Making Impressions

The adaptation of a Portuguese family to Hong Kong, 1700-1950

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A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy of

The Australian National University

October 2012
Chapter 13

A community apart:

the Portuguese in twentieth century Hong Kong

Part 1 – Recovery: return to Hong Kong, 1945

In the 1840s, Hong Kong was seen as a place of golden opportunity by many Macanese people. A century later, their descendants, refugees in Macau from the worst catastrophe ever to befall Hong Kong in its often interrupted history of growth and prosperity, flocked back to Hong Kong to rebuild their lives. Yet within less than a generation, most had left Hong Kong again, regarding the British presence as too fragile to endure, and fearing another dreadful experience of prolonged hardship at best, death at worst.

Following severe disturbances in the 1960s in both Macau and Hong Kong, most of the Portuguese population of Hong Kong got out as quickly as they could. It was clear to them that Chinese militants wanted them to go, along with the British, and most were only too glad to oblige. Some remained; paradoxically, those who did so rode the crest of an unparalleled wave of prosperity in the next thirty years until the handover of Hong Kong to the People’s Republic of China. Most members of the Braga family were among those who left; three remained and benefited from the great boom of the 1970s and beyond: Tony, Paul and Caroline.

Olive Braga returned to Hong Kong and saw her days out there, cared for by Tony, Caroline and Mary. All of her seven married sons, six with children, looked elsewhere to raise their families as citizens of the USA, Britain, Canada and Australia. Mary died of breast cancer on 15 July 1965. Tony, a bachelor all his days, remained in Hong Kong until his death in 1994. He was survived by his sister Caroline, the last of her generation, who outlived by a year the British colony of Hong Kong, handed back to China on 30 June 1997. She died aged 86 on 21 November 1998, a year before Macau too reverted to Chinese sovereignty on 20 December 1999, the first and the last European colony in the Far East.
The fortunes of the Braga family closely mirrored the fortunes of Hong Kong and its Portuguese community during this half century. They returned to Hong Kong as soon as Hong Kong was able to receive them. A general sketch of how they fared is appropriate at this point. Later parts of this chapter will discuss more broadly what became known to those involved as the Diaspora of the Hong Kong Portuguese community.

All of the British and most of the Portuguese refugees returned to Hong Kong as soon as Hong Kong was in a fit state to have them. Jack wrote in March 1946 that ‘things get quieter and quieter in Macao, with so many less people living here’. Most of the Bragas forgot all about being Portuguese. They were certainly included in Leo d’Almada’s acid comment that ‘those pseudo-Portuguese have successfully eliminated all traces of the sardine from their system’.

Three of the married Bragas, Maude, Noel and John, went on rehabilitation furlough to Britain. Maude came back with her husband Eric, who was unsettled thereafter. Noel did not return until 1952, while John came back and continued with China Light for twenty years. Like many others, their lives were never the same again, and the drive they possessed as young men in the 1930s deserted them as middle-aged men in the later 1940s. They had been through too much. In February 1946, Jack wrote that ‘all the old energy seems to have gone. It is so difficult to get round to things’. Clement moved to Canada in 1946, and for him too, life was unrewarding. The historian of China Light, where Noel and John worked, observed that ‘in many a case lives that had seemed assured before were now irretrievably blighted by illness and the effects of deprivation’. The naval officers who arrived on 30 August saw at once the effects of internment on the personnel of the provisional government that Gimson had set up a fortnight earlier. ‘They were not capable of great mental effort, had no power of decision, short memories and made...

