

Hong Kong's New Deal? The Making of Postwar Constitutional Reform, 1945 - 1947

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'Hong Kong will not meekly acquiesce in an attempted resuscitation of the worn out government machine which let us down so badly in 1941'⁽¹⁾

Hong Kong is a British colony. It has been formally so since the Treaty of Nanking in 1842⁽²⁾ and will remain as such until midnight on 30th June 1997. The weight of the colonial past, which was very visible during the inauguration of Chris Patten as the final governor of Hong Kong in the summer of 1992, has long acted to deter constitutional change. This paper argues that movements for political reform in the immediate postwar period probably had little chance of success, given the attitudes of the Hong Kong government and the absence of sufficiently strong local pressure to alter the status quo. It is questionable whether calls for the birth of a new Hong Kong that followed the end of the Pacific War and the British re-occupation of the territory had much realistic hope of being realized. It was less a case of *Democracy Shelved* and more a return to the past.⁽³⁾ The concept of representative government did not fully enter Hong Kong's political lexicon until the 1980s; attempts at reform a generation earlier were extraordinarily timid and piecemeal.

Historians of Hong Kong⁽⁴⁾ have traditionally deployed the administrations of successive governors as markers in their story. This convention makes good sense for the postwar period too and for our purposes divides the saga of reform into three convenient phases. We shall be concerned with : the British Military Administration,

7 September 1945 - 30 April 1946, the months that followed when Sir Mark Young returned to Hong Kong to resume his administration and finally the beginnings of Sir Alexander Grantham's lengthy period as governor from the summer of 1947.

The unexpectedly sudden demise of Imperial Japan and the problems of first reclaiming and then restoring Hong Kong were inevitably the chief priorities of the scratch British task force that liberated the territory in September 1945. To get the colony's administration running again and to provide essential services was no easy matter, given the international debate surrounding Hong Kong and the uncertainties of even rudimentary trading links in the region.⁽⁶⁾ Yet this did not deter the local press from demanding swift action in the field of constitutional change. The *China Mail* spoke out for a New Deal⁽⁶⁾ and there was pressure from all sides to conclude the military interregnum as quickly as humanly possible. The secretary of state for the colonies⁽⁷⁾ replied to a question from James Callaghan on 19th November 1945 in the House of Commons that :

'A Military Administration has been established in Hong Kong under the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Harcourt, and the Chief Civil Affairs Officer, and many of his staff are experienced officers of the pre-war civil administration. As soon as conditions in the region permit, it is His Majesty's Government's intention to restore full civil government.'⁽⁸⁾

Harcourt's advisors certainly knew that political change was in the wind but they rarely had the time or energy to consider what might ensue in a postwar Asia united only in its delight to see the crushing of Imperial Japan.⁽⁹⁾ All that was apparent was the reality of European disgrace in battle. Few doubted that in a general sense the political map would have to be redrawn to take note of what Douglas MacArthur had been reminded of forcefully : the fact that 'Japan has conquered in 150 days the white man's Far Eastern structure of 150 years'.⁽¹⁰⁾ Yet local circumstances obviously came

immediately into play and it would be absurd to assume that events now moved automatically forward to the ending of empire and the reassertion of Asian sovereignty after centuries of alien rule. Despite the clamour for independence in Indo-China and what would soon become Indonesia, the political fate of Hong Kong was rarely considered in such terms.⁰⁰

Wartime thinking in the Colonial Office had been cautious. There was a reluctance to suggest more than the most tentative of ideas when files entitled the 'future policy' of Hong Kong were circulated. Talk began of a 'proposed new constitution' but the nature of the debate in May 1945 was highly circumscribed. Indeed, there was a farcical tone to portions of the discussion, as when it was difficult to prepare suffrage extensions that did not totally guarantee that power would continue to rest in the hands of British officialdom. It was a far from impressive beginning to what would prove by 1947 to be a lengthy and ultimately unsatisfactory saga.

The Colonial Office's staff and its Hong Kong advisors admittedly were feeling their way in foreign territory but the severe limitations that the group wishes to see imposed on Chinese voters to restrict their influence was a bad omen. David MacDougall, shortly to be back in Hong Kong as Harcourt's political advisor, suggested that the mere 9,000 names on the territory's jury list might best serve as a suitable voters list for the membership of a new Municipal Council.⁰² To make the ploy even worse it was noted that traditionally the Colonial Secretary had always scrutinized all such lists before publication.

