

# China and the West

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**The Maritime Customs Service Archive  
from the Second Historical Archives of China, Nanjing**

Primary Source Media





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**The Maritime Customs Service Archive  
from the Second Historical Archives of China, Nanjing**

**Cumulative Guide  
Reels 1-372**

*General Editors*

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**Primary Source Media**



**中国第二历史档案馆**  
The Second Historical Archives of  
China



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Dr Robert Bickers and Dr Hans van de Ven, Editors

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## **PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD**

Primary Source Media is proud to present **China and the West: The Maritime Customs Service Archive from the Second Historical Archives of China, Nanjing**. This microfilm collection draws on the rich archives of the Maritime Customs Service (MCS) from 1854, when it was established, until the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The MCS was the only bureaucracy in modern China which functioned uninterrupted throughout all the upheavals between 1854 and the Communist takeover in 1949. Its records and reports give invaluable and often unique evidence of Chinese life, trade and politics through the Boxer Rebellion, the 1911 Revolution, the May Thirtieth Movement, the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese Occupation and the Nationalist period.

The microfilm collection is accompanied by a printed guide and the first-ever electronic catalogue to the complete archive, which will open the contents of the Maritime Customs Service Archive to closer inspection, making this extraordinary historical material available to a wider public.

A special thank you is due to Dr Robert Bickers and Dr Hans van de Ven whose comprehensive knowledge and generous advice have very substantially contributed to the preparation of the collection for publication.

## **TECHNICAL NOTE**

Primary Source Media has set itself the highest standards in the field of archivally-permanent library microfilming. Our microfilm publications conform to the recommendations of the guides to good microforming and micropublishing practice and meet the standards established by the Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

Attention should be drawn to the nature of the printed material within the collection. This sometimes consists of documents printed or written with a variety of inks and on paper that has become severely discoloured or stained rendering the original document difficult to read. Occasionally volumes have been tightly bound and this leads to text loss. Such inherent characteristics present difficulties of image and contrast which stringent tests and camera alterations cannot entirely overcome. Every effort has been made to minimise these difficulties though there are occasional pages which have proved impossible to reproduce satisfactorily. Conscious of this we have chosen to include these pages in order to make available the complete volume.







# INTRODUCTIONS

## Part One: Maritime Customs Service Archive: Inspector General's Circulars 总税司通令

This set of microfilms draws on the rich archives of the Maritime Customs Service of China (中国海关) and collects its Circulars (通令) from 1854, when the Maritime Customs Service was established, until the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Circulars were issued by the Service's head, the Inspector General (总税务司). They were confidential documents to which only senior Customs officials such as Customs Commissioners (税务司) had access. Like Imperial Edicts, they were law until explicitly superseded by a new Circular. They were the key texts of the Customs Service.

The activities of the Customs Service were wide ranging. It assessed duties on Chinese trade, established and maintained China's lighthouses, mapped China's coast and major rivers, and ran a Preventive Service that combated smuggling. It policed rivers, harbours and railroad lines. It published not just monthly, quarterly and annual *Returns of Trade*, but also a regular series of *Aids to Navigation* and less regular reports on meteorological conditions and medical phenomena. The Service further involved itself in China's diplomacy, organised its representation at nearly 30 world fairs and exhibitions, and ran various educational establishments.

Circulars tell us how the Customs Service organised itself, discharged its routines and responded to events. More than 7,000 Circulars were issued in the course of the Customs Service's pre-1949 existence. Only some have been made public before, and then only in a strictly limited edition. Therefore, this microfilm collection is the first time that all are made public. Given the centrality of Circulars in the Customs Service and the Service's importance to China as it struggled with foreign invasion, civil warfare, modernisation, globalisation and revolution, the publication of this set of Circulars is critical to the effective exploration of the 55,000 files of the Maritime Customs Service Archives held in Nanjing at the Second Historical Archives of China. This is an invaluable new resource for the study of China, and the publication of the Circulars will help historians make effective use of it.

As a foreign-staffed service, the Imperial Chinese Maritime Customs originated in the establishment at Shanghai on 12 July 1854 of a Board of Inspectors to oversee the re-establishment of trade after months of disruption caused by the Taiping rebellion. Other aims were to break up existing patterns of taxation in which personal connections had been important and to prevent countries without treaty relations with China, and hence no obligation to pay duty, from driving the British, French and Americans from the China trade. In 1858, the Tianjin treaties extended the Shanghai system to all treaty ports. Horatio Nelson Lay was the first Inspector General (IG), but it was his successor, Robert Hart, appointed in 1863, who oversaw the development of the service until the first decade of the twentieth century. He was followed by Francis Aglen (1911-29), Frederick Maze (1929-43) and Lester Knox Little (1943-50). Acting and Officiating IGs had full authority to issue Circulars.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The most prominent of these would be: Sir Robert Bredon (1908-10), A.H.F. Edwardes (1927-29), and C.H.B. Joly (1941-42).

The bedrock of the Customs Service consisted of regular flows of information in tables, forms, reports and letters from Customs Stations to the Inspectorate in Peking, and of instructions from Peking to the ports. The intricate repertoire of different communications – among them Despatches (训令/申呈/详报), Semi-Official Letters (半官性函件) and Memoranda (节略) – was surmounted by the IG Circular, first issued by Hart in 1861. The Circular dealt with issues of relevance to all Customs Houses and Commissioners. Until it was withdrawn or explicitly superseded it remained in force. The corpus of IG Circulars therefore formed a working set of instructions covering all aspects of Customs work. Numbered in sequence, they were eventually issued in three series. Series 1 contained those issued between 1861-75, and these were numbered in sequence for each year. Series 2 was issued from 1875, and numbered in one continuous sequence. At least 7,500 of them had been issued by 1949. Series 3 Circulars (Factory Products Circulars) passed on instructions about duty treatment of certain products from the Shuiwuchu (税处) (Bureau of Fiscal Affairs), to which the Customs Service was responsible from 1906, and its successor, the Guanwushu (处) (Bureau of Customs Affairs) from 1928.

Circular 9 of 1875 announced that henceforward all Circulars would be printed and authenticated by the signature of the Statistical Secretary. About 100 Circulars were issued a year. They were reissued in bound form in batches of 200 by the Statistical Department's press about once every two or three years. These bound volumes formed the core of every Commissioner's library. They outlined the philosophy of the Service, signalled important changes in overall Customs policy or in political circumstances, introduced and regulated changes to the scope of the Service's activities, and circulated decisions about its administrative or taxation routines. Some are general and discursive in tone, while others are highly technical and specific. From 1911 onwards Semi-Official (半关性) Circulars were also issued. After 1944, a Chungking Inspectorate General Series (渝常字) was initiated to convey "instructions for general information only". This was continued until 1946 as the General Series (常字) with no change of sequence.

War disrupted this system. After the onset of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, Frederick Maze maintained the Inspectorate in Shanghai's International Settlement, not occupied by the Japanese until after Pearl Harbour. The Wang Jingwei National Government sponsored by the Japanese dismissed Maze. Chiang Kaishek's National Government in response ordered C.H.B. Joly to establish the Inspectorate in Chongqing, the wartime capital, which he did on 16 December 1942. From 1942-45 two Inspector Generals – Horiuchi Kishimoto (岸本廣吉) in Shanghai, and successively Joly, Maze and Little in Chongqing – issued IG Circulars. To demonstrate the legitimacy of the Kishimoto regime (known in Chinese as the 'wei', or 'bogus') customs, the Circulars issued, starting with No.5769 on 11 December 1941 (announcing the appointment of the Japanese IG) maintained the existing sequence down to No.5918, 23 August 1945, which announced his resignation. In Chongqing, Joly began a Chungking Inspectorate Series (C.I.S., 渝字) in December 1941. In December 1945, precisely to demonstrate the *illegitimacy* of the Kishimoto customs, the Deputy Inspector General ordered the C.I.S. Circulars to be renumbered for future publication starting at No.5769. The 'bogus' Circulars were thereby removed from the record, although they were not removed from the archive and they can be found here as well.

Circulars were restricted documents. They formed part of the confidential archives of each Commissioner's office. They belonged to the Office Series of Customs publications, not to be sold, "retained privately or lent to others for perusal" (see Circular No.179 of 2 February 1882). Although confidential "several of them are intended for the information of a Commissioner's subordinates generally, and are to be dealt with as directed". However, the point was reiterated

periodically that they were confidential, indeed more so than despatches (Circular No.902). Circular No.179 was quite clear about this: “unauthorised possession of copies of official documents will entail dismissal from the service”. Documents leaked, of course. In 1919 Aglen noted that excerpts from Circulars were being printed in the treaty port press. He restated the 1882 injunction, and threat.

The archives of the Maritime Customs Service amount to nearly 55,000 titles. They are an unexplored resource for the study of modern China. Circulars were the texts that underpinned the Service, and all it did, from 1854 until 1949 (and beyond). Without a thorough knowledge of the Circulars, it will be difficult to develop an understanding of any depth of the Customs Service and consequently it will be difficult to make full use of the Customs Service archives themselves.