\[\text{1234} \quad \text{Jack Braga to Olive Braga, 29 March 1946. James Braga Papers.}\]
\[\text{1235} \quad \text{L. d’Almada e Castro, ‘Some notes on the Portuguese in Hong Kong’, Address at Club Lusitano, Hong Kong. Instituto Portugueses de Hong Kong. Boletim no. 2, September 1949, p. 275.}\]
\[\text{1236} \quad \text{Noel did not want to go, but Lawrence Kadoorie, seeing the condition of this wraith-like figure, insisted. Noel admitted once he reached England that he was ‘weakening, sickening’, with a bout of malaria. Noel Braga to Jack Braga, 3 December 1945; Noel Braga to Charlie da Silva, 27 December 1945. J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/8.1/12.}\]
\[\text{1237} \quad \text{Jack Braga to Olive Braga, 23 February 1946. James Braga Papers.}\]
\[\text{1238} \quad \text{N. Cameron, Power, p. 152. T. Banham has also pointed out, referring to POWs, ‘a large percentage would never be whole again. Those men who survived never truly threw off the effects of battle and incarceration’. We shall suffer there, pp. 243-244.}\]
frequent minor mistakes in conversation’. 1239 It would take them some time, as one internee, M.F. Key, put it, to get the barbed wire out of their system. 1240 Many never did.

On the other hand, Jack, with a significant and continuing record of achievement, moved to Hong Kong, where he won esteem and respect for his writing and bibliographical work. He sold his fine library to the National Library of Australia in 1966, deeply apprehensive that if the Red Guards over-ran Hong Kong, it would suffer the same fate as those of Sir Paul Chater and his father. After spending two years in the USA, he moved for four years to Australia, greatly enjoying the Library and the recognition he received there. Jean, who had never ceased teaching music in Hong Kong, continued to do so, living on her own.

Hugh returned with the military administration in November 1945, eventually setting up his own construction business in which he used the experience he had gained during the development of the major ‘garden suburb’ of the 1930s. James remained in the USA, exercising a faithful ministry in several churches and later in a theological college. Paul, who saw at once the debilitating effects of wartime Macau

1240 M.F. Key, Hong Kong before, during and after the Pacific War, being chiefly an account of the Stanley Internment Camp, p. 8.
on other members of his family and quickly left, resumed his pre-war career in the motor industry with conspicuous success. Caroline developed a significant career as teacher and pianist. Mary, much the youngest, and also the most vulnerable, whose gentle care of her aged mother won her the esteem of her family, needed care herself after Olive’s death in 1952.

The Braga family went through testing times when China’s participation in the Korean War between 1950 and 1953 closed Hong Kong’s trade with China even more completely than the boycott of 1925-26 had done. As a result, Hugh again left for Australia with his family in 1951, Maude and Eric Franks having already gone there in 1950. Noel, who held two positions in the Far East, finally went back to England in 1961 after less than ten years. Paul remained in Hong Kong until his retirement in 1970, when he moved to San Francisco. By then, ten of the twelve siblings who used to attend the large family gatherings at Knutsford Terrace in the 1930s were still living, but only three remained in Hong Kong. The Knutsford Terrace houses were long gone, having been sold in 1946 to pay off the mortgage, overdue payments and accumulated interest, no payments having been made during the war years. Tony, appointed by his siblings as sole executor of his father’s intestate estate, hoped that he would be fortunate to sell them for enough to pay off this debt and then leave something over towards wiping off his father’s bank overdraft.  

The tight-knit family group had grown up together and shared a great deal of private information. It gradually drew apart, a process begun by marriage and career opportunities and greatly hastened by the war. Afterwards, each of six family groups (Jack, Clement, Noel, Hugh, John and Paul) went their own way in a greatly changed

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1241 Tony Braga to John Braga, 29 April 1946. James Braga Papers. They were sold for $192,000, then a very good sum for properties in poor condition. Nos. 9 and 10 were half-owned by the Estate of J.P. Braga, Li Pu Chee being the other half-owner. The mortgage was $49,000. The size of other debts is unknown. Tony Braga Papers. As a comparison, Sir Robert Ho Tung proposed to sell his two houses on the Peak, Nos. 25 and 26, ‘Bishop’s Lodge’, for $2.75 a square foot. With an area of 27,744 square feet, this sale would have returned $76,296 to Hong Kong’s shrewdest capitalist. He authorised Jack Braga to handle the sale on his behalf, presumably for discretion. Sir Robert Ho Tung to J.M. Braga, 6 July 1948. J.M. Braga Papers MS 4300/4.7/1.

