be potentially detrimental to harmony within the domestic sphere and thus the stability of the colonial government.[342] As Leslie Smith, who became one of the leading figures in Hong Kong's propaganda work in the 1950s, warned, 'Hong Kong cannot be held by force indefinitely if the population is hostile.'[343]

The decision to pursue an ongoing, positive relationship with China, even under communist rule from the end of 1948, by the British Government was an attempt not only to protect British trading interests in Hong Kong but also its possession of the colony. In securing relations with Communist China it was hoped that the prospect of the communists launching an overt attack on Hong Kong, whether ideologically or materially, would be minimised. However, as the future of China and its relations with Britain remained uncertain, concerns over the future of Hong Kong and the impact of communist ideology remained. From 1948 onwards, steps were taken by the British to limit and combat any communist influence in Hong Kong through anti-communist (negative) propaganda. These steps provide the focus of this chapter.

The Chapter is split into three sections. The first section will document the emergence and establishment of a negative anti-communist propaganda campaign in Hong Kong

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[341] G. Wang, 'Hong Kong's Twentieth Century; The Global Setting,' in P. Roberts and M. Carroll (eds.), *Hong Kong in the Cold War* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016), p. 8. and: Yan, 'Limits to Propaganda', pp. 95-118.

[342] Refugees weren't the only source of concern in regards to the spread of communism through the Colony. According to Lu Yan, it was Hong Kong's workers and radical intellectuals, who had settled before the new wave of immigration, and who 'now enthusiastically embraced the new communist China.' Yan, 'Limits to Propaganda,' p. 98.

[343] L. Smith (then Kemsley Press correspondent to China) to C.B.B. Heathcote-Smith (political adviser to Hong Kong Government) 1st October 1949, CO 537/ 5132, TNA.

to show the initial determination by the British to confront this perceived Chinese communist threat.

The second section will then reveal how, in line with a broader change of British policy towards China and changes in the geopolitical climate, the imagined anti-communist propaganda campaign in Hong Kong was confined and hindered by key British actors who had earlier championed such efforts. The actors involved in the information sphere in Hong Kong will be shown to be numerous, uncoordinated, and often acting in silos as each sought to achieve their own, distinct aims.

The final section will explore the role that censorship played in responding to the use of anti-communist propaganda. It will show that while Britain prepared a number of laws for use in Hong Kong in anticipation of a communist China, few were put into practice and those that were did not target solely a communist influence but all potential threats to Hong Kong's internal stability. The Chapter will conclude that once again concerns over the impact of Sino-British relations and specifically the implications for the future of Colony, were largely prioritised over Britain's commitment to the global anti-communist campaign.

Literature Overview

Hong Kong has arguably taken an unjustifiably minor place in Cold War history given its regional status and proximity to China. Work on the subject, is, however, growing. Significant insights have been put forward by Steve Tsang, Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, Chi-Kwan Mark, and most recently by contributors to Priscilla Roberts and John Carroll's edited collection.[344] Cumulatively, this literature has helped to demonstrate

[344] S. Tsang, 'Strategy for survival: The cold war and Hong Kong's policy towards Kuomintang and Chinese communist activities in the 1950s, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 25/2 (1997), pp. 294-317; N. Bernkopf Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong and the United States, 1945-1992: Uncertain friendship*s (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994); Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold*

the complex environment that existed in Hong Kong and its importance in wider Cold War relationships.

The use of the colony as an outpost for American intelligence, covert action and propaganda towards Communist China has gained particular attention.[345] When the PRC was established in 1949, Hong Kong became a frontline city for Western interests in China, being both a site for monitoring the PRC and a conduit into that country. The 'American diaspora' in Hong Kong was, as a result, vast and continued to grow from the 1950s onwards.[346] The American approach to Hong Kong is often cited in literature in sharp contrast to that of the British.

The colonial government's policy of 'neutrality' in regard to mainland China has been relatively well documented. It was initially adopted during the Chinese civil war and carried over after the establishment of the PRC.[347] In recognition of the precarious

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*War.*and: P. Roberts and J. Carroll (ed.), *Hong Kong in the Cold War* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016).

[345] For details on US operations in Hong Kong see: J. R. Lombardo, 'A Mission of Espionage, Intelligence and Psychological Operations: The American consulate in Hong Kong, 1949-64,' in R. J. Aldrich, G. D. Rawnsley and M. T. Rawnsley (eds.), *The Clandestine Cold War in Asia, 1945-1965,* (London: Frank Cass, 2004), p. 64; Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong and the United States, 1945-1992:* C. Mark, 'American China Hands,' in C. Y. Chu (ed), *Foreign Communities in Hong Kong, 1840s–1950s* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); and L. Xun, 'The American Cold War in Hong Kong, 1949-1960: Intelligence and Propaganda, in P. Roberts and J. Carroll (eds.), *Hong Kong in the Cold War* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University, 2016), pp. 117-140.

[346] The size and activities of the American Consulate-General in Hong Kong dramatically increased as the Americans withdrew from China. The term 'American diaspora' is borrowed from Mark, *Hong Kong and Cold War*, p. 177.

[347] For an insight into Hong Kong's place in the context of Anglo-Chinese relations that emerged post-1945, see: C. Chan, 'Hong Kong and its strategic values for China and Britain (1949-1968),' *Journal of Contemporary Asia,* 28/3 (1998), pp. 346-365. And: Francis Yi-hua Kan, 'The position of

position of Hong Kong and its desire to protect the colony from Chinese aggression, the colonial government sought to refrain from policies or activities that could be interpreted as acts of interference in Chinese affairs and thus provoke action from the PRC. As a result, the colonial government's behaviour during the early Cold War is often associated with restrictions on and reprimands of America's propaganda operations, led by the United States Information Service (USIS), particularly when targeted at a Hong Kong audience.[348] Due to this non-confrontational position adopted by the colonial government, there has been little subsequent exploration of Britain's more discreet actions within Hong Kong to combat a communist influence.

In recent decades, this standardised history of colonial Hong Kong in the Cold War has, to a degree, been challenged by both Mark (2004), and Roberts and Carroll (2016).[349] Mark's diplomatic account places Hong Kong at the heart of the Anglo–American relationship in the wider context of the Cold War in Asia. While agreeing that the colonial government often acted as a restraining force, particularly to proposed overt actions, Mark reveals a level of collaboration between Britain and America on matters of intelligence and propaganda in tackling communist influence in Hong Kong. The colonial government's expressed anxiety over American policy was, on occasion, unheeded by the British Government in their concern for Anglo-

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Hong Kong in Britain's policy towards the two rival Chinese regimes during the early years of the cold war,' *Civil Wars*, 2/4 (1999), pp. 106-137.

[348] On restrictions placed on the US in Hong Kong see K. Ng, (2015), 'Colonial Censorship and the Cultural Politics of Cinema in the Cold War,' General Research Fund (GFR), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267902231, accessed 11.7.2018; Also see: Mark, 'American "China hands."'

[349] Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*. and: Roberts and Carroll (eds.), *Hong Kong in the Cold War*.

American relations. Despite British restrictions on KMT and communist operations, Mark shows how America was allowed greater leeway in its operations than other powers.[350] Crucially, in revealing this Anglo-American relationship, both Roberts and Mark question whether Hong Kong's neutrality with regard to communism and communist China was genuine.

It is Christopher Sutton (2017), in his analysis of British colonial policy-makers' engagement in this Cold War battleground, who offers the most confident dismissal, thus far, of the supposed neutrality of the Hong Kong Government with regards to communism during the Cold War.[351] Rather than being constrained by a comparison of British and American activities, where America's far greater involvement diminishes Britain's role by comparison, Sutton focuses on the actions of the British colonial government. Sutton asserts that, from the beginning, British officials both in London and in Hong Kong were in fact 'explicitly anti-communist in their motivation and intentions for policy formation, beginning 1948, if not earlier.'[352] He points to anti-communist propaganda, led by the Foreign Office's Information Research Department (IRD) in Hong Kong, and to the increased use of censorship by the colonial government. Unfortunately, limited by his main aim of comparing the colonial experience of Cyprus to that of Hong Kong, Sutton fails to give any substantial detail as to the extent or nature of these activities, nor the relationships between the relevant actors.

Sutton's work provides the basis on which this Chapter will build. Using an array of Colonial Office and BBC records, as well as the private papers of Malcolm MacDonald, Commissioner for the U.K. in South East Asia (1948 -1955), and newly released

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[350] Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*.

[351] C. Sutton, *Britain's Cold War in Cyprus and Hong Kong: A conflict of Empires* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

[352] Sutton, *Britain's Cold War in Cyprus and Hong Kong,* p. 10.

Foreign Office files acquired through successful Freedom of Information requests, this Chapter will challenge the existing narrative on Hong Kong's Cold War involvement and reveal the extent of Britain's anti-communist propaganda activities in Hong Kong.

Section One. Plans for anti-communist propaganda campaign in Hong Kong

As Mao's forces gained ground on the mainland in the late 1940s, for British officials in Hong Kong, 'the ideological onslaught had begun.'[353] However the prospect of fighting communism on this front was confidentially noted as being far from 'hopeless' by the British Governor of Hong Kong, Sir Alexander Grantham, (1947-157) with his government looking towards 'propaganda and publicity' as their 'best weapon.' [354]

The Colonial Office had its own specialised department for the co-ordination and distribution of propaganda. Known as the Colonial Office's Information Department (COID), originally called the Public Relations Department, it had come into existence

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[353] Leslie Smith, then Kemsley Press correspondent (China) to C.B.B. Heathcote-Smith (political adviser to Hong Kong Government) 1st October 1949, CO 537/ 5132, TNA.

[354] Grantham was seen as an 'old China hand,' having had a long career as a diplomat and an ongoing relationship with Hong Kong. He had first joined the Colonial Administrative Service as a cadet in the Hong Kong civil service in 1922, where he was trained in Cantonese. He spent 10 years in the Hong Kong administration culminating with the position of Deputy Clerk of The Legislative Council of Hong Kong for a brief period in 1933. In 1945 after the War he became Governor of Fiji and then High Commissioner of the Western Pacific from 1945 until 1947. Details of Grantham's career can be found in his book: A. Grantham, *Via Ports: From Hong Kong to Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1963).

Grantham to Rayner (RIO,S), Memorandum relating to problems which may become subject of controversy or negotiations between Hong Kong and Chinese Communist regime 15th November 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

in 1942 as a result of wartime pressure.[355] Although the department was initially charged with the co-ordination and direction of publicity and propaganda in the colonies, it was the Foreign Office that guided this department in its new, anti-communist direction and effort. (For further information on the COID and the Colonial Information Policy Committee (CIPD), whose agenda was directed by the Foreign Office see chapter one).

The ultimate responsibility for disseminating propaganda lay with each individual colony. In Hong Kong the machinery for anti-communist publicity initially lay with Hong Kong's Public Relations Officer and Office (PRO). The PRO, originally called the Press Relations Office, was formed as a result of the need to deal with war correspondents in the aftermath of hostilities at the end of the Second World War. The office was established on a formal footing as a new governmental department, once a civilian administration took over from the military in May 1946. The principal function of the office was liaison with the press, the interpretation of policy for the public, and to inform the government about public opinion.[356] However, the ability of the PRO to truly challenge the growing ideological communist threat in Hong Kong was increasingly brought into doubt.

Cabinet Minutes of March 1949 also reveal apprehension over the growing influx of refugees from China and the communist influence that they could bring into Hong Kong. Ministers questioned what could be done to control the latter without

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[355] Rosaleen Smyth has detailed the reluctance of the 'tradition bound' Colonial Office to engage in the Public Relations sphere even during the war. R. Smyth, 'Britain's African colonies and British propaganda during the Second World War,' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 14/1 (1985).

[356] The PRO went through a series of recognisable stages over the next forty years and continued to exist in essence until the handover of Hong Kong in 1999. For an overview see: Hong Kong Government Record Service, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region,' <http://www.grs.gov.hk/PRO/>, accessed 11.7.2018.

upsetting the communists in China.[357] The apparent inactivity of Hong Kong in combating communist influence in the Colony was subsequently brought to the attention of the House of Commons. Sir Walter Fletcher, Conservative MP for Bury, warned that there was no vernacular newspaper in Chinese which put the view of the British Government before the Chinese.[358] Fletcher alleged, inaccurately, that there were 'a great many Communist and Left Wing newspapers' with none to counter them.[359]

Albert Alexander, the British Minister of Defence, urged that more work needed to be done in countering communist influence in Hong Kong. In a report based on his travels to the region in the summer of 1949, Alexander suggested that, unlike the US (whose service 'impressed'), British radio broadcasts in Hong Kong, which summarised newspaper editorials, failed to give a British opinion.[360] His report pushed the Colonial Office to initiate further discussions with the IRD on the possibilities in Hong Kong. It was the Colonial Office that would be 'responsible for implementing any action that may be considered necessary on Mr Alexander's recommendations.'[361]

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[357] Cabinet Conclusions, 8 March 1949, CAB 128/15, TNA.

[358] Mr. Fletcher, MP for Bury, House of Commons Debate (HC Deb), CHINA (BRITISH POLICY), 5 May 1949, vol 464, cc1224-349.

[359] This was not quite an accurate reflection. While there were many pro-CCP newspapers such as *Xinhua News Agency*, *Wen Wei Po* and *Ta Kung Pao,* there were also some pro-KMT newspapers such as Kung Sheung Daily News (Gongshang ribao), which was the main pro-KMT newspaper in Hong Kong at this time in the 1950s.

[360] 'Relevant section' of the Minster of Defence's report from his travels, Colonial Office to Mr Roberts (Hong Kong) 5 July 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

[361] Wallace (Colonial Office) to K. W. Blackburne (Director of Information Services/Colonial Office) 22 June 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

The need to improve Hong Kong's propaganda machinery started to be discussed in earnest amongst Colonial Office and Foreign Office officials in mid-1949, as the communists crossed the Yangtze River and a communist victory in China looked certain. The Foreign Office's recently established Regional information Office (RIO) in Singapore (S) (1949) appeared to be the most obvious place to oversee any new propaganda arrangement.[362] Following the outbreak of the Malayan Emergency in 1948, and in the context of growing concerns about the spread of communism in South East Asia, the IRD had agreed with the Commissioner General's Office (CGO) in Singapore about the establishment of a regional office branch of the Information Department. The RIO (S) whose existence, unlike that of the IRD, was not secret but was discreet in its operation to serve the propaganda requirements of colonial governments and foreign missions in South-East Asia.[363]

In June 1949, consultations began, between the head of the RIO (S), John Rayner and Grantham, on ways to improve Hong Kong's propaganda machinery.[364] Both agreed on the need to use propaganda in Hong Kong to tackle the communist threat, and that the existing arrangements with the PRO were not fit for purpose. Besides them doubting the ability of the man in charge of the PRO, Gordon Harman, their disillusionment came down to one of finance and the suitability of a government organisation to issue the desired propaganda. [365] On the subject of finance, Grantham

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[362] Wallace to K.W. Blackburne, 22 June 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA; Memorandum by Overseas Planning Section, 'Anti-communist measures in the Far East', Official Committee of Communism, 15 August 1950, CAB 134/4, TNA.

[363] For an overview of the RIO (S) and its activities see I. Aitken, *The British Official Film in South-East Asia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 90.

[364] References to these meetings are noted in: Malcom MacDonald, Commissioner-general for SEA, telegram to the Foreign Office, 12 June 1949, CO 537/5132. TNA.

[365] Beside the Public Relation Officer being 'fully occupied with routine publicity of the Colony' Grantham questioned the aptitude of Harman, stating in a conversation with the Minister of

noted that expanding the PRO's range of work to include engagement with specific anti-communist publicity work would be expensive. With the increased defence commitments already under way, and an influx of refugees exerting pressure on public services, finding the money for this new venture within an existing budget would be difficult. In addition, Rayner and Grantham agreed that if propaganda was to be effective it needed to be distanced from the PRO, as work under this office could create 'a certain suspicion in the minds of the Chinese press…if they feel this office is primarily a propaganda set-up.' The use of an already overt office as a vehicle through which to organise and distribute anti-communist propaganda was thus seen as a hindrance to such work. It was therefore agreed that a separate Information Office was needed for the job in hand. The new office should, it was advised, come under the authority of RIO (S). This would not only mean that the Foreign Office would have to cover a large portion of the expenses of the propaganda outfit, but that propaganda would be more effective as it would not be associated with the PRO in the minds of the Chinese. It was accepted, however, that the new regional office would need to consult with the PRO behind the scenes.[366]

In the summer of 1949 an agreement was reached between Whitehall, the Regional Information Office in Singapore and the Hong Kong Colonial Government on the need for Hong Kong to assert a propaganda offensive to protect itself from communist influences. The resolution marked a radical change in the direction of colonial Hong Kong's propaganda activities, in recognition of the looming communist threat and as the Cold War lines became more firmly entrenched.

Defence that he was not the man to 'set the Thames on fire'. MacDonald to Foreign Office, 28 June 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

[366] Grantham to Ralph Hone (Deputy Commissioner General for Southeast Asia (Colonial Affairs)) 20 June 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

At a meeting of the Colonial Office Information Committee in June 1949 the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office agreed, in response to recommendations from its officials, to set up an offshoot of the RIO (S) in Hong Kong. The creation of the Regional Information Office Hong Kong (RIO (HK)) was regarded as the best option for pursuing anti-communist propaganda in the Colony.[367] The minutes from the meeting noted that while the RIO (S) was supposed to function through local Information Officers, Hong Kong was to be 'considered as a special case in view of its importance with regard to China'.[368] Some Foreign Office officials foresaw Hong Kong as becoming the centre of a communist propaganda battle in the Far East. These included the Commissioner-General for South-East Asia (SEA), Malcolm Macdonald, who had argued that the need for an Information Office to 'attend to this side of business [seemed] incontestable.'[369]

The new office was to receive directives, guidance and publicity material from the RIO (S), and thus indirectly from the Foreign Office, with the close consultation of the Hong Kong Government and the British Embassy in China. At the local level, the office was to form a close relationship with Hong Kong's Public Relations Officer and seek to advise the Political Adviser to the Hong Kong Government.[370] While the initial agreement of power sharing between the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office to the setting up of the RIO (HK) seemed a relatively straightforward task, the harmony

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[367] While secondary literature has acknowledged the existence of RIO (HK) there has thus far been very little discussion on the creation of the organisation and its activities. See: T. Maguire, *British and American intelligence and anti-communist propaganda in early Cold War Southeast Asia, 1948-1961* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2015).

[368] Colonial Office Information Committee, Minutes, 30 June 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

[369] Concern from MacDonald is arguably unsurprising given the fact that he was fighting the communist insurgency in Malaya. Memo. from MacDonald, 25 July 1949, FO 1110/185, TNA.

[370] Grantham to Rayner, 15 November 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA,

between the departments did not last, as discussions about the aims of the propaganda office began.

Crucially, in discussions between officials in Hong Kong and Singapore leading up to the committee meetings, the precise nature of the work and the terms of reference for the officer leading this new outfit were ambiguous. The Information Committee, while acknowledging the need to establish the RIO (HK), had concluded that before any action could be taken to launch this organisation, more information was needed from Singapore and Hong Kong about the intended nature of the work of the office.[371] This proved to be a far from easy task.

Debate grew between the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, the Governor of Hong Kong, H. M. Ambassador to China and the Commissioner-General's Office in SEA on the aims and type of propaganda services of the new office, and specifically as to whether or not the office would focus its efforts on producing anti-communist propaganda.

As has been detailed in chapter two, between 1948 and 1949, British propagandists were preparing and developing their anti-communist campaign for the Far East. However, under the instruction of the Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, policy-makers in London had begun to consider a policy of conciliation towards the communists in China in order to protect British interests. The two agendas were far from complementary and Bevin had expressed his anxiety about how anti-communist propaganda might prejudice his China policy (see chapter three).

Bevin's concerns were aligned with the approach long championed by the British Ambassador to China, Sir Ralph Stevenson. As we saw in the preceding chapter, Stevenson had repeatedly opposed the issue of anti-communist propaganda in China, and also in the wider Far East. As discussions on the new propaganda office in Hong

[371] Colonial Office Information Committee, Minutes, 30 June 1949, CO 537.5132, TNA.