**How to use the Circulars:**

Reel 1 reproduces the latest index to the Circulars produced by the Customs Service itself. Although it was printed in 1936, subsequent circulars were issued with small slips for pasting into the index. This copy has references to Circulars numbered into the 7000s. Part I of the *Index*, arranged by subject, provides the Circular number, which can then be traced to the relevant volume. Part II concerns individual and general staff matters. This is arranged following the hierarchy of the service, starting with the Inspector General, and then alphabetically by subject. The wartime Chongqing circulars can be approached through the *Index to Inspector General's Circulars, Nos 1-1012, Chungking Inspectorate Series* (Reel 2). This follows the same conventions. Reels 1 and 2 reproduce some other indexes and registers which also might be useful. Very late period circulars are less easy to trace, although each bound volume contains its own index to the circulars within.

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## **Part Two: Maritime Customs Service Archive: London Office Files**

The London Office of the Chinese Maritime Customs Service served successive Inspector Generals and the Service from 1874 until 1948. It was at once a recruiting centre, funnelling recruits from across Europe into posts in China, an office of the Inspectorate General (IG) abroad liaising on the IG's behalf (and per his instructions) with the British Foreign Office, and also the bureau which dealt after 1895 with the banks and consortia whose loans to China were secured on Customs revenues. The Non-Resident (or, less formally, 'London') Secretary secured equipment and supplies, but also ran an office which, in the eyes of one later Customs observer, was "to some extent during the early part of its history ... an agency of the Chinese Empire in England and Europe".<sup>2</sup>

A 'London Agency of the Imperial Chinese Maritime Customs' was established in July 1867, and was run by Henry C. Batchelor until 1874. On 17 January 1874, Robert Hart (the IG) informed him that the Agency was to be closed, "chiefly on the grounds of its failure to come up to the standard of general efficiency", by which he in fact meant that he needed a man he could entrust confidential business to, not just a commission agent.<sup>3</sup> Hart's aims for the Customs Service were greater than the mere business of efficient revenue collection, and the internationalised context of his work also required more delicate handling than Batchelor could deliver. James Duncan Campbell (1833-1907), formerly Chief Secretary and Auditor of the Service, was appointed Non-Resident Secretary (NRS) from 31 March 1874.<sup>4</sup>

Campbell had left a promising career in the Treasury to join the Customs Service in 1862, and so knew Whitehall well. He had been mainly based in London after 1870, on various missions, and the new appointment formalised and regularised his position there and greatly broadened the scope of his work. He was to act as the Service's London agent until his death in 1907, attending to "the procuring and forwarding of all official supplies" as well as "performing the special duties confided to him by the Inspector General" (Circular 3/1874, 30 January 1874). The London Office (伦敦办事处) was a formal branch of the Inspectorate, and listed as such in the *Service List* (职员提名录). "You are to carry out the IG's orders", wrote Hart, and "are to keep him supplied with information on all matters of interest", but "you are to refrain from all initiative".<sup>5</sup>

This London Office serviced the practical development of the Customs Service in all its activities, but also underpinned what was politically the most important foreign diplomatic relationship in the decades before Pearl Harbour. In premises at 8 Storey's Gate, St James's Park, and then, from 1892 at 12 (later renumbered 26) Old Queen Street, Westminster, the (officially titled) 'London Office of the Inspectorate General of Chinese Maritime Customs' functioned as a purchasing and recruitment centre. Candidates were examined there, and the papers (and photographs) of successful applicants were sent out to Hart. But it was also a quasi-diplomatic outpost, most notably serving to provide a back-door route for Hart and his successors (notably, but problematically, Sir Frederick Maze) to

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<sup>2</sup> Cancelled draft Circular No.7497, 1948, in SHAC, 679 (1) 17341, 'General Matters Concerning Organisation, Reorganisation, and Closing of London Office'. (Reel 104)

<sup>3</sup> SHAC, 679 (2) 1190, 'London Office: Dispatches to IG, 1874-1875', Robert Hart to H.C. Batchelor, 17 January 1874.

<sup>4</sup> Hart's musings on the office and formal offer to Campbell are in John King Fairbank, Katherine Frost Bruner and Elizabeth Matheson (eds), *The I.G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868-1907*, 2 volumes (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1975) I, Letter 63, 31 August 1863.

<sup>5</sup> *I.G. in Peking*, I, Letter 133, 21 July 1875.

correspond with British diplomats and other officials, as well as financial interests. Sir Frances Aglen required C.A.V. Bowra (NRS 1924-26) to stick to Customs Service business, and not to think his office an alternative Chinese Legation, but Maze bombarded his NRS appointees with documents for forwarding on to the Foreign Office and others he thought influential and helpful.

From the London Office J.D. Campbell was involved in a number of diplomatic missions, but he also served as Hart's private secretary in London, spending Sundays in the office dealing with the IG's private correspondence and financial affairs, ordering new clothes to Hart's designs, procuring sheet music and violins, and buying and selling shares for him. This private correspondence has already been published (and none of it is replicated here).<sup>6</sup> Those letters, edited by John Fairbank and his team in the 1970s, proved to be a goldmine of information about the Customs Service itself, and about Hart of course, and also about the international relations of China and the developing role the Customs Service played as the Qing state struggled to order and normalise its foreign relations. Hart confided in his distant Secretary, let off steam, surveyed his own position, and issued instructions. No other IG/NRS relationship was in itself as distinctive as that of Hart and Campbell (nor as long-lasting – for there were 11 different holders of the post after the latter's death), but there is still a great deal to be learnt from the exchanges which are now made available for the first time.

Seen as effectively a luxury from the 1930s onwards, the Office closed on 5 August 1948, although E.N. Ensor remained as 'London Representative' thereafter. Financial reasons underpinned this decision, which was ordered by the Guanwushu (关务署) which oversaw Customs affairs in the Ministry of Finance as a way of saving foreign currency holdings, but the diminished British role in the Service generally was a key factor in the downgrading of the importance of the connection. A cancelled draft of Circular No.7497, announcing the closure, noted that "the elimination of this time-hallowed establishment signifies the final withdrawal of one phase of Customs activities and shifting of emphasis in other directions" – an American IG looked elsewhere for diplomatic support.

### **The London Office files**

The formal Archives of the office itself were either destroyed or sent to the Inspectorate Archives in China when the office was closed in 1948 (details and packing lists are in SHAC file 679 (1) 31486 – Reel 101). This unit of the Maritime Customs Service Archives collection is organised in six sections: 1) Three runs of registers of Dispatches and IGS letters to and from London and the IG; 2) Surviving London Letter Books (two series, 1874-1905, and 1883-98, 1906-26); 3) Semi-official correspondence between the NRS and the successive IGs, 1908-49); 4) Confidential, private and personal correspondence between them (1908-20, mostly with Aglen, and after 1938, mostly with Maze); 5) Sets of Pacific War-era memos and telegrams, and 6) A selection of materials concerning the history of the office, its archives, staff, office procedure and premises. The collection overall goes well beyond the activities of the London Office, and provides vital materials for understanding the broader history of the service and its activities.

The Dispatch Registers serve as a resource in themselves, outlining the broad concerns and the multifaceted minutiae of Customs Service work, and can be used to track correspondence and issues

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<sup>6</sup> Hart's letters, now in the archives at The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, were published as Fairbank, Bruner, and Matheson (eds), *The I.G. in Peking*. Campbell's side of the correspondence, and the telegrams the men exchanged, are in the Archives at Nanjing, and have been published as the four volume Chen Xiafei and Han Rongfang (eds), *Archives of China's Imperial Maritime Customs: Confidential Correspondence between Robert Hart and James Duncan Campbell, 1874-1907* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1990-93).

– and locate details of pertinent files in the Archive itself. The Letter Books are a melange of correspondence and a lively guide to the activities and concerns of the NRS. The third, fourth and fifth sections are incomplete, as is the archive, because Aglen, Maze and also Little (to varying degrees) retained possession of their correspondence with the NRS (and others) when they left office (or in Maze's case, when the Pacific War loomed). Some of what they removed from the Inspectorate archives can now be found in the collections at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (Aglen, Maze), and at Harvard University's Houghton Library (Little), but what is now made available here extensively supplements those holdings, and with the Semi-Official series provides a chronologically broader as well as deeper context for those materials. The Maze papers in particular have been widely used by historians of Sino-British relations in the run up to war, but another 15 files of correspondence are now made available here, and as Maze, notoriously, censored and shaped his archive, there is likely to be much that throws new light on the last British IG.

The Semi-Official correspondence, formally complete for the years 1908-49, contains the fortnightly letters sent from London to the IG (as from all formal Customs stations). These contained reflections on events and trends that were likely to be of interest to the IG, and in particular issues that might develop into the formal subject of a Dispatch, or which might not find an appropriate alternative forum for communication. The series forms an alternative commentary on British diplomatic policy towards China, loans and the Customs Service, but particularly also on IG policies and concerns. Maze liked to keep his NRS 'informed' about his policies and thinking, especially after the onset of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, sending copies of his correspondence with embassies and his superiors.<sup>7</sup>

The twentieth century record of the London Office is strongly represented in these documents, which shed new light on the Customs Service after Hart, and on the Aglen and Maze eras in particular, but there is also much here more generally concerned with the multifaceted and non-political world of Customs Service work. The collection also includes three albums containing photographs of all new recruits sent out from London between 1903-33 – taken together these photographs provide a unique and enigmatic record of the mostly fresh, young, foreign faces of the Customs Service in the twentieth century.