1242 Noel Braga’s diary, written when he was aged between 22 and 26, shows that not only did they live close together, but also that they kept very little from each other, including salary, intimate personal details and affaires de coeur. The “bachelors’ mess” held a two hour meeting in 1926 at which sex was discussed, between eight and fourteen years before they married. ‘The conference broke up with a very fine feeling.’ Noel Braga Diary, 13 December 1926.
world. ‘It looks as though the family is being spread abroad: however, we may all meet again some day’, wrote Maude.\textsuperscript{1243} This was not to be, yet in the crisis of war and the great challenges they faced in its immediate aftermath, they stuck together in a remarkably selfless way. Remarkable also is the fact that all eight marriages lasted the distance. The Braga family were caring and loyal to each other and to their spouses, while the six who had children were determined to give them educational opportunities that either had not existed or had been hard to come by in early twentieth century Hong Kong. It was a long-lived family. Mary died at 51; all others except Maude and Clement reached the age of seventy. Three died in their seventies: Noel (76), John (72) and Paul (79), four in their eighties: Hugh (82), James (87), Tony (86) and Caroline (86), while the two eldest, Jean and Jack, both reached 90. Seven were still living in December 1984 when Zhao Ziyang and Margaret Thatcher signed the Sino-British Joint Declaration under which Hong Kong would return to China in 1997; only Caroline, still teaching music in Hong Kong, would see the accord implemented. In the 156 years between the beginning and the end of Hong Kong as a British colony, five generations of this family of high achievers lived under that jurisdiction. Yet in the vicissitudes of upheaval caused mainly by war or threat of war, only one individual, Jean Braga, the eldest of the thirteen siblings, remained there throughout life, apart from brief overseas visits. Others, and members of succeeding generations, became part of the Macanese Diaspora.\textsuperscript{1244}

\textsuperscript{1243} Maude Franks to Olive Braga, 15 January 1946. James Braga Papers.
\textsuperscript{1244} That saga began with the immediate task of getting on their feet again after the Japanese Occupation. It continued almost until the end of the twentieth century. While that extended period of more than fifty years lies beyond the time frame of this thesis, it is covered in Appendix 15, which serves to complete the story of that generation of the Braga family.
Part 2 – the Portuguese community: bowing to the Bank

That Diaspora was unimaginable until the catastrophe of the Japanese Occupation. Speaking less than a year beforehand, on 20 January 1941 in a series of broadcast talks to commemorate the centenary of the British occupation of Hong Kong, J.P. Braga described the Portuguese as ‘a community apart’.\textsuperscript{1245} Some of the people of whom he spoke were fifth generation Hong Kong residents. Most, if not all of the Hong Kong Portuguese spoke English, and for many it was their first language, the language spoken at home, school and work. By birth, those born in Hong Kong were British subjects and most saw themselves as such. They had made vast strides in terms of prosperity since leaving Macao as economic refugees at various stages during the nineteenth century.

Yet in terms of cultural identity, members of the Portuguese community kept very much to themselves. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Portuguese settlement at Mato Moiro remained largely as it had been since the 1870s, when rising rents had driven them from the harbour side to what eventually became the Mid-Levels. They continued to live within the sound of the Cathedral bells, the smaller church of St Joseph’s at Garden Road being largely for Catholic members of the naval and military forces. The Cathedral, and for the better-off members of the community, Club Lusitano, were the centres of community life. Mato Moiro gradually became overcrowded, and by the early twentieth century there was a definite need to look elsewhere.