Alternative suggestions were slightly less redolent of the 18th century but Arthur Morse, a prewar banker and non-official member of the China Association, stated bluntly that 'clearly there could not be universal suffrage ...',⁰³ while others scratched around for alternative models that would leave things essentially as they had been before the Japanese invasion. Admirers of the Shanghai Municipal Council put forward its name and others suggested Singapore, Ceylon and British local government as candidates for consideration. By Christmas 1945 all that this divergence had pro-

duced was a minute from Miss A.M. Rushton of the Colonial Office that 'no final draft of the proposed new constitution for Hong Kong has been agreed'.⁽⁴⁾

The direction of thinking within Whitehall remained, however, reasonably clear. Following in the footsteps of the wartime planners in the Hong Kong Planning Unit the bureaucratic mind had long argued that municipal reform was the best way forward. Some might feel this very title inappropriate and a minority spoke of more drastic change but essentially the focus on the devolution of some central powers to a more open system of local government. This approach was intended to satisfy international opinion, prove acceptable to a newly-elected Labor government, offer something to Chinese residents in Hong Kong who had previously been largely frozen out of government and still keep the existing colonial structures in place. Given the disparate constituencies that the Colonial Office (and Hong Kong administration) was attempting to satisfy and the contradictory objectives these groups held, it is not particularly surprising that the elaborate, painstakingly prepared drafts were to fail.

Policy-making invariably began in London and was then developed in Hong Kong. Under the military administration the best that could be reasonably attempted was a psychological and political shift by the Hong Kong authorities. Harcourt said soon afterwards that 'the following were the chief problems we left' to the incoming civil administration :

'First, that there were a number of people returning to Hong Kong and outside Hong Kong who did not realize that they had to have a 1946 outlook; that 1946 outlook is imbued with a spirit of national pride in China and the national sovereignty of China. The 1941 outlook is absolutely taboo. There seemed to be some who were either unwilling or unable to understand this, but if they continue in ignorance of the change they will be heading for trouble.

Among the first of the things which have to be introduced is the new Consti-

tution. When the Governor returned he announced the approximate terms and is now taking action to get some form of self-government going in Hong Kong, roughly on the lines of a municipal council, to turn over to an elected body certain of the functions of government such as the L.C.C. perform in London. If we can get that going, and they hope to about the beginning of 1947, that will be a great step forward.⁴¹⁵

Harcourt's public display of optimism proved way off the mark but it is apparent that he and many others assumed that it ought to be comparatively simple to devise an effective transfer of some governmental powers to a new local authority. Expectations were high in Hong Kong that the British government and its servants in the colony were willing to put through substantial changes. As Sir Robert Kotewall wrote in conclusion to a lengthy confidential memorandum to Brigadier MacDougall on 25 April 1946, the Hong Kong public 'entertain great hopes' of political reform.⁴¹⁶

Yet little had been clarified when Sir Mark Young returned to Hong Kong's Government House after his wartime imprisonment at the hands of Japan and a short interval back in Britain. He promptly announced that London was considering how Hong Kong 'can be given a fuller and more responsible share in the management of their own affairs'.⁴¹⁷ There was, promised Young, a possibility that 'a Municipal Council, constituted on a fully representative basis' might be the best way forward. This, it was claimed in a text prepared in London and issued simultaneously by the British government, might 'be an appropriate and acceptable means of affording to all communities in Hong Kong an opportunity of more active participation, through their responsible representatives, in the administration of the territory'.⁴¹⁸ All, however, was still up in the air. Young went out of his way to stress that nothing was settled and that an examination must now begin to note 'the views and wishes of the inhabitants' with the intention 'to announce not later than the end of the year the principles on which that revision should be based'.⁴¹⁹ Time was passing and still the talk

was of listening to public opinion and the drafting of possible local government ordinances. The hope of the *China Mail* that '... before civil government is re-established ... the framework of the new constitution be clearly define.'²⁴ had been dashed. Work on 'the necessity for a liberal constitution' and for Young meeting 'every section of the community and trying to break down social distrust' might be his instructions from Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech Jones²⁵ but the initiative appeared to be slipping to those who preferred less zeal and more consolidation before embarking on any journey of change.