Kong reached Stevenson, he warned Grantham that this move would lead to Hong Kong becoming the focal point for anti-communist propaganda in the Far East. He also underlined that criticism of communism would risk provoking the Chinese Communists to stir up trouble in the colony itself. For Stevenson the risk was too high, especially as the acceptance of such material by the Chinese-language press in Hong Kong was likely to be small and would have diminished to almost vanishing point by the time the communist forces had reached the borders of the colony. On this basis, the Ambassador argued for a similar approach to the one he had used in China: propaganda emanating from Hong Kong should only be positive, pro-British and/or pro-colonial Hong Kong. He urged that this was the only way propaganda would be useful, as opposed to harmful. He ended with a request that the Foreign Office keep him informed before any broad policy directives were issued to the RIO officer in Hong Kong so that due weight could be given to the British Embassy in Nanjing's viewpoint.[372]

The IRD, whose remit was to produce anti-communist propaganda, sought to address these fears. While Bevin's concerns appear to have abated somewhat with the assertion that Hong Kong would not be used as a base to issue anti-communist propaganda to China or the wider region, the IRD struggled to quell the concerns raised by the Ambassador. Stevenson's warnings of Hong Kong's vulnerability appear to have struck a chord with Grantham.[373] Given the colonial government's wish to protect Hong Kong from charges of interference by the Chinese communists, Grantham wrote to the Colonial Office noting his agreement with the Ambassador and stating that the current draft directive placed the 'emphasis too heavily on anti-communist publicity', in effect making Hong Kong purely an advanced base for

[372] Stevenson to Foreign Office, 2 August 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

[373] Discussion shows the IRD were content that Bevin's concerns had been addressed as they concentrated on responding to the concern of Stevenson. Foreign Office to Commissioner General Singapore, 16 August 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

attacking 'eastern communists'. Instead, Grantham suggested that a line be added to the draft, one that stressed the role of positive propaganda.[374]

The IRD, however, were determined not to let communist 'deceptions' go 'un-refuted', and refused to give way altogether. [375] While understanding the reasons behind Grantham's new line, it made its position clear; the RIO (HK) outlet was not to be conducted only on a "positive pro-British, pro-Hong-Kong" basis. In a letter to Singapore, the Foreign Office challenged Stevenson's arguments by expressing doubt that Chinese communist policy would truly be swayed by considerations of whether or not the UK chose to stand up to the PRC propaganda in Hong Kong. As far as the Foreign Office was concerned, whether they could be seen as provocative towards China would depend upon the manner in which the propaganda was disseminated and the type of material used. The Department clarified that they 'did not envisage blatant anti-Chinese communist material being used.'[376]

Eventually, both the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office made compromises, and by November 1949 the terms of reference for the new Hong Kong information outlet, which were acceptable to all of the relevant parties, had been agreed. These were:

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[374] Initial correspondence between Grantham and the Colonial Office suggests that he did not propose the same solution as Stevenson when it came to suitable anti-communist propaganda being issued in Hong Kong itself. Grantham saw that a way to ensure Hong Kong would not open itself to charges of interfering in Chinese domestic affairs would be to ensure that there was an officer appointed to keep in liaison with the political Adviser. However, a month later Grantham's concern on the dangers of anti-communist propaganda appeared to have grown. Grantham to Colonial Office, 15 September 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

[375] Foreign Office to Commissioner General Singapore, 16 August 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

[376] The Hong Kong Government's desire to distance itself from anti-communist work aligned with the IRD requirement that for effective propaganda, the material's governmental origin should be hidden. Foreign Office to Commissioner General Singapore, 16 August 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

a) Dissemination of publicity to counter Chinese Communist propaganda, particularly through the medium of the Chinese press in Hong Kong.

b) Provision of information to local publicists to pass on to their own public in their own manner.

c) Advising Radio Hong Kong on policy to counter Chinese Communist propaganda and supplying them with guidance and material.

d) Collecting propaganda intelligence material for passing to RIO Singapore.

e) Dissemination of positive publicity and information about British and Western democratic achievements and practice in labour, industrial, educational and other fields; and dissemination of similar publicity and information about Hong Kong. [377]

The new department was to distribute positive propaganda and gather information on China, an increasing concern for the Foreign Office with Western intelligence now being cut off in China. Crucially for the IRD, the central tenet remained the same; the office was to respond to Chinese communist propaganda.

The climate, however, was quickly changing. Within two months of this agreement, the Foreign Office had formally recognised Communist China. As has been detailed in Chapter two, the ramifications of this decision could not be ignored by the information departments. In preparation for Britain's recognition in January 1950, a general policy paper on anti-communist propaganda in the Far East was readied by the Colonial Office. It explained, "The broad task of our anti-communist propaganda in the Far East, as seen from London by the Foreign and Colonial Offices, is to impress on the peoples of the area the essential hostility of Kremlin-controlled communism to nationalism in Asia, and thereby to attempt to offset the anti-Imperialist and anti-

[377] Grantham (HK) to Rayner (RIO (S)), 15 November 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

colonial campaign being run there under Russian-Chinese Inspiration." The intention was for Chinese Government to wean itself away from Soviet control and stop identifying itself with the policies of the Soviet Union. This approach was seen as being unlikely to provoke Communist China. The focus, as had been agreed by the IRD in China a year earlier, was Russian aggression. Essentially this meant that 'we should not criticize behaviour of the Chinese Communist Party and Government in acquiescing to the Kremlin's behaviour'.[378]

Nonetheless, it is evident that the Hong Kong Colonial Government was not neutral when it came to the communist threat in the Colony. As the threat from China grew, the colonial government, with the encouragement of the IRD and RIO (S), took steps to combat communist influence in the domestic sphere. While Grantham did start to voice unease at negative anti-communist campaign, a compromise was reached. The establishment of the RIO (HK) arguably signalled Hong Kong's first real attempt to use propaganda to deal with the perceived communist threat to the colony from China.

Section Two. Constraints to the propaganda campaign.

The man tasked with the job of setting up and running the RIO (HK) was Leslie Smith. Formerly of Kemsley Press, Smith was a fluent speaker of Chinese. He had had experience working as a press correspondent in China prior to the war, and also with information activities as an MOI (Ministry Of Information) officer during the Second World War.[379] For Smith the task was to ensure that the organisation operated fully

[378] Memorandum, Anti-communism propaganda in the Far East, Creech-Jones (Secretary of State to the Colonies) to Commissioner General Office, 2 January 1950, CO 537/5132, TNA.

[379] There are a number of indications that Smith had some relationship with MI6. As an MOI officer Smith is alleged to have been involved in clandestine activities from Hong Kong. Kemsley Press was known to allow many of their correspondents to cooperate with MI6 and even took MI6 officers as foreign correspondents. B. Mellor, 'In India, in China, and Twice in Hong Kong,' in C. Matthews and O. Cheun (eds.), *Dispersal and Renewal: Hong Kong University During the War Years* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1998), p. 352; R. L. Keeble, 'Hacks and Spooks.

in accord with all of the terms agreed. The propaganda, largely IRD material in the form of articles and broadcasts, was to discreetly target the press, publicists and radio.[380] However, this was by no means a straightforward process. From early on in its establishment, the RIO (S) sought to alter the scope of the RIO (HK) operation (with the acquiescence of the Colonial Government) in the light of the changing environment.

By June 1950, British anxiety over the threat posed to Hong Kong from Communist China had eased. It was clear that Communist China posed no immediate threat to the British presence in Hong Kong.[381] On the other hand British endeavours to establish diplomatic relations with Communist China were not proving fruitful: the Sino-Soviet alliance remained in place; and China and Britain were now on opposing sides in the Korea War (with Chinese troops crossing the Yalu River into Korea on 14 October 1950). Against this background it appears that interest and apprehension

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Close Encounters of a strange kind: A critical history of the links between Mainstream journalists and intelligence services in the UK,' in J. Klaehn (ed.), *Political Economy of Media and Power* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), p. 95; Blackburn to Murray, 1 December 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

[380] The type of propaganda (i.e., word of mouth or written articles) and the method of dissemination that the RIO was to utilise were never directly addressed at the time of creation. From the aims of RIO (HK) and subsequent references to Smith's work it is clear that the main target was opinion-makers, in particularly the press, who were provided with weekly bulletins and articles. Grantham (HK) to Rayner (RIO (S)), 15th November 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA; FO 1110/401, TNA; Billy Smyly, 'Farewell to a "Chinese Britisher, (Obituary for Leslie Smith),' *South China Morning Post*, 24 March 1985; Leslie Smith to Foreign Office, Regional Information Office, Hong Kong, Report, 26 August 1959, FO 1110/1225, Freedom of Information Request (FOIR).

[381] For an understanding as to why taking over Hong Kong would have made no strategic sense for China see: P. Roberts, 'Cold War Hong Kong: Juggling Opposing Forces and Identities,' in Roberts and Carroll (eds.), *Hong Kong in the Cold War*, p. 32

over the RIO (HK) had subsided. Discussions concerning the RIO (HK) now focused more on the issues of resources and costs.

As Smith started to prepare the RIO (HK) for operations, he requested from the RIO (S) a large range of books that focused on Marxism, Russia and China for reference and background material.[382] While it was unclear exactly how Smith intended to use this material it is apparent his efforts were not altogether welcomed. In a letter to Ralph Murray, the Head of IRD, Rayner, complained that Smith's demands for these publications was far greater than from any other post before. Rayner gave as an example Smith's request for 24,000 copies of each of the two parts of *Behind the Iron Curtain* in Chinese, the cost of which was £5,000 (a huge sum at the time). Rayner emphasised that the RIO (S) budget would not stretch to meet Smith's demand. In the wake of such demands, Rayner began to question the proposed work of the RIO (HK) under the changed environment of Hong Kong and the wider region.

For Rayner, the propaganda efforts had to be turned in full towards South East Asia where, as a result of the Malayan Emergency, concerns over the vulnerability of British rule and the infiltration of communist ideology had intensified. Rayner argued, therefore, that the overseas Chinese in South East Asia were a much 'more important target for us than the Chinese in Hong Kong'.[383] Accordingly, for the RIO (S), the priorities of the Hong Kong Office needed to be readdressed to support this change,

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[382] These included: Stalin, A Political Biography, (Deutscher); Nineteen Eighty Four (Orwell); The British Yoke (Evans); East of the Iron Curtain (Bartlett); Marxism and the National and Colonial Question (Stalin); The Theory and Practice of Communism (Carew Hunt); The God That Failed (Koestler etc); Moscow Mission (Bedell Smith); Soviet Genetics (Huxley); The Twentieth Century in the Far East (Kent); China: the Far East and the Future (Keeton). However, it is unclear from the existing material how Smith planned to distribute them. RIO(S)) to IRD (FO), 7 June 1950, CO 537/6564, TNA.

[383] Rayner (RIO (S)) to Ralph Murray (Head of IRD), 29 May 1950, CO 537/6564, TNA.

and the effort allotted to the dissemination of propaganda within the Colony reassessed (see comments on the tactical importance of the RIO (S) above).

The colonial government in Hong Kong did not challenge the new approach proposed by the RIO (S). The colonial government had repeatedly expressed concern over the propaganda activities of the RIO (HK) on the grounds that it 'might prove embarrassing to them and possibly an irritant in their relations with the Chinese Government.'[384] Further, changes in the organisation of the colonial government's own information machinery now undermined the need for the RIO (HK). The arrival of Lawrence Murray, commonly referred to as 'Jock', as Hong Kong's Public Relations Officer (replacing Harman on his retirement), meant that the quality and scope of the government's information work was enhanced. For the government, the Public Relations Office (PRO)'s focus on 'positive propaganda' was aligned with the change in external circumstances that was seen to necessitate a 'soft-pedalling' of information material.[385] The PRO was now considered capable of carrying out the majority of Hong Kong's information work (see chapter 5 for more detail).

In addition, in understanding the colonial government's opposition to the propaganda of the RIO (HK) it is worth noting that by the mid- 1950s America's own anti-communist propaganda operation was in play in Hong Kong. America's propaganda in Hong Kong has been well documented, as noted above. Chi-kwan Mark's work, in particular, has shown how Britain was acquiescent with the US operation in tackling communism in this sphere. While there is no clear connection between the colonial government's position, with Britain operating its own anti-communist propaganda, and America's growing propaganda role in the colony, it was

[384] Minute by P.G.F Dalton (Foreign Office) Records conversation with Mr Smith on early attempts at anti-communist propaganda in the Colony, 6 February 1959, FO 1110/ 1225, FOIR.

[385] Rayner (RIO (S)) to G.W. Adlington (Political adviser, Colonial Secretariat, Hong Kong) 17 November 1950, CO 537/6564, TNA.

thought that America's anti-communist propaganda operation would be easier to defend to the Chinese communists if objections were made.[386] The colonial government could easily assert that America's actions in Hong Kong were not synonymous with those of Britain and that it could give examples of instances in which it had censored America's overt interference in Hong Kong.

In November 1950 it was agreed between the RIO (S) and the Colonial Secretariat that the role of the RIO (HK) in disseminating publicity to counter Chinese communism should be put on hold. Its anti-communist propaganda approach was no longer seen as appropriate and the promotion of a 'soft' positive propaganda approach was now to become a function of the PRO. Smith's involvement in these activities was not to cease completely as he was asked to be ready to start again on 'anti-communist' propaganda if the circumstances demanded, and to help the PRO in distributing material from the RIO (S). The main priority of the RIO (HK) now was to assist with the work of the RIO (S) for its South-East Asian audience. Smith was to focus his efforts on the collection of propaganda intelligence material for the RIO (S). With the Western presence in China now being restricted under the Communist Government, Smith was to use his position in Hong Kong to find out what was happening in China. He was to make use of his old contacts in the press and media (see below), the Chinese press, and information from travellers, missionaries and refugees arriving from China.[387] In addition to the collection of propaganda

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[386] Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War.*

[387] The refuges likely to be of particularly relevance were the anti-communist intellectuals, see: G. Peterson, 'Crisis and Opportunity: The Work of Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals (ARCI) in Hong Kong and Beyond,' in P. Roberts and J. M. Carroll (eds.), *Hong Kong in the Cold War* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016), pp. 141-159. For information on the role of missionaries see: L. K. Hing, 'A Neglected Story: Christian missionaries, Chinese New Villagers, and Communists in the Battle for the 'hearts and minds' in Malaya, 1948–1960,' *Modern Asian Studies,* 47/6 (2013).

intelligence, Smith was to commission and supply work by Chinese writers and artists[388] for use in the form of articles, pamphlets and books for South East Asia.[389]

The alignment of the desires of both the colonial government and RIO (S) desires meant that, although with different motives, the vivacity of the RIO (HK) seemed to have been put on hold, even before it had got started. Foreign Office officials appeared quiet in the discussions and voiced no apparent objections.

From IRD reports it is apparent that anti-communist propaganda produced and disseminated in Hong Kong did not cease altogether. In the IRD's first real review of the RIO (HK) output in May 1951 it was noted that while, for the purposes of cover, the office purported to be the centre of 'positive British information,' the office was able to seed 'quite a number' of IRD feature articles about communism in the local Hong Kong press. While details on how Smith was able to achieve this are not clear, IRD descriptions note his 'dynamic personality,' journalistic background, and his wide range of contacts in Hong Kong.[390]

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[388] America's Asian Foundation funded Union Press is an example of an organisation in Hong Kong that used cultural work to target young 'overseas Chinese,' see: S. Sheng, Empire of Information: The Asia Foundation's Network and Chinese-Language Cultural Production in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia, *American Quarterly*, 69/3 (2017), pp. 589-610.

[389] With the lack of reliable information coming out of China, both for propaganda and intelligence, collecting information from sources in Hong Kong took priority. Rayner (RIO) to G.W. Adlington (Political adviser, Colonial secretariat, Hong Kong) 17th November 1950, CO 537/6564, TNA.

[390] An article on the obituary for Smith notes how his bureau produced a weekly China bulletin and circulated articles to many newspapers: Smyly, 'Farewell to a 'Chinese Britisher,' (Obituary for Leslie Smith).' Also: F.C Stacey (Foreign Office), Minute, Visit of Mr Smith, 28 May 1951, FO 1110/401 (FOIR).

It is likely that Smith's ability to make contacts helped in his relations with the US. The IRD report from 1951 notes that Smith reported being on 'good relations' with his USIS counterpart, exchanging press reviews and translations.[391] Further, Smith had direct links to Father Laszlo Ladany, a Jesuit priest who was forced to flee the Chinese civil war in 1949, and who became one of the most prolific of anti-communist 'China Watchers' in Hong Kong for the next three decades.[392] In 1953, Ladany set up the biweekly *China News Analysis* in Hong Kong. A talented linguist, he monitored Chinese radio broadcasts, maintained a network of cross-border contacts and interviewed recent emigres from the mainland. According to Jim Lilley, a CIA official, 'Ladany produced the best intelligence on China available to the US.'[393]

Therefore, despite agreement between the Colonial Government and the RIO (S) about the activities of the RIO (HK), it was still able to carry out an anti-communist propaganda function in the colony. The IRD report reveals no surprise or concern over this continuing propaganda function of the RIO (HK). What is certain, however, is that the office's propaganda operations were limited. In accordance with the prioritisation of British propaganda for the South East Asian Region demanded by RIO (S), there was a twenty to eighty percentage split between time spent on its

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[391] F.C Stacey (Foreign Office), Minute, Visit of Mr Smith, 28 May 1951, FO 1110/401 (FOIR). An example of anti-communist propaganda used by USIS in various parts of Asia is given in: J. W. Riley's, *The Reds takes a city: The Communist occupation of Seoul, with eyewitness accounts* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1951).

[392] Smyly, 'Farewell to a 'Chinese British,' (Obituary for Leslie Smith).' In the article there is a picture of Father Ladany as one of the pallbearers.

[393] Jim Lilley was a member of the CIA working in China, who in 1989 became US ambassador to China. See: R. Baum, *China Watcher: Confessions of a Peking Tom* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010), pp.232-236.

propaganda output to that of information collection on current developments in China, that could be then used by the Singapore office.[394]

There is no suggestion that the RIO (HK) propaganda efforts expanded beyond getting a number of IRD articles into newspapers, and the effectiveness of even this small propaganda operation was questionable. While these IRD feature articles found particular success in Hong Kong's English dailies, Smith was not achieving the same result in the Chinese press. In response, Smith emphasised to the IRD that the English dailies were read not only by English readers but by English-speaking Chinese and the editors of Chinese-language dailies. However, it is clear that the RIO (HK) was struggling to reach the Chinese audiences intended for its propaganda. Whether this was a result of unwillingness on the part of the Chinese dailies to cooperate fully with government organisations is unclear. However, the outcome is arguably unsurprising given that the Hong Kong office in 1951 was staffed by only four full time employees, including (besides Smith himself) a Chinese assistant and two stenographers.[395]

It also likely that the RIO (HK) propaganda operations were further hindered by the colonial government. The Colonial Government had the right to prevent anything it considered detrimental to its relations with China from being distributed. The strengthening of the PRO caused further difficulties for the RIO (HK), with reports that the PRO had 'denigrated I.R.D. (IRD) on various occasions and created certain difficulties for I.R.D. work'. Smith's explanation for this was that the office was seen

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[394] An obituary praised Mr Smith as a 'pioneer in the gathering and processing of information monitored from local radio stations through Asia:' Smyly, 'Farewell to a 'Chinese British,' (Obituary for Leslie Smith)'. Also: T. Tull (Foreign Office), Minute, Financing of RIO's organisation in Singapore and Hong Kong, 28 December 1951, FO 1110/401 (FOIR).

[395] Whether this was because of limited time and/or resources, or simply the unwillingness of the Chinese to cooperate with government factions is unclear. F.C Stacey (Foreign Office), Minute, Visit of Mr Smith, 28 May 1951, FO 1110/401 (FOIR).

as an anomaly which ought to be under PRO control.[396] Details of what actually took place and to what extent propaganda operations were affected by this are unclear, but it appears to have had the effect of further restricting the already limited propaganda efforts of the RIO (HK) in the early 1950s.

Constraints on the activities of RIO (HK) did ease, with the restrictions on propaganda criticising China (noted above) lifted in 1951.[397] Minutes from F. C. Stacey and Thomas Tull, both IRD officials, highlight Smith's role in this outcome; his material on China strengthened the case for 'removing the ban on publicity about developments in China.' [398] It also appears that a modus vivendi existed between the Public Relations Office and the RIO (HK) by the mid-1950s, where the former was not made aware of all the RIO activities and thus the latter was allowed to operate.[399] However, any work that was critical of China in Hong Kong remained on a limited basis. [400]

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[396] Aide (RIO (HK)) to R. McAndrew (Foreign Office), 4 June 1959, FO 1110/1225 (FOIR).

[397] The proposal to lift the limitations on propaganda were noted at the Bukit Serene Conference in 1951. MacDonald to Foreign Office, Bukit Serene Conference , Propaganda recommendations, 28 November 1951, Malcolm MacDonald Papers, Palace Green Library, Durham University.

[398] The audiences in South East Asia were of great importance to the British. This was due mainly to the ongoing Emergency in Malaya. In 1950-51 the British were struggling to contain the activities of the communists. The anti-Chinese communist propaganda, that Smith could provide, would be an important tool in persuading the uncommitted rural Chinese communities in Malaya to become 'good' Malayan citizens. For details of these events refer to: K. Hack and G. Wade, 'The origins of the Southeast Asian Cold War', *Southeast Asian Studies*, 40/3 (2009), pp. 441-448.

T. Tull, Minute, 31 December 1951, Minute, FO 1110/401 (FOIR); F. C. Stacey (Foreign Office), Minute, Visit of Mr Smith, 28 May 1951, FO 1110/401 (FOIR).

[399] H. H. Tucker (IRD, Head of editorial section), 17 June 1959, FO 1110/1225 (FOIR).

[400] In a review of the RIO (HK) with a view to closing it down in 1959, it was noted 'in the early stages of the RIO there was a good deal of general distrust on the part of the Colonial

Section Three. The use of Censorship in Hong Kong.

Between 1948 and 1949, as the Hong Kong Colonial Government feared a communist ideological onslaught, a number of censorship measures were readied. Although it is not the purpose of this chapter to discuss censorship in great detail, as defined at the start of the thesis the two are linked, while propaganda is the supply of information, censorship suppresses information and ideas. Both seek to promote the political view of the government and both were utilised in Hong Kong during the early Cold War.

In its preparation for the establishment of a communist government in China, a number of restrictive laws were enacted and amended by the colonial government in Hong Kong. These mainly targeted the mass media, education, and labour unions. These laws included: the Public Order Ordinance, enacted in October 1948, which prohibited quasi-military organisations and allowed for curfews, closing and evacuation of certain areas; the Illegal Strikes and Lock-outs Ordinance, in April 1949, which rendered illegal any strike or lock-out other than those concerning trade disputes; the Immigrants Control Ordinance, enacted in January 1949, which consolidated and tightened the ordinances for the control of immigration and registration of aliens in the colony; and the Education (Amendment) (No.2) Ordinance, enacted in December 1948, which allowed for the closure of a school or the removal of its manager and to prohibit any person from teaching in any school in the colony.[401] A Colonial Office memorandum, anticipating the establishment of a communist regime which would have complete control of south China, also noted

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Government, but this has now been overcome to some extent and Mr Smith is able to do some limited IRD work in HK itself'. D. Hopson (later to be Charge d'Affaires to Chins, 1965-68) to Mr Marett (Foreign Office), Minute on Mr Leslie Smith, 10 October 1959, FO 1110/1225,FOIR ; R. McAndrew (Foreign Office), minute, 15 December 1959, FO 1110/1225, FOIR.