In the 1870s, the move had been to go up the hill to Robinson Road, where one travelled by sedan chair. It was not an option to go higher. Firstly, the topography was impossible, the north face of Victoria Peak becoming almost precipitous above Kennedy Road. More importantly, social pressures militated against such a move. A few intrepid souls had built mountain lodges on the heights of the Peak in the 1870s, E.R. Belilios reaching his by camel, but the eagerly awaited Peak Tramway, which took three years to build, made the Peak far more accessible when it opened in

\textsuperscript{1245} The Census Report for 1921 indicated that the Portuguese population of Hong Kong was 2,609 and that throughout the Far East, including Macau, Singapore and the Treaty Ports they totalled about 15,000. ‘They form a separate community everywhere’, added the Census Report (\textit{Sessional Papers}, 1921, p. 158.)
1246 The governor, Sir William Des Voeux, described it as ‘a tramway from the town to Victoria Gap ... worked on a plan similar, I understand, to that of the railway on Mount Vesuvius’. This changed the situation dramatically, and over 200 houses were built there in the following two years. Power and wealth ensured that only the taipans would be able to build in this exalted location, cooler and far more pleasant in summer than the sweltering city beneath.

To ensure that this exclusivity remained, the Peak District Reservation Ordinance was passed by the Legislative Council in 1904, reinforced by the Peak District (Residence) Ordinance in 1918, which required that all applications to live there should be approved by Government.

In 1922, a Peak Residents’ Association was formed lest the Governor waver, but there was no chance of that. For any Chinese to be permitted to reside on the Peak, a special resolution of the Executive Council was required. In the 23 years between 1918 and the outbreak of hostilities in 1941, only one Chinese was so permitted: Madame Chiang Kai-shek. Not even eminent Chinese such as Sir Kai Ho Kai, Sir Shoushon Chow, or the Jewish potentate Sir Elly Kadoorie were allowed to live there. That prince of compradors, the Eurasian Sir Robert Ho Tung, was able to buy two cottages there in 1906 by exploiting a loophole in the Ordinance which barred non-Europeans from renting property on the Peak, but was silent about purchase of property. However, Ho Tung preferred to live in ‘Idlewild’, a mansion in the Mid-Levels. His children lived on the Peak, at ‘Bishop’s Lodge’ Nos. 25 and 26. The Peak, and were told by European children that they should not be there.

Sir Paul Chater, an Armenian Christian, was also excluded. Having arrived in Hong Kong in 1864, he lived in what was originally the salubrious Caine Road, well above the city,
from 1869 until the area became crowded with tenements, so in 1901, Chater built an ostentatious mansion, ‘Marble Hall’, on Conduit Road, as high as he could go in the Mid-Levels.  

1252 His mansion was grander by far than anything on the Peak, or Government House itself for that matter. 1253 Residence on the Peak, in short, was more exclusive than a knighthood. 1254 The Peakites quite literally looked down on everyone else. 1255 What hope did the Portuguese have in a community like this, in which snobbery, social class, better economic opportunity and even altitude, all

1253 In 1935, and again after World War II, it became the official residence of the Naval Officer Commanding China Station, always an officer of flag rank. It was badly damaged by fire in 1946 and then demolished. *Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch Journal*, Vol. 18, 1980, pp. 202-204.
1254 As late as the 1980s, this exclusion still rankled with the Kadoorie family, the head of which was then Lawrence, the elder son of Sir Elly Kadoorie. Sir Lawrence, knighted in 1974, was created Lord Kadoorie in 1981. He still did not live on the Peak. While he lived on Kadoorie Avenue in the socially inferior Kowloon, he also built in 1938 another mansion, Boulder Lodge, at Castle Peak, the most salubrious location in the New Territories, remote from the caste-ridden geographic divisions of Hong Kong and Kowloon. Kadoorie finally had his revenge on the Peakites. On his elevation to the peerage, he took the title Lord Kadoorie of Kowloon and the City of Westminster.
1255 Acidly pointed out by the Kowloon Residents’ Association, which told senior officials that their ‘knowledge of local conditions [in Kowloon] was gleaned from a panoramic view of the peninsula from an elevation of 1,200 feet’. P. Snow, op. cit., p. 352 n 8, quoting H.J. Lethbridge, ‘Hong Kong under the Japanese Occupation’, p. 80.
combined to affirm and preserve the superiority of the British and the inferiority of all others? With the exception of a tiny wealthy elite who were accorded a special status (but not Peak residence), the Chinese were a vast proletariat who were effectively outcasts in their own country, not unlike the Untouchables in India. The Marxian term, ‘wage slaves’, could well be held to apply to them.\footnote{1256}

Despite the yawning gulf of inequality, British education slowly made a difference to local communities.\footnote{1257} From the 1870s English-language schools catered for and helped to create and enhance an aspirational middle class. The Anglican Church set up the Diocesan Boys’ School and the Diocesan Girls’ School principally to create similar opportunities for Eurasian children.\footnote{1258} The offspring of the transient British and European communities were invariably sent to their home countries for schooling. There was no local school for British children until the Central British School, later renamed King George V School, was opened in 1894. Strangely, this resulted from a benefaction by Robert Ho Tung, ever far-sighted, who saw in this step the possibility, not only of keeping families together, but of making an impact on the rigid segregation of British children and local people.

Thus constraints surrounding the Portuguese community were not essentially of their own making, but were largely the product of a British Imperial system that had no place for them except as clerical workers who were reliable, efficient, subservient and far cheaper than comparable people who, but for them, would have to be brought out from England. The fact that members of the ‘Home’ staff were executives who received high salaries and lived on the Peak served powerfully to reinforce and entrench the system of exclusivity.

In the first part of the twentieth century, Hong Kong was not a city with an urban sprawl, except for the ribbon development along the whole length of the north shore of Hong Kong Island. Transport here from 1904 was provided by an electric

\footnote{1256} However, as David Faure has pointed out, members of the Chinese elite, created by the colonial system and from whom were appointed members of the Legislative Council, or who sought to come under notice for such appointments, were not necessarily the wealthiest. D. Faure, Colonialism and the Hong Kong mentality, p. 15.\footnote{1257} The Anglican Church’s St Paul’s College and the government’s Queen’s College (named Victoria College until 1894), set up by genuinely liberal benefactors, were entirely Chinese, while St Joseph’s College was originally almost entirely Portuguese. A. Sweeting, Education in Hong Kong Pre-1841 to 1941, pp. 146, 175, 203, 215, 244.\footnote{1258} Fung, Yee Wang & Chan-Yeung, Moira Mo Wah, To serve and to lead: a history of the Diocesan Boys’ School Hong Kong, p. 35.
tronway, extending the entire length of the elongated city from Kennedy Town in the West to Shaukiwan in the East. Although this extended for thirteen kilometres, there was effectively no place into which the Portuguese community could expand. The racial divide which sent the English to the Peak pushed the expanding Chinese population east and west of Central. A proposal to build a Portuguese settlement at the eastern end of Wongneichong Valley, made in 1912, came to nothing. It was to have been called Cidade de Camoens, after the great sixteenth century Portuguese poet, who was reputed to have visited Macau. While this area, close to sea level, was served by a tramway extension, it was hot and airless in summer, the valley remote from any sea breeze. The British officials who proposed this unattractive location where land was cheap would never have countenanced such an environment for themselves and their families. Some years later, in 1933, the Portuguese-Eurasian community at Melaka (formerly Malacca), which had been in steady socio-economic decline since the Dutch defeated the Portuguese in 1641, was rehoused in a similarly unattractive area, in government-owned communal housing of small huts with thatched roofs. They became a closed community of fishermen, occupying a social role similar to the ethnically and socially segregated Chinese fishing community in Hong Kong.

In that the Cidade de Camoens did not eventuate, the Hong Kong Portuguese community narrowly escaped a similar fate. Instead, they began to move to the Kowloon side, as it is termed. Low-cost transport was essential, and this was provided by the Star Ferry, cheap, fast and reliable, between Central and Tsimshatsui on the southern point of the Kowloon Peninsula. Between 1918 and 1928 the

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1259 *Historical and Statistical Abstract of the Colony of Hongkong, 1841-1920*, p. 35.
1260 It was discussed extensively by J.P. Braga in an unpublished chapter, Chapter 19, ‘Portuguese housing schemes’, of his *Portuguese in Hongkong and China*. He quoted from a Prospectus issued by N.J. Ede, Chief Manager of the Union Insurance Society of Canton, p. 4: ‘the site has a commanding view of the Happy Valley race course and overlooks from some distance the Jewish, Zoroastrian, Public, Catholic and Mohammedan cemeteries’. It was planned to be a Portuguese enclave (p. 7 – ‘no house can be leased to persons of other than Portuguese extraction.’). J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/13.3/3. Also Ede’s pamphlet, *Proposed Portuguese Housing Scheme*. Printed by J.P. Braga, Hongkong, 1912, 4to, 13 pp., with a map.
1262 Observing this Malaccan community in 1971, K.E. Chan concluded: ‘the identification of community with place also helps to segregate the Settlement from the rest of society. This segregation is more than just isolation in the physical sense; it has behavioural implications for the individuals and families concerned, who often feel outcast and socially alien to other better-off Eurasians, as well as from Melakan society at large’ (Chan Kok Eng, ‘The Eurasians of Melaka’ in K.S. Sandhu, P. Wheatley (eds.), *Melaka. The transformation of a Malay capital, c. 1400-1980*, vol. 2, p. 267).
population of Kowloon grew from 80,000 to 250,000.\textsuperscript{1263} By the 1931 census, two-thirds of the Portuguese population had moved to Kowloon.\textsuperscript{1264} As roads were developed in the northern part of the Kowloon peninsula after World War I, a second Portuguese enclave at Homantin was developed as a ‘garden city’ by Frank Soares.

Map 24 –Four Portuguese residential enclaves

These were settled in Kowloon between the 1920s and 1950s, above left, replacing the late nineteenth century enclave known as Mato Moiro on the Hong Kong side. The first, in the early 1920s, was in Tsimshatsui, shown in detail, above right. The second was at Homantin, at the end of the 1920s. A third enclave developed in the 1930s and after World War II, around St Teresa’s Church at the corner of Prince Edward Road and Waterloo Road, Kowloon Tong. Lastly, the construction of the Bank Flats in the 1950s at the far north of Kowloon Tong led to a large concentration there of the Portuguese employees of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.

From António M. Jorge da Silva, The Portuguese Community in Hong Kong

\textsuperscript{1263} N. Miners, \textit{Hong Kong under Imperial rule}, p. 141.
\textsuperscript{1264} Report on the census of 1931. \textit{Hong Kong Sessional Papers}, 1931, p. 112.
Land was still cheap in what was seen as a distant suburb, and houses had enough ground for the Portuguese families who resided there to grow their own vegetables and raise their own poultry. Soares Avenue, Emma Avenue and Julia Avenue were named after Frank, his wife and his daughter.\textsuperscript{1265} The remote location was served by motor buses, another innovation of the 1920s. Just as the Mato Moiro community had clustered around the Cathedral, so the Tsimshatsui community grew up close to Rosary Church, built on Chatham Road in 1905, and the adjacent St Mary’s School.\textsuperscript{1266} With the continuing development of Kowloon, another Portuguese community grew up close to St Teresa’s Church, built in 1928 in Kowloon Tong at the corner of Prince Edward Road and Waterloo Road.

Close by was Hong Kong’s second major Catholic boys’ school, La Salle College, built in the prevailing architectural idiom of a granite-faced central pile surmounted by a dome. St Teresa’s and La Salle became the foci of a growing Portuguese community.\textsuperscript{1267} Another focus in Kowloon was Club Recreio. Although it was principally set up as a recreational facility it naturally served also as a social club, and was seen by Club Lusitano as a competitor. As the Portuguese population of

\textsuperscript{1265} A.M. Jorge da Silva, \textit{The Portuguese community in Hong Kong, a pictorial history}, vol. 1, pp. 20-21.
Mato Moiro declined, so did the membership of Club Lusitano. The two clubs therefore tended to have an inharmonious relationship.\textsuperscript{1268}

The banks were for the best part of a century the powerhouse of the colony of Hong Kong, and with it, of the Portuguese community there. There were three banks authorised to issue currency notes: the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, the Mercantile Bank and the Chartered Bank, the Hongkong Bank being the largest. It was by far the biggest financial institution in Hong Kong and by 1935, with the completion of Hong Kong’s first skyscraper (as it was then described), its physical presence was equally dominant. It was the first air-conditioned building in Hong Kong. Its fourteen storey bulk towered above the gracious Edwardian buildings of the early twentieth century. Its entrance was guarded by two snarling bronze lions, the paws of which were soon polished bright and smooth by Chinese customers touching them for good luck. A similar pair stood at the entrance of the bank’s Shanghai office on the Bund.

The bank’s hundreds of employees closely reflected the social and economic stratification of Hong Kong. The European staff, engaged on sterling contracts, occupied all managerial positions. The Chief Manager was the leader of Hong Kong's business community. A succession of eminent bankers occupied this important position, beginning with Sir Thomas Jackson, baronet, who retired in 1902 after 32 years in charge of the bank.\textsuperscript{1269} His statue, larger than life size, was the only one in Statue Square other than royalty, for in Hong Kong, Sir Thomas Jackson was royalty. For another half-century, most of his successors were also knighted. If the huge bronze effigy of Sir Thomas Jackson personified the solidity of the British presence in Hong Kong, the fate of another Chief Manager, Sir Vandeleur Grayburn, would symbolise its ultimate fragility. Sir Vandeleur, at whose urging the grand

\textsuperscript{1268} L.A. de Sá, \textit{Boys from Macau}, pp. 85-93; English translation, p. 51; [Re invitations to dinner at Club Lusitano for Governor of Macau] ‘Our fellows are a curious lot. As usual the fighting comes from people best able to afford spending but who will not stir a finger to take part in any communal affairs in ordinary everyday life. Well, they have been served a lesson this time’. [They were not invited to the dinner]. J.P. Braga, then President of Club Lusitano was invited to all community functions marking this visit except the reception held by Club Recreio. J.P. Braga to J.M. Braga 24 September 1927, J.M. Braga Papers MS 4300/2.3/3.

\textsuperscript{1269} The plinth bears a plaque reading ‘In honour of Sir Thomas Jackson, Bart. (1841-1915) and in grateful recognition of his eminent services to the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation whose destiny he guided as Chief Manager from 1870 to 1902’. It is the only statue remaining in Statue Square.
Head Office was built, starved to death in Stanley Prison during the Japanese Occupation.¹²⁷⁰

The segregation of the Bank’s workforce was complete, rigid and hierarchical. The cashiers were Chinese, through whose nimble fingers, skilled with the abacus, flowed the millions of dollars of cash transactions. No less skilled were the Portuguese clerks, whose recording of transactions was accurate, precise, and always

¹²⁷⁰ He died of ‘malnutrition and medical neglect’ on 21 August 1943. F.H.H. King, The Hongkong Bank between the wars and the bank interned, 1919-1945, p. 623. During its construction and well after its opening in 1935, the building was enviously termed ‘Grayburn’s folly’ by his enemies – all the other taipans.
presented in excellent calligraphy. The (Chinese) Comprador and the (Portuguese) Chief Clerk were important personages in their respective spheres of operation, but until the 1960s, had no signing rights, reserved for the British managers.\footnote{Lusitano Newsletter, October 1961.}

A photograph of the whole staff, proudly assembled outside the new building clearly indicated how important the Portuguese clerks were to the Bank’s operations. It could not operate without them; equally, they could not have survived without the bank.\footnote{It is interesting to see that the Portuguese Chief Clerk and the Chinese Chief Cashier were both seated among the small managerial group in the front. Behind, standing in serried ranks were the British staff, behind them a much larger number of Portuguese clerks, and behind them again, the Chinese cashiers. The total staff in the photograph exceeded two hundred. After World War II it grew still larger. By late 1961, the number of Portuguese employees of the bank reached 520: 470 men and 50 women, according to a Portuguese community source, \textit{Lusitano Newsletter}, October 1961.} Another photograph from the same period shows seventy gathered for the annