From “tradition” to “anachronism”: the post-WWII development of the District Watch Force

Presented at the Second Postgraduate Workshop of the Hong Kong History Project, Jan 11-12 2018, University of Bristol, UK

by

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Date: 12 Feb 2018
Time: 1130-1230
Venue: POL’s Multi-purpose Room (B7516), Yeung Kin Man Academic Building,
Abstract:
On 15 October 1946, the Colonial Government took over the District Watch Force, abandoned its old private funding system and funded it with public money instead. The group of Chinese elites sitting in the District Watch Committee (DWC) can no longer raise their own force. This act also loosened the grasp of the DWC on the force, marking the end of this tradition since the early colonial period. According to Lethbridge (1971), the DWC was as important as if the “Chinese Executive Council of Hong Kong”. Then, why would this change happen?
This working paper tries to explain the above question by revisiting the colonizer-indigenous relationship before and after 1945, and argue the above change as a result of the changing relationship. Also, the author would like to explore further on the impact brought by changing London-Hong Kong relationship, to see how this factor acted as context for the above change. This study will focus on the untouched period (post-WWII) on the development of private policing system, as Hamilton (2008) stopped at 1941. The challenge being faced is how could this study contributes to the discussion of colonialism and to the better understanding of the relationship between the Chinese elites and the British colonizer, especially in the post-WWII period.

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(Free admission)

All are welcome!