[401] Colonial Office Report, 'Recent changes in policy towards Chinese communists in HK', 12 August 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

that the Emergency Regulations Ordinances had been updated in readiness to suppress communist media and publications and jam radio messages.[402] While these 'last resort' measures where never required, other censorship measures continued to be prepared throughout the early 1950s.

Lu Yan, in examining Hong Kong's leftist media and their supposed ideological pursuits, has detailed how, between the founding of the PRC and the Korean War, the British authorities issued and reinstated several restrictive ordinances aimed at controlling the Hong Kong press. These included the Sedition Ordinance, first established in 1938 and amended in 1950, which made speech or publication against the colonial authorities a crime, and the Control of Publications Consolidation Ordinance of 1951, which made it a punishable crime to publish 'false news' likely to persuade persons to act unlawfully or disturb public order.[403] However, as Yan shows, the authorities rarely exploited these legal rulings, a result of Hong Kong's non-confrontational approach towards China. [404]

One occasion when these laws were cited was in the colonial government's use of the Sedition Ordinance to suspend publication of an alleged Leftist newspaper over their reporting of the authorities' role in the Tung Tau Fire of November 1951. In

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[402] Memorandum relating to problems which may become the subject of controversy or negotiations between Hong Kong and the Chinese Communist regime 15th November 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

[403] For further legal detail on all the relevant Ordnances enacted see: M. C. Davis, *Constitutional Confrontation in Hong Kong: Issues and Implications of the Basic Law* (London: Macmillan, 1990). and; H. L. Fu, 'Past and Future Offences of Sedition in Hong Kong', available at <https://www.law.hku.hk/ccpl/Docs/SEDITION%20revised.pdf> accessed 11.7.2018. For an analysis on how these Ordnances were passed and pushed under Grantham, and the tensions between Whitehall and Hong Kong, see: Sutton, *Britain's Cold War in Cyprus and Hong Kong*, p. 10.

[404] Yan, 'Limits to Propaganda.'

response to protests from the PRC to London, a concerned Whitehall guided the colonial government back 'to a course of moderation,' which led to the penalty accorded to the newspaper being rescinded, in this case from six months to a twelve day suspension.[405]

This fear that Hong Kong would become 'the Berlin of the East' meant that where the colonial government relied on censorship powers they applied these universally, to target communists and anti-communists alike.[406] This can be seen most visibly in the sphere of cinema, which flourished in Hong Kong in the early 1950s.[407] Initial considerations about an embargo on all Chinese Communist films being distributed in the Summer of 1949 were dropped after the colonial government was cautioned by Foreign Office officials that such a move could be 'potentially explosive' to mutual relations between Hong Kong and China.[408] However, censorship was not ruled out altogether.[409]

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[405] Interestingly Yan shows how the leftish newspapers often censored themselves, out of a wariness of the ordinances and their desire to keep a presence in Hong Kong. The PRC is also seen as following a similar approach, one of non-confrontation in the Colony. Yan, 'Limits to Propaganda.'

[406] This is a term used by Ritchie Ovendale on the question whether the British would be prepared to support Hong Kong if its channels of supply and access were cut off, as had happened in Berlin. R. Ovendale, Britain, the United States, and the Cold War in South-East Asia, 1949-1950, *International Affairs*, 58/3 (1982), pp. 447-464.

[407] Annual Report on Hong Kong, 1953, HKRS 41-1-7883, Public Records Office (PRO), Hong Kong.

[408] W.S. Morgan (Colonial Office), Minute, 21 November 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

[409] For an insightful and in-depth account of the history of Hong Kong film, see: I. Aitken and M. Ingham, *Hong Kong Documentary Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

As Kenny Ng has shown, the colonial government 'introduced and vigorously exercised stringent measures in film censorship to interfere with the production, distribution, and screening of undesirable images for the colony's Chinese audiences'.[410] All films presented for public exhibition were subjected to censorship by a Board of Censors appointed by the government. Between 1951 and 1952, a total of 637 feature films were viewed by this board. Of these, 527 were passed as clean, 81 passed with cuts and 22 were banned.[411] These films came from a variety of sources. For example, in one quarter of 1953 approximately fifteen were British, one hundred and four were American, fifty-six were locally-made Chinese films and twenty were from other countries.[412] Therefore, ccensorship was used not just against the Communist but also against the KMT, and even the American forces, when they did not adhere to the strict legal guidelines.[413] Thus, the cinematic sphere became a battlefield for ideological combat between the Chinese Communists and the Kuomintang, the American-led "liberal camps" and the Soviet-centred Communist blocs on cultural affronts. However, few traces of Cold War politics could

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[410] See: K. Ng, (2015), 'Colonial Censorship and the Cultural Politics of Cinema in the Cold War,' General Research Fund (GFR), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267902231, accessed 11.7.2018.

[411] The ability of the Government to carry this out improved with the new leadership of the PRO. See Chapter 6 for more detail. Report. Films- Censorship Ordinance 1951, HKRS160-1-51, PRO, Hong Kong.

[412] Annual Report on Hong Kong, 1953, HKRS 41-1-7883, PRO, Hong Kong.

[413] Authors Kenny Ng and Jing Jing Chang give examples of the types of films that were banned. See: K.Ng, 'Colonial Censorship and the Cultural Politics of Cinema in the Cold War,' and J. J. Chang, *Screening Communities: Negotiating Narratives of Empire, Nation, and the Cold War in Hong Kong Cinema* (Hong Kong: HK University Press, 2019)

be detected in the mainstream movie culture and daily life in Hong Kong, largely because of the government's covert control.

The fact that censorship laws were introduced to be able to prevent the free circulation of communist ideas and activities, undermines the argument that the Hong Kong Government sought to maintain a position of neutrality in the colony. However, in practice such public restrictions to target communists or 'left' material were rarely applied over concern of agitating the local Chinese population and encouraging any clash of ideologies. Where censorship was used, for example in film, it was applied even-handedly to both communist and anti-communist alike.

Conclusion of chapter

This Chapter has shown, there was a balance to be struck in Hong Kong. While colonial Hong Kong wanted to avoid provoking the CCP for fear of retaliation and therefore sought to maintain an appearance of neutrality, it also wanted to protect the island from unrest and instability. In terms of propaganda, for the colonial government, this meant limiting the scope of the negative anti-communist propaganda targeted in Hong Kong.

The early determination by the British to confront the perceived threat from communist China was thwarted by the lack of means to disseminate the information in the form of the PRO. As a result, in 1949, a new Regional Information Office (HK) was set up with the aim of using anti-communist propaganda to counter communist influences in the colony (not just anti-Soviet propaganda as had been agreed for mainland China). As with all IRD material, this propaganda was disseminated discreetly where possible, hiding its official provenance and targeting opinion makers. In the case of Hong Kong, this focused on the press.

What this chapter has shown, however, is that once again, as in China, this was not achieved in a co-ordinated or planned fashion. A number of actors representing different departments and policy areas were involved, each pushing their own agendas. Initial debates between the main sponsors (i.e., the Foreign Office, the

Colonial Office, the Governor of Hong Kong, the British Ambassador to China and the Commissioner-General of the UK in South East Asia) about the role of the new Regional Office, showed a clash in approaches in regard to future of Hong Kong and its place in the Cold War. While agreement appeared to have been reached with the inauguration of the RIO (HK) in 1949, such agreement did not last long. The RIO (S) under John Rayner pushed for a re-focus of efforts and resources to South-East Asia, to the detriment of RIO (HK). The colonial government, which had already expressed doubts about the role of negative propaganda, readily agreed. To some extent, the Foreign Office's IRD appears to have lost interest after 1950 as tensions in the region eased. These factors combined to ensure that propaganda activities played a more limited role for the RIO (HK) than had at first been imagined.

Despite the disagreement and compromise in the context of evolving British policy towards China, the chapter has shown that anti-communist propaganda was certainly disseminated in Hong Kong. This is an important conclusion which complements the emerging literature of scholars such as Mark, Roberts, and Sutton, who have all started to question the accepted narrative of Hong Kong's neutrality during the Cold War.

The creation of pre-emptive censorship laws, to meet the potential communist ideological threat on the island, reinforces doubt over the consistency of Hong Kong's neutrality. Interestingly, however, the concern for stability of the island meant that such public restrictions were rarely used and where they were, for example in film, they were applied universally. Neutrality, therefore, may be seen to have been dependent upon which sector is being considered; Hong Kong did pursue an anti-communist agenda when it came to propaganda, although discreetly, but it was more neutral when it came to censorship.

This mantra of neutrality and stability is pursued in the next chapter, which introduces the role played by Hong Kong's own revamped publicity office the PRO in producing positive propaganda, albeit with the same notion of confronting any communist threat in Hong Kong.

Chapter 5. Hong Kong and Positive propaganda

By 1950 the Hong Kong colonial government had made clear its opposition to anti-communist propaganda being disseminated in the colony. While no immediate threat of physical hostility from China was feared, concern about the impact of communist influence on the colony's stability remained.[414] As such, the colonial government, under the leadership of Sir Alexander Grantham turned to positive propaganda as a subtler way of combating communist influence within Hong Kong.[415]

The Chapter will show the Colonial Office sought to present the activities of Britain, as well as British rule in Hong Kong, in a positive manner. Propaganda in Hong Kong was, however, unable to touch on the concept of independence (as in other British colonies, due to the notion held by many Foreign Office officials, including Grantham, that Hong Kong should always be viewed as part of China),[416] and was unwilling to sell a new 'Hong Kong identity', as the preference was to maintain the political status quo. [417] Positive propaganda instead focused on a concept of 'Britishness' which

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[414] Although China did not demand an immediate return of China, this did not represent an abandoning or withdrawal from it – rather that it would be facilitated by Chinese propaganda. C. Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War: Anglo-American Relations 1949-1957* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), p 38.

[415] Grantham's discussion of the terms of reference for the Regional Information Office shows his preference for positive propaganda work, insisting that this would be more suitable to the environment in Hong Kong (see Chapter Four). Grantham to Colonial Office, 15 September 1949, CO 537/5132, The National Archives (TNA), Kew.

[416] W. R. Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonisation* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), p. 358.

[417] Grantham argued that any form of political representation would only give the CCP greater opportunity for 'disaffection and trouble making,' A. Cathcart and A. N. Shaw, 'No space for democracy, Political dissidence in colonial/contemporary Hong Kong,' *Asia Research Institute*,

promoted qualities and values that distinguished the British from other peoples in terms of their identity, culture and traditions. It was a 'Britishness' that Hong Kong's citizens could aspire to and something that communism could not offer. [418]

The Chapter will demonstrate how, in projecting a certain image of Britain in Hong Kong, the government also reverted to the use of what was referred to as 'pabulum.' i.e., bland or insipid intellectual matter, often in the form of mainstream entertainment. The central idea was that by promoting such pabulum, the colonial government would be turning Hong Kong listeners, readers and consumers away from pro-communist media.[419]

The Chapter has two sections. The first traces the development of Hong Kong's Public Relations Office (PRO) from the late 1940s to the period of reform and expansion in the 1950s when, as Ian Aitken has suggested, 'the general political situation had become more complex …[meaning] that Government public-relations activity within the colony had to adapt and expand.'[420] It will demonstrate how the PRO offered a means for the colonial government to engage in positive propaganda, focusing on

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Hong Kong Free Press , 23/07/2017 <https://www.hongkongfp.com/2017/07/23/>, accessed 7.6.2018.

[418] For an innovative take on the Colonial relationship in Hong Kong, the power relationship between the colonizer and the Chinese and the intertwinement of Colonialism and nationalism, see L. W. Sang, *Collaborative Colonial Power: The Making of the Hong Kong Chinese* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009).

[419] The reference to the term is found in a Colonial Office discussion in 1956 on Communist propaganda in Hong Kong, where pabulum is noted as a tactic for 'young Chinese minds.' A.M. Macdonald to Sir John Martin, 'Communist Propaganda, Hong Kong', 25 April 1956, CO 1030/188, TNA.

[420] I. Aitken, *The British Official Film in South-East Asia: Malaya/Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 69.

influencing communications such as the Press, Exhibits and films. The second section explores how in its projection of Britain, the PRO engaged and coordinated with other British organisations such as the British Council and Radio Hong Kong (RHK).

This Chapter will assert that, as Hong Kong came to represent 'a global clash of ideologies,' this approach crucially not only offered a means to tackle communism but more generally instability in the colony. [421]

Literature overview and background

As has been set out in Chapter Four, the literature on Hong Kong's role in the Cold War is often seen through an American 'lens,' with the colonial government often depicted as clashing with its American ally. America's attempt to target and use Hong Kong as a base for propaganda aimed at Chinese audiences put it at odds with colonial Hong Kong's attempt to keep the colony neutral. This narrative has meant that little comment has been provided on Britain's own anti-communist activities in the colony, including its positive propaganda endeavours.

Emerging interest in Hong Kong's cultural developments and identity over the twentieth century has provided some interesting insights into Britain's involvement in pushing and facilitating the emergence of certain narratives about Britain and colonial rule in this crucial post-war period. The most relevant studies on the government's involvement in this sphere have come from Ian Aitken (2014, 2016), Michael Ingham (2016), Mark Hampton (2016), and Jing Jing Chang (2019).

[421] Hong Kong was where Chinese from different ideological and social backgrounds could openly share views and distribute ideas without constraint. P. Roberts, 'Cold War Hong Kong: Juggling Opposing Forces and Identities', in P. Roberts and M. Carroll, (eds.), *Hong Kong in the Cold War* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016), p. 15.

Aitken's work exploring British official film in South-East Asia has revealed a level of government involvement in Hong Kong's film industry from 1959 through to 1973, when the Colonial Office set up its own Hong Kong Film Unit.[422] Aitken and Ingham's subsequent book, which explores Hong Kong documentary film making, supports Aitken's earlier findings; film was used by the British in Hong Kong to pursue its own agenda and ensure the government's voice was reaching the local population.[423] Chang's more recent publication, which looks more broadly at cinema in Hong Kong in 1950s, has only served to reinforce how various camps in Hong Kong, including the Colonial government, sought to persuade audiences through film.[424]

Similarly, Mark Hampton's article, analyses the success of the British Council's attempts to project Britishness to the people of Hong Kong from 1950 to the 1970s. It shows how that organisation promoted positive relations with the Chinese through an understanding of British culture and values. Hampton, however, questions the closeness of the collaboration between the Council and the colonial government, and the effectiveness of the British Council.[425] This theme of the failure of Britain's cultural engagement with the Chinese in Hong Kong is repeated in Hampton's monograph on Hong Kong and British culture.[426]

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[422] I. Aitken, *The British Official Film in South-East Asia.*

[423] I. Aitken and M. Ingham, *Hong Kong Documentary Film,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014). And: Aitken, *The British Official Film in South-East Asia*.

[424] J. J. Chang, *Screening Communities: Negotiating Narratives of Empire, Nation, and the Cold War in Hong Kong Cinema* (Hong Kong: HK University Press, 2019)

[425] M. Hampton, 'Projecting Britishness to Hong Kong: the British Council and Hong Kong House, nineteen-fifties to nineteen-seventies', *Historical Research*, 85/230 (2012).

[426] Mark Hampton, *Hong Kong and British Culture, 1945-1997*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press: 2016).

Comments on both the use of film and the British Council note the implications of budget constraints and the reliance on London for material. This is something this Chapter will confirm. It will build on these findings to show the Colonial Government used different forms of media to project Britain in the context of the Cold War and the threat of communism.

Section One. The Public Relations Office (PRO), 1948-1950

The principal functions of the PRO, formed in the aftermath of the Second World War, were to liaise with the press, interpret policy for the public and inform the colonial government of public opinion. As noted in Chapter Four, however, the PRO was regarded by the Colonial Government as not fit to carry out a propaganda function. This conclusion was made on the basis of the aptitude of the organisation, and its inability to improve under the then head officer, Gordon Harman, as well as a concern that any anti-communist work would be undermined if it was run by an established government department, since suspicion of its propagandist nature would easily be aroused.[427]

Just as quickly as the RIO (HK) had been set up, favour and support for it had diminished. While the terms of reference for RIO (HK) did note that the organisation would have a positive propaganda element, its main purpose had been to launch anti-communist rhetoric from the colony. This was something that the colonial government was now wary of. As discussions continued about restricting the RIO (HK)'s propaganda functions in the summer 1950, the colonial government took the decision to strengthen the PRO, and with it the scope and scale of the Colony's information activities.

[427] Grantham to Ralph Hone (Deputy Commissioner General for Southeast Asia (Colonial Affairs)) 20th June 1949, CO537/5132. TNA.

In 1950, the colonial government's Public Relations Office was given a new lease of life. Under the leadership of 'Jock' Murray, the PRO expanded and reformed. What is apparent is that Murray, like Leslie Smith (the head of RIO (HK)), had knowledge of both publicity techniques *and* the dynamics of the region. He had been a Fleet Street journalist before joining the Foreign Office as Press attaché in China. He was stationed at the British embassy in Chongqing during the Second World War. After the war, he had moved to the Foreign Office's Guangzhou office, near the Chinese border with Hong Kong.[428] His appointment appears to have reflected a new determination within the Foreign and Colonial Offices' information services to move away from a reliance on the more traditional 'old China hands' (i.e., those with extensive knowledge and experience of Asia), to fill overseas postings in China. As a new China emerged, individuals with publicity skills *and* knowledge of China were seen as being more valuable.'[429]

On appointment, Murray set out a revised set of aims for the PRO, splitting the content between that which targeted a domestic audience and that which targeted a global audience. These were:

> (i) To present and interpret the activities of (a) The Hong Kong Government and, (b) Her Majesty's Government, as clearly, forcefully, comprehensively

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[428] I. Aitken, *British Official Film;* Z. Druick, *The Grierson Effect: Tracing Documentary's International Movement* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 97.

[429] Note by K. W. The director of the Colonial Office information services notes a determination by Mr Rayner (head of RIO (S)) that any appointees for future information positions should have experience in 'publicity techniques' over knowledge of the Far East. It was noted that Rayner argued that a propagandist would be able to do more valuable work than an 'old China hand.' Interestingly, Smith was not only an 'old China hand' but also had experience dealing with the press. K. W. Blackburne (Colonial Office), Minute, Discussion between the Colonial Office and Foreign Office, 6 December 1949, CO 537/ 5132, TNA.

and promptly as possible, to the citizens of the Colony through the media of the local press, through its own or other official publications, and through broadcasting, films, visual display and, indeed, all methods of "mass communication".

(ii) To present and interpret the Colony's activities to the people of the world through the medium of (a) newspaper, news agency and radio correspondents either resident in or passing through the Colony and (b) official publicity channels (publications, films, broadcasts, etc.) sponsored by the Hong Kong Government or by organisations such as the Information Department of the Colonial Office, Central Office of Information and so on.[430]

For the PRO to be effective in delivering these aims a series of transformations were envisaged by Murray. These included: greater financial provision; the recruitment and training of new staff; changes to existing officers to enable them to understand the 'proper functioning' of a Public Relations Office; and, re-structuring within the PRO.[431]

Having reviewed existing departmental activities, Murray decided to arrange the PRO into three separate but interlocking units under his overall control. They were the Press section (headed by the Press Officer), a Display and Distribution section and an Administrative section, the latter two being controlled by the same Assistant Public Relations Officer. A separate section was later added for the censorship of films.[432]

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[430] PRO (HK) to BBC, Annual Departmental Reports, 1951-2, E1/860, BBC archives, Caversham Park, Reading.

[431] PRO (HK) to BBC, Annual Departmental Reports, 1951-2, E1/860, BBC.

[432] J. L. Murray (Public Relations Office, Hong Kong), Public relations estimates, 22 May 1951, HKRS 160-1-23, Public Records Office (PRO), Hong Kong.

The Press Section

Murray's most urgent issue on appointment was with his Press Section, especially as foreign journalists continued to flock to the Colony. Although not considered as the main news centre in the Far East (Tokyo and Singapore were regarded as better permanent bases by the majority of newspapers and news agencies), Hong Kong was faced with an influx of 'transient correspondent' journalists.[433] The PRO was determined to be a 'helpful' source of information for these travellers as well as presenting up to date information of the Colonial Government's activities to the local population.

The Press Section was formed in April 1951 with the appointment of S. S. Knowles as Press Officer. Knowles had previously been in charge of the Press Section of the Information Department of the British Consulate in Shanghai. His first task was to secure suitable accommodation. This was by no means easy in an expensive, densely populated city of Hong Kong. A solution was found with the vacation of Radio Hong Kong from its premises at Gloucester Building, which offered prime real estate space and broadcasting facilities. Administrative problems, however, meant that the Press Office was stuck in a temporary building in Statue Square, unable to function properly until September 1951.[434] Eventually in the new accommodation, the move was seen as a key contributor to improving the effectiveness of the section's operations. The

[433] After the mainland fell to the Communists, foreign newspaper correspondents became 'persona non grata' in Shanghai. Hong Kong's proximity to China, and freedom to travel between the two countries, provided the best access for information on China for journalists. PRO to BBC, Annual Departmental Reports, 1951-2, E1/860, BBC.

[434] Murray expressed his frustration at the hold-ups to the Colonial Office. Murray to Colonial Secretary, 16 May 1951, HKRS 160-1-23, PRO, Hong Kong; Annual Departmental Reports, 1951-2, E1/860, BBC.

PRO's annual report for 1951/1952 noted that relocation to the Gloucester Building contributed in 'no small degree' to an increase in the efficiency of the department.[435]

In improving the quality and reach of its news service, the department utilised The *Daily Information Bulletin.* It was the main source of official news provided to both the local and foreign press. Its aim was to give as full a picture as possible of the colonial government's policies, actions and views, and where possible to anticipate press questions. The *Bulletin* included announcements, the text of important speeches by Government officials, and 'feature' and 'background' items, and was produced in both English and Chinese editions.[436]

The operating hours of the Press Office were extended in 1951 to 16 hours a day. New staff were brought in, including a European duty officer and a Chinese counterpart, to be available to answer press queries for more hours. Murray asserted that if the newspapers, in particular the Chinese press, know that they can turn to a PRO duty officer with their queries, it may be possible that they will do more checking of rumours and that we can thus achieve a better press.[437]

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[435] There were only two records of Annual Reports of the PRO retained, they are for the years 1951/1952 and 1952/1953. These are held by the BBC, on receipt from the colonial government. E1/860, BBC.

[436] Besides local distribution, copies of the Bulletin were despatched daily by airmail to the Press Department of the Colonial Office, the Central Office of Information, London, British Information Services, New York, and to several other British official information agencies throughout the world, to supplement news of the Colony being transmitted by the commercial news agencies. Annual Departmental Reports, 1951-2, E1/860, BBC.

[437] The Section, besides the Press Officer, consisted of three Assistant Press Officers (only two had been recruited by the end of March, 1953), six Translators, whose work it was to translate from English to Chinese and vice versa, 2 Chinese Copyists and 2 Typists. (1952/1953); Murray to Financial Secretary (Hong Kong), 13 Dec 1951, HKRS 160-1-2, PRO (Hong Kong).

Positive results were very quickly reported. In the six months between the 1st October 1951 and the 31st March 1952 the use of items published in the *Bulletin* by Hong Kong newspapers and periodicals was 'surprisingly high'.[438] Every one of the 562 items published in the *Bulletin* was used, with a total acceptance figure of 3,829 — an average press publication rate of 6.8 times per item. The next quarterly report was even more encouraging, with all 1,150 items used, a total acceptance figure of 10,208 and the average use per item increasing to 8.88. [439]

Besides the printed press, the Section took on a new commitment with the editing of a news bulletin for the government-sponsored RHK. The station was to serve Hong Kong only, unlike the American station VOA. From the beginning of July 1951 it started producing bulletins in both English and Chinese. The bulk of this service was provided by Reuters, a British-based news service, and supplemented by the London Press Service (LPS), USIS bulletins and local news items. The radio News Bulletin very

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[438] It is worth noting that it wasn't only the British doing this. Meredith Oyen's work exploring how China and America looked to influence overseas Chinese shows how significant amounts of content in Chinese language newspaper through Asia in the period were in fact created by USIS. See: M. Oyen, 'Communism, containment and overseas Chinese' in Z. Yangwen, H. Liu and M. Szonyi (ed), *Cold War in Asia: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2010), pp. 59-94.

[439] Only the principal newspapers and periodicals of the Colony where checked in acceptance reports. The more popular, vernacular (Chinese) newspapers and specialist journals (e.g. economic) used only a small percentage of Bulletin material and the Communist newspapers published very little. Since the latter groups were included in the total announcements, the average acceptance figures were better than indicated.

There are no comparisons available on 'PRO acceptance to the Press' figures before the reorganisation of this department. However, it is clear that the report saw the results as a success upon previous work of the department. Annual Departmental Reports, 1951-2; Annual Departments Reports 1952-53, E1/860, BBC.

quickly became regarded as the second most important function of the Section. This service was further expanded in December 1951, when the hours of broadcasting were extended to early morning broadcasts, starting at 7 a.m. This resulted in three news bulletins being produced each day.[440]

The Section also agreed in September 1951 to help edit and distribute the LPS to the local press. Prepared by the editorial department of the Central Office of Information (COI), London, it offered a British official service of news and views which was regarded as 'supplementary to, and in no sense in competition with, the commercial news agency services'. Produced in both English and Chinese editions, the service was disseminated in Hong Kong by Cable & Wireless Ltd on behalf of the PRO. Although the press acceptance figures were not the same remarkable average as secured by the local bulletin, they were still viewed as sufficiently good enough to warrant the continuation of the Service. [441]

In addition to the editing and distribution of news, the new Press Section also took charge of translating and arranging for the distribution of special feature articles. These articles, which had been prepared by writers commissioned by the Central Office of Information (COI), commented on a variety of different aspects of the British way of life (as we shall see below). The number of articles handled by the department increased under the now stronger translation team and found a good level of

[440] For information on links between the British government and Reuters see Chapter Three. Annual Departments Reports 1952-53, E1/860, BBC.

[441] This excluded LPS items used in compilation of Radio Hong Kong news bulletins, as no account of them was taken. Annual Departmental Reports, 1951-2; Annual Departments Reports 1952-53, E1/860, BBC.

acceptance in the local press. Between 1952 and 1953, for example, all of the 48 feature articles provided by the COI were accepted[442]

The PRO readily identified the press as an important outlet for the dissemination of British and Western sponsored views of world events to local and international audience. The section worked hard to meet the ever growing demands. By 1953 there were approximately 88 newspapers and magazines published in Hong Kong, both in English and Chinese. Offices were also maintained by both Communist and Nationalist Chinese representatives, including the New China News Agency (the official agency of the PRC), and the Central News Agency of Nationalist China on Taiwan. [443] Within this demanding press corps,[444] the Press Section tried to assert itself as a credible and reliable source of information. Changes in expanding operating hours and in the translation services helped to guarantee that the voices of both London and the Hong Kong colonial government were present in international and local press releases. This helped in shaping the desired narrative of events to the colony.

Visual Display and Distribution

The Visual Display and Distribution Section also played a key role in the dissemination of positive propaganda. Visual material, in the form of posters, picture-sets, pamphlets, and periodicals, was supplied by the COI through the Colonial Office's Information Department (COID). In these materials, the emphasis was on the positive achievements of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth, rather than on Hong Kong.

[442] Annual Departments Reports 1952-53, E1/860, BBC.

[443] Annual Departments Reports 1952-53, E1/860, BBC.

[444] Besides local demands the office also had to satisfy the demands of local press offices of international organisations such as The United Press of America and Reuters.

In the case of the "Picture-Posters" produced by the COI, the PRO agreed it could provide a 'Chinese edition' by adding Chinese text to the posters on arrival.

Hong Kong's Education Department readily used this display material and factual pamphlets, with these serving as an important part of the PRO's dissemination work target for Chinese youth. For example, a series of pamphlets on the '*Democratic Way of Life,'* where the office had received 5,000 copies of each title, went almost entirely to the Education Department, for use in senior classes in English-speaking Schools.[445] Private and non-government schools, clubs and institutions were also supplied with such material, for which the demand was reportedly growing weekly. In 1950 an exhibition of photographs of schools in Britain took place at the request of the Director of Education. It was held jointly with USIS, who supplied photographs of American schools. In 1952, the COI even produced large Chinese editions of posters for use in schools.[446]

However, there were limits to the utility of this material in the Hong Kong context. For example, criticism was voiced by the PRO over the suitability of all the material provided by the COI. The Colonial Office's own picture magazine, *Today*, although full of pictures, lacked popularity. According to the PRO, this magazine devoted too much space to African affairs and too little to those of the Far East. The reliance on the COI also hampered the visual display team's attempts to engage the public with window displays and exhibits from 1951 to 1952. These displays, showcasing British industry and 'colonial life', while described as successful, were short-lived. The COI was also suffering from a number of cuts at this time, hindering its ability to address problems and offer the resources demand by the PRO.

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[445] Intriguingly, there were no questions on the appropriateness of promoting democracy to country with whom it had denied such rights. Annual Departments Reports 1951-52, E1/860, BBC.

[446] Annual Departments Reports 1952-53, E1/860, BBC.

The following year's Report, however, did suggest that some improvements had been made as the PRO recruited its own staff. As a result, the PRO was able to circulate its own locally produced photographs and pictures. With a Hong Kong focus, these reportedly found greater popularity with the Colony's daily press, having a higher press acceptance rate than the material supplied by the COI.[447]

The Display Section was also charged with the dissemination of government sponsored films. Hong Kong's film industry during this period was flourishing as mainland immigrants continued to flock to the island bringing intellectual capital and talent. The establishment of the PRC marked the end of mainland China as a market for commercial Chinese films, but this did not stop Hong Kong's rise as a major producer of commercial Chinese cinema, much of it exported to diasporic audiences in Southeast Asia, as well as to Taiwan.[448] Cinema-going also remained a major pastime in Hong Kong itself.

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[447] The use by the local press of photographs from the PRO and COI, including plans, maps and sketch drawings, are shown below in columns from left to right: Office; No. of items; No. of items used; Rate of acceptances by the local press:

PRO	103	238	2.31
COI	367	384	1.05

Annual Departments Reports 1952-53, E1/860, BBC.

[448] Hong Kong's cinematic history in the mid-twentieth century has attracted increasing attention from scholars in recent years because of its importance in the cultural development of the island.

For a good overview see Poshek Fu, 'Cold War Politics and Hong Kong Mandarin,' in Carlos Rojas (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Cinemas* (Oxford, 2013). For an interesting comment on the role of the Shaw brothers, the largest film company in this development see: Poshek Fu (ed.), *China Forever, The Shaw Brothers and Diasporic Cinema*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press,

By the time Murray arrived, the PRO was already engaged in the showing of documentary films sent by the COI, and maintained its own library of over 236 films. These shorts films, made by the Ministry of Information (MOI) before being replaced by the COI, were apparently met with a poor reception. However, as Aitken has noted, the PRO was able to 'persuade or pressurise' most local cinema managers, if not all, to show these films in 10-15 minute breaks between the screenings of feature films.[449] Essentially, this meant that the PRO was able to exploit the popularity of commercial cinema as a means of distributing its otherwise unpopular propaganda amongst the local population.

On his appointment, Murray gave the matter of film-making a low priority with the reform of the office as a whole being given precedence. However, with his experience in film-making, having run a 'largish' film strip production unit in Chongqing during the war, Murray was aware of the possible uses of film for propaganda purposes.[450] It was apparent to Murray that the films given to the PRO by the COI not only lacked a Hong Kong dimension but were invariably made in English. Dubbing in Cantonese was believed to increase the value and supposed potential audience by several hundred per cent. This was particularly the case for newsreels and educational films, where the pictures alone could not convey the whole story without spoken commentary. The cost involved in doing this for each film was, however, considered

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2008); and: D. W. Davis, 'Questioning diaspora: mobility, mutation, and historiography of the Shaw Brothers film studio', *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 4/1 (2011), pp. 40-59.

[449] Aitken, *The British Official Film*, p 143; Aitken and Hampton, *Hong Kong Documentary film*, p. 77.

[450] For more detail on Murray's cinematic experience and successes see: Zoe Druick, (2016), *The Grierson Effect: Tracing Documentary's International Movement*, p. 97. And: Ian Aitken, (2014), 'The British Official Film.'

to be far too high.[451] The colonial government, therefore, had to continue to insist that Hong Kong cinemas exhibit its films.[452]

The more spacious premises in Gloucester Road did, however, enable the department to organise and successfully restock with a small library of 16 mm films. This library was seen to encourage the borrowing of films — entirely free of charge — by schools, clubs, institutions and other similar groups. Reports note that as at April 1951 about 50 films were borrowed monthly and seen by some 2,000 people; by March 1952, this number had risen to 150 films being borrowed each month, with a viewing audience of over 20,000 people.[453] In the booming and competitive film industry of post-war Hong Kong there were limits to the popularity and therefore the impact of such films.

As Aitken notes, Murray recognised that the only way to be truly successful was for the PRO to have its own Hong Kong film unit, similar to the one which had been established in Malaya. This did not materialise until 1959. [454] In the meantime Hong Kong was entirely reliant on COI material, with medical films being the only ones produced locally. The lack of resources was a constraining factor which was particularly apparent in the case of the Display unit. Unlike the Press Section, the unit

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[451] Annual Departments Reports 1952-53, E1/860, BBC.

[452] A draft of the Hong Kong Annual Colonial report in 1953 notes that, 'a quota system operates whereby first-run theatres have to show British films (from the PRO) for seven days in every seventy.' Colonial Secretariat to Heads of Department, draft for HK annual report to Colonial Secretariat, 21 September 1953, HKRS 41.1-7883, PRO (HK).

[453] Annual Departments Reports 1952-53, E1/860, BBC.

[454] Atiken has shown how the regionalisation of film production efforts was not an easy task. The RIO (S)'s own efforts to do so were confronted by dissenting voices concerning the value and impact of film on assumed 'primitive audiences'. There was also reluctance to devolve control of this work from London. Aitken, *The British Official Film*.

struggled to introduce a more local approach to its work. Despite the Colonial Office 'giving [us] more' it was clear that the effectiveness of the Section was limited by its reliance on the COI for material and imposed funding cuts.[455]

The decision to reform and improve the PRO came at a time when Hong Kong's domestic sphere was becoming increasingly unstable as a number of competing political voices came face-to-face on the island. In this respect, the PRO's propaganda efforts in disseminating a positive image of Britain can be seen as an attempt to stabilise Hong Kong's internal situation as a whole as well as limit communist influences.

The PRO worked hard to ensure that its services reached the Chinese population by extending the range of its activities and the quantity of its translation work. Much of the work, shown above, can be seen to target opinion-makers, through press and publications, as well as youth groups through collaboration with the education department. However, as Murray solidified his role within the PRO, attention increasingly turned to attracting a wider, mass audience with film, and (as will be explored below) broadcasting. Good relations were developed and maintained with the local press, newspaper correspondents, film producers, and film distributors and exhibitors, to ensure the effective dissemination of material.

A reliance on COI material meant that there were some recognised limitations to the effectiveness of the PRO, often lacking applicability to the local environment and restricted by funding cuts. Interestingly, however, the PRO seems to have been able to plan and disseminate much of its work independently of instruction from Whitehall.

[455] Annual Departments Reports 1952-53, E1/860, BBC.

Section Two. Organisations.

Under Murray, the PRO asserted that in leading a successful government information campaign in the colony all forms of government publicity were to be co-ordinated through his department. This included the efforts of the British Council and government sponsored broadcasters.[456] This section will explore how the PRO utilised and co-ordinated these organisations in its efforts to shape the official narrative being disseminated in the colony.

Broadcasters

Hong Kong was not only used as a base from which propaganda could be broadcast into China (see chapter two). It was also a place within which radio could be used to project specific ideas to the local population. Officials in London fully expected a 'radio war' to emerge between the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong. RHK would be the main protagonist in this type of war, responding to communist 'lies'.[457] This was regarded as a task for the RIO (HK). However, such a 'radio war' never materialised.

This section will show as fears of communist influence in Hong Kong continued through the early 1950s, the government *did* seek to influence and in some cases control the content of programmes being broadcast through RHK and Rediffusion (another British Broadcaster). This was carried out by the PRO on behalf of the government. As we shall see, these broadcasts disseminated positive material on Britain and the British way of life as well as pabulum. The latter was designed to maintain listeners' interest and divert their attention away from pro-communist broadcasts. The benefit of such broadcasts was recognised by the colonial

[456] Annual Departments Reports 1951-52, E1/860, BBC.

[457] Memorandum relating to problems which may become subject of controversy or negotiations between Hong Kong and Chinese Communist regime 15th November 1949, CO 537/5132, TNA.

government, which meant that the PRO also attempted to improve the strength and influence of radio in Hong Kong.

Officially named Radio Hong Kong (RHK) in 1948, this station was already well established as the official radio broadcaster of the colonial government under the authority of the Office of the Postmaster General (PMG).[458] The two main stations broadcasting were the English language station (ZBW), which included special daily and weekend broadcasts for the armed forces, and the Chinese language station (ZEK), broadcasting mainly in Cantonese. As attention focused on the British publicity capability in Hong Kong post war, the existing broadcasting arrangements of the PMG was considered to be too 'anachronistic' and no longer suitable for the changing political and social environment.[459]

By 1951, however, there was fresh optimism as to what could be achieved by the PRO under Murray's leadership. Although concerns had been lodged by some in the administration that RHK would, by association with the PRO, have 'a taint of propaganda', Murray regarded this faction as 'die-hards' whose desire for an independent radio department ignored the best path for the station. For Murray there was much to be done with RHK. It was agreed in April that year that the station should come under the authority of the PRO, where it remained until 1953. Accordingly, a Broadcasting division was set up alongside the Public Relations Office.

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[458] The Official radio station was formed in 1928, but at first it was only in English. Chinese broadcasting was to come 5 years later. For an overview of the history of the RHK see: Aitken and Ingham, *Hong Kong Documentary Film,* pp. 118-120.

[459] Annual Departments Reports 1951-52, E1/860, BBC.

It was headed by a Controller of Broadcast who was responsible for the entire programme output. [460]

Murray readily identified the Chinese station (ZEK) as an area for improvement. While the Education Department sponsored two weekly programmes, the Chinese station, under PMG, had generally suffered from a continued shortage of Chinese recordings and the recruitment of local talent to produce live shows. Effort was therefore to be focused on refining the content of broadcasts and expanding the scope of the services.

The first step to develop the content of the broadcasts was the move of the RHK station from the inadequate and technically old-fashioned Gloucester Building into new studios in the newly-built Electra House, completed in April 1951. [461] The new premises were found to be 'highly suitable' for the broadcasting of various types of Chinese programmes, ranging from story-telling to music by instrumental groups and large concert parties with a wide frequency range. The new Concert Hall also allowed for listeners to be present in the form of studio audiences in the 'more important' and 'starred' concerts. While this provided a good basis for refining broadcasts, for the station to cope with its present commitments and to be ready in the 'event of an emergency,' further money was needed.[462]

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[460] Murray to S.H. Evans (Acting director of Information services, Colonial Office), 20 December 1950, HKRS 41.1-7883, PRO (HK); Annual Departments Reports 1952-53, E1/860, BBC.

[461] The plans were initially made in 1947 and the transfer completed in April 1951. By 1954, however, reports were already coming in from the PRO that as broadcasting continued to expand, the new accommodation would soon be inadequate in terms of space. Annual Departments Reports 1951-52, E1/860, BBC.

[462] As broadcasting ability improved, ZEK was also identified as a key provider in the Government's information and advice service to the average citizen. An example of the service being used is by the police to educate people on 'how to deal with the wiles of confidence

The progress of RHK under the PRO was explored in a draft of the Annual Report for 1953. This noted an increase in feature programmes that were locally produced. These included: Chinese New Year Round-up; an exhibition of mechanized junks in Aberdeen (South-West Hong Kong); the Agricultural Exhibition at Yuen Long and a special concert by young musicians, which was organised in conjunction with the Education Department. Big events in the colony such as the visit of Princess Marina the Duchess of Kent in 1952, the opening of the 10th Exhibition of Hong Kong Products, and the Queen's Birthday Parade were broadcast from the spot. Such 'live' and outside broadcasting of major events had not been attempted before and were designed to attract local listeners.[463]

RHK also relayed a number of other services. Under the PMG, a friendly liaison with the BBC was established as the organisation sent 'excellent material' both in recorded and scripted form to RHK. This connection was maintained and developed under the PRO. While BBC programmes could be picked up directly in Hong Kong by long wave radio, it was often a very poor signal. RHK therefore offered a perfect relay station for BBC content into Hong Kong. By 1953, a 'very great number' of BBC programmes, approximating 300 hours, excluding the BBC news bulletins, were relayed by RHK annually, both in English and Chinese.[464] These BBC broadcasts from the Far Eastern Department, while not pure propaganda, included content detailing British ideals and the British way of life (see Chapters One and Three).

A close relationship between the BBC and RHK was aided by the secondment of staff between the two organisations. This was regarded as critical for the advancement of

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tricksters, on the advantages and correct use of *999, and on everyday Safety First measures.' Annual Departments Reports 1951-52, E1/860, BBC.

[463] Colonial Secretariat to Heads of Department, draft for HK annual report to Colonial Secretariat, 21 September 1953, HKRS 41.1-7883, PRO (HK).

[464] Annual Departments Reports 1951-52, E1/860, BBC.

the local radio station. For example, Eddie Au Yeung from the BBC's Overseas Services was set to work in the Press Section of the PRO in Hong Kong. He reorganised the methods of preparing the Chinese News Bulletins and generally guided the Chinese editorial staff in radio techniques.[465]

Besides British produced programmes, the RHK relayed material from the US. In addition to the news broadcasts, which were supplemented by USIS, as noted above, the station also agreed in March 1950 to broadcast Voice of America (VOA) newscasts. Their content included popular American entertainment along with political messages (including those relating to China directly).[466] VOA broadcasts from Hong Kong were beamed into China in a variety of Chinese dialects at this time, including Cantonese, Teochew, Hokkien, Mandarin and even, occasionally, Shanghainese. This was eventually stopped in 1953 as the colonial authorities moved to restrain some of the more 'overt' US propaganda activities on the island.[467]

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[465] Annual Departments Reports 1952-53, E1/860, BBC.

[466] For information on VOA see: Robert W. Pirsein, The Voice of America. *A history of the international broadcasting activities of the United States government 1940 – 1962* (New York: Arno Press, 1979); H. C. Shulman, *The Voice of America. Propaganda and democracy, 1941 – 1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); D. F. Krugler, *The Voice of America and the domestic propaganda battle, 1945–1953*,(Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000); Alan L. Heil, *Voice of America. A history* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Simona Tobia, 'Advertising America: VOA and Italy,' in *Cold War History's Special Issue, "Europe Americanised*, 11/1 (2011), pp. 27–49.

[467] For further insight into UK/US cooperation in Hong Kong see: Lu Xun, 'The American Cold War in Hong Kong, 1949-1960: Intelligence and propaganda', in P. Roberts and J. Carroll (eds.), *Hong Kong in the Cold War,* (Hong Kong, 2016), pp. 117-140, and; Mark Chi-Kwan, *Hong Kong and Cold War; Anglo-American Relations, 1949-1957* (Oxford, 2004).

RHK also intentionally offered entertainment programmes. As noted in the introduction, the inclusion of pabulum for radio was a recognised tactic by the British government as a means of controlling the narrative, and distracting audiences from the communist broadcasts of the PRC. Although not referred to directly by the PRO, it is clear that information officials, concerned with retaining audience numbers, welcomed the use of this material and pushed for this diversification of programmes.

In addition to changes in content, Murray also set about extending the hours of broadcasts for all stations. He achieved this by the end of 1951, when the hours of broadcasting were extended to the early morning. While this quick turnaround gave an excuse for a 'certain amount of mild self-congratulation' it was recognised that this had only been achieved by stretching resources to the utmost and by putting a tremendous strain on the ZEK station's small, regular staff. General staffing shortage problems remained. Tensions only began to ease slightly following the return of a member of permanent staff from secondment to the BBC in 1952.[468]

However, links between radio broadcasting and the government's publicity were eventually called into question. As Aitken has shown, the growing importance of radio during the 1950s, and the need to provide public-service radio with at least a semblance of independence, meant that its inclusion within government propaganda and public relations departments proved to be unsatisfactory. In July 1953, RHK

[468] The PRO's annual report from 1952 recorded the immediate effect the return had on the programme output. Annual Departments Reports 1952-53, E1/860, BBC; Annual Departments Reports 1951-52, E1/860, BBC.

became a separate department, although a level of co-operation between the Government and RHK continued.[469]

Rediffusion was another broadcaster that collaborated with the PRO. This broadcaster originated from Broadcasting Relay Service Limited, an organisation set up in 1928 to relay radio programmes to paid subscribers. Post war it had expanded its operations into several British colonies, including Hong Kong.[470] Subscribers had a loudspeaker and selector switch installed in their homes for $25, and paid a manageable monthly service rental charge of $10. [471]

Similarly, to RHK, Rediffusion provided two programmes, one in English and one in Chinese, operating from 7 a.m. to midnight. While the English programme consisted mainly of musical items, the Chinese programme included plays, stories, concerts and other features originated in the studio. There were also regular relays of news bulletins in three dialects, which were broadcast several times a day.[472]

Rediffusion was far more popular than the RHK with Chinese listeners in Hong Kong. While broadcast licences dropped by just over 2,000 during the year from 1951 to

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[469] For example, PRO continued to supply the news bulletins. Draft for HK annual report to Colonial Secretariat, 21 September 1953, HKRS 41.1-7883, PRO (HK); Ian Aitken, *Documentary film*, p. 120

[470] For discussion on Rediffusion as a cultural force in Africa and the West Indies in this same period see: G. A. Griffith, *The BBC and the Development of Anglophone Caribbean Literature, 1943-1958* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), Chapter Three; S. W. Head and J. Kugblenu, 'GBC-1: a Survival of Wired Radio in Tropical Africa', International Communication Gazette, 24/2 (1978), pp. 121-129.

[471] Annual Departments Reports 1951-52, E1/860, BBC.

[472] Draft for HK annual report to Colonial Secretariat, 21 September 1953, HKRS 41.1-7883, PRO (HK).

1952, the number of Rediffusion subscribers had gone up in this same period, and were around 47,000.[473] The PRO, which noted RHK's 'friendly rivalry' with the station, put the popularity of Rediffusion down to four main factors: its simplicity and more or less foolproof reliability; its comparative inexpensiveness; the content of programmes, being primarily popular in nature; and its longer hours of broadcasting.[474]

For the PRO, RHK could not compete with Rediffusion on the first or second points. It accepted that people would be innately more willing to pay a small monthly fee than an immediate expenditure of several hundred dollars for a radio receiver. RHK was resigned to the fact that no single Colonial Broadcasting station could do anything to lower the price of radio receivers or persuade dealers to offer 'easy terms'.

Nonetheless, it was thought that more could be done to compete with Rediffusion on the third and fourth points. As noted above, RHK had made efforts to extend broadcasting hours and make its programmes more entertaining and popular. Nevertheless, PRO reports the aims of the two broadcasters were ultimately different. Radio HK, in having assumed the role of a public broadcaster, could not just aim for sheer entertainment, but also had to introduce serious plays and thought-provoking talks and discussions. In regard to the extension of hours, these had already been extended as much as possible under available resources. Plans for an eventual further extension were under consideration.[475]

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[473] For further information on the continued popularity of Rediffusion in Hong Kong see: A. H. Chan, 'Fashioning change: Nationalism, colonialism, and modernity in Hong Kong,' *Postcolonial Studies: Culture, Politics, Economy*, 3/3 (2000), pp. 293-309.

[474] Annual Departments Reports 1951-52, E1/860, BBC.

[475] Annual Departments Reports 1951-52, E1/860, BBC.

While Rediffusion was technically a competitor to the RHK, its popularity on the whole only seemed to serve the latter. Again, the notion of filling the airwaves with vacuous commercial entertainment, pabulum, appeared to serve the interests of the PRO. This not only stopped people from listening to alternative communist broadcasts but offered a 'captive' audience for positive propaganda when it was disseminated. While Rediffusion's programmes mainly originated in the company's studios, they also relayed between 21-30 hours a week of BBC programmes. The PRO's Press Office also supplied Rediffusion with the same news bulletins. A close relationship developed whereby RHK had a constant and sometimes daily liaison with Rediffusion on programme matters, especially in regards to important talks and appeals in English and Chinese. Wherever possible, these were arranged to be broadcast simultaneously. Rediffusion was immediately informed of alterations or additions in programmes which were in their interest. The success of this arrangement was acknowledged by Murray, 'since Rediffusion co-operates magnificently with the Government in the broadcasting of important announcements, special talks and features etc., it is a most valuable adjunct to the official broadcasting station.' [476]

Rediffusion, in fact paid the colonial government a monthly fee, in respect of each subscriber, in the form of a licence fee. This helped ensure that RHK was remarkable among British colonial broadcasters because it made a profit. While broadcast fees were limited by London, combined with these royalty fees they exceeded the amount expended on the broadcast of programmes. Most territories subsidised their broadcasting system out of general revenue, some very heavily. [477]

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[476] Murray to Financial Secretary (Hong Kong), 13 Dec 1951, HKRS 160-1-2, PRO (Hong Kong); Annual Departments Reports 1951-52, E1/860, BBC.

[477] Hong Kong Information Centre, 'GIS Through The Years: This Remarkable Sample Of Peaceful Co-Existence,' Hong Kong, <http://www.info.gov.hk/isd/40th/2.html>, accessed 17.5.2017.

The PRO led efforts to ensure that both British broadcasters served the colony's interests. For RHK, this meant improving the quality and quantity of broadcast material. For Rediffusion, the PRO maintained a positive relationship and supplied it with selected news and features to broadcast. It is clear that for RHK a balance was struck in broadcasting both 'positive propaganda' and pabulum. In both cases, however, the same ends were sought, i.e. to encourage internal support for the British Government and to resist communism. Moreover, both RHK and Rediffusion's ability to produce more entertainment meant that they had a greater captive audience when pro-British content was broadcast.

The British Council

The British Council opened its doors in Hong Kong for the first time in September 1948, with its operations coming into force at the start of the following year. The task of opening and leading the Council in its inaugural period was given to Robert Bruce, who was experienced in Chinese culture and language. Bruce had served in a number of Far Eastern posts in the Colonial Office.[478] Bruce argued that the Council's objective was not primarily to concern itself with the politics of HM Government in regard to the future of Hong Kong, but instead to promote the 'closest relations' between the British and Chinese communities in the colony. For Bruce, the audience focus was to be 'learned societies,' such as scholarly bodies and arts societies (i.e., intellectual audiences, as opposed to the mass audience that was being courted by the likes of Rediffusion).[479]

[478] For details of Robert Bruce's unique career, achieved despite virtual blindness, see D. Bruce, ' Obiturary: Robert Bruce', Independent, 29 September 1999, <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/obituary-robert-bruce-1122975.html> , accessed 5 May 2017.

[479] Bruce (British Council Representative, Hong Kong) to Fry (British Council, London), Occasional Report, 8 March 1949, BW 94/1, TNA.

The most concerted attempts by the Council to engage directly with the Chinese were seen in the form of education. Within the first few months of the Council's operations, names had been recommended for Council scholarships, a local scholars association had been set up, notably formed by members from northern China who had come to seek refuge, and social events that had been put on for the heads of all university departments at the University.

However, from early on, Bruce's reports to the British Council in London expressed concern that the Council was struggling to meet its objectives in Hong Kong. For example, in the case of recitals and exhibitions, the Council's audience was almost always European. To rectify this issue, Council exhibitions, such as those which included English paintings and prints, were accompanied with both English and Chinese notes. The Council's difficulties in engaging with a Chinese audience remained, however, largely due to resources i.e., inadequate funding and inappropriate premises.[480]

Suitable space was one resource seen to limit the Council's ability to develop relations with Chinese scholars, for example. Within one month of the Council library in Statue Square being opened to the public in February 1949, membership had reached 109 and was increasing daily. While the library was regarded as a 'great asset' in putting the Council on the map, its limitation was clear, as the room became full with just eight readers. Even after finding larger headquarters on Gloucester Road, the Council still was unable to afford air conditioning, which meant that lectures tapered off in the stifling heat, so much so that the Council had to virtually shut down all activities in the summer months.[481]

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[480] Bruce to Fry, 8 March 1949, BW 94/1, TNA.

[481] M. Hampton, 'Projecting Britishness to Hong Kong: The British Council and Hong Kong house, Nineteen-fifties to Nineteen-seventies,' *Historical Research*, 85/230 (2012), p. 4; Bruce (Hong Kong) to Fry (British Council), 8 March 1949, BW 94/1, TNA.

However, the main constraint for the Council was the quantity of its staff. The Council consisted of only two London staff and as a result was heavily dependent on outsourcing and voluntary work, which led to extended delays. For example, the Council had made an arrangement whereby feature articles from the British Council would be given a page in the biggest Chinese daily. However, work was held up owing to the illness of an intermediate, who also acted as a translator in a voluntary capacity. This shortage of staff, according to Bruce, meant that the Council struggled to conduct basics tasks, such as sending out material, including the *British Medical Bulletin* and *Britain Today* to their subscribers, let alone more imaginative activities, such as developing 'innovative functional work which will catch the public eye.'[482] This pressure on the Council continued throughout 1949 to 1950, with repeated claims in their quarterly reports that their effectiveness was hindered by limited staff resources. Bruce, in his final month in post, put forward a formal request for more London-appointed staff, justifying his request by announcing that two men were not enough to deal with the burden of administrative activities.[483]

The value of the British Council in the context of the Cold War was not missed by the Colonial Office. In a circular despatch in 1948, the Colonial Office explained to its governments abroad how their Information Departments should seek 'valuable help in the cultural field from the British Council'.[484] For the Colonial Office however, the Council would only prove to be of value to the government if certain changes were made. Accordingly, from early in 1950, a series of discussions and meetings took place in London between the Colonial Office and the British Council on the

[482] Bruce (Hong Kong) to Fry (British Council), 8 March 1949, BW 94/1, TNA.

[483] Bruce (Hong Kong) to Colonies Department (HK), Proposals for 1951/2, 12 June 1950, BW 94/2, TNA.

[484] Circular dispatch (Colonial Office), 15 July, 1948, HKRS 160-1-23, PRO (HK).

coordination of future work. These talks developed around two themes: the target audience and the messages that were to be conveyed.[485]

One of the primary concerns raised was the reach of the Council to wider audiences. Sir Kenneth Locke of the British Council, explained in a meeting between the Colonial Office and the Governor that the 'general principle of the Council's work [was] to try to tackle first the educated people…and then to work on a snow-ball principle hoping that after a few people were interested they might interest others'.[486] While acknowledging that, with limited staff, the Council could not hope to influence the masses, the Colonial Office agreed with the Governor's suggestion that the Council should do more than just targeting those at university level. It should 'also try to influence' the wider public in terms of those in skilled and semi-skilled occupations. Teachers, doctors and trade union executives were given as examples, particularly appropriate as schools and trade unions were thought to be most susceptible to communist influence. To attract these audiences, programmes on 'subjects of interest to the workers such as the history of Trade Unionism, the organization of Co-operatives' were recommended, as was the use of Radio Hong Kong and Rediffusion.[487]

There was an agreement between the offices that the Council should continue to emphasise the advantages of the democratic way of life. The aim here was to maintain 'a reasonable balance between the aesthetic elements in Council manifestations and what would be broadly the sociological'. However, in a meeting

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[485] Bruce to Colonial Office (London) Quarterly report, April- June 1950, 20 June, 1950. BW 94/2, TNA.

[486] Minutes, meeting between Grantham and the British Council (London), 26 June 1950, BW 94/2, TNA.

[487] Colonies Department, British Council to Council Representative, Hong Kong. 21st July 1950. BW 94/2, TNA.

between the British Council, Governor Grantham and the Colonial Office, it was agreed that the Council should be ready to respond to communist views that were brought forward as part of its work, for example at study groups. Although it was not to engage in anti-communist rhetoric, it was decided that the Council should be able to point to facts on the benefits of western civilisation, such as the trade unions and health services.[488] The Colonial Office urged the Council to work closely and collaboratively with Leslie Smith and Jock Murray.[489]

There is little to suggest that the Council *did* liaise with the RIO (HK) on preparing any rebuttals of communism, as by 1950 the latter had turned into little more than a monitoring post. However, PRO annual reports suggest that by the end of 1952 'there is an easy working liaison with the British Council Representative on a general "projection of Britain" policy'.[490]

Nonetheless, reports from the PRO show that the British Council *did* seek to influence wider audiences through mass forms of communication. By 1952, the British Council had begun producing programmes for the Chinese- and English-language stations run by RHK. These programmes included poetry readings and talks on British life. Despite the failure of the PRO's own attempts to produce exhibitions, the Council was reportedly 'quite successful' in this venture. For example, the Council sponsored exhibitions on book-jackets produced by UK publishers and technical education in Britain.[491]

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[488] Minutes of meeting between Grantham and the British Council (London), 26 June 1950, BW 94/2, TNA.

[489] C.J. Jeffries (Colonial Office), Minute, British Council's future, 21 June 1950, BW 94/2, TNA.

[490] Annual Departments Reports 1951-52, E1/860, BBC.

[491]Hampton, Projecting Britishness, p. 4; Annual Departments Reports 1951-52, E1/860, BBC; Draft HK annual report, 21 September 1953, HKRS 41.1-7883, PRO (HK).

The Council also engaged in the dissemination of films. While the Colonial Office agreed that it was not the job of the British Council to supply films (that being the task of the COI), Aitkens and Hampton have both demonstrated that the Council, in cooperation with the PRO, was active in this field from the 1950s onwards. The British Council sponsored their own films, was a recipient of COI produced films (which were screened at and outside the Council's premises) and had a film library where films were regularly leased. The Council's film-related activities continued to grow throughout the 1950s. For example, during the build-up to the Coronation year in 1953, the Council chose to focus its activities on film-related matters.[492]

There were, however, clear limits to the relationship that had developed between the two offices. The Council was continually hampered by funding limitations, which, the Colonial Office failed to help alleviate. Instead, the Colonial Office recommended in 1950 that the colonial government should help fund the Council's expensive but valuable scholarship scheme. This was a scheme that allowed Chinese from Hong Kong to take part in student exchanges with the UK. It was also suggested that the colonial government should help with accommodation costs, as the Council looked to establish a branch in Kowloon. Grantham was however resistant in the matter regarding the desire for help with accommodation, since the Council could 'avoid expenditure on capital projects' and instead 'concentrate their expenditure in more productive services'.[493] In the end, support did not come for either project, despite recommendations of the Drogheda review (See Chapter One).[494]

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[492] Aitken, *Official film*, pp. 138-146. And: Hampton, Projecting Britishness, p. 4.

[493] Minutes of meeting between Grantham and the British Council (London), 26 June 1950, BW 94/2, TNA.

[494] In reference to the setting up of a base in Kowloon, Wilmot notes, 'we are in serious financial difficulties and I fear nothing along the lines you suggest can take place'. Charles Wilmot, director

Finances continued to be an issue for the Council during the 1950s. This is confirmed in Hampton's research, which looks beyond the period of this thesis, to shows how monetary problems impinged on the effectiveness of the Council's basic ability to project Britain throughout the next two decades. As a Council Representative noted on his arrival to Hong Kong in 1957, for example, the 'highfaluting' mission of contrasting life under the English parliamentary system to that under communism, was likely to continue to fail until the Council had 'created and run successfully some sort of cultural programme for a steady period of years.' He urged against the 'scrounge as scrounge can' attitude that he saw as characterising the Council's activities in Hong Kong.[495]

Interestingly, both Hampton and Aitken question whether the Council was truly committed to the the 'projection of Britain' in Hong Kong. As Hampton notes, for example, notwithstanding the Council's outreach to teachers and RHK, the British Council in Hong Kong remained true to its more general approach of communicating to the masses indirectly. Here Hampton points to the unwillingness of the British Council to allow free membership of its library (in complete contrast to USIS), because it was thought that a deposit would not be a 'serious deterrent to membership of the best kind.'[496] Equally, Aitken notes that British Council film exhibition targeted 'the people who matter,' i.e., specialists, the technically able and the educated. This may not have been entirely the fault of the Council. As a 1951 memo notes, Alexander Grantham and other senior officials 'on several occasions' asked the Council to concentrate less on cultural activities and operate more on a

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of Colonies department (British Council), to Pearson (Representative, Hong Kong) 15 June 1952, BW 94/2, TNA.

[495] E.V. Jenkins to R.A. Phillips (British Council, Overseas Controller), Private letter, 24 November 1957. BW 94/7, TNA; Hampton, *Projecting Britishness*.

[496] Hampton, *Projecting Britishness*.

level likely to appeal to the 'artisan class'.[497] Nonetheless, such cases suggest that the Council's success in seeking to 'project Britain' must be queried.

As Aitken has best summarised there were no 'smoking guns' in any suggestion that the Council was involved in anything covert when it comes to propaganda.[498] However, what is clear is that the Council worked closely with the colonial government and became a discrete mouthpiece for the government in its projection of Britain to local Chinese audiences. As the above discussion has shown, doubts can be raised on both the effectiveness and commitment of the British Council to this task. A major issue for the effective functioning of the Council was funding. As Bruce concluded in the mid 1950s at the end of his time in the colony, 'Hong Kong is greatly in need of what we can provide' but 'our resources must expand many-fold.'[499]

Conclusion of chapter

This Chapter has shown how the colonial government utilised positive propaganda in its attempts to counter communist influence in Hong Kong in the early Cold War. While positive propaganda in China focused on presenting Britain as a social democracy, the Colonial office in Hong Kong sought to present a traditional image of Britain and its values for the Chinese to 'aspire' too

This propaganda task was given to the PRO, under the guidance of Murray who was able to instigate and oversee a number of fundamental changes within the

[497] Aitken, *Official film*, pp. 138- 146.

[498] Aitken, *Official film,* p 4.

[499] Minute. Drafted by Mr Bruce [drafted on board his return ship, based on information supplied by his secretary], Quarterly Report, April- June 1950, 20th June, 1950, BW 94/1, TNA.

Department.[500] Its services included the production of bulletins, press releases, publications and exhibitions to disseminate information to the population of Hong Kong. The PRO in efforts to project Britain also collaborated and sought to influence British broadcasters and the British Council.

However, the propaganda efforts were hampered by the differing priorities in terms of message content from London and the lack of resources, as information services across the board were facing repeated cuts. As a result, there was no single 'projection' of Britain, but rather a complex set of different messages and images.

Within these conclusions, the chapter has shown the importance of British officials situated in China, in dictating the policy on propaganda. The decision to improve Hong Kong's positive propaganda operations through the PRO seemingly came from Grantham. The operation of it was left to Murray. With little interference from London, Murray oversaw the day-to day running and independently decided the PRO's aims and priorities. In doing so, this chapter has reinforced the conclusion of chapter four, that the accepted narrative in the existing literature, that Hong Kong was neutral in its response to the Cold war.

While it is difficult to judge the real impact of positive propaganda in Hong Kong, it is clear that despite all of the threats and difficulties, Hong Kong remained relatively stable on a political and economic front in this period, with the Tsuen Wan riots of 1954 (between pro-KMT and pro-CCP protestors) representing the only major incident of civil unrest. In hindsight, post war colonial policy can be seen as having

[500] There was a rapid turnover of staff between 1946 and 1948. Hong Kong Information Centre, 'GIS Through The Years: This remarkable Sample of Peaceful Co-Existence,' Hong Kong, <http://www.info.gov.hk/isd/40th/2.html> accessed 11.7.2018.

been quite successful given this relative stability, coinciding with the start of economic growth in the period between 1949 and 1954.[501]

[501] R. C. Bush, *Hong Kong in the Shadow of China: Living with the Leviathan* (Washington, 2016), p.9.

Chapter Six. Taiwan

With the establishment, and subsequent recognition, of the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the de facto ruler of China in January 1950, Britain's consulate in Taiwan took on a new significance. While the KMT retreated from mainland China to Taiwan Britain, despite now having no official diplomatic relations with the Republic of China(ROC), maintained its consulate. For twenty years Britain was the only power to enjoy the 'privilege' of having ties with both the PRC (semi-diplomatic) and ROC (consular). Yet as the chapter will show, the relationship between the two countries was limited and strained.

Britain's official presence on Taiwan, an island just off the south-eastern coast of China, can be traced to 1860, when its first consular post opened in Tainan. This was followed by another post in Tamsui (a Taiwan Prefecture at the time but now part of greater Taipei) in 1877. Both of these were opened in the treaty port era in order to protect British businesses and facilitate trade and exports of products to the mainland.[502] Following the Japanese victory over China in 1895 and Japan's subsequent colonisation of Taiwan, under the *Treaty of Shimonoseki*, the significance of Tainan as a port diminished (largely as a result of the development by the Japanese of Takao - now Kaohsiung - as the main port in southern Taiwan). The British Consulate in Tainan closed in 1911. The British Consulate in Tamsui became the only British consulate left in Taiwan, reporting to the British Embassy in Tokyo. Britain's consular presence at Tamsui was, however, suspended during the Second World War. [503]

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[502] Consulates were created as a way for countries to protect their expatriates and commercial interests, as well as to exercise their consular jurisdiction and mediate with local authorities.

[503] J. Hoare, 'Korea, Taiwan and Manchuria: Britain's Consular service in the Japanese Empire, 1883- 1941', in H. Cortazzi (ed.) *Britain and Japan biographical portraits, Vol. VIII* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 1999), p. 135.

At the Cairo Conference in 1943, the United States and the United Kingdom agreed with Chiang Kai-shek, as leader of the Republic of China (ROC), that on the defeat of Japan, Taiwan would be returned to the 'Central Government of China.'[504] While Chiang might have assumed that this would be his Nationalist Government, as events show this declaration was not clear. The British Consulate in Tamsui was re-opened in the autumn of 1946, but now reported to the British Embassy in Nanjing (i.e., Nationalist China's capital).

Unrest grew in Taiwan under the Kuomintang (KMT), with the Taiwanese people voicing their resentment at the corrupt and harsh rule of the KMT Governor, Chen Yi, and sectarian violence between recent arrivals from the mainland and 'local' Taiwanese (especially former members of the Japanese armed forces) breaking out in early 1947.[505] The uprising in February 1947, in which thousands of protestors were

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For a general overview of Taiwan's development from its formal beginnings as a political entity to life under the Kuomintang-controlled Republic of China see: M. A. Rubinstein (ed.) *Taiwan, A New History* (London: An East Gate Book, 2007).

[504] Taiwan's political status was fraught with difficulties from the start. Neither of the statements of intent from the Cairo Declaration in 1943 and the Potsdam Conference in 1945 agreed to automatically transfer the status of Taiwan to the Nationalist following a Japanese surrender. Consequently, after 1945 Taiwan remained a piece of the Japanese Empire, under allied occupation by the KMT. This ambiguity meant that the Western powers continued to raise questions as how best to deal with Taiwanese sovereignty in the early Cold War. Both the US and Britain considered whether or not Taiwan should become independent or be dealt with by an UN trusteeship, rather than just being left to the KMT.

For further detail see: J. Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the struggle for modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

[505] J. K. Fairbank, *The United States and China* (4th edition, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 354.

killed (now referred to as the 228 massacre), led to the imposition of martial law.[506] This was still in place when the KMT were forced to retreat to the island in 1949, following the defeat of its forces on the mainland by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).[507] From Taiwan the ROC maintained martial law and imposed an extreme anti-communist military dictatorship. The civil war had come to represent the Cold War lines, with the ROC speaking of its determination to retake the mainland, with the support of the US. This represented an existential threat to the future world. It is against this background that British anti-communist propaganda was explored.

This chapter will firstly provide a brief overview of the key literature and debates in the existing work on Britain's relationship to Taiwan in this era, before dividing into two sections. The first section will assess Britain's propaganda efforts in Taiwan under the KMT in the era when the civil war still raging on the mainland. The second will focus on the period after the retreat of KMT forces to Taiwan in 1949, and through until the end of 1954.

It will demonstrate that once again the use of propaganda was shaped and constrained by a number of regional considerations. These included the local environment, resources, Britain's relationships with the KMT and the PRC, and more

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[506] For an account of events that led up to the 28th February 1947 uprising, which resulted in the deaths of thousands of Taiwanese by the ROC regime, see: V. Louzen, 'From Japanese Soldiers to Chinese Rebels: Colonial Hegemony, War Experience, and Spontaneous Remobilization during the 1947 Taiwanese Rebellion,' *Journal of Asian Studies*, 77/1 (2018), pp. 161-179.

[507] For details on the reasons that led to Chiang Kai-shek's decision to declare martial law in Taiwan, an 'outcome of many ad hoc, individualistic factors and decisions related to war or alliance, maintenance, or even serendipity,' see: H. Lin, *Accidental State: Chiang Kai-shek, the United States, and the Making of Taiwan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 2; also: Fairbank, *The United States and China*.

broadly the strategic importance of Taiwan to Britain. These findings reinforce the role and limits of British overseas officials in shaping Britain's propaganda agenda. The Chapter also offers insight into the struggles and applicability of anti-communist propaganda beyond Hong Kong .

Literature Overview

Most of the research on the Cold War in East Asia concentrates on the bilateral or trilateral relationship between the USA, the PRC and the Soviet bloc. The ROC and the UK are regarded as secondary players in much of this literature. Taiwan's role in the Cold War is also often analysed through an American 'lens', demonstrating the complex and critical role of the US as a consistent determining force shaping developments on the island state.[508]

In 1949 the Truman administration's support for Chiang Kai-shek's government on Taiwan looked in doubt. While the administration had supported the KMT during the Chinese civil war, it had become disillusioned with the failures and corruption of its leader Chiang Kai-shek. As with British reasoning, the American Secretary of State, Dean Acheson (and others in the administration), adhered to the theory that the PRC would eventually 'liberate Taiwan' much as it had done the mainland, and would eventually follow the Titoist line. [509] Keeping the door open to this probability was

[508] Key contributions include: R. Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment: US policy towards Taiwan, 1950-1955* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996); N. B. Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong and the United States, 1945-1992: Uncertain friendship*s (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994); and: Lin, *Accidental State.*

[509] Not only did the Americans think that Taiwan would fall to the CCP, the KMT were also concerned enough to be considering a withdrawal to the Philippines, as a kind of 'government in exile,' if needs be. See: Lin, *Accidental State*.

the best way to serve America's long-term strategic interests.[510] Such a view was, however, quickly dashed with the North Korean invasion of South Korea in June 1950.

In response to this communist aggression in Korea, President Truman announced that America would protect Taiwan. Any attempt by the CCP to take Taiwan was now to be regarded as a direct threat to the security of the Pacific and the US, and that as a result the US would deploy its Seventh Fleet to protect Taiwan from a possible CCP invasion.[511] From this point onwards, collaboration between the Americans and the ROC increased steadily, with America contributing significant amounts of money and resources to the defence of Taiwan, as it readied for the possibility of war. This support continued under the Eisenhower Administration (1953 – 1961). The power of the pro-Chiang Kai-shek 'China Lobby' in the era of McCarthyism is often identified as a key reason for this US policy towards Taiwan.[512] Particular attention in the

[510] Taylor, *Generalissimo*, p. 425.

[511] Truman did limit US commitment to Taiwan by calling on the government in Taipei to cease all air and sea operations against the mainland, and declared that 'the determination of the future status of Formosa (Taiwan) must await the restoration of security in the pacific, a peaceful settlement with Japan, or consideration by the UN.' See: Lin, *Accidental State,* p. 38.

[512] For example Tucker has called into question what we know about Eisenhower's thoughts on China and Taiwan. She shows the power of the China Lobby in influencing America's Taiwanese polices. N. B. Tucker, *The China Threat: Memories, Myths, and Realities in the 1950s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012). For an overview of who the China Lobby were, their support of Chiang Kai-shek, even after he had fled in exile to Taiwan, and its influence on American and world opinion, see: Fairbank, *The United States and China*, pp. 340-354; James Bradley is an author who suggests that US China policy was fundamentally misguided by pro-KMT lobbyists and supporters in US diplomatic, business and political circles. J. Bradley, *The China Mirage: The Hidden History of American Disaster in Asia* (London: Hachette UK, 2015).

literature on Taiwan is devoted to the offshore islands crises of 1954 and 1958, which marked an escalation in the military standoff between the ROC and the PRC.[513]

Within this narrative, analyses of Britain's role are minimal. Britain is identified as having played a moderating role. While originally urging the US to recognise the PRC, with the start of the Korean War, the Attlee and Churchill premierships focused, respectively, on de-escalation. Often attempts were made to minimise what London regarded as dangerous American rhetoric about Taiwan. The British were concerned that provocation of communist China could quickly escalate a local crisis into a Third World War.

The lack of focus on Britain within the wider story of early Cold War Taiwan might be justified given that Britain's presence in Taiwan was, indeed, marginal during this period. Taiwan was not regarded as an important economic partner for the British, particularly when compared to Hong Kong. Its value was therefore limited mainly to peripheral strategic considerations. However, Hong Kong can be seen as an important factor in ROC-UK relations. The KMT had wanted Hong Kong to be returned to China after the war, and pro-KMT activists in Hong Kong were often a cause of trouble for the colonial government. However, Britain prioritised its relations with the PRC over those with Taiwan. In comparison post war America had become the dominant Western power in East Asia and the most powerful ally for Taiwan.

Research that *has* provided some form of analysis on Britain's Taiwan policy in the early Cold War, include that of Chi-wan Mark, Qiang Zhai and Peter Lowe.[514] Steve

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[513] For a discussion on the offshore island crisis see the works of: M. Szonyi, *Cold War Island: Quemoy on the Front Line* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), and; N. B. Tucker (ed.) *Dangerous Strait: The U.S.-Taiwan-China Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

[514] C. Mark, *The Everyday Cold War: Britain and China, 1950-1972* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017); Q. Zhai, *The Dragon, the Lion, and the Eagle: Chinese-British-American Relations, 1949-58* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1994); P. Lowe, *Containing the Cold war in East Asia; British*

Tsang's 2006 book, *The Cold War's Odd Couple,* is arguably the only contribution that has focused specifically on British-ROC relations up to and after 1950, despite his conclusions having been heavily contested.[515] Tsang diverges from existing literature in arguing that a 'de facto strategic partnership' had emerged between Britain and the ROC by the time of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958, albeit unintentionally. For Tsang, this relationship formed for three reasons: (i) reforms carried out by the KMT; (ii) the failure of Britain's 'constructive engagement' approach towards China; and (iii) the Suez Crisis in 1956. All of these factors emphasised the importance of Anglo-American friendship in determining Britain's foreign policy.

Chi-Wan Mark, however, disagrees with Tsang's assertion that Britain and Taiwan were 'de facto' partners, arguing it to be an exaggeration. In particular, Mark takes aim at the reasoning that led to Tsang's conclusion, questioning the impact of Suez on the ROC-UK relationship, as well as the supposed impact of consular reports by relatively low–ranking consular officials, that had reported an improving situation in Taiwan, on London's decision-makers.[516] In his most recent publication, *The Everyday Cold War,* Mark further undermines Tsang's line of argument by showing that the eventual normalisation of relations between Britain and the PRC, meant that the two countries had managed to achieve their medium and long term common goals. The PRC were recognised as the 'de jure' rulers of China and that Hong Kong was still a

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Policies Towards Japan, China and Korea, 1948-54 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997).

[515] S. Y. Tsang, *The Cold War's Odd Couple: The Unintended Partnership Between the Republic of China and the UK, 1950-1958* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006). There is another review of Britain's Taiwan policy, by: H. Wang, 'Lengzhan zhong di liangmianpai: Yingguo de Taiwan Zhengce, 1949-1958, [Two-Faced Party in the Cold War: Britain's Taiwan Policy],' (2014), quoted in: Mark, *The Everyday Cold War*, Summary.

[516] C. Mark, 'Book Review,' *History in Focus: The Cold War, Volume 10,* <www.history.ac.uk> , accessed 11.7.2018.

British colony. As such Britain's engagement with China had not been a failure (see literature review for more detail).[517]

While such criticisms are arguably valid, Tsang's work offers a vital contribution to East Asian international history, filling a void on both Britain and Taiwan's Cold War relationship and thus establishing its importance in the context of the Cold War for both countries. It also confirms that Britain invested in the maintenance of an independent ROC government on Taiwan, and that a British-ROC relationship of sorts did emerge by the end of the 1950s, even if Tsang exaggerates the strength of the connection. Such research shows how Britain's Taiwanese policy in the early Cold War evolved, influenced by a number of competing factors. These included Britain's strategic assessment of Taiwan; the Anglo-American relationship; and Britain's relationship with the PRC. The following section will build on these findings to show how, against this background, Britain's propaganda activities on Taiwan were shaped.

Britain's propaganda endeavours in Taiwan, 1948-1949

Prior to the defeat of the KMT and its withdrawal to Taiwan in 1949, post-war Britain had treated Taiwan as part of the ROC, its consulate in Taipei reporting to the British Ambassador in Nanjing, Sir Ralph Stevenson, in the same way that regional consulates in other parts of China did. However, the threat of communism on Taiwan was entirely different to that on the mainland. The Taiwanese Communist Party was institutionally not linked to the CCP but rather was an offshoot of the Japanese Communist Party, which had developed in Taiwan under Japanese colonial rule. Its members were Japanese educated with little or no association with the Chinese communists on the mainland. Further, the Taiwanese communists claimed very limited support on the island.[518] Yet Taiwan was still subject to the same propaganda

[517] Mark, *The Everyday Cold War*.

[518] For further details of the Taiwanese Communist Party, see: F. S. T. Hsiao, A Political History of the Taiwanese Communist Party, 1928–1931, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 42/2 (1983), pp. 269-289.

instructions as the rest of the Chinese consulates, as detailed in Chapter two and Chapter three respectively.[519]

In terms of negative propaganda, the Information Research Department (IRD)'s general anti-communist initiative in China had been rejected as inappropriate as a result of the political climate in China. Instead, the IRD had agreed that its propaganda focus would be on a Sino-Soviet split, with material specifically focusing on Russian encroachment into China. Although, as I showed in Chapter Two there is no evidence of British information officers pursing this line, since by the time they had agreed on the agenda a communist victory in China looked imminent The establishment of the PRC spelled the end to British Information services in China.

The prospects for Taiwan as a base for positive propaganda was, however, actively discussed by British information officers and can be traced back to the 1947 Foreign Office review of the Far Eastern Information Department (FEID). One of that office's recommendations to improve propaganda services in the face of a rising communist influence in China was that Donald Macfarlane, the First Secretary (Information) at the Embassy office in Shanghai, should visit Chinese consular posts. The purpose of such visits would be to stimulate information activities and arrangements for a Chinese or locally employed European clerk to be attached to consulate posts, at least initially, to assist the consul in public relations and information matters (see Chapter Three for more detail on the report and subsequent efforts). Taiwan was included in this list of posts. [520]

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[519] A recent article describes the situation in Taiwan around 1947: V. Louzen, 'From Japanese Soldiers to Chinese Rebels: Colonial Hegemony, War Experience, and Spontaneous Remobilization during the 1947 Taiwanese Rebellion,' *Journal of Asian Studies*, 77/1 (2018), pp. 161-179.

[520] Stevenson (British ambassador, Nanjing) to Kirkpatrick (Permanent Secretary, Foreign Office). 12 January 1948, FO 953/289, The National Archives (TNA), Kew; John Pilcher (Foreign Office),

Records show that Macfarlane visited the consulate in Taiwan in May 1948. Reporting back to the FEID, Macfarlane noted that the newly appointed consul, E.T. Biggs, had agreed that 'Information work had great possibilities' on the Island. However, he explained that the consulate was currently understaffed and therefore it had been agreed that whilst Biggs would provide the names of contacts, the Central Information Office, based in Shanghai, would lead the information work. The Shanghai office was to deal directly with the various contacts in the island. According to Macfarlane's minutes, a later visit was agreed, once Biggs had settled in, during which discussions would begin on the possible engagement of an information clerk or vice-consul in Tamsui.[521]

The British consulate in Taiwan also looked towards the British Council to aid it in its projection of Britain. A Consular report for November 1948 shows that Biggs reached out to the British Council for assistance. Miss Lynda Grier, a representative of the British Council in China, had accordingly paid a visit to Taiwan for a week in November 1947. [522]

During the trip she visited the National Taiwan University, the National Taiwan Normal College and representative middle and primary schools, where she met teachers of English. However, it appears that the Council found considerable confusion in these educational institutions, particularly the relationship between the

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Report on visit to Burma, Siam, Indonesia, Indochina, China, Japan, the Philippines, The Special Commissioner's Office at Singapore, Tibet and Afghanistan, 1947, FO 953/320, TNA.

[521] Donald Macfarlane (First Secretary, Shanghai) to Pilcher (Foreign Office), 20 May 1948, FO 953/289, TNA.

[522] Macfarlane to Pilcher (Foreign Office), 20 May 1948, FO 953/289 TNA; E.T. Biggs (Consul Taiwan) to R. Stevenson (British Embassy, Nanjing), 8 December 1948, FO 371/ 69621, TNA.

Department for Education and the National Taiwan University. It would also appear that the after effects of the events of February 1947 and the subsequent implementation of martial law also cast a long shadow over British attempts on the island. National Taiwan University (an institution that had been founded under Japanese colonial rule, where Japanese was still used as the medium of instruction in many departments and which remained a centre of considerable elite opposition to the KMT in this era) was on strike at the time of Grier's visit, and staff there refused to meet with her. As a result, the Council concluded that such apparent divisions and confusion would only 'impede the further development of their work in Formosa (Taiwan)'.[523]

Retreat to Taiwan

Britain's decision to maintain the consulate at Tamsui can be viewed as a pragmatic one; it was not envisaged as a long-term arrangement. Indeed a naval attaché had been placed in charge. Britain did not necessarily want Taiwan to fall into 'communist hands,' but it was prepared to accept its fall as a logical outcome of the Chinese civil war.[524] Instead following the decision to recognise the PRC as de facto ruler of China in January 1950, Britain lobbied the US to follow suit. From March onwards, as Britain negotiated the establishment of diplomatic relations with the PRC, Britain also began

[523] E. T. Biggs (Consul Taiwan) to R. Stevenson (British Embassy, Nanjing), 8 December 1948, FO 371/ 69621, TNA.

[524] Britain's main concern was that the bulk of the Taiwanese military resources, in particular its navy and air force, would fall into communist hands and thus significantly increase the PRC's ability to threaten Hong Kong. However, even this on balance was not deemed a major issue; the British believed that while it was the PRC's ultimate objective to seek the retrocession of Hong Kong, no attack was being planned. Tsang, *The Cold War's Odd Couple*, p. 66.

taking steps that would remove the KMT as the Chinese representative at the UN Security Council (UNSC) and replace them with an official from the PRC.[525]

These actions, unsurprisingly, led to anti-British reactions in Taiwan itself. Criticism in the press was focused on Britain's position towards China, seen as misguided and motivated by economic self-interest.[526] However, in permitting Britain's consulate to remain open against this background (and despite the lack of diplomatic relations), the KMT displayed considerable pragmatism. Britain still represented an important international power. By allowing the consulate to continue as a channel for communications, it was believed that the KMT could persuade Britain to change its mind on the issue of recognition of the PRC.[527] At the same time, an unofficial Nationalist Chinese representative was sent by Chiang Kai-shek to London, and was allowed to maintain an office there. This allowed for occasional meetings with senior British officials, and Nationalist liaison officers maintained a presence in Hong

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[525] See: Tsang, *The Cold War's Odd Couple*, p. 101.

[526] Jacobs-Larkcom, the British Consulate in Tamsui, monthly reports on the domestic and political developments during 1950/51 show the constant criticism Britain was subjected to in the KMT press. As explored in Chapter Two, Chiang Kai-shek's disposition was inherently anti-British, seeing Britain as representative of the old European colonial powers. Britain's position in regards to Taiwan from 1950 was hardly likely to improve his stance. The feeling of anti-Britishness sometimes boiled over into action such as at a student demonstration in April 1951 when the British Consulate in Tamsui was overrun and the British flag hauled down. Jacobs-Larkcom (Taiwan) to Foreign Office, Summary of events in April, 22 May 1951, FO 371/92209, TNA. Also refer to: P. Lowe, *Containing the Cold War in East Asia: British Policies Towards Japan, China and Korea,* pp. 151-154; Taylor, *The Generalissimo.*

[527] Taylor has shown the British commonwealth was recognised by the KMT to influence and gain their support. As such there was a pro-KMT lobby within the British Commonwealth. The KMT sponsored parliamentarian visits from places such as Australia in the early 1950s. J. E. Taylor, 'Taipei's Britisher: W. G. Goddard and the promotion of Nationalist China in the Cold War Commonwealth,' *NZ Journal of Asian Studies*, 9/2 (2007), pp. 147-168.

Kong.[528] A reason and means for the two countries to directly communicate with each other thus remained.

China's decision to commit its armies to Korea in October 1950, however, forced Britain to re-think its support for Taiwan's independence from the mainland. With an assertive communist China rising in East Asia, Taiwan took on a new strategic value in the context of the Cold War and the wider region. For Peter Lowe, it was the stalemate in the Korean War, reached by the summer of 1951, and America's further commitment to Taiwan's defence with the arrival of the Eisenhower administration, that finally pushed Britain towards a wider acceptance of Taiwan, 'not with enthusiasm but through a feeling of inevitability.'[529]

The dilemma for Britain was that while it accepted that de facto recognition of the ROC in Taiwan should be given, this should not be de jure recognition, at least not until Chiang Kai-shek was sufficiently established on the island (his control remained predominantly reliant on American support in this early period). On the other hand, the Americans granted de facto recognition to the CCP for the territory that they held, but would not give the PRC de jure recognition. This suggested that there were in fact two Chinese states, which neither Communist nor Nationalist would agree to, at least while the civil war was still in progress.[530]

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[528] For detail on the experience of the KMT reception in London see S. Tsang, 'Unwitting Partners: Relations between Britain and Taiwan (1950-58)', *East Asian History,* 7/June (1994), pp.105-120.

[529] While Britain 'deplored' Washington's decision to tie the Korean War to the protection of Taiwan, seeing such a move as an affront to the PRC, America's commitment to Taiwan helped solidify the independence of the island from the mainland. Lowe, *Containing East Asia*, p. 154.

[530] Sir Eric Beckett (Legal Adviser, Foreign Office) to the Attorney General, Memo, 26 June 1951, FO 371/92226, TNA.

Certainly, from 1951 onwards Britain's relations with Taiwan appeared to have eased. Britain no longer pursued policies harmful to the ROC in the UN. The re-election of Churchill as Prime Minister in 1951 furthered the prospect of a more favourable Taiwan policy, given his strong anti-communist views and promotion of the special relationship with the US.[531] Yet, despite the promise of what a Churchill government would bring, Britain still ultimately refused to recognise the ROC. Its determination to stop the Taiwan question from becoming a cause for a general war in the Far East also meant that it often positioned itself as an obstacle to Chiang's announcements to retake the mainland. Attempts by officials and special emissaries from Taipei to convince Britain to change its position on the question of representation, often received a 'cool reception.'[532] Britain and the ROC also continued to be at odds over Malaya and Hong Kong, where the British saw KMT interference as undermining colonial stability.[533] A level of anti-Britishness was still detectable.[534] Britain's relationship with Taiwan remained, but it was 'limited and unimportant' throughout the 1950s.[535]

Subsequently, as Britain struggled to clarify and define its relationship with Taiwan, there appears to have been little substantial discussion by the British on the

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[531] Jacobs-Larkcom to Foreign Office, Summary of events in September, 18 October 1951, FO 371/92210, TNA.

[532] Mark, 'Book Review', *History in Focus: The Cold War, Volume 10.*

[533] The KMT were vocally critical of the British treatment of the overseas Chinese in Malaya. In Hong Kong local supporters of the KMT challenged British authority in their confrontation and rallies against the pro-communist factions, see: L. Xun, 'The American Cold War in Hong Kong, 1949-1960' in P. Roberts and J.M. Carroll (eds.) Hong Kong in the Cold War (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016).

[534]For example, attacks on British ships in Taiwan that delivered to the mainland, continued. Lowe, *Containing East Asia*, p. 154.

[535] Mark, 'Book Review', *History in Focus: The Cold War, Volume 10.*

possibility of distributing anti-communist propaganda material in Taiwan until mid-1953 (i.e., following the armistice in Korea). After this, as tensions temporarily eased in East Asia, and the ROC's position in Taiwan seemed secure, discussions started on a British propaganda initiative. This initiative did not come from London or the consulate at Tamsui but instead from the Regional Information Office (RIO) in Singapore, led by its representative in Hong Kong, Leslie Smith.

Smith, on leave from his post in Hong Kong, visited Taiwan in October 1953 to observe 'anything that might be of interest both to the RIO and to the administration in general'. To gain such an insight, Smith travelled around the island by train and bus, talking with the local populace and with a number of KMT officials from whom he received a 'friendly reception.'[536]

Smith's report focused on a number of aspects of the KMT government, including the size, strengths and weaknesses of the nationalist army; the financial situation, now under considerable American control; the attitude of Taiwan's population to the Nationalists, which was assessed as one of being 'reasonably content' with the nationalist administration; the position of Chiang Kai-shek, still having undisputed control of both political and military affairs; American policy, which was still seen as supportive of Taiwan for the foreseeable future, both politically and financially; contacts with the mainland (which were continuous but conducted through covert channels); nationalist reintroduction centres for communists, which was where communist agents and suspected communists were sent for 'thought reform,' and

[536]Smith was quite privileged to be allowed such freedom. It was a very rare occurrence, given that Taiwan was under martial law and the KMT was terrified of possible CCP spies. Normally any foreigner who was not US military would have had to been accompanied by an official KMT guide. For an interesting insight into what Taiwan was like during the Cold War with a large presence of US troops, a permanent curfew and martial law, which puts into perspective how unusual it was for Smith to travel so freely around Taiwan, see Richard Baum's memoir: R. Baum, *China Watcher: Confession of a Peking Tom* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010).

KMT plans to return to the Chinese mainland, which was talked about for 'Morale' purposes but lacked any real intention.

Smith's report also noted attitudes towards Britain, specifically that while there was a certain amount of anti-British feeling amongst the Nationalists, senior government officials were anxious to be on friendly terms with the British, with or without recognition. Smith was however an 'information man' and the report honed in on the current anti-communist propaganda function in Taiwan, seeing it as an area where Britain should be engaged.[537]

In his relatively positive report on Taiwan's progress, Smith noted to his own surprise that the country was neither as inefficient nor corrupt as he had expected from his experience of nationalists on the mainland. Smith recommended that steps were taken to improve British representation on Taiwan. Given the military position of Taiwan and the importance of 'face' in the Asian world, he noted that it was 'desirable (that)…the status of the British representative in Taiwan were to be increased.' For this representative, Smith's report asserted that there was 'much room' for RIO's basic material. He also noted that this propaganda material would be useful to the KMT 'propagandists' of the island. Smith explained that the ROC's current research group for such a purpose was 'neglected' and were, on interview, deemed a 'suitable recipient for RIO/IRD material.'[538]

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[537] Commissioner General's Office to C. T. Crowe (Far Eastern Department), Attached Leslie Smith's Report of 4 December 1953, Visit to Formosa between October 16th to November 12th, Report of 23 January 1954, FO371/110384, TNA.

[538] Smith interviewed Professor Shu-chin Tsui, who was engaged upon this work. Tsui reported that most of his information from the mainland reached him via Hong Kong, and rather late. Smith recommended him as a suitable recipient for Regional Information Office and Information Research Department material. Smith, Report of 4 December 1953, FO371/110384, TNA.

Smith acknowledged that the Americans already had a 'fairly large' propaganda presence in Taiwan with a USIS head office in Taipei and three branches, mobile projectors and libraries, broadcasts, and film shows at their disposable.[539] A caveat to this was that the material was mostly of a positive nature. While Smith noted that the Americans 'did not seem too pleased at the idea of British information activities in Formosa (Taiwan)' he asserted that there *was* space for British anti-communist propaganda. This was reflected in the report's recommendation which argued that Taiwan should be included in the orbit of the RIO's activities and that a British Information Services (BIS) representation be placed on the island. Smith's conclusions were far from welcomed by the consulate in Tamsui and in Whitehall.[540]

Despite the report giving the impression that the commissioning of propaganda work was supported by the consulate in Tamsui, this was emphatically rejected by staff at the consulate themselves. Alexander Hermann, the British Consul, asserted to Whitehall that Smith's account of their conversations on information work was 'wishful thinking.' In the absence of formal diplomatic relations, the consul, as the lead British representative in Taiwan, had taken on a semi-political role. Although he could not take on any direct diplomatic engagement with the Nationalists, the consul met with ROC officials, produced reports on domestic and political developments on Taiwan, and even advised on British policy towards Taiwan.[541] In this regard it was

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[539] Gary Rawnsley provides details of Taiwan's propaganda efforts or rather lack of them in his book *Taiwan's Propaganda Cold War.* He also acknowledges the input of the Americans. See: G. Rawnsley, 'Taiwan's Propaganda Cold War: The Offshore Crises of 1954 and 1958,' *Intelligence and national Security*, 14/4 (1999), pp. 82-101.

[540] Smith, Report of 4 December 1953, FO371/110384, TNA.

[541] The Foreign Office response to Taiwan shows that consuls did at times overstep the mark in the 'political advice' they provided. For example, British Consul E. H. Jacobs-Larkcom (1950-1951) can be seen to have pushed for British recognition of the KMT. For example, he wrote that 'cold-shouldering of the Nationalists is involving us at the Consulate in serious and needless difficulties with few or no compensating advantages.' His comments brought about a short and rather terse

Hermann who appears to have been the key protagonist in the criticism of Smith's report. [542]

While thanking Smith for his 'comprehensive report' and noting that Smith's general impressions were in line with his own, Hermann underlined that their conversation had been 'misunderstood.' For Herman, the report demonstrated a lack of political awareness of the situation that Britain faced in Taiwan. His criticism focused on the potential damage to political relations in Taiwan that propaganda could bring. For example, he argued that any advertising of Britain on Taiwan would revive 'anti-British' outbursts that had only just died down. In doing so it would, he alleged, damage the consulate's ability to 'achieve quite useful…things' and put at risk its ability to even continue to operate, which was not guaranteed without diplomatic relations.[543] For Hermann, securing the continued presence of the consulate was essential. As such, he argued that if IRD material was deemed necessary it should go to selected Chinese for their use and not through the Consulate. Furthermore, Hermann argued that 'this [i.e., Taiwan] is a place where right hands do not know

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response from Mr R. H. Scott at the Foreign Office, 'Mr Jacobs-Larkcom is badly informed.' Jacobs-Larkcom to Foreign Office, INTEL, 25 June 1951, R. H. Scott, Minute, 2 July, 1951, FO 371/92226. See also: Tsang, 'Unwitting Partners,' p. 111; Lowe, *Containing the Cold War in East Asia*, pp. 151 -154.

[542] A. Hermann (British Consulate, Tamsui, Formosa) to C. T. Crowe (Far Eastern Department, Foreign Office), 28 December 1953, FO371/110384, TNA.

[543] Hermann argued that British existence relied on keeping out of the public eye and giving those who do not like us, but see the desirability of our being here, every chance to pretend that we do not exist. Hermann to Smith (Hong Kong), 24 December 1953, FO 371/110384, TNA.

what left hands are doing, and for us to hand out documents of any kind to anyone but the provincial government might lead to sinister misconstruction.'[544]

Hermann also looked at political relations with Beijing to substantiate his position against the proposed propaganda initiative. In his reply to Smith, Herman noted that HMG's official recognition was still accorded to the PRC and that one should not give the impression that this policy of recognition was to change. If any propaganda efforts by Britain in Taiwan were discovered it could jeopardise this policy.[545]

Rejection of the report's propaganda recommendation on the basis of these political considerations was backed by both the Far Eastern Department (FED) and in turn by the IRD, who agreed that Smith in his recommendations had failed to recognise the political problems inherent in his proposals. In fact the nature of Smith's visit in the first place was called into question.

The report brought to the attention of the Foreign Office the fact that Smith had gone 'beyond his duties' as Hong Kong Information Officer during his trip to Taiwan. This type of political report was clearly in the domain of the consul at Tamsui. Most seriously for the FED, Smith's enquiries into political, military and economic issues, and the interviewing of some very high KMT officials in Taiwan, meant he had already risked causing HMG 'serious political embarrassment' vis-a-vis the KMT authorities in Taiwan (Formosa) and the Chinese Government in Beijing (Peking). The concern was that the Chinese Nationalists may have misinterpreted his visit to Taiwan as a 'feeler' from the British government to the Nationalists.[546] This could have further worsened

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[544] It was likely that making the consulate deal with the provincial government and not the central government was a way of avoiding the British from making any direct contact with Taipei.

[545] Hermann to Smith (Hong Kong), 24 December 1953, FO 371/110384, TNA.

[546] P. Wilkinson (FED) Minute, 17 February 1954; E. Holland (IRD), Minute, 4 March 1954, FO 371/110384, TNA.

UK-ROC relations and also, if the PRC had heard about it, British relations with the mainland too. In particular, it was asserted that Smith's visit to Quemoy, an island close to the Mainland and controlled by KMT military, where he attended at Nationalist military parades for the visit of the United States Vice President Nixon, was particularly contentious, as it could have easily been misinterpreted as involving HMG with the Nationalist adventure.[547]

Smith did show some awareness that his visit could be politically damaging. In his report he explained that he had made it clear to those he spoke that he was not on official business and avoided all subjects which might fall within the province of Her Majesty's Consul, Taipei, such as attacks on British shipping.[548] This was regarded as a feeble defence and one that was not accepted by the Foreign Office. Colin Crowe, Head of the Far Eastern Department, was scornful of Smith's 'remarkable performance,' asking how Smith could pretend that no one took his visit as being official when he spent much of his time discussing official business.[549]

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[547] The only people allowed to visit Quemoy were pro-KMT foreign guests, military personnel or those helping the troops in some way. It is quite likely therefore that the KMT regarded Smith as an ally or friend of some kind. The visit by Smith is rather odd for someone who was an information man and used to secrecy. His visit is not likely to have been unnoticed by the Nationalists in Taipei and the CCP in Beijing. Note by Wilkinson and Crowe shows concern over Quemoy. Wilkinson, Minute, 17 February 1954, FO 371/110384, TNA.

[548] Smith noted that it was decided by the Taipei authorities that I should meet people and travel in the guise of a correspondent for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and that no public mention of my visit should be made. They cooperated fully in this respect. Smith, Report of 4 December 1953, FO371.110384, TNA.

[549] Crowe, Minute, 28 March 1954, FO 371/110384, TNA; It is again worth noting that Smith was an 'information man,' and his mission was one of gaining information, i.e., in all probability Smith had a covert agenda in Taiwan.

While Smith's initial trip had been approved by the RIO (S) and the China and Korean Department (which by the end of 1953 had been incorporated into the FED) it was originally for a two days visit to "renew old contacts." The Foreign Office seemed aggrieved that this report had not been commissioned by them nor had his extension to stay for over a month. To add to this, Smith then made a second visit to Formosa for one week in December without reference to London offices. The Foreign Office insisted that Smith be reprimanded.[550]

Beside the political consideration, the Foreign Office also questioned the value that the proposed information work would bring. As Wilkinson of the FED pointed out, Taiwan is 'sufficiently anti-communist without any encouragement from us'. The IRD, in more colourful language agreed, asserting that instructions to Nationalists on anti-communism would be equivalent to teaching your grandmother to suck eggs. The IRD official concluded by saying 'I can conceive few more useless occupations than trying to convert the Pope to Catholicism.'[551]

It is possible to refute some of the criticism put forward by the consulate and Foreign Office on Smith's report. For example, it was arguably an overstatement by the consul that a propaganda initiative by the British officials in Taiwan would jeopardise the consulate's existence. As can be seen in existing literature, and as was noted in

[550] Singapore did defend Smith, noting they had agreed to the extension of another 12 days and his second visit. However they agreed-that on no account should Smith or anyone else for whom we are responsible go off on trips from Hong Kong without getting permission from London. W.D. Allen (Foreign Office) to A.A. Dudley (Office of commissioner-general Singapore) 26 March 1954; Dudley to Allen, 9 April 1954, FO 371/110384, TNA.

[551] Wilkinson, 21 January 1954; IRD Official, Minute, undated, FO 371/110384, TNA.

Smith's report, the Nationalists were keen to improve relations with Britain, recognition or not.[552]

Moreover as Jeremy Taylor has shown in his investigation into the Australian-born intellectual, W. G. Goddard, the KMT did manage to work with and even employ foreigners in their own propaganda efforts.[553] It is also unlikely that any British propaganda initiatives with the KMT would simply be a case of 'sucking eggs.' As Gary Rawnsley has shown in his review of Taiwan's Cold War propaganda during the offshore crisis, ROC's propaganda capability was wanting. But, as in the case of America, whether the KMT would have listened to Britain or accepted its material is a different matter.[554]

In regards to the criticism that a propaganda initiative, if discovered, would have adverse effects on the PRC-British relationship, while this might have been the case, it is clear at the time of the report such relations were already at a low point.[555] As

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[552] Mark confirms KMT efforts focused on getting the British not to act against KMT interests such as the recognition of the PRC in the UN. Mark, 'Book Review'*, History in Focus: The Cold War, Volume 10.* Smith, Report of 4 December 1953, FO371.110384, TNA.

[553] Goddard wrote and spoke profusely about the Nationalist cause around the world, even visiting Britain where he gave lectures, appeared on TV, spoke to the press, politicians and diplomats about Taiwan. Interestingly he did not acknowledge his source of funding. The fact that Goddard was a Commonwealth (i.e., Australian) citizen was interpreted by the Nationalists as a reason for him to be more readily believed in countries such as Britain. J. E. Taylor, 'Taipei's Britisher: W. G. Goddard and the promotion of Nationalist China in the Cold War Commonwealth,' *NZ Journal of Asian Studies*, 9/2 (2007), pp. 147-168; J. E. Taylor, 'Being a "Friend of Free China": W. G. Goddard in Nationalist Taiwan,' The Chinese Historical Review, 16/2 (2009), pp. 208-227.

[554] Rawnsley, 'Taiwan's propaganda Cold War: The offshore islands crises of 1954 and 1958,' pp. 82-101.

[555] Lowe shows in the Spring and Summer of 1952 when debate occurred in the Foreign Office on the possibility of offering recognition to Taiwan instead of China, discussion came down to the

demonstrated in Chapter Four, by 1951 Hong Kong and South East Asia were issued with propaganda that responded directly to the Chinese Communist threat.[556] Whether or not expanding the propaganda initiative to Taiwan would have posed a significant threat when relations were already so poor can be questioned.

What can be concluded, however, is that the attempt to introduce negative anti-communist propaganda into Taiwan had been effectively rebuffed by arguments on the possible impact of this on political relations with both the ROC and the PRC. There was also doubt as to the value that any such propaganda initiative could have. Crucially, unlike in the case of China and Hong Kong, the IRD did not contest these arguments and cautions. Arguably, this was reflective of the strategic value that Britain allotted to Taiwan, as identified in the existing literature. Taiwan was not of key strategic priority for the Foreign Office. It was not seen as being a major part of Britain's anti-communist propaganda campaign.[557]

Smith's report, however, did not just focus on negative anti-communist propaganda, but also highlighted the role of positive propaganda. Smith endorsed the British consul's request for a 'library of background books' on the British way of life, for example. This would include titles such as *How Parliament Works* and *The British*

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benefits of alignment with the US, trade possibilities and the legal basis, perceptively not what could be lost from China. Lowe, *Containing East Asia*, p. 155.

[556] MacDonald to Foreign Office, Bukit Serene Conference, Propaganda recommendations, 28 November 1951, Malcolm MacDonald Papers, Palace Green Library, Durham University.

[557] Nor did the RIO (S), despite the fact that they initially requested Smith's visit to Taiwan they did not fight to implement the report's propaganda recommendations. As in Hong Kong, the RIO (S) seemed content to focus the resources that it had on SEA, where there were concerns with the overseas Chinese, particularly in Malaya. P. L. Carter (the Commissioner General's Office) to C.T. Crowe, 23 January 1954; Rayner (RIO, Singapore) to Holland (IRD), 15 February 1954, FO 371/110384, TNA.

Police System. There was certainly a more upbeat reaction to such recommendations.[558] The IRD agreed that the 'soft touch' approach of the British Council, in making positive propaganda available for those who desired it, could also be of benefit. An IRD official noted that Mr Hermann could have this basic material on the projection of the British way, 'for him to inform himself and to pass to any particular contacts who might be interested.' The matter was recognised as a matter for the IPD and passed over.[559]

The IPD quickly responded to this noting that their funds 'for such purposes as this are almost exhausted for this year.' One official, R. L. Muston, made it clear that priority was to be given to consulates who were doing information work, and whose needs must be met first. As a result it was not possible to commit funds from next year's (54/55) budget for the purpose of this propaganda.[560]

Accordingly, attempts were made to re-engage the British Council in Taiwan. Smith had recommended the organisation should provide assistance to the National Taiwan University, and the New Christian University, with the intention of retaining British cultural influence in Formosa.[561] An IRD official noted that the Department had asked the British Council whether they could give discreet help (by way of books, teaching aids, etc.) to the Christian University, without becoming politically involved.[562]

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[558] Smith, Report of 4 December 1953, FO371/110384, TNA.

[559] E Holland (IRD) 20 January 1954, FO371/110384, TNA.

[560] R. L. Muston (IPD), Minute, 2 February 1954, FO 371/110384, TNA. For more on cuts to the IPD and all information services, see Chapter One.

[561] The English and Canadian Presbyterian Missions had contributed. Two of the five directors of the New Christian University were to be English and one Canadian.

[562] T .M. White (IRD) Minute, 27 January 1954, FO371/110384, TNA.

It is unlikely that this was approved. British Council records show that just a month later when a Taiwan-based professor who had previously served as a cultural attaché at the Nationalist Chinese Embassy and who was now Chairman of the Teachers Association, visited the UK and asked the Council if he could visit UK schools and educational institutions, the Council was wary about acquiescing to such a request. The Council referred the request to the China and Korea Department who in turn asserted that the 'Council should not extend help to official Nationalist China'.[563] No further British Council or Information Policy Department files, currently available, show that any subsequent discussion or agreement took place on the matter of Taiwan throughout the period in question, 1953-54.

Besides these failed Foreign Office initiatives, Taiwan was still subject to British positive propaganda through the medium of radio. The BBC made daily broadcasts to Chinese listeners, both inside and outside the mainland, as part of its Far Eastern Service. These broadcasts gave an inherently pro-British tinge to its reporting. However, as discussed in Chapter Two the quality of this service to these areas was seen as poor. While discussions focused on how the Service's reach and quality could be improved for mainland China, Taiwan was given no such priority. [564]

Conclusion of chapter

The Chapter has shown, that the lack of vested interest in Taiwan, ultimately underlined the absence of British propaganda in the country. Unlike in mainland China and Hong Kong, the IRD did not challenge the reasoning as to why negative propaganda was deemed inappropriate. There was no real emphasis, prior to ROC

[563] Although the Foreign Office agreed that assistance might be given to an unofficial visitor if they asked for aid. Mrs. L. Kitchingham, Minute, Mr Yew: Formosa, 18 February, 1954, BW 163/1, TNA.

[564] Pilcher (Foreign Office), Historical brief for the Minister, 3 September 1948, 1051 E1/1055/1, BBC archives, Caversham Park, Reading.

withdrawal from the mainland, on disseminating propaganda in Taiwan (positive or negative). As such, a more harmonious relationship between policy and propaganda seems to have developed when compared to the case studies outlined in other chapters. On British policy in Taiwan, the IRD and the IPD all seemingly worked together in agreement.

These findings have again reinforced the role that key individuals played in shaping the propaganda agenda. For example, Leslie Smith had been able to go beyond his remit during his visit to Taiwan. He put forward propaganda recommendations which went further than those being adhered to in London. Consul Hermann, like Stevenson in China and Murray in Hong Kong, set out to confront any suggestion of anti-communist propaganda - successfully so.

Importantly the thesis also shows the limits of Britain's anti-communist propaganda effort beyond Hong Kong in the 1950s. While British 'anti-communist' propaganda was seen to be of value in Hong Kong, in Taiwan an 'anti-communist' Chinese regime it is likely Britain's own anti-communist messages would have struggled. For Britain, being anti-communist was about projecting a certain view of Britain. However for Taiwan and America, this was a battle between Left and Right in which there was no room for nuance.[565] This chapter therefore highlights the very real differences between the UK and its views of Chinese communism, as opposed to that of the more aggressively anti-communist forces such as the KMT, in Cold War Asia.

[565] Kraus uses the term 'anti-communist Asia' to show the US allies like Taiwan and South Korea were far more anti-communist than the US itself. C. Kraus, 'The Danger is Two-Fold': Decolonisation and Cold War in Anti-Communist Asia, 1955–7', The International History Review, 39/2 (2017), 256-273.

Conclusion

In 1948, while committed to the Anglo-American alliance and the global campaign to confront communist ideology and the spread of communism, Britain still looked to secure its trade and strategic interests in China. London's recognition of the People's Republic of China (PRC) the following year put Britain at odds with its American ally and complicated its attempts to counter communism in the Cold War. This thesis, by analysing Britain's propaganda efforts in 'greater China' during the early Cold War, gives a unique insight into how Britain sought to balance these opposing policies in the period down to 1954.

This concluding chapter outlines the main findings of the thesis; emphasising the need for a holistic approach in the study of propaganda; revealing the extent, and shape of anti-communist propaganda in China; and underlining the overall lack of co-ordination of Britain's propaganda efforts in greater China. The chapter will then show how these findings contribute to the existing literature before suggesting some possible avenues for future research.

This thesis has underscored the need to take a holistic approach to the study of propaganda and demonstrated the benefit of defining propaganda as used by British policy officials at the time, according to the content of its message; Negative or Positive. As shown in the literature review, a holistic approach is not the typical approach to British Cold War studies. Generally, investigations into Britain's use of propaganda during this period have focused overwhelmingly on the activities of the Information Relations Department (IRD). This was a department designed specifically to counter the emerging communist threat. It relied largely on negative propaganda to criticise, or reply to, criticism from communist countries - mainly Soviet Russia. Because of this remit, the department (and therefore negative propaganda) has become the main focus of studies into British Cold War propaganda.

Crucially, this thesis has demonstrated that positive propaganda was used by Britain in 'greater China' to help combat the perceived communist threat, and thus must be seen as a vital part of its anti-communist propaganda effort. The contribution positive

propaganda could play in the global fight against communism was increasingly accepted by officials in the early stages of the Cold War. In South East Asia, British overseas posts reported that 'negative (i.e., specifically anti-communist) publicity is most effective If adequately backed by positive material'.[566] At a meeting held to discuss publicity and propaganda policy in South East Asia, in October 1950, it was agreed that 'the value of such propaganda was taken as axiomatic' and a request was made for further guidance documents dealing with positive publicity.[567] This was discussed at the subsequent Bukit Serene Conference of information officers one month later, where it was concluded that positive propaganda in the region, if properly integrated with policy and strategy, was to be considered as a stabiliser. It was agreed that all propaganda must be regarded 'as being anti-communist in effect'.[568] According to the department in charge of producing this material in Whitehall, the Information Policy Department (IPD), the right proportions were considered to be no more than one negative to four positive.[569]

For James Vaughan, this utilisation of positive propaganda is not just a phenomenon in the Far East. In his study of cultural diplomacy in the Middle East he asserts that,

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[566] A. Malcolm (Head of IPD) to Denning (Head of Far Eastern Department] travelling in Singapore, 25 December 1950, FO 953/750, The National Archives at Kew (TNA).

[567] F. R. H Murray, Minute, Record of meeting held at the Foreign Office on 11 October 1950, FO 953/750, TNA.

[567] Malcolm to Denning, 25 December 1950, FO 953/750, TNA.

[567] F. R. H. Murray, Minute, Record of meeting held at the Foreign Office on 11 October 1950, FO 953/750, TNA.

[568] Macdonald (Singapore) Foreign Office, conclusions of The Bukit Serene Conference, December 13th 1950, FO 953/750, TNA.

[569] Malcolm to Denning, 25 December 1950, FO 953/750, TNA

by 1950, the Foreign Office had concluded that 'the prevailing doctrine was that British propaganda should not be entirely negative, but that, as well as exposing the evils of the soviet regime, we have to show that there is a better alternative and that Western democracy, with Britain in the lead is pointing the way to it.'[570] However, as seen in the literature review, few existing contributions have explored the implication of these findings in the study of Cold War propaganda. Comment on positive propaganda often ceases after the point when the idea of Britain as the 'Third Force' was abandoned. This was when the IRD was allowed to concentrate on 'offensive' propaganda. Vaughan's study is an exception and one that has helped to challenge the current approach to the study of propaganda.

It is important to state here that it is possible to overstate the dichotomy between positive and negative: the two are not completely divorced. As outlined in chapter two, to tackle communism the IRD encouraged a comparison between the merits of Britain and Western democracy to the vices and dangers of communism.[571] The promotion of Britain meant that positive propaganda, by definition, formed at least part of their propaganda effort. However, as is apparent from references to officials involved at the time, positive propaganda was *not* the responsibility of the IRD.

By adopting a broad approach to propaganda, the thesis has also explored the use of censorship to help combat the communist influence. This was most evident in the case of Hong Kong, where colonial authorities had the ability to exercise such powers. The thesis has also highlighted the role of pabulum, generic entertainment in radio

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[570] J. R. Vaughan (2005) '"A Certain Idea of Britain:" British Cultural Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1945–57,' *Contemporary British History*, 19/2 (2005), p. 156.

[571] Foreign Office (FO) Circular Telegram, No. 6, 23 January 1948, FO 1110/1, TNA; Memorandum by Ernst Bevin (Foreign Secretary) Future Foreign Publicity Policy, 4 January 1948, CAB129/23, TNA.

broadcasts, as a way to help prevent Chinese audiences from listening to something that was less desirable, that is, communist propaganda.

In distinguishing Cold War propaganda in terms of 'positive' and 'negative', the thesis offers an important tool to move beyond just the study of the IRD. The thesis instead utilises a multi-agency methodology, to reveal the roles played by other actors, both government departments and organisations. It has particularly emphasised the role of one of these actors, the IPD. It was a department tasked with overseeing the 'Projection of Britain.' While much less known than the IRD, arguably its records are just as revealing. As Alban Webb, has concluded the IRD and IPD together provided 'an archival spinal column which reveals the wider architecture of Whitehall's anti-communist and propaganda activities.'[572]

The British Council and BBC are also shown as key actors in this dissemination of propaganda. Their efforts have been addressed to some extent by those studying the IRD, particularly the BBC. However, by exploring their contribution to the positive propaganda agenda, a broader understanding of their value to the anti-communist agenda is obtained. Not only was their cultural propaganda valued by the Cold War propagandists but, as in the case of the British Council in China, they occasionally took on an 'information' role, directly facilitating the activities of the British Information services in the dissemination of positive propaganda. The extent of these propaganda activities will now be discussed.

Another central finding of the thesis is that the IRD struggled to find a receptive market in greater China. Its overseas colleagues showed a vocal reluctance to engage with the IRD and disseminate its material. In mainland China, the British Embassy in Nanjing challenged the IRD from the very beginning. The Far Eastern Circular, issued in July 1948, was met with a barrage of criticism from the British Embassy. The Chargé

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[572] A. Webb, *London Calling: Britain, The BBC World Service and the Cold War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p 10.

d'Affaires, Henry Lamb, argued that the approach suggested by the IRD was not only incompatible with the environment in China, in the midst of a civil war, but that it had the potential to damage Britain's relationship with the KMT, where Britain's allegiance still lay. As argued in chapter two, their reluctance to issue anti-communist propaganda was primarily due to concern over the possible negative impact on relations with the CCP, the likely new rulers of China. During the lengthy process of responding to the concerns from the Embassy, the IRD was effectively prevented from disseminating its anti-communist propaganda in China. The British government's new China policy, agreed by the Cabinet in December 1948, legitimised the concern which overseas posts had raised about the possible impact negative propaganda could have.

Concern about the impact that propaganda activities might have on the Sino-British relationship, also shaped the Hong Kong colonial government's receptiveness to IRD material. Initially, in 1948, the colonial governor, Alexander Grantham, appeared willing to launch an anti-communist propaganda campaign in the colony. The agreement led to the creation of the Regional Information Office (RIO), Hong Kong (HK), a branch of the RIO in Singapore, to counter any communist influences in the colony. However, as seen in chapter four, Grantham increasingly voiced concern on the prospect of negative propaganda. He pointed to the damage that this could cause to relations with the CCP and the potential for retaliation that would jeopardise the colonial authority in Hong Kong.

By time the RIO (HK) became operational, in mid-1950, the prospective use of negative propaganda was further curtailed. Concern about a communist threat was growing throughout South East Asia, particularly as events in Malaya had escalated. The RIO (S) therefore suggested a reassessment of the activities of the RIO (HK) . Rather than disseminate propaganda, its role was to monitor events on mainland China and produce material, which could be used to inform audiences in South East Asia of communist activities and intentions. The colonial government seemed happy to acquiescence to this reassessment of priorities.

Against the background of the recognition of the PRC and the stalemate in UK-Sino relations, IRD appeared to lose interest in the area. The IRD did not question the reduction in the propaganda role of the RIO (HK). The proposed propaganda activities of the RIO (HK) were effectively side-lined. True, there is evidence to show that the RIO (HK) did disseminate anti-communist propaganda through its contacts with the local press, but the finer detail on the extent and how it was done is currently unavailable in archival material.

In Taiwan, the situation was more complex. The Sino-British relationship, along with concerns over the existence of its consulate in Tamsui, were reasons put forward in justifying the absence of the IRD. However unlike in Hong Kong and China there had never been a serious push for negative propaganda. The thesis has argued that this was because Britain lacked a vested interest in the territory. Certainly by 1953, as demonstrated in Hong Kong, the IRD had seemingly lost any real impetuous in pushing the idea of negative propaganda.

Whereas the IRD struggled to overcome the opposition put forward by overseas officials, the thesis has shown how positive propaganda offered a welcome alternative. In 1947, the IPD and FEID started work with the British Information Services (BIS) in China to develop a suitable propaganda approach. It was agreed that positive propaganda needed to focus on presenting Britain as an alternative to communism. Messages focused on social mobility and change in Britain under the Labour government, in terms of trade unions, a National Health Service and public libraries. In accordance with FEID recommendations, the British Embassy also agreed to develop its framework to improve the reach of the propaganda. Propaganda distributed included photographs, pictures and posters, books and pamphlets and films. As with the IRD proposals, the IPD propaganda targeted audiences of those deemed to be influential and opinion-makers. While its existence was known, it tried to distance itself as the author of the material, encouraging the use of native speakers where possible.

Its job was made increasingly difficult, however, as the civil war developed, with information officers struggling to distribute material under the KMT's increased

control and censorship of the press. Eventually, as noted above, under the PRC, the British Information Services in China were closed down in 1949. All of Britain's information activities in China ceased. Crucially however unlike the IRD it had been able to disseminate propaganda, although the effectiveness of its operations had been somewhat limited by the environment in which it had to operate.

The colonial government in Hong Kong also welcomed positive propaganda as a means to tackle the perceived communist threat. For the colonial office It not only offered a way to tackle a communist influence without risking the neutral image sought, but more broadly it offered a mechanism to bring stability to a city in which there were many competing voices.

Unlike China, however, the positive propaganda approach did not focus on Britain as an alternative to communism through the promotion of a changing Britain with a social democracy. Instead the Public Relations Office (PRO) aimed to project the traditional values that identified Britain in terms of its society and culture such as its royal family elite private education system. It was a 'Britishness' that Hong Kong's citizens could aspire to.

However, while the PRO reformed and grew its information services in 1950s, it was hampered by reliance on London for much of its propaganda material. With differing priorities this material was not always suitable for Hong Kong audiences, nor, as the information services in Whitehall faced mounting cuts, was there the capacity to improve on the quantity or the quantity of material it delivered.

In 'projecting Britain' in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, the thesis has also shown that the British government sought the assistance of other government-sponsored organisations. In China, the BBC's Far Eastern Service appeared an ideal vehicle to 'project' Britain. The Foreign Office was keen to utilise this service. While the BBC resisted attempts to influence the content of the material, it did work with the Foreign Office to improve the effectiveness of its broadcasts. The BIS actively promoted the BBC broadcasts to Chinese audiences. Similarly, while the British

Council focused on the staging of plays, organisation of concerts, and hosting of lectures, the BIS advertised their presence and shared resources when demanded.

However, the effectiveness of both the BBC and British Council were severely limited under the PRC. For the BBC, the CCP actively discouraged citizens from listening to its services and limiting the number of radio sets available. For the British Council, the communists made day-to-day activities increasingly difficult with permits for travel and access to resources restricted. One by one the Council's offices closed, the last remaining one in Shanghai shutting its doors in 1954.

The situation in Hong Kong was more favourable. The government through the PRO was able to exert more control on content and programmes being broadcast. The official broadcaster, Radio Hong Kong (RHK), was under the authority of the PRO from 1951 until 1953. RHK relayed a number of BBC programmes and produced its own locally-focused shows. In efforts to improve the popularity of the station, the station also relied on pabulum. The PRO also found Rediffusion to be a willing receiver of its news bulletins and features programmes.

The colonial government's relationship with the British Council on the other hand was more difficult. While the Colonial Office recognised the cultural value of the British Council in the context of the Cold War, Ambassador Ralph Stevenson raised concerns over the impact of the Council's activities, specifically its intended target audience of the educated elite and suggested expanding its focus to influence the semi-skilled. The Council's difficulties in engaging with a Chinese audience remained, however, largely due to resources, inadequate funding and inappropriate premises. As the Hong Kong colonial government had found in its reliance on positive propaganda from London, by the 1950s the information services were feeling the effects of repeated funding cuts.

In Taiwan the suggestion of positive propaganda in 1953 received a more favourable reception from policy officials than had negative. However, like Hong Kong, funding cuts were again citied as an issue. Both the IPD and British Council argued they did not have the capacity to extend services to Taiwan. Nor is it likely that it would have

been an ‘easy task’. Messages about social democracy would hardly have been welcome in a territory under authoritarian rule. Nor would pictures of ‘Windsor or of a group of beefeaters’[573] been appreciated by an inherently anti-imperial regime.

Therefore, while positive propaganda was able to make a substantial contribution in ‘greater China,’ it too faced limitations. In China this was the local environment under the PRC, restricting the main methods to disseminate positive propaganda. In Hong Kong the differing priorities and the cuts to information services meant there was no single 'projection' of Britain, but rather a complex set of different messages and images which ranged from exhibitions of English paintings to broadcasts of Cantonese opera, Chinese-language documentaries about British schools, to pictorials depicting colonial Africa.

The thesis has also shown a clear lack of coordination in the anti-communist propaganda campaign. The IRD dominated the information agenda, but other agencies were brought in, in a piecemeal fashion. There were different ideas and approaches to propaganda from, for example, the IPD, the COI and the British Council. There was no overarching plan that defined how they all might tackle anti-communist propaganda.

Within this disjointed propaganda environment, the thesis has shown how a number of key figures were able to skew or subtly shift instructions they were being sent from London about the propaganda campaign. Perhaps none more so than Ralph Stevenson and Henry Lamb, who were opposed to the use of negative propaganda in China and were able to effectively refute the Foreign Office’s request for Far East posts to engage in propaganda in 1948. Grantham in Hong Kong was more shrewd, waiting for the environment to change and improving its own colonial services to rally that the Foreign Office’s RIO. There were also ‘information experts’ who had

[573] Information Department (Shanghai) to Foreign Office, Report for the quarter ending December 1948, FO 953/577, TNA.

emerged during World War Two, such as R. F. Harris in China and, more visibly, Leslie Smith and John F. Murray in Hong Kong, who were not only able to play an important role in delivering anti-communist propaganda, but also were able to reinvent themselves in their new positions and achieve some measure of success. Smith's unsuccessful foray into Taiwanese propaganda politics, however, shows the very real limits of such aspirations.

The thesis significantly contributes to two main areas in existing literature. First, for the study of British Cold War propaganda, the thesis has demonstrated the value of a new, holistic approach to the study of propaganda, going beyond current monographs on the subject, such as those of Jenks and Defty, who focus on the activities of the IRD.[574] As Anthony Nutting, Minister of State, succinctly summarised this in 1953, 'all propaganda is planned against the background of Soviet threat - no longer just 'projecting Britain for its own sake.''[575] This is something that future work on British propaganda must recognise.

Secondly, in applying this approach, the thesis has contributed to the literature on Sino-British relations. By exploring the marked divergence of opinion between London and overseas officials on the appropriateness of negative propaganda in China, the thesis has highlighted the first-hand experience of officials of the corrupt KMT regime and atrocities that took place during the civil war. This experience helped encourage a, often unsubstantiated, confidence by many overseas officials that life would be better for the Chinese and even British interests under the PRC. Stevenson was at the forefront of those championing such views, views which were not shared by officials in Whitehall. Future research would benefit from further investigation

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[574] J. Jenks, *British propaganda and news media in the Cold War* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2006). A. Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda 1945-53: The Information Research Department: Propaganda, 1945-1958* (London: Routledge, 2004).

[575] A. Nutting, Minute, 13 December 1953, FO 953/1461, TNA.

into the differing views between officials in London and China. With the recent release of Stevenson's private papers, there is a clear opportunity to do just this.

The thesis also supports the recent findings of Mark, Roberts and Sutton who have questioned the accepted narrative that Hong Kong, in an effort not to antagonise China and maintain the stability of the island, was neutral in it policies towards communism and non-communism.[576] The thesis has shown that, in fact, the Hong Kong colonial government took steps to check the perceived threat of communism on the island through propaganda. Although there was a clear balance to be struck, colonial Hong Kong wanted to *appear* neutral and so limited negative propaganda, but they relied instead on less offensive, positive propaganda.

Finally, this thesis has revealed from 1950-1954, there was an acceptance in the Foreign Office that Britain had chosen its position in relation to communist China and its approach to propaganda, in China, Hong Kong and even Taiwan reflected this. Such findings align with the recent works of scholars such as Chi-Kwan Mark which show that, 'for all the diplomatic snubs, abuse of British consular officials, and hostile propaganda by the Chinese communists, never had London come to the conclusion that the UK should break off (semi) diplomatic and economic relations with China.' The 'normalisation' of the 'everyday Cold War' had been established.[577]

In undertaking this study it is apparent that there are other areas that deserve further investigation in order to provide a more complete picture of the use of British

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[576] C. Mark, *The Everyday Cold War: Britain and China, 1950-1972* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).; Roberts, P., 'Cold War Hong Kong: Juggling Opposing Forces and Identities', in P. Roberts and M. Carroll (eds.), *Hong Kong in the Cold War* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016), pp. 26-59.; Sutton, C., *Britain's Cold War in Cyprus and Hong Kong: A conflict of Empires* (London: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2017).

[577] Mark, *The Everyday Cold War.*

propaganda in China in the early Cold War. One example being the topic of reception; how was British propaganda received, did the projection of Britain strike an accord with its intended Chinese audience. This would certainly not be an easy task and would require access to range of Chinese archives. Another area of study that could offer particularly pertinent findings, is in comparison of the British propaganda approach to that of America. While there has been considerable work done on America's role in the region in the early Cold War, a comparable study to its propaganda efforts in 'greater China' are absent. The thesis has touched on the relationship between Britain and America's propaganda agencies, particularly in relation to Hong Kong and Taiwan, where Britain is seen to take a very different approach to relations with communist China to that of the USA and to its use of propaganda. This seems to be an area well worth further investigation.

Ultimately, while it is not the aim or ability of the thesis to judge success of failure of anti-communist propaganda efforts, it has shown that anti-communist propaganda did take place in 'greater China' in the period from 1948 to 1954. The IRD, however, which led the anti-communist propaganda campaign globally, struggled to address concerns about the impact of its negative propaganda on the Sino-British relationship. In effect, the relationship was prioritised by the British government over its commitment to fighting the Cold War by confronting communist ideology.

Arguably, there were times when the IRD could have challenged this outcome. Faced by concerns from posts about protecting the relationship with China, the IRD failed to realise the significance of clearly defining communism, and stating precisely what the target of its anti-communist propaganda was: communist ideology; the Soviet Union or the Chinese communists. Moreover, the IRD largely failed to reassure posts about the secret nature of its operations, which could have limited any potential damage to relations with China.

Yet despite such criticisms, the thesis has also shown how Britain was more active in China than previously imagined. The overall response to the communist threat in greater China can be largely viewed as pragmatic. Britain was still committed to limiting communist influence on a global level, but at a more local level it had to

rethink its approach. It still espoused anti-communism but was more subtle in the way it approached the issue. By 1954 this cautious approach had permitted Britain to 'keep a foot' in China, its consulate in Taiwan and maintain stability in Hong Kong.

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