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Annual Reports of the Straits Settlements, 1855–1941
12 volumes, 7850 pages, plus 6 maps in volume 11; ISBN 9781852079406

The Straits Settlements were formed in 1826 by the amalgamation of the three Settlements of Singapore (including Christmas Island and the Cocos-Keeling group), Penang (including Province Wellesley), and Malacca. Initially the seat of government was Penang but in 1836 Singapore became the capital.

On 1 April 1867 the Straits Settlements were transferred from the control of the Indian Government to that of the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London. In 1912 Labuan became the fourth Settlement.

This 12 volume set covers the years 1855 to 1941 and includes all the annual reviews ever produced of the colony as a whole. The reports are arranged in chronological order establishing, for the first time, an integral series gathered together from scattered Government files. There are also many instances of hitherto unknown or unreleased documents which were specially requested by the editor from the British Foreign Office to complete this series of reports.
China: Political Reports 1911–1960
11 volumes, 6970 pages ISBN 9781852079307

3 volumes, 1800 pages ISBN 9781840970203

This collection draws together the periodic political reports sent by British officials based in China back to the British Foreign Office in London. The collection begins with the 1911 annual report. To summarise this report would be to say it describes the fall of the Manchu Dynasty, but any attempt to do so reveals the nature of all these reports on China. The vastness of the land area of China, the many different peoples and the different political character of the many provinces mean a level of detail that defies any attempt at simplification. Furthermore, China shares external boundaries with 14 countries to the north, west and south and has 14,000 kilometres of coastline to the east.

This collection of reports ends in 1960 with the effects of the ‘Great Leap’ forward of 1958 just beginning to be felt; the first suggestions of dissent within the leadership of the Communist Party; and the process of the elevation of Chairman Mao to cult status well under way.

In the 1961–1971 period is the recovery from the ‘Great Leap Forward’ and the main thrust of the ‘Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution’. These two events alone would sustain research for years to come but this period also includes China’s relationship with the other great Communist power and its near neighbour – Russia and disputes with India over Tibet.

Hong Kong: Annual Administration Reports 1841–1941
6 volumes, 3000 pages; ISBN 9781852079703

This collection of administration and related reports covers the first 100 years of British rule in Hong Kong. On 26 January 1841, Hong Kong was occupied by British forces; two days after this initial occupation, on 28th January 1841, a Royal Proclamation placed the civil administration in the hands of Captain Elliot, then Chief Superintendent of Trade of British Subjects in China.

It naturally took time for the whole apparatus of colonial government to be developed in Hong Kong and for the standard reporting back to London to be established. Foremost among the reports that had to be sent back to London was the annual Blue Book: the collection of all available statistics for the colony, with details of all income and expenditure (including official salaries and pensions), and with the Blue Book was sent the Governor’s report summarising the events of the year.

This series has been established in its complete form for the first time by Robert Jarman, who also provides an archival introduction.
Japan: Political and Economic Reports
1906–1970
14 volumes, 9500 pages; ISBN 9781852079000

Cambridge Archive Editions presents a revised edition of the 1994 title Japan and Dependencies: Political and Economic Reports 1906–1960. It provides an extensive series of British diplomatic reports containing a continuous account of developments in Japanese history from 1906–1960, now updated by the addition of previously withheld documents from the 1940s and 2 volumes of documents from 1960–1970. It is further changed by the separate publication of the dependencies titles. The resulting 9,500 pages is a considerable piece of research which provides descriptions and assessments of Japanese international relations, internal political and economic affairs and post-war civil and economic reconstruction for this relatively unknown country, viewed latterly as one of the great engines of economic change in the twentieth century.

Korea: Political and Economic Reports
1882–1970
14 volumes, 10000 pages; ISBN 9781840971101

This comprehensive collection of facsimile documents contains all available diplomatic reports regarding Korea that are housed in the British National Archives. The period covered by the collection begins with the Korean monarchy, and includes the time spent under Japanese rule, the split into north and south Korea and the Korean War.

From the documents it can be seen that the history and status of Korea was dependent upon the rivalries between, and the comparative strengths of, the three countries that lay adjacent to Korea – Russia, China and Japan. After the Second World War, the vacuum caused by the elimination of Japan meant that the Soviet Union, the USA and Communist China now vied for influence in Korea, and the post-1945 division of the peninsula into North and South Korea and the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 are symbols of that rivalry. The entrenchment of the division between the Communist North and the non-Communist South, and their respective supporters in the Soviet bloc and the capitalist West, is the central issue from the armistice in 1953 to the final report in this collection in 1970.

1906–1922
9

Coré.

9. This country lately came under the definition of an “Independent State,” and it is sufficient to say that her relations with Japan are those which might be expected to exist between a weak, ignorant, and ill-governed nation and a strong country which has occupied her territory and is adminstering her affairs.

Russie.

9. Diplomatic relations were resumed with Russia on the 23rd January, and the new Minister, M. D. Bakhundoff, arrived in Tokyo in April. It soon became evident that the Russian Representative had instructions to cultivate cordial relations with the Japanese Government, and every effort was made to show that Russia did not bear ill-will against her late enemy. The question of the compensation for the Russian Consulates at Seoul gave rise to a certain amount of friction, but the issue was finally settled by the authority which should issue the compensation. The Russians concluded that the Compensation should be addressed to the Empress of Korea and the ex-emperor issued by him, and this argument was used by them, and the Japanese, that the external relations of Korea having been excluded from their direction, there could be no question of any but Japanese authority in the matter. The question was finally settled by the Commission being made out in a general form, as to Consulates for HisBel Consulates, and not addressed to any person personally, and the ex-emperor was issued from Tokyo. All the negotiations resulting from the war were carried on at St. Petersburgh, but it may be noted that there was up to the end of the year a very marked belief amongst certain Japanese officials of importance that, in spite of the friendly assurances of M. D. Bakhundoff and M. Ivolinsky, Russia was only hiding her time to commence a war of revenge.

France.

10. The relations between Japan and France, though correct, were not altogether cordial, though it is surprising that the Kawana Bay incident and the general assistance given to Russia during the war do not seem to have excited serious ill-feeling. It seems to be realized that the war of contact was forced upon France by her position as Russia’s ally, and it was therefore viewed with a much more lenient eye than the action of Germany in joining France and Russia after the Sino-Japanese War.
Shanghai: Political and Economic Reports 1842–1943: British Government Records from the International City
18 volumes, 14500 pages; ISBN 9781840972108

The remarkable and durable institution of the International Settlement allowed the British to report in detail on political and economic matters in Shanghai and China. This collection of primary documents establishes a comprehensive series of despatches, in the main from the British consul in Shanghai to the British ambassador to China usually based in Peking, but in the 1930s based in Shanghai itself.

There is regular information on the government of the Settlement, and reports on the opium trade; there are extended reports, in 1856, on the continuing Taiping Rebellion, and later, reports on the Sino-Japanese war over the control of Korea; from 1901–1 reports include: the Boxer Rebellion; commentary on the French settlement; anti-government conspirators in Shanghai; the Russo-Japanese war; the Shanghai tramway system; the bubonic plague in Shanghai; the Chinese revolution of 1911–12; British intelligence reports on German activities, 1914–18; and in the mid-1920s telegrams reflect the impact of the civil war in China, and report “the Shanghai incident”. The collection ends with the winding up of the Settlement under wartime Japanese occupation.

Her Britannic Majesty’s High Commissioner in China has extreme gratification in announcing to Her Majesty’s Subjects in China that he has this day concluded and signed with the Chinese High Commissioners deputed to negotiate with him a Treaty of which the following are the most important Provisions.

1. Lasting Peace and friendship between the two Empires.
2. China to pay Twenty one Millions of Dollars in the course of the present and
Taiwan: Political and Economic Reports 1861–1960
10 volumes, 7000 pages; ISBN 9781852079451
For the first time the complete series of British diplomatic reports from the island of Taiwan is published. These volumes provide an extensive and reliable research source for study of a 100-year period of Taiwanese history. The early reports cover the nineteenth century years of Formosa as a part of China, as well as the brief period of independence in 1895; followed by the long period up to World War II as a Japanese colony.

The post-war reports are of special value in documenting the struggle between the Kuomintang, led by Chiang-kai-shek, and the Communist forces of Mao-tse-tung. The Nationalists, defeated on the mainland, brought to Taiwan the flag which had been adopted as the national flag of China from 1928–1949.

These reports provide contemporary accounts of the military tensions of the early 1950s, the rivalry over the Chinese heritage and the unresolved status of Taiwan. The reports also give a balanced picture of the different political and ethnic constituents in Taiwanese history, with information on the Chinese, Japanese and aboriginal communities.

(ii) Enemy Activities.

34. The only other white residents of the island (apart from the Spanish priests noted above) are Professor Arundell del Re and his family, and one aged German who retired from teaching many years ago. Professor del Re is a teacher of English literature at the university and Italian consular agent. Though he is an Italian subject, he is Irish on his mother’s side and half-English by education, while his wife is wholly English except by marriage. He is strongly Anglophile, and the later trend of Fascist policy has caused him acute distress. As I have known him intimately since 1935, I have unobtrusively kept up a fairly close personal contact. It is obviously in the British interest that the only Axis representative in Formosa should be an Anglophile Italian, who, even though he does try to observe a certain minimum loyalty towards his own Government, is yet uncomfortably convinced that defeat may be a lesser evil for his country than victory. If he were boycotted, he would have no recourse but brooding on Axis propaganda, and there would be an obvious risk of a nervous breakdown, followed by the appointment of an Axis representative of a very different type.

35. The German named Sauter (1) is very old and feeble, and has long lived the life of a complete recluse. He would not be a useful substitute for Professor del Re, and I do not think his activities are to be feared.

36. The strongly pro-Axis tendency of Japanese opinion in Formosa is not due to any effective enemy activity on the spot, but to orders issued from the Central Government, and in particular to the general control of the press in the Nazi interest by the Japanese authorities themselves.

37. There is one Italian merchant ship, the s.s. Carignano, which since Italian entry into the war has been using Takao as a port of refuge.
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