Young's period as governor of Hong Kong proved to be the high tide mark of early postwar reform. It is, therefore, important that its accomplishments be accurately chronicled and assessed. Our starting point will be the constitutional position of Hong Kong in the spring of 1946 when Young announced that he was serious about discovering Hong Kong public opinion prior to any pronouncement on political change. Whether the British government thought that Young was the right man for this task is not easy to even guess at, though he was not in the best of health and there is the occasional hint in the official record that neither Hong Kong nor Whitehall had overmuch confidence in him. What was certainly a moral factor in his favour was that he demonstrated the shared experience of both officialdom and people. He was entitled to speak in his first public statement of the memory of 'those bitter closing days of 1941' and to evoke 'the memory of unity of effort by men and women of every class'.²⁶

The returning governor arrived with instructions from London to prepare the ground for increased self-government. He did not have a specific programme in his briefcase, however, despite the more than lengthy gestation period that had already elapsed. Young's promise to be the impartial observer and to listen first to a cross section of Hong Kong opinion appeared to get his administration off to a good start but it was a gesture that would have major consequences for reformers and old guard alike.

Leaving decision-making to elements within Hong Kong was a step backwards. Given the century of tight colonial government and the necessary local concentration on economic reconstruction, it is most improbable that disparate Hong Kong voices could be woven within a new consensus. The politically immature Hong Kong of 1946 required guidance rather more urgently than questionnaires and grass-roots consultative gestures. Sceptics, such as the *South China Morning Post*, could rightly point out that there simply was no communal interest. Its editor may have been incorrect to maintain that self-government was impossible, employing the line 'Hong Kong cannot have self-government, because it has no self', but few would challenge his remark that 'There never was a more divided community nor a community subject to outside influences and interests'.²³ Confirmation of Young's well-meaning difficulties came in his radio broadcast of late August, when he admitted that 'disappointingly few' replies had surfaced in response to his call for thoughts on possible elections.²⁴ Acute divisions between European and Chinese responses to press surveys confirmed the near impossibility of imagining that an instant territorial solution could emerge. *The Hong Kong Sunday Herald* reported that 82% of its Chinese readers welcomed an open system of elections 'irrespective of position, nationality or race', whereas only a mere 22% of Europeans felt prepared to accept such a diminution of their privileged status.²⁵

Young was not deterred. His eventual local-government proposals are best seen as an attempt to square the circle of British intransigence and Hong Kong Chinese aspirations. His scheme admittedly had been rehearsed in the Colonial Office from the last months of the Pacific War onwards but it was the returning governor who finally submitted a detailed despatch on constitutional revision to Creech Jones on 22 October 1946. It was essentially a scheme for limited improvement to a thoroughly 19th century colonial regime. Its hesitations are perhaps best seen against the absence of earlier progression away from a bureaucratic government of expatriate officials. Those who had been arguing that Hong Kong's colonial structure had close

parallels with British parliamentary traditions - such as the Hong Kong study group within The Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House - could only present a weak case for the pre-Young period. For such authors to suggest that Hong Kong's Legislative Council was 'the local equivalent of parliament' or that the Executive Council was 'the rough equivalent of the cabinet' appears bizarre, particularly at a time when appointments to both bodies were largely controlled by Government House.⁶⁸ Equally complacent was Chatham House's suggestion that the District Watch Committee and the Urban Council could be described as 'important' bodies.⁶⁹

Young's proposals to the Colonial Office were next subjected to close scrutiny in London. Comment centred on Hong Kong's 'decided lack of enthusiasm for any constitutional changes', which Young attributed 'in part to apathy and in part to apprehension'⁷⁰ and the arrangements suggested on devising a franchise for the local government schemes recommended by the governor. There can be little doubt that 'The Young Plan' moved the constitutional debate forward but its limitations must also be noted. The scheme was far from radical and when the Colonial Office proposed more adventurous measures Young was quick to defend his plan and to resist any further schemes from London. It is to inflate Young's achievements and to go against the grain for David MacDougall to claim two generations later that 'Young had in high degree the qualities of imagination and personality needed to gain public support for his proposed constitutional changes'. It is a leap in the dark to suggest that if Young 'had been able to remain Governor of Hong Kong for a year or two longer, something along those lines most probably would have evolved, in spite of some obvious dangers'.⁷¹ This hypothesis also ignores the important question of why Young was replaced so soon after his return to the territory, a move that hardly hints at possessing the full confidence of either Hong Kong or his masters in Whitehall.

What Young did produce was a competent set of proposals along already familiar lines. He did virtually nothing to weaken the power of his office and indeed concluded his confidential despatch to Creech Jones by nothing with satisfaction that his

suggestion for altering the composition of the Legislative Council could 'hardly be considered as unduly hazardous even by those who are most apprehensive of transfer of power from the Government to the representatives of the unofficial community'.⁶³ Certainly the concept of raising the status of local government and suggesting a vastly wider franchise for the election of members to the proposed Municipal Council⁶⁴ was progressive within the context of Hong Kong's history but it ought to have been seen more as a beginning rather than a splendid break through. Young did indeed refer in his despatch to the educational intent of his plan but he might have noted that the conservatism of the Europeans exceeded the hesitancy of many Chinese residents. Civic irresponsibility thrived among the expatriate groupings ; corruption knew no colour bar.⁶⁵

Commentary on the Young reforms was extensive and protracted. Unfortunately, it was far more fully stated in London than Hong Kong. Young may not have done quite as well as his supporters were to later claim, though, again, it has to be stressed that it was a Herculean task to begin what for many was either an unnecessary or an unwelcome measure. The Colonial Office, in effect the original authors of the plan, not surprisingly generally applauded the handiwork of 'an extremely well balanced document'.⁶⁶ Disputes emerged but they were papered over without too much difficulty, as when one official who felt that the new municipal scheme was counterproductive was told to be quiet.⁶⁷ What mattered to Whitehall was that the scheme be approved subject to Young's 'further consideration on half a dozen points of detail'. This 'centre view' dismissed the stance of both those who thought nothing ought to be done and the more radical opinion that municipal government ought to be by-passed by 'broadening the basis of the Central Government itself'.⁶⁸ Although the nuts and bolts had still to be worked on it appeared probable that the Young plan would gain ministerial approval in the near future.

It was not to be. The first of what would become an embarrassingly long list of doubts suddenly emerged and from a surprising quarter. In December a quite differ-

ent view arose from within the Colonial Office. Instead of nodding through the Young plan, sentiment appears that wanted to scrap the proposals and replace it with 'a greater democratization of the Colonial Government itself'.⁶⁸ This volte face was prompted by Sydney Caine, later to find fame as director of the LSE, who spoke up for appreciating that 'we are in danger of either on the one hand setting up an alternative Government in the Colony, or, on the other, setting up something which will be, or will appear to be, a sham, in order to avoid introducing an element of greater democracy into the real Government of the territory.'⁶⁹ This, he claimed, left Hong Kong's proposed constitutional changes in a most unsatisfactory position. It would be better to press for substantial change at the heart of the territory, since this 'would be no more dangerous from the political point of view than setting up an independent system of Government which could perhaps even more easily become the focus on anti-British agitation.' The new switch in policy prompted Arthur Creech Jones to minute in January 1947 that 'this discussion has taken an extraordinary and surprising turn and I would like a discussion before sending the draft telegram submitted'.⁶⁸ The minister's own plans had been seemingly destroyed by his senior advisors.

Policy towards Hong Kong's constitutional reform began to unravel. Delays now became the norm as voices for more radical change within the Colonial Office discovered a weakening enthusiasm from the Hong Kong government for virtually any change. Caught between two sets of officials was the cautious reformism of Creech Jones, whose ability to carry his advisors appears to have deteriorated by the end of 1946. The extent of his lack of control is implied in a patronizing minute from a senior Colonial Office figure, who minuted in the spring of 1947: 'Even with the aid of Mr. Mayle's summary ... you may find difficulty in following through some of the details'⁶⁹. By mid June the British Colonial Secretary is reduced to writing in his almost indecipherable hand that 'the essential thing now is to get the thing moving and experience will indicate any defects and popular agitation will bring to light any shortcomings or need for more liberal provision'.⁶⁹ This was not the way his depart-

ment traditionally conducted its business. The Colonial Office preferred to be as certain as it could be before instituting change, particularly when the consequences might proved far-reaching for a territory where it had full responsibility.

The flip-flops continued, however, throughout 1947. The initial suggestion that more be done by Young to strengthen reform in the central government and, in effect, drop his municipality schemes met fierce resistance from the architect of reform. The Colonial Office considered that 'abandoning the project for the establishment of a municipal council coterminous with the urban area of the Colony and substituting for this a scheme for the considerable broadening of the basis of the central government itself through a system of election of a proportion of the legislature⁽⁴¹⁾ was preferable to the Young plan. Debate in Whitehall was intense. Minutes were scrutinized and counter-proposals drawn up before 24th January 1947 a 12-part despatch was sent by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Mark Young announcing that 'with some hesitation ... I have decided to refer this general question back to you for your further views' in order for a rethink of the basic premises of the governor's already much delayed proposals.⁽⁴²⁾ It is easy to imagine Young's feelings on receiving the disappointing news that authorities in London required that his entire plan be received and possibly reworked. Hopes of making an immediate impact on Hong Kong had long gone and now Young faced the prospect of seeing his labours being scrapped. It was an unenviable position for a governor who had returned with very public promises of change nine months previously.

Young stuck to his guns. He objected to the mangling of his scheme and was able to carry London with him, but the price paid in this protracted debate was inevitably to delay discussion in Hong Kong and reduce still further interest in what had always been a minority affair. Young won the battle but lost the war. This is best illustrated by the fact that his plan was eventually accepted - with qualifications - by the British government but only after Young had himself returned from Hong Kong to retirement in British. There was no final announcement, in the form of any publication of

the correspondence concerning political change in the territory, until after Young had been replaced since the Colonial Office ruled that the matter was 'too important to be rushed'.⁶³ Unfortunately, there was soon found to be no likelihood of a Young Plan working without Young being in Government House. The scheme required his driving force to prosper and his ideas died a slow death in the following months of the new administration of Sir Alexander Grantham. What had been received as a novel scheme for instituting at least the rudiments of a more open and responsive system of quasi-democratic reform gradually withered on the vine through inaction. The attempt at constitutional reform depended on a Hong Kong initiative and firm Colonial Office endorsement ; both were improbable by the autumn of 1947, since Young and his principal advisor⁶⁴ had left Hong Kong and the London end had demonstrated too many inconsistencies to compel a recalcitrant governor to comply with its directions.

Apportioning blame is part of one of the historian's tasks that some in the profession enjoy more than others. The initial and greatest difficulty rests within the Colonial Office for its slow and disunited approach to Hong Kong's future. Action took too long and was then derailed to the chagrin of Young, who held that his approach was the best way forward. This surely could have been prevented since the number of staff involved was small and most presumably were well aware of the others' thinking long before action had to be taken. Those implacably opposed to even the municipality scheme were sufficiently strong in debate to throw the machinery into reverse and thereby create sufficient delay that, intentionally or otherwise, had the effect of reducing any concerted action in Hong Kong.⁶⁵ It was only in July 1947 that Creech Jones was able to tell Sir Alexander Grantham that the Young scheme of October 1946 ought to be put into effect to give the people of Hong Kong 'the opportunity ... to assume a fuller and more responsible share in the conduct of its own affairs'.⁶⁶ Yet even then the secretary of state noted a series of important qualifications to the original scheme and, while praising Young for his

'inspiration' and 'energy', had to regret that publication prior to the governor's departure had proved impossible.

What Creech Jones defined as 'the necessity for careful examination of the details of this comprehensive new departure' worked to deflate the entire project. Certainly there had to be scrutiny in depth of the Young plan but a firmer hand from Creech Jones might have helped make for progress. He appears to have too easily assumed that what he wanted for Hong Kong would be quickly translated into policy. Of course, his defenders will claim that he faced a series of more pressing colonial issues - including the running sore of Palestine - but the continuing bureaucratic games reflect poorly on his performance. As late as April 1951 the Colonial Office's own Information Department had to acknowledge that the Hong Kong '... consultations have been long drawn out; and the proposals for the institution of a Municipal Council and for the reduction of the official members of the legislative council to seven have been postponed'.⁶⁷ Creech Jones' record on Hong Kong is unlikely to be staunchly defended. His considerable accomplishments in other areas, southern Asia and Africa in particular, have no parallel with his work for Hong Kong. Since as minister Creech Jones faced little or no cabinet or parliamentary attention to Hong Kong's political future this may have contributed to his performance, though having only to carry his senior officials and the Hong Kong government with him ought theoretically to have made his task considerably easier. His voluminous private papers reveal few clues as to his own thinking ; his lengthy statement to parliament in the debate on colonial affairs on 29 July 1947 wasted only one sentence on Hong Kong.

But Creech Jones was far from alone in failing to engender serious efforts to reform Hong Kong. Some of his officials thought the very idea of political change a nonsense, since, in Grantham's later words, 'Hong Kong is indeed different from the average Colony'.⁶⁸ Grantham, of course, went out of his way to maintain this difference and refused to have any truck with political schemes that risked weakening

Britain's hold on the territory. Yet the hesitations, though more than shared by Governor Grantham, largely predate his administration and he should not be pilloried for the prior prevarication of others.⁶⁹ Employing the less than sophisticated ploy of using language and argument extracted from Young scheme, the Colonial Office succeeded in wrecking the proposals by seeming to show that even something as innocuous as a municipal election would lend itself to political ends. In part this could hardly be denied, since any political advance would inevitably lead to the formation of ties to some elements that the British and Hong Kong governments regarded as subversive. At issue was whether Young's sense that '... local institutions, including the prospective municipality, may become more and more the tools of the Kuomintang' and that thereafter 'at the dictation of that organization declare itself to be in favour of the retrocession of Hong Kong to China ...'.⁶⁹ Yet a council whose powers were very largely to be centred on the provision of a fire service and the licensing of hawkers was perhaps a threat to no one. Young went out of his way to ensure that 'the constitution should be so framed as to preclude the possibility of the Council concerning itself with political matters, particularly in relation to the future status of the Colony'.⁶⁹

If officials in Whitehall were deliberately exaggerating the pitfalls to any changes in policy - even to as modest a one as Young had put forward - how is one to judge the Young Plan and its author? The scheme was minimalist and to paint Sir Mark Young in shades of red is obviously absurd. Young represented both the past and a guarded acceptance of change to better accommodate postwar Hong Kong to its future colonial existence. (In that sense Sydney Caine was correct to be wary of the Young reforms). Confidential information from Admiral Harcourt to the secretary of state in January 1946 cautioned that Hong Kong was less than impressed with the prospect of Young's return. Harcourt reported that: 'One of the things which is most eagerly discussed here in the Colony is the appointment of the Civilian Governor who will take over when the Military Administration comes to an end. There is a

rumour going round here that Sir Mark Young may be re-appointed. The local reaction is not good - neither with foreigners nor with Chinese. Feeling (largely subconscious, I think) is that new blood is wanted. There is nothing against the late Governor personally: it is simply that people have pinned their hopes on a new start under new management. This latter feeling is quite strong and if you could harness it I believe it could be used greatly to the Colony's advantage. I am afraid that the possibility of Sir Mark Young's return to Hong Kong creates if not disillusion at least a chill in the local atmosphere'.⁶²

Harcourt's fears were partly realized. Young's proposals were indeed modest and this produced criticism from some in the Colonial Office in London, while generating little enthusiasm within Hong Kong. The Young plan was too cautious and its author insufficiently assertive to command wide support. Of course, over time there was the prospect of the municipalization schemes developing into a more democratic 'potential alternative government'⁶³ but such a defense of Young ignores the expectations of the early post-liberation months. Young's so-called 'experiment' was too hedged around with restrictions to fuel a positive response.⁶⁴

There never was a postwar New Deal for the people of Hong Kong. The two vital years from the summer of 1945 to Grantham's arrival on 25 July 1947 were indeed to prove to be wasted opportunities. Lack of concerted policy-making inside the British governmental system and a hesitant series of recommendations from the Hong Kong authorities played into the hands of those who preferred to see the reestablishment of the prewar colonial structure. The '1946 outlook' was all too quickly forgotten and replaced by the familiar 1941 machine.

Notes

(1) *China Mail*, 7 December 1945.

(2) Hong Kong was first occupied in 1841, Kowloon was acquired under the Peking

Convention of 1860 and the New Territories were leased by the Chinese government to Britain in 1898 for a period of 99 years.

- (3) See Steve Yui-Sang Tsang, *Democracy Shelved : Great Britain, China, and Attempts at Constitutional Reform in Hong Kong, 1945-1952* (Oxford, 1988). Dr. Tsang's pioneering study remains the starting points for investigation on this matter and I am grateful for discussion with him in Oxford on political development in Hong Kong.
- (4) See, for example, G.B. Endacott, *A History of Hong Kong* (Oxford, revised edition, 1973). The bulk of Endacott's work is taken up with the 19th century and neither in this book nor his *Government and People in Hong Kong, 1841-1962 : A Constitutional History* (Hong Kong, 1964) is he fully prepared to chance his arm on more recent events.
- (5) The problems are discussed briefly in Buckley 'From Reoccupation to EXPO : Hong Kong - Japanese Relations, 1945-1970', *The Journal of Social Science*, ICU, October 1989.
- (6) *The Weekly China Mail*, 22 November 1945.
- (7) George Hall MP, who would soon be replaced by Arthur Jones.
- (8) Quoted in Cabinet memorandum on Hong Kong, 19 August 1949, CP (49) 177.
- (9) For a survey of regional affairs at the moment of surrender see Louis Allen, *The End of the War in Asia* (London, 1976).
- (10) Quoted in Buckley, *US-Japan alliance Diplomacy, 1945-1990* (Cambridge, 1992) p.4 MacArthur's correspondent was Lt. Col. Wilkinson, a British intelligence figure serving in the Pacific theatre and later liaison officer to MacArthur.
- (11) Harcourt's public statements after he had left Hong Kong barely touch on the constitutional future of the territory. See, for example, Harcourt's lecture entitled 'The Military Administration of Hong Kong', *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, vol. xxxiv, 1947.
- (12) Colonial Office discussion, 29 May 1945, 54145/4 (CO 537/1650).
- (13) *ibid.*, Morse returned to Hong Kong in 1946 as chairman of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. He was immediately appointed to Hong Kong's Executive Council after his arrival.
- (14) Miss Rushton, 22 December 1945, *ibid.*

- (15) Harcourt lecture, 'The Military Administration of Hong Kong', *op. cit.*, L.C.C. was the London Country Council, whose buildings opposite the Houses of Parliament were bought by a Japanese hotelier in 1992, following the closure of the L.C.C.'s successor organization, the Greater London Council, by Mrs. Thatcher.
- (16) Kotewall to MacDougall, and seen next by Sir Mark Young. MacDougall was to be promoted for his services under Harcourt to the post of Colonial Secretary. Kotewall's memorandum, HK PRO, Hong Kong Record Service No 163, D & S No 1/124. Kotewall's experiences of government in Hong Kong stretched back fifty years.
- (17) Governor's speech, 1 May 1946. Harcourt gave the address of welcome, while Sir Robert Ho Tung spoke on behalf of the Hong Kong community. Sir Robert, who had spent the war years in Macao, ended by wishing that 'prosperity and plenty descend upon Hong Kong'.
- (18) Governor's speech, 1 May 1946.
- (19) *ibid.*
- (20) *The China Mail*, editorial, 7 December 1945.
- (21) Creech Jones memorandum for Sir Mark Young, 12 March 1946, 54145/4 (CO 537/1650).
- (22) Young's broadcast, 30 April 1946. His health suffered from wartime imprisonment under Imperial Japan.
- (23) *The South China Morning Post*, 8 September 1946.
- (24) Young's radio broadcast, 28 August 1946.
- (25) *The Hong Kong Sunday Herald*, 30 June 1946. The paper noted that Chinese responders naturally rejected the idea of 'Hong Kong being a British colony, British representatives on the Council should be in the majority'. A similar questionnaire was to be found in *The China Mail* for 9 June 1946. European opinion strongly favours the Shanghai Municipal Council model, whereby each community would elect its own representatives.
- (26) RIIA, 'Administration of Hong Kong, second draft', Hong Kong Group Paper No. 14, 26 November 1946, copy in CO 537/1651.
- (27) *ibid.*
- (28) Young to Colonial Office, 22 October 1946, CO 537/1651.

- (29) David MacDougall's foreword to Steve Tsang, *Democracy Shelved*, *op. cit.*
- (30) Young to Colonial Office, *op. cit.*
- (31) Young's own definition of the changes proposed was that 'a Municipality shall be established for Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and New Kowloon ; that it shall represent the Chinese and non-Chinese communities in equal proportions and shall be constituted as to two-thirds of its membership by direct election on a moderately wide franchise, and as to the remaining one-third by nomination carried out by certain unofficial bodies; and that certain of the important functions at present exercised by the Government of Hong Kong shall be transferred to this body'.
- (32) Colonial Office commentary could be frank on the problems of the colony in 1945. One noted that 'With a population of 96% Chinese and only 4% non-Chinese the problem of racial discrimination was always the main concern of the Government'; there was a danger that privilege went to 'the latest arrived shop-assistant in Lane Crawford's (provided his skin was white) which would be denied to a Chinese millionaire or even to a returned graduate of Oxford.' N.L.Smith, 11 May 1945, CO 537/1650.
- (33) Miss Rushton, 18 November 1946, CO 537/1651.
- (34) The Colonial Office official, N.L.Mayne, returned to the charge later and remained sceptical of the concept of a Municipal Council, given Chinese apathy and probable Kuomintang interference.
- (35) Miss Rushton *op. cit.*, The latter opinion was held by Sydney Caine, who had pointed out since 1945 that a municipality would essentially duplicate the work of the existing government and produce a double-headed arrangement that he found unsound.
- (36) Caine memorandum, 16 December 1946, CO 537/1651.
- (37) *ibid.*
- (38) Creech Jones, 13 January 1947, CO 537/1651.
- (39) Sir T.I.K. Lloyd to Creech Jones, 22 April 1947, CO 537/2188.
- (40) Creech Jones, date unclear but probably mid June 1947, in reply to Sir T.I.K. Lloyd's minute of 12 June 1947, CO 537/2188.

- (41) Colonial Office minute, 31 December 1946, CO 537/1651.
- (42) Arthur Creech Jones to Sir Mark Young, 24 January 1947, CO 537/1651. Discussion centred on the three questions of whether local or central government ought to be the focus of political reform in the colony, on the implications of Kuomintang activity towards any new representative government and the difficult issue of how large a number of popularly elected members in either forum be appropriate.
- (43) Sir T.I.K. Lloyd, 22 May 1947, CO 537/2188.
- (44) T.M. Hazlerigg was special advisor to Young. He was widely respected for having done much of the drafting. He even went so far as to prepare (in his spare time) extraordinarily detailed Ordinances for the proposed municipal council before his departure. See Hazlerigg's three Ordinances in HKRS No 163, D & S No 1/125.
- (45) The two officials typifying this scepticism were N.L. Mayle and Sydney Caine. Mayle was head of the Hong Kong Department when Young's proposals were first delivered. Caine's objections were over the unnecessary nature of a dual system of government and appear to have carried considerable weight with his superiors.
- (46) Creech Jones to Grantham, 3 July 1947.
- (47) 'Notes on Colonial Constitutional Changes, 1940-1951', Colonial Office, Information Dept., April 1951 in Creech Jones papers, box 16, Rhodes House, Oxford. The changes to Legislative Council were proposed later but once again subject to delay.
- (48) Grantham 'Hong Kong is Different', *Corona*, January 1959.
- (49) No serious biography of Grantham or his immediate predecessors is yet available. For an enthusiastic commentary on Creech Jones' years at the Colonial Office see Kenneth O. Morgan, *Labour in Power, 1945-1951* (Oxford, 1984) pp. 200 - 206.
- (50) Young, confidential despatch, 22 October 1946.
- (51) *ibid.*
- (52) Admiral Harcourt to Secretary George Hall, 13 January 1946, CO 537/1650.
- (53) See Steve Yui-Sang Tsang, *Democracy Shelved, op. cit.*, p.187.
- (54) Chinese press coverage was seen as less than total by the Hong Kong Government when

reporting on this subject back to London. For an important analysis of 'The Attitude of the Local Chinese' see Tsang, *op. cit.*, pp. 59 - 62.