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<sup>7</sup> SHAC, 679 (1) 31476, 'IGS and Confidential Letters to NRS, 1939-40', IGS 4, 24 September 1939 encloses copy of Maze to Wright, 24 September 1939. (Reel 92)

**Appendix 1: Non-Resident Secretaries (officers 'In Charge' inset):**

James Duncan Campbell, 1874-1907

Edgar Bruce Hart, 1907-14

Paul King, 1914-20

A.G.H. Carruthers

G.F.H. Acheson, 1921-24

C.A.V. Bowra, 1924-26

J.H. Stephenson, 1926-31

F. Hayley Bell

P.R. Walsham, 1931-33

L.A. Lyall

J.H. Stephenson, 1933

J.H. Macoun, 1933-38

W.O. Law

Stanley Wright, 1939

J.H. Cubbon, 1939-43

Foster Hall, 1943-46

C.A. Pouncey, 1946-48

**Appendix 2: Sources of further information:**

Robert Ronald Campbell, *James Duncan Campbell: A memoir by his son* (Cambridge, MA: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1970)

Chen Xiafei and Han Rongfang (eds), *Archives of China's Imperial Maritime Customs: Confidential Correspondence between Robert Hart and James Duncan Campbell, 1874-1907* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1990-93)

John King Fairbank, Katherine Frost Bruner and Elizabeth Matheson (eds), *The I.G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868-1907*, 2 volumes (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1975)

Paul H. King, *In the Chinese Customs Service: A Personal Record of Forty-Seven Years* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1924), 45-59, 98, 270-303

Cancelled Circular No.7497, 1948, in SHAC, 679 (1) 17341, 'General Matters Concerning Organisation, Reorganisation, and Closing of London Office' (Reel 104)

'London Office: Handing Over Charge Memoranda, 1914-46', SHAC, 679 (1) 17580 (Reel 105)

### Appendix 3: London Office Dispatches in the Second Historical Archives of China, Nanjing

These excerpts from the catalogue of the Customs Service Archive at the Second Historical Archives, refer to files which can be cross-referenced with the Dispatch Registers filed in this Part.

#### 1. Dispatches: London Office copies

All pre-1902 files were transferred to the Customs Reference Library in Shanghai, in 1933. This complied with an instruction issued to all Customs Stations in Semi-Official Circular No.91.<sup>8</sup> These files were transferred from London as a result.

Classmark	Call number	Title	Period covered
679 (2)	1201	London Office: Dispatches from IG	1892-93
679 (2)	1202	London Office: Dispatches from IG	1894-95
679 (2)	1203	London Office: Dispatches from IG	1896
679 (2)	1204	London Office: Dispatches from IG	1897
679 (2)	1205	London Office: Dispatches from IG	1898-99
679 (2)	1206	London Office: Dispatches from IG	1900
679 (2)	1207	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1874-75
679 (2)	1190	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1874-75
679 (2)	1191	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1876-77
679 (2)	1208	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1876-77
679 (2)	1192	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1878-79
679 (2)	1209	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1878-80
679 (2)	1193	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1880
679 (2)	1194	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1881
679 (2)	1210	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1881-83
679 (2)	1195	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1882-83
679 (2)	1196	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1884
679 (2)	1211	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1884-85
679 (2)	1197	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1885
679 (2)	1212	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1886-87
679 (2)	1198	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1886-87
679 (2)	1219	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1887-92
679 (2)	1199	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1888-89
679 (2)	1213	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1888-90
679 (2)	1200	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1890-91
679 (2)	1214	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1891-92
679 (2)	1215	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1893-95
679 (2)	1220	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1893-1901
679 (2)	1216	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1896-97
679 (2)	1217	London Office: Dispatches to IG	1898-1901

<sup>8</sup> *Documents Illustrative of the Origin, Development and Activities of the Chinese Customs Service* Vol. V, (Shanghai: Statistical Department, Inspectorate General of Customs, 1939), 118.

**2. Dispatches: Inspectorate copies**

<b>Classmark</b>	<b>Call number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Period covered</b>
679 (2)	1311	Dispatches from London Office, Ningpo Customs	1867-88
679 (9)	7612	Dispatches, etc., from NRS	1874-78
679 (9)	7613	Dispatches, etc., from NRS	1882-84
679 (9)	7614	Dispatches, etc., from NRS	1885-86
679 (9)	7615	Dispatches, etc., from NRS	1887-89
679 (9)	7616	Dispatches, etc., from NRS	1890-91
679 (9)	7617	Dispatches, etc., from NRS	1893-94
679 (9)	7620	Dispatches, etc., from NRS	1895-97
679 (9)	7619	Dispatches, etc., from NRS	1898-1900
679 (9)	7618	Dispatches, etc., from NRS	1898-1900
679 (9)	7621	Dispatches, etc., from NRS	1898-1902
679 (9)	7622	Dispatches, etc., from NRS	1901-06
679 (9)	7624	Dispatches, etc., from NRS	1902-08
679 (9)	7623	Dispatches, etc., from NRS	1905-06
679 (9)	7625	Dispatches, etc., from NRS	1909-10
679 (9)	7626	Dispatches, etc., from NRS	1910-14
679 (9)	8050	NRS Dispatches Advising Shipment of Stores	1915-20
679 (3)	1579	NRS Dispatches, Nos.2488-3032	1896-1900
679 (3)	1580	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3033-3061	1900-01
679 (3)	1581	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3062-3106	1900-01
679 (3)	1582	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3107-3164	1901-02
679 (3)	1583	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3165-3216	1902
679 (3)	1584	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3217-3230	1902
679 (3)	1585	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3231-3270	1902-03
679 (3)	1586	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3271-3300	1903
679 (3)	1587	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3301-3340	1903-04
679 (3)	1588	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3341-3370	1904
679 (3)	1589	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3371-3390	1904
679 (3)	1590	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3391-3420	1904-05
679 (3)	1592	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3446-3470	1906
679 (3)	1593	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3471-3520	1906
679 (3)	1591	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3521-3545	1905
679 (3)	1594	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3546-3579	1907
679 (3)	1595	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3580-3600	1908
679 (3)	1596	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3601-3670	1908
679 (3)	1597	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3671-3710	1909
679 (3)	1598	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3711-3750	1910



679 (3)	1599	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3751-3800	1910
679 (3)	1600	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3801-3860	1911-12
679 (3)	1601	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3861-3950	1912-13
679 (3)	1602	NRS Dispatches, Nos.3951-4020	1913-14
679 (3)	1603	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4021-4100	1914
679 (3)	1604	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4101-4170	1914-16
679 (3)	1605	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4171-4265	1916-18
679 (3)	1606	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4266-4315	1918-19
679 (3)	1607	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4316-4342	1918-19
679 (3)	1608	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4343-4385	1919-20
679 (3)	1609	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4386-4399	1920
679 (3)	1610	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4400-4434	1920
679 (3)	1611	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4435-4450	1920
679 (3)	1612	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4451-4501	1920-21
679 (3)	1613	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4502-4508	1921
679 (3)	1614	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4509-4543	1921
679 (3)	1615	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4544-4545	1921
679 (3)	1616	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4546-4585	1921-22
679 (3)	1617	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4586-4587	1921-22
679 (3)	1618	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4588-4600	1922
679 (3)	1619	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4601-4640	1922-23
679 (3)	1620	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4641-4654	1923
679 (3)	1621	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4655-4720	1924
679 (3)	1622	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4721-4770	1924
679 (3)	1623	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4771-4830	1924
679 (3)	1624	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4831-4885	1925-26
679 (3)	1625	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4886-4930	1926-27
679 (3)	1626	NRS Dispatches, Nos.4931-5037	1927-29
679 (3)	1627	NRS Dispatches, Nos.5038-5211	1929-32
679 (1)	26259	NRS Dispatches to IG	1941-45
679 (1)	26215	Dispatches to NRS	1942-44
679 (1)	26537	Dispatches to NRS	1944-45







### **Part Three: Maritime Customs Service Archive: Semi-Official Correspondence from Selected Ports**

The Chinese Maritime Customs Service operated with a strictly delineated and strictly limited repertoire of official forms of internal communication including Circulars, Despatches, Memoranda and Returns, as well as Semi-Official letters (半官性函件). Surviving runs of the latter type from four important ports are reproduced here, and provide a significant and unique new resource for the study of national and local events, their reception and their representation, in each of the four cities concerned (Hankow 汉口, 江汉关, Harbin 哈尔滨, 滨江关, Shanghai 上海, 江海关, and Swatow 汕头, 潮海关). They also reveal much about the official -- and notably the unofficial -- history of the workings of the Customs Service and the lives of its personnel.

The first official document dealing with Semi-Official Correspondence (Circular 15/1874, see Appendix 1, and Part 1 Reel 2) drew attention to the existing standing requirement in letters of appointment issued to Commissioners that they:

address [the Inspector General] semi-officially or privately every fortnight, as well to supplement your despatches as to keep me informed of interesting or important occurrences at your port or in its vicinity – occurrences which it might be expedient to bring to my notice, but which could not properly form the subject of official correspondence.

In this Circular the Inspector General (IG), Robert Hart, went on to clarify what he wanted to find in these letters:

any non-customs business, whether affecting foreigners or natives, that is causing a reference to Peking or that is likely to evoke the intervention of the Peking officials, – any local occurrence tending to the benefit or detriment of local interests, or specially affecting interests elsewhere, – and any sayings or doings of individuals which, in the interests of the Service, ought to be brought to the Inspector General's notice[.]

The resulting files of letters offer a very rich insight into the activities of the Customs in each port, and to local politics and events of greater or lesser importance. They came from the Commissioners in each and every port, and from all branches of the Customs Service. The Second Historical Archives of China at Nanjing contains some 1,800 files of correspondence with 'Semi-Official' status in the classmark 679 series, but the material of greatest general interest is the incoming correspondence from station Commissioners.<sup>9</sup>

From 1900 the letters were addressed as a matter of routine to the Deputy Inspector General, Sir Robert Bredon (Circular No.1213, 23 January 1905), although, Hart added in this latter Circular to Commissioners, 'When special circumstances seem to require it, or you desire to do so, I shall always be glad to hear from you direct'. Aglen, when IG, reinstated the pre-1900 system. Under Maze the Semi-Official became more formalized, and so important a channel did the Semi-Official become, that Commissioners were upbraided for not cross referencing them properly with prior correspondence.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> There are just over 900 files of Semi-Official letters from station Commissioners. Other files contain the same type of correspondence from Secretaries (Non-Resident (London), Statistical etc, as well as from the Marine Commissioner.

<sup>10</sup> Second Historical Archives of China, 679(1) 32372 'Swatow Semi-Official, 1935'.

The files reproduced here are confined to the twentieth century because the destruction of the Inspectorate archives in the Boxer war of 1900 wiped out the surviving copies of this correspondence from the nineteenth century. Although, for example, many runs of nineteenth-century Despatches were preserved in Customs Station archives and were transferred to the Customs Reference Library in 1933 -- Semi-Official Correspondence, in spite of the injunctions in Circular 15/1874 -- retained an ambiguous official status in the eyes of Commissioners which meant that very few copies of the letters survived. Swatow Commissioner Edward Gilchrist (served 1890-1923), put the problem clearly in a 1910 -- Semi-Official -- letter responding to an instruction from Sir Francis Aglen to maintain copies of the correspondence in station safes:

[N]one of my predecessors have left any record of their semi-official correspondence, up to date, for the inspection of their successors, because it has been prepared entirely without such prospect in mind

Moreover, he made clear that the correspondence was copied into his personal press-copy volume ('not taken from official stationery'). Commissioners did not regard this correspondence as properly belonging to station archives, and so took their personal copies with them when they were transferred to new posts, or left the Service. This habit was in many senses an aspect of the intensely personal nature of the relationship that developed between the IG and Commissioners in the Hart and Aglen years. Hart's much commented-on 'autocracy' engendered strong personalised relations -- and loyalties -- between the IG and his Commissioners. These overlaid, if at times they did not obscure, the formal and professional hierarchies and relationships within the Service.

Some nineteenth-century letter books have survived, however. John King Fairbank donated transcripts of H.B. Morse's Letter Books to the Customs Reference Library (679(2), 1222-1225). These are lodged, together with the correspondence from Commissioners in Korea (679(2), 1005-1077), and a few volumes from Hangzhou (679(2), 1329-1333). But overall the nineteenth century record of this correspondence is not available unless still held in private hands or in libraries and archives overseas with the other papers of former Commissioners.

Semi-Official Correspondence can give a richly-detailed and often much more personal view of events and personalities than the formal Despatches. As the letters were not preserved in Station archives until the 1910s they also escaped the eyes of Chinese or foreign subordinates, and so the Commissioners could write more freely than in other forms of correspondence with the IG. Detail came at the cost of the effort and time required for composition, however. London Secretary Bruce Hart registered his complaint about this duty in 1913:

this latter class of correspondence has, I know, its value (though, as a matter of personal view, I don't place it very high seeing how frequently its hap-hazard information is incorrect and consequently misleading), but, just as every man has his abilities and disabilities, so, small-talk and chatty script are inherently absent from my make-up'<sup>11</sup>

Bruce, Sir Robert Hart's son and a difficult character, was deliberately courting an order to depart the service (he resigned 3 months later), but the view may have been more common.<sup>12</sup> 'I have not written for some time', wrote Commissioner Ohlmer from Tsingtao (青岛, 胶关站) in March 1911, 'The last two months have been very trying -- work has been heavy and troubles many.'<sup>13</sup> Expressive too, though for different reasons, was one letter from Nanning in 1908:

<sup>11</sup> Second Historical Archives of China, 679(1) 31840, E. Bruce Hart to Aglen 19 November 1913

<sup>12</sup> London Semi-Officials are to be found in Unit 2, 'London Office Files'.

<sup>13</sup> Second Historical Archives of China, 679(1) 32013, 'Tsingtao Semi-Official, 1905-14', Ohlmer to Aglen, 17 March 1911.

23 February 1908

Dear Sir Robert,  
 No news of any interest to report.  
 Yours obediently,  
 E. von Strauch<sup>14</sup>

Such forlorn pithiness aside however -- and the Customs life, especially in such smaller ports, was often lonely and dull -- the Nanning correspondence gives a lively sense of the value of this type of record for understanding local events, debates and changes. A survey of Nanning Semi-Officials for the first years after a Commissioner arrived at this 'voluntarily opened mart' (1908) finds them replete with detail of topics such as a massacre of lepers, reports on provincial developments seen as evidence of 'westernisation', which stretched from the more obvious developments -- a new military academy opens, Japanese advisors arrive, foreign steamship companies experiment with new services -- to the more private and subtle, but no less important changes that shaped the new world of goods and practices in twentieth century China:

While at my place [the provincial governor] told me his Yamen was so hot, and as he had been indisposed for a few days, it was not so easy to sleep these hot nights. So I showed him a fan, run by methylated spirits, which took his fancy so that he asked me to telegraph for one to come up as soon as possible.<sup>15</sup>

Then there are the reports of local rumours, some of which involve the Customs, and some French activities in the region, while others reflect the concerns and fears of the inhabitants of Nanning, and lie behind the events and details recorded in Despatches or other reports.

Material in Semi-Official letters complements the official business recorded in the Despatches. Sometimes issues are first raised in the Semi-Officials, as a prelude to a Despatch, at other times the Semi-Official Correspondence contains reflections and details for which a Despatch would be inappropriate vehicle, or too public a document. But as Hart noted in 1905, 'what you wish to have done, or attended to, or answered, must be sent forward in a despatch'<sup>16</sup>. They also acted as a forum for letting off steam, for grumblings about local personalities or subordinates: 'Mr Mansfield', wrote von Strauch in 1907, 'is quite unfit for life at a lonely place. He is accustomed to gay company and the loneliness here makes him a unhappy and nervous and the result is, he is a very difficult companion.'<sup>17</sup>

### The selected files

Twentieth century correspondence from four stations has been included in this unit: Shanghai (1900-1941, 1946-49), as the biggest and most important of the Customs posts; Swatow (1900-1941, 1945-49), as a representative smaller coastal station; Hankow as a Yangzi river port (1900-49), and Harbin (1900-1928, 1930-32, 1945-47) by way of representing Manchuria and the inland stations. The Hankow selection includes correspondence from the Classmark 2085 Series at the

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<sup>14</sup> Second Historical Archives of China, 679(1) 32516, 'Nanning Semi-Official Correspondence, 1907-1912'. E.A.W. von Strauch, a German national appointed in 1899, served until his resignation in September 1916.

<sup>15</sup> Second Historical Archives of China, 679(1) 32516, 'Nanning Semi-Official Correspondence, 1907-1912', 8 June 1908.

<sup>16</sup> Circular 1213 (Second Series), 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1905.

<sup>17</sup> Second Historical Archives of China, 679(1) 32516, 'Nanning Semi-Official Correspondence, 1907-1912', 5 September 1907. R.D. Mansfield had joined in October 1903 as a 4<sup>th</sup> Assistant, and served until his death in 1925 when Acting Commissioner at Chungking and Wanhsien.

Second Historical Archives of China which contains materials from the Pacific War-era collaborationist Customs Commissioner to Japanese IG Kishimoto Hirokichi. Each of these stations had its full complement of the events that unfolded in China in these years, and each covers many incidents which directly affected the Customs – such as the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and the seizure of Customs stations there -- one of which was Harbin -- by the collaborationist Manzhouguo authorities.

The letters are often annotated by the IG and sometimes a response is drafted on the letter itself, but in most cases a bare acknowledgement was sent. The runs of material included here represent a fraction of the information flowing into the Inspectorate through this form of communication.

Professor Robert Bickers  
University of Bristol



## Appendix 1

*CIRCULAR No. 15 of 1874.*

INSPECTORATE GENERAL OF CUSTOMS,  
PEKING, 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1874.

SIR,

Concerning  
Semi-official  
Correspondence

1. — In your sealed letter of appointment to the Commissionership of the port (I.G./F.I.), paragraph 6 reads thus:—

You will address me semi-officially or privately every fortnight, as well to supplement your despatches as to keep me informed of interesting or important occurrences at your port or in its vicinity – occurrences which it might be expedient to bring to my notice, but which could not properly form the “subject of official correspondence.

2.— On the whole, I have to thank all who have had charge of ports for the attention to the instructions contained in the paragraph quoted. A growing tendency, however, is becoming perceptible, on the one hand to substitute semi-official letters for despatches, and on the other to leave it to the Inspector General to find out for himself, from newspapers or other sources, what is occurring in the locality: on the one hand, the result is that questions asked and perhaps instructions sent in reply – both one and other semi-officially, or in letters relating to private or personal business – are not recorded, while, on the other, matters at the port, which the Inspector General ought to be the first to know about, are frequently those which, to the surprise of others and to the disadvantage of Service interests, he is the last to learn.

3.— As regards the outside matters which ought to be communicated to the Inspector General semi-officially, each Commissioner must judge for himself; but, generally speaking, any non-customs business, whether affecting foreigners or natives, that is causing a reference to Peking or that is likely to evoke the intervention of the Peking officials, – any local occurrence tending to the benefit or detriment of local interests, or specially affecting interests elsewhere, – and any sayings or doings of individuals which, in the interests of the Service, ought to be brought to the Inspector General’s notice, – these and kindred matters may properly form the subjects of semi-official correspondence. In this connection it ought to be remembered that it is in the interest of the Service generally, and therefore as much in their – the Commissioners’ – interest as in his own, that the Inspector General requires such intelligence; further, the communication of it in this semi-official way is as much a part of a Commissioner’s official duty as attention to the current work of the Custom House.

4. — In respect to the other matter, semi-official reference to business matters to be dealt with by the commissioner, there is no objection to such reference as long as it does no more than supplement, or rather comment

upon or explain the official treatment of the same subject or question in a despatch; but when such semi-official reference is made or allowed to take the place of the official treatment of the subject in a despatch, the result is often embarrassing. Semi-official letters received are, of course, preserved by the Inspector General, but copies are not kept of the Inspector General's private or semi-official replies; hence subjects are lost sight of that ought to be borne in mind, and advice or instructions forgotten, if not officially contradicted on some subsequent occasion. It is therefore desirable that you should remember, and be guided by the explanation: business questions, the statement of cases for the Inspector General's opinion or instructions, applications for the Inspector General's authority or sanction, &c., &c., &c., —these and kindred matters ought to be dealt with officially in despatches, so that the statement submitted and the instructions issued may be properly recorded for future guidance or reference; and when such business matters are treated of in semi-official letters, it is to be borne in mind that such semi-official treatment of them must not take the place of official reference, but is merely to be complementary or explanatory of what has been already written on the same subject in official despatches.

5. — I trust that these explanations will be of use, and assist in making semi-official letters what they ought, as well as preserve them from becoming what they ought not, to be.

I am &c.,

(Signed) ROBERT HART,  
*I.G.*

**Appendix 2****Officers in Charge at Hankow, Harbin, Shanghai and Swatow, 1900-49**

## 1. Hankow Commissioners or officers in charge, 1900-49

	J. H. Hippisley (Officiating Commissioner)
23 May 1901	R.T.F. de Luca (Commissioner)
10 February 1902	E.T. Pym (A.W. Cross assumed charge vice Pym died)
10 March 1907	F. A. Aglen (Commissioner)
	A.H. Sugden (Commissioner)
1 May 1912	F. A. Carl (Commissioner)
20 October 1913	F.E. Taylor (Commissioner)
5 December 1914	F. A. Carl (Commissioner)
6 May 1916	J.F. Oiesen (Commissioner)
4 November 1918	H. Unwin (Commissioner)
17 November 1919	E. Lowder (Commissioner)
29 September 1920	R. A. Currie (Commissioner)
24 October 1921	F. Maze (Commissioner)
6 October 1925	J. W. H. Ferguson (Commissioner)
19 December 1927	R.C.L. d'Anjou (Commissioner)
3 November 1928	H.E. Prettejohn (Commissioner)
11 June 1930	E.G. Lebas (Commissioner)
24 August 1932	卢寿汶Lu Shou Wen (Acting Deputy Commissioner in charge ad interim)
23 November 1932	A.S. Campbell (Commissioner)
31 May 1934	B.E. Foster Hall (Deputy Commissioner in charge ad interim)
22 April 1935	W.R. Myers (Commissioner)
1 October 1936	M.C.D. Drummond (Acting Deputy Commissioner In charge ad interim)
21 October 1936	L.H. Lawford (Commissioner)
17 April 1937	E.N. Ensor (Commissioner)
30 June 1941	A.C.H. Lay (Deputy Commissioner in charge)
2 February 1942	雷忠炳Lei Chung Pin (Assistant in charge)
26 May 1942	方博Fang Po (Assistant in charge)
30 April 1943	末次晋S. Suetsugu
7 September 1945	华锦燦Hwa Chin Tsan
31 October 1945	范豪Fan Hao (Acting Commissioner)
18 March 1946	陈瓊琨K.K. Chen (Commissioner)
7 May 1947	杜秉和Tu Ping Ho (Commissioner)
	刘邦麟Liu Pang-lin (Deputy Commissioner in charge temp.)
25 January 1949	蔡学团Tsai Hsioh Tuan (Commissioner)

## 2. Harbin Commissioners or officers in charge, 1907-32, 1946-49

February 1907	N.A. Konovaloff (Commissioner)
30 November 1910	W.C.H. Watson (Commissioner)
16 April 1913	R. de Luca (Commissioner)
15 April 1915	R.J. Grevedon (Commissioner)
21 October 1919	R.C.L. d'Anjou (Commissioner)
1 May 1924	U. Marconi (Acting Commissioner)
21 April 1927	P.G.S. Barentzen (Acting Commissioner)
31 March 1930	R.C.L. d'Anjou (Commissioner)
15 April 1931	E.J. Ohrnberger
10 March 1946	V. Muling

## 3. Shanghai Commissioners or officers in charge, 1900-49

	F. A. Aglen (Officiating Commissioner)
c.1 April 1901	H.E. Hobson (Commissioner)
c.1 December 1909	H.F. Merrill (Commissioner)
c.1 July 1913	F.S. Unwin (Commissioner)
1 May 1917	R.H.R. Wade (Commissioner)
15 April 1919	L.A. Lyall (Commissioner)
4 October 1920	H.G. Lowder (Commissioner)
17 April 1922	C.N. Holwill (Dep. Commissioner. in charge temp.)
14 October 1922	L.A. Lyall (Commissioner)
8 October 1925	岸本廣吉 H. Kishimoto (Officiating Commissioner ad interim)
31 October 1925	F.W. Maze (Commissioner)
10 January 1929	W.R. Myers (Commissioner in charge temp.)
1 June 1931	L.H. Lawford (Commissioner)
12 July 1932	F.D. Goddard (Officiating Commissioner)
6 October 1932	L.H. Lawford (Commissioner)
7 March 1933	A.C.E. Braud (Commissioner)
8 January 1935	L.H. Lawford (Commissioner)
15 October 1935	P.G.S. Barentzen (Commissioner)
21 April 1937	L.H. Lawford (Commissioner)
22 November 1941	赤谷由助 Y. Akatani
5 October 1942	小山田一 K. Oyamada
9 February 1943	谷冈胜美 K. Tanioka
18 October 1943	K. Oyamada
23 November 1943	卢寿汶 Lu Shou Wen (Commissioner in charge ad interim)
18 January 1944	黑泽二郎 J. Kurosawa
20 August 1945	裘倬其 Chiu Tso Chi
13 September 1945	丁贵堂 K.T. Ting (Dep. Inspector General and Commissioner)
18 June 1946	E.A. Pritchard
25 October 1946	刘丙彝 Liu Ping yi
30 December 1949	张勇年 Chang Yung Nien

## 4. Swatow Commissioners or officers in charge, 1900-49

	W.M. Andrew
	J.W. Innocent (Assistant in charge)
September 1900	C.H. Brewitt-Taylor (Acting Commissioner)
April 1901	S. Campbell (Commissioner)
26 March 1903	P.B. von Rautenfeld
	E. Glichrist (Assistant in charge)
9 June 1903	F.A. Morgan (Commissioner)
15 October 1903	Frank Smith (Acting Commissioner)
12 March 1907	R.A. Currie (Acting Deputy Commissioner temp.)
17 May 1909	E. Glichrist (Commissioner)
December 1912	W.G. Lay (Commissioner)
14 September 1915	D. Percebois (Deputy Commissioner in charge temp.)
16 February 1916	W.G. Lay (Commissioner)
	A.G.H. Carruthers
	B.D. Tisdall (Acting Deputy Commissioner in charge temp.)
10 June 1918	J.H.M. Moorhead (Commissioner)
31 March 1921	P. Kremer (Deputy Commissioner in charge ad interim)
17 May 1921	C.E.S. Wakefield (Commissioner)
27 December 1921	R.M. Talbot (Acting Deputy Commissioner in charge ad interim)
20 February 1922	R.A. Currie (Commissioner)
3 May 1924	W.C.G. Howard (Deputy Commissioner in charge ad interim)
28 May 1924	F.W. Carey
13 October 1925	E.A. MacDonald
17 December 1925	R.F.C. Hedgeland
23 November 1926	J. Klubien (Commissioner)
15 October 1929	B.E.F. Hall (Acting Deputy Commissioner in charge ad interim)
23 October 1929	A. Sadoine (Commissioner)
13 August 1930	E. A. Pritchard (Deputy Commissioner in charge temp.)
13 April 1931	H. G. Fletcher (Commissioner)
15 April 1933	H. D. Hilliard (Commissioner)
1 April 1935	G.N. Gawler (Chief Assistant A Acting Deputy Commissioner in charge ad interim)
20 May 1935	C.G.C. Asker (Commissioner)
15 October 1936	H.St.J. Wilding (Commissioner)
15 April 1937	A.L. Newman (Acting Deputy Commissioner in charge ad interim)
1 May 1937	Y.H.J. Cloarec (Commissioner)
13 October 1937	A.L. Newman (Acting Deputy Commissioner in charge ad interim)
15 November 1937	J.C.O'G. Anderson (Commissioner)
28 March 1938	C.G.C. Asker (Commissioner)
19 June 1942	高桥明A. Takahashi (3 <sup>rd</sup> Assistant A Acting Deputy Commissioner in charge temp.)
25 February 1943	松冈宪二K. Matsuoka
13 May 1943	高桥明A. Takahashi
	黄志塞Huang Chih Chien (Acting Commissioner)
28 September 1946	杨明新Yang Ming Hsin (Commissioner)
Feb. 1947	R.C.P. Rouse

31 March 1949 史恩灏Shih Eng How (Acting Commissioner ad interim)  
26 April 1949 E. Bathurst (Commissioner)

## **Parts Four and Five:**

### **Maritime Customs Service Archive: The Policing of Trade**

The previous units of microfilm in this collection consisted largely of runs of certain types of Customs documents, such as the Inspector General's (IG) Circulars (Part 1, reels 1-62) and Semi-Official Correspondence (Part 3, reels 106-173). In the case of Part 2 (reels 63-105), we included series of Letters, Semi-Official Correspondence, private Z Letters, as well as Confidential Letters generated over time between the Non-Resident Secretary in London and the Inspector General in Beijing or Shanghai. For Parts Four and Five, we have opted for a thematic approach, as we will do for Parts Six and Seven. Parts Four and Five consist of files relating to the Chinese Maritime Customs Service's involvement in the policing of China's trade. The next two will deal with the Customs during the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) and the Civil War (1945-1949) periods.

To understand the role of the Customs in the regulation of China's trade, it is important to realise that the Service's responsibilities were initially limited. Only after the 1911 Revolution did it begin to collect the duties on China's international trade, something which until then had been done by the Superintendent, a prominent Chinese local official for whom the oversight of the Customs Service was only one of his responsibilities. Until 1912, the Service mainly recorded the values of China's imports and exports as reported by merchants, assessed the duties on it in accordance with the Tariff stipulated in agreements between China and foreign countries, checked cargo manifests and import and export applications, and once a designated bank had notified the Customs that the relevant charges had been paid, it issued documents enabling merchants to proceed. Customs personnel also watched goods as they were moved between vessels and the shore. Similarly, although the Customs assisted local officials in the suppression of trade in contraband carried on foreign vessels (initially especially arms) low tariff rates made the smuggling of non-contraband goods financially unattractive. In the prevention of smuggling, Commissioners of Customs had to cooperate with local Chinese officials who had their own policing forces as well as foreign consuls, whose cooperation was necessary because foreign merchants enjoyed extraterritoriality and were hence immune from Chinese jurisdiction.

Due to the significance of the Superintendents in the management of China's international trade, the first section of this set of microfilms consists of communications between them and Customs Commissioners in Ningbo, Xiamen, Wenzhou, and Wuhu during the second half of the nineteenth century. The documents in these files are rare owing to the destruction, by the Boxers, of the Inspectorate archives in 1900 and because archives of Superintendents themselves were either destroyed during various instances of warfare during the twentieth century or remain locked away in the archives of China's contemporary Customs Service, as at Shanghai, Tientsin, and Xiamen. This is doubly so because woodworms have eaten their way through many of these documents made from rice paper. Before they could be microfilmed, they had to be painstakingly restored by the Preservation Department of the Second Historical Archives. In a number of cases the damage proved too extensive and unfortunately we therefore cannot provide long runs of despatches between the Superintendent and Commissioner of any given place. Nonetheless, the documents we reproduce here have much to tell us about the relationship between Superintendents and Commissioners, the range of concerns addressed in their communications, the way that the Custom Service fitted into the broader Qing bureaucracy, and cooperation between Superintendents and Commissioners in the suppression of the smuggling of contraband.

The next section concerns the Shanghai River Police. Its origins go back to 1868, when Robert Hart instructed his London agent to hire seven men from England from the Thames Police

'chiefly in the hope of being thereby able to put a stop to the thefts from which cargo boats are constantly suffering in the Shanghai anchorage' (Despatch of 4 May 1898, Documents Concerning the Shanghai River Police, file 679/824). As Shanghai's trade grew in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Shanghai River Police expanded accordingly. As late as 1912, though, its constables and sergeants had to rely on sampans - small flat bottomed wooden boats propelled by an oar thrust into the water from its side - to perform its major functions of regulating traffic in the harbour and along Suzhou Creek, keeping waterways clear, and watching cargo as it was loaded and unloaded.

As Shanghai developed into one of the five largest ports of the world in the 1920s and 1930s, the Shanghai Police Force rapidly increased in size, acquired motorized launches, and became responsible for tasks ranging from the enforcement of regulations governing waterborne traffic and the safe storage of flammable or explosive materials such as kerosene, to the prevention of the dumping of waste, fighting fire in the harbour, assistance with raids on shops suspected of involvement in smuggling, and apprehending smugglers on the Huangpu River and in the Suzhou Creek. The files reproduced here give information on the internal organization of the Shanghai River Police; the scope of its activities; court cases in which it was involved, including some arising from acts of brutality inflicted by its own staff on members of the public; smuggling; and conflicts with other police forces in Shanghai, including the Municipal Police of the Shanghai Municipal Council as well as various policing arms of local Chinese authorities.

When the Nationalists seized power in 1928, the tasks of the Customs Service and its reach changed radically. The aim of the Nationalists was a nation with a clearly defined border, a national economy, a tariff protective of China's industry, and a single set of rules governing trade throughout the country and applied uniformly to foreigners and Chinese alike. Despite the fact that the Customs Service was dominated by foreigners, the Nationalists nonetheless found it useful to exploit it in the attempt to realise their vision. In 1930, the Nationalists ordered the Customs Service to police not just the Treaty Ports but the entire 5000 plus miles of coast. The Customs was also ordered to take over the management of the Native Customs (常关) and Lijin Barriers (厘金) in order to eliminate them and so achieve a continuous border and a single market. The Customs was a useful tool because it was backed by foreign countries with gunboats in China's harbours and waterways, while the reach of the Nationalists themselves was limited to the lower Yangtze area.

Lijin Barriers had been established during the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) by local authorities to tax trade and so finance local contributions to the suppression of the Taiping insurgency. Afterwards they proved difficult to abolish. The Custom Service had been ordered to assume control over some within a 25 kilometre radius of Custom Houses after the Boxer Rebellion when their revenue had been allocated to service the Boxer Indemnity. But the Service had not been able to make that control effective. As civil warfare spread during the 1920s, local military and civil authorities stopped remitting assigned quotas of Lijin revenues.

When the Foreign Inspectorate was established, its task was to supervise the recording of foreign trade at the Maritime Stations (海关) of the Qing bureaucracy that collected duties on domestic as well as overseas trade. Its other stations from then on became known in Chinese as 旧 (Old) or 常 (Standard) Barriers and as the Native Customs in English. Following the issue of new international and domestic loans after the 1911 Revolution, the revenues of some Native Customs were hypothecated to the service of these and were to be remitted to the Inspectorate. As in the case of Lijin revenues, however, these revenues were also increasingly retained locally. Thus, when the Nationalists ordered the Customs to assume control over Lijin Barriers and Native



Customs stations, their goal was not just a unified Customs administration and a single market; they also sought to make use of the Customs Service to eliminate the revenue flows on which their opponents depended.

If these new responsibilities and the extension of its geographical span of operations increased the burdens of the Customs Service, so did the rapid increase in smuggling that followed the introduction of high import tariffs, announced on 1 February 1929. Previously, most imports had been taxed at a nominal 5% of value, although in reality rates were lower, both because the value of silver fell over time and also because for a significant number of goods tariff rates were expressed not in terms of value but at a set rate, often lower than actual market values. A further problem for the Customs was that in Manchuria, north China, Guangdong and Guangxi, and Fujian, regional authorities, sometimes in collaboration with foreign countries such as Japan, resisted the Nationalist Government in Nanjing. Not infrequently, their own armed forces shipped goods on government transports from which Customs personnel were barred, or declared imports to be government material exempt from taxation.

The Confidential Correspondence between the Inspector General and the Kuan-wu Shu (关务署, pinyin Guanwu Shu), an agency of the Ministry of Finance that oversaw the Customs Service, is valuable because these confidential letters discussed the ramifications of the introduction of the new tariff, the creation of new institutions under the Customs Service (such as the Preventive Service and the Chief Inspection Bureau to deal with smuggling as well as minor and major incidents such as the seizure in 1930 of the Tientsin Custom House by northern warlords) the consequences of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1932, the Fujian Rebellion of 1933-34, and the outbreak of total war in 1937. This series of documents then is fundamental to understanding the development of the Customs during a new phase of its history.

The Preventive Service and the Chief Inspection Bureau were the most prominent new institutions developed by the Customs in the 1930s to combat smuggling. The Preventive Secretariat was formed in 1931, following investigations of smuggling all along the China coast. It developed a substantial fleet of nearly 100 ships, of which 13 were over 140 feet in length. Assigned to four commands along the China coast, their movements were directed centrally. Rapid communication was made possible by a radio net managed by the Customs' Wireless Service, some of whose radio masts continue to adorn the China coast. The idea was to throw up a coastal cordon to prevent smugglers from even reaching China's ports. The Preventive Service frequently acted on information supplied by informers (who received substantial rewards) as well as an embryonic intelligence service, with agents for instance operating in Japanese-occupied Taiwan. Plans for a Customs air force existed, but were never realised. Files reproduced here detail the development of the Preventive Service and illustrate its activities.

According to Preventive Service reports, by 1935 the Customs Service was beginning to win its war on smuggling between south China and Hong Kong and Macao as well as between Taiwan and Fujian Province. However, the Customs was barred from operating in significant parts of north China because of the 1935 He-Umezu agreement between Japan and China whereby the Nationalists agreed to withdraw their armed forces and government institutions from parts of Hebei Province. Tientsin became a major centre of Japanese-sponsored smuggling. In response, the Customs established the Chief Inspection Bureau with the task of checking cargo carried by rail southward from north China. This required the cooperation of railroad authorities, which was not always forthcoming, and involved the Customs in regular conflicts with well organised gangs of runners, who simply occupied whole train carriages to carry their wares. Nonetheless, according to Customs reports, even if the Service could do little about smuggling in north China itself, by 1937 it had succeeded in stemming the most significant flows of goods southward. The

files reproduced here consist of Handing Over Charge Memoranda and the Semi-Official Correspondence generated by the Bureau.

With respect to the Customs Service's take-over of Native Customs stations and Lijin barriers, we include documents relating to its management of these at Tientsin, Shanghai, and Canton from after the Boxer Rebellion into the 1920s and 1930s as well as its assumption of control over the Fengyang and Yangyu (Yangyou) Collectorates after the beginning of Nationalist rule. The last two were among the largest Native Customs Collectorates in China. The nineteen barriers operated by the Fengyang Native Customs collected duties on trade flowing through north and northwest Anhui Province along the Huai River, the Long-Hai and Jin-Pu Railroads which intersected at Bengbu, and roads and rivers connecting northern Anhui to the Yangtze River. The Yangyu Collectorate, headquartered in Yangzhou City in Jiangsu Province, covered northern Jiangsu. The files included here provide insight into the Native Customs themselves and the difficulties the Customs Service encountered as it attempted to establish control over them.

During the 1930s, the Customs Houses filed monthly reports on smuggling. These offer discussions of the most prominent categories of smuggled goods, details of major smuggling cases, illustrations of the most prevalent modes of smuggling, and reports on relations with other local military and civilian authorities. They also provide information on responses of local merchants and populations to the Customs' efforts to prevent smuggling. We have selected runs of reports from Custom Houses at Canton, Kowloon, Macao, and Shanghai to provide details of counter-smuggling operations by the Customs Service during the 1930s.

The opium trade was a significant feature of China's modern history. Nationalist policy was contradictory. The opium trade was illegal, but its licensing through a state monopoly brought in much needed revenue. Actual policy therefore opted formally for eradication over time after it had been brought under state control. With opium grown in many areas where the control of the Nationalists was limited, permits to ship to coastal markets were also a tool the Nationalists used in their management of relations with warlords. The Customs therefore faced a complicated situation of considerable danger as smugglers, parts of the National Anti-Opium Suppression Bureau, and the forces of local military and civilian authorities could be well armed.

The opium trade threatened the Customs Service in other ways as well. The temptation of Customs personnel to hunt for smuggled opium was high, as they received as seizure reward a large part of the proceeds of the sale of confiscated opium (see Appendix 2 for files of reports on seizures and rewards). This could embroil them not only in serious armed conflict, but also lead to overzealousness and diversion from less lucrative assignments. The files relating to opium included in this collection include some that relate to the Customs approach to the opium trade during the second half of the nineteenth century, but most concern the complicated situation of the 1920s and 1930s, in which not a few Commissioners argued that the wisest course of action was to remain as detached as possible. It should be noted that the archives contain many files dealing with individual cases of opium smuggling, but these have not been reproduced here.

These two parts, in short, illustrate the activities of the most significant Customs organisations involved in the regulation of China's trade and focus especially on the suppression of smuggling after the introduction of high tariff rates and before the outbreak of the War of Resistance against Japan in 1937. Due to space limitations, significant topics have had to be omitted. The Quarantine Service was important in the combat of epidemics which spread as communications facilities improved within China as well as between China and other areas of the world. Files relating to fraud and bribery by Customs members themselves have also been excluded. We have omitted files illustrating the Marine Department, responsible for the erection and maintenance of

lights and buoys along China's coast and rivers; the survey of its routes of navigation; the publication of maps; and the issue of *Notices to Mariners*. Corruption became a major issue during the War of Resistance due to the financial collapse of the Nationalists and the general scarcity of even basic commodities. Hyperinflation during the Civil War undermined Customs discipline even further, despite the best efforts of Lester Knox Little, Inspector General from 1942 to 1949. Parts Six and Seven will provide information on these developments.

It should finally be stated that researchers should not forget that previous units contain much information relevant to the topics set out in this introduction. IG Circulars laid down general principles that guided the staff of the Customs Service, while the Semi-Official correspondence written by Commissioners frequently discussed issues relating to smuggling and the policing of trade. The files made available here, therefore, should not be consulted in isolation, but read together with those already made available in earlier units and those that will be included in units six and seven.

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## Parts Six and Seven

### **The Maritime Customs Service Archive: The Sino-Japanese War and its Aftermath, 1931-49**

Parts 6 and 7 of this collection highlight the richness of the files in the Second Historical Archives of China relating to the period of the Japanese invasion of China after 1931. Significantly more than half of the 55,000 files in Nanjing cover the period of the full-scale conflict which developed after 7 July 1937. Others cover the Japanese seizure of Manchuria in 1931-32, and the tensions caused in north China thereafter, when Japanese forces had expanded their influence and control. We have selected files covering the outbreak of the conflict and its progress to 1941; the impact of Pearl Harbor on the Service; and Customs functions in unoccupied China (notably its new role collecting Wartime Consumption Tax, and its planning for, and resumption of, its functions at the end of the conflict). These units also contain files on the careers of key leadership figures in this period: the Inspector Generals (IGs) – Sir Frederick Maze (1929-43), Lester Knox Little (1943-50) and Hirokichi Kishimoto 岸本廣吉 (1941-45), as well as the leading departmental secretaries, notably Ding Guitang 丁贵堂 (Ting Kwei Tang), the leading Chinese employee in the Service. To these we have also added files relating to the seizure of Manchurian stations in 1932, and its aftermath.

#### **The Customs at war**

After 1937 Sir Frederick Maze worked in an increasingly difficult situation to maintain the integrity of the Service, as he saw it, and the period between July that year and Pearl Harbor highlights the continuing oddness of the Customs and its position despite its subordination to Guomindang control. Maze attempted to retain its integrity as an agency of the Chinese state under the control of the Ministry of Finance via the Guanwushu 关务署 (see Part 4, reels 209-215), while at the same time continuing to operate offices in Chinese ports under the control of the Japanese, within which some established puppet Chinese administrations. He aimed to retain its integrity as the agency securing and servicing foreign loans, which whilst important for the Nationalist state, had often been seen as a supra-governmental activity. He also tried, somewhat obsessively, to maintain the integrity of the Service as an institution to prevent it from being broken up and to ensure that it continued to run as a nationwide service. These concerns are threaded through the extensive correspondence with diplomats and policy makers filmed here.<sup>18</sup>

The files also allow us to see the impact across the Customs establishment of the unfolding conflict, and the process that followed as Japanese pressure to increase the number of Japanese in the Customs, and their seniority, steadily mounted. The full range of Customs correspondence is included; despatches to and from stations, semi-official correspondence, confidential letters and reports, ‘career’ files (the closest that the Service got to what we might think of as a ‘personnel’ file), as well as documents which demonstrate the changing nature of the Service. In 1937 for the first time we have minutes of Secretaries’ Meetings – conclaves of the Secretariat heads — and these become more routine as the war progresses (although their survival is patchy). They indicate how far the autocratic system developed by Hart had changed as the service became more and more embedded in the civil service of the Nationalist state. In many ways, as the subject files in the Customs series at the Second Historical Archives of China in Nanjing show, there was much by way of business as usual. Indeed, because of the diplomatic pressure that Maze could try and bring to bear through his correspondence with British and American diplomats, the

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<sup>18</sup> See, in addition, the Maze papers at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.

Customs just about retained a semi-privileged position – as a Nationalist state organ which managed to function behind enemy lines. However as stations fell under Japanese control, and as its staff suffered in the face of the Japanese advance and aerial bombing, it was also clear that the days of its observer status were drawing to a close.

On 8 December 1941, as the Pacific War erupted, the Inspectorate fell into Japanese hands, its archives just about intact. Key stations in treaty ports not previously occupied by the Japanese were seized: Canton, Tianjin and, of course, Shanghai amongst them. Maze and his entire senior staff, and the bulk of Service personnel, were in Japanese hands. Maze was formally ‘dismissed’ by the collaborationist Wang Jingwei government, which had its own Guanwushu in the Ministry of Finance, and replaced on 11<sup>th</sup> December by Kishimoto, who had joined the Customs in 1905, and who since 1935 had been Chief Secretary, effectively second in command. Kishimoto worked thereafter with all semblance of legitimacy: he had the archives, he had the bulk of the staff, including numbers of remaining neutral or Italian axis nationals, and he held the greater number of stations. His service recruited an additional 470 Japanese into the Customs between December 1941 and July 1944. There were at least 500 already in the Service at Pearl Harbor, the majority of them having been appointed since July 1937 in response to Japanese diplomatic pressure on Maze to appoint Japanese staff to ports in occupied China. But some of those running the Service had long been working for it, and were imbued with its ethos, and perceptions of its role.

As a Kishimoto Customs produced outline history of the Service notes, ‘On account of special circumstances prevailing at present’, some of its stations were ‘closed’. The key role the Kishimoto Customs found for itself was the collection of interport duties, that is duties on internal trade around Shanghai and other Japanese-occupied ports and cities. As a result it opened some new stations solely for the collection of interport duties and to deal with the changed geography enforced by the war.<sup>19</sup> The routine business of the Shanghai-based ‘Bogus’ (伪) Service is captured in its Circulars (Part 1), and Semi-Official Correspondence from key ports (Part 3). In August 1945 the Services of nearly all Japanese were dispensed with. A few technical staff remained in post, and although Kishimoto himself resigned on 23<sup>rd</sup> August, he was still being sent ‘for interrogation in regard to matters concerning Customs revenue, property, archives and other unfinished affairs’ in October. He was not repatriated to Japan until 8<sup>th</sup> March 1946.<sup>20</sup>

At the outbreak of the Pacific campaign and with the seizure of the Shanghai headquarters of the Service, the Nationalist Ministry of Finance instructed the Chongqing Customs Commissioner to establish a replacement Inspectorate. With Maze incommunicado, C.H.B. Joly, was appointed Officiating IG in late December, and had to recreate the Service almost from scratch. Severe practical issues aside (there was no paper, and no typewriters, there were no files and no books), there was also little apparent reason for the Maritime Customs to continue to exist, and much hostility to it, as an agency still in the British orbit at a time of abject British failure in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. Nevertheless it had useful friends. One of these was Song Ziwen 宋子文 – T.V. Soong — Foreign Minister and then President of the Executive Yuan. A key internal friend was the very well-connected Ding Guitang, a native of Liaoning province, who had joined in 1916, and who was Chinese Secretary at the Inspectorate on the eve of the Pacific War. After a

<sup>19</sup> Interport duties had been introduced in 1931 at the abolition of *lijin* and other internal transit dues. Revised in 1937 they were payable on ‘all native goods moved in China, irrespective of the place of shipment or destination ... which are loaded or discharged at, or pass through, places where there is a Custom House or Maritime Customs station’. Postal parcels were exempt, as were goods on which other taxes had been levied (tobacco, wine, minerals etc). IG Circular No.5585.

<sup>20</sup> SHAC, 679(6), 634, ‘战后留用日籍雇员问题’, Despatch to Caizhengbu 3724, 29 Oct 1945.



brief imprisonment in occupied Shanghai, Ding made his way to Free China in December 1942, taking the position of Chief Secretary, and later Deputy Inspector General. Ding's connections and energy were vital to the prolongation of the Foreign Inspectorate.

The Service was hit in other ways. Of key importance was the application to the Customs of the National Government's 1938 Public Treasury Law from 1<sup>st</sup> October 1942. Under this legislation Service offices were required to hand over on a daily basis all revenues collected to local Public Treasury Offices.<sup>21</sup> The Ministry of Finance would then set and issue a budget to the Customs to enable it to function. In this way the Customs was finally normalised as a Chinese state agency. It also found a new role for the duration of the war, which is charted here. From April 1942 onwards interport duties in unoccupied China were abolished, and the Service was delegated to collect a new 'Wartime Consumption tax' on foreign and Chinese goods in transit.<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Finance advisor Arthur Young lobbied for this to be a job for the Customs, partly because he felt that what looked like a new form of *lijin* (likin, local transit taxes, abolished in 1931 – see Parts 4-5) ought to be the responsibility of an institution which had no vested interest in perpetuating it.<sup>23</sup> For the following three years this excise function was the primary activity of the 'Maritime' Customs, as it was still styled, and required the establishment of new stations in the interior, and many new checkpoints. The scale of its contributions to state finances did not match those of peacetime, but they were enough to keep it in business, and we have extracted here all the files relating to this, its most important wartime function. We have also filmed files of semi-official correspondence from the new wartime stations – at Xian, Luoyang, and in Xinjiang (all unlikely sites of work for the Maritime Customs) as well as from the other Customs stations of the Chongqing service.

Back in Shanghai Sir Frederick Maze was arrested on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1942. He had been living comfortably enough in his French Concession flat, but he then had four less-comfortable weeks with other senior staff in the Bridge House Kempeitai (Gendarmerie) headquarters. Maze was lucky enough, however, to be one of the British nationals released in an exchange of internees with the Japanese, and sailed to Lourenco Marques in Portuguese East Africa, arriving on 27<sup>th</sup> August. He then made his way to Chongqing, in the face of Chinese opposition. Ostensibly his intention was to report in person on developments between 1937 and the outbreak of the Pacific War, and on occurrences in Shanghai after that date. Maze arrived on 3 December. He announced on his own authority on 14<sup>th</sup> December that he had resumed command of the Service. The Minister of Finance was outraged. Maze's notification was countermanded and he was required to submit a formal written report accounting for his actions since 1937. Negotiations were obviously undertaken about his future, and Maze was permitted to resume charge on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1943, but apparently only on the understanding that he simultaneously submit his resignation. He left office on the last day of May, handing it over temporarily to Ding Guitang. In August 1943 Ding then handed over to former Canton Commissioner, American L.K. Little, who had also been repatriated in August 1942.

The task facing the Customs in 1945 was huge. It had to retake control of the 'Bogus' Service and its staff, reconstruct its material assets – notably reconstituting its fleet – and repair war damage to the lights infrastructure that it managed (much of the lights system had been destroyed). In addition to regaining control of the ports lost after 1937, it was tasked with resuming control of the Manchurian ports lost in 1932, and of the ports in Taiwan, which had

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<sup>21</sup> CIS Circular 287.

<sup>22</sup> CIS Circ. 131.

<sup>23</sup> Arthur N. Young, *China's wartime finance and inflation, 1937-1945* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 36.

been lost in 1895. If this was not enough of a challenge, given that other military and civilian agencies were jockeying for scarce resources (and formerly-Japanese pickings) at the end of the conflict, then inflation and the developing crisis of the Communist-Nationalist civil war threw up new hurdles. Planning for this process took up much Customs energies, and files from the committee creating the Rehabilitation Plan have been included here, telling us much about pre-war practices and processes as well.

Resumption of administrative control over the Bogus Service went smoothly enough. DIG Ding flew to Shanghai with a team of senior staff and opened an office of the Inspectorate General. Reports on the takeover of each collaborationist Secretariat on 12<sup>th</sup> September show an orderly process.<sup>24</sup> Most archives survived intact. Most Japanese staff had gone. Post-1941 appointees were sacked and new staff were recruited to keep offices running. Once the tensions raised by the reuniting of staff from free China, 'Bogus' Customs staff, and internees had been negotiated, then the Service as a whole resumed work along many of its existing patterns.

Nationalistic tensions remained a problem for the Foreign Inspectorate after the war. When Little proposed appointing American Carl Neprud as Shanghai Commissioner in late 1945, there was opposition from those who pointed out that with an American IG, and an American Coast Inspector (who ran the Marine Department: the lights, river police and preventive fleet) there might be adverse political and public reaction. Edwin Pritchard, a Briton with 30 years of Service experience, was appointed instead, and then, after his death in October 1946, a Chinese Commissioner. Some in the Ministry of Finance kept up their attack, and there were certainly Chinese staff who wanted an end to foreign employment in the Service.

Parts 1-5 contain a great deal of material also relevant to the theme of this collection — Inspector General's Circulars for both Services (Part 1: reels 29-37 and 62 amongst others), London Office correspondence (Part 2: reels 80-84, 89-100, 103), and the Semi-Official Correspondence from select ports (Part 3: reels 120-22; 144-45; 158-59), while Parts 5-6 have many overlapping files. We have also taken the opportunity here to rescue from the obscurity of mis-cataloguing files of Sir Francis Aglen's outgoing semi-official correspondence for the early years of his control, and in particular the year of the 1911 revolution and its aftermath. From such a priceless archive we have inevitably had to be selective. The rich files of debriefing reports from staff who crossed the front-line having served under the Kishimoto customs, are one example of the material that awaits researchers in Nanjing. The confidential 'IGS' correspondence between the Inspectorate and Commissioners is another. The post-war Staff Investigation Committee files flesh out many of the stories of men who served in occupied China throughout the conflict. We present here, however, the foundations of an understanding of the Chinese Maritime Customs as it faced its toughest test, and much detail from the ground. Altogether this provides a rich set of new sources from across the country for understanding what scholars are beginning to understand as twentieth-century China's defining experience: the war of resistance against Japan.

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<sup>24</sup> SHAC 679(1), 25573, 'Inspectorate General of Customs, Removal of to Shanghai or Nanjing' (Reel 360).

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- 679 (1) 28024 Inspector General's Circulars: General Instructions, Miscellaneous, Chungking Inspectorate Series, Nos 6091-7238, 1946-48

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- 679 (1) 26923 Inspector General's Circulars, Vol.34, Second Series, Nos 6901-7100, 1946-47

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- 679 (1) 26925 Inspector General's Circulars, Vol.36, Second Series, Nos 7301-7500, 1948-49
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- 679 (3) 3046 Deputy Inspector General Special, Vol.1, Despatches 1-23, Memoranda 1-683, 1945



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679 (1) 32036 Loyang Semi-official, 1941-1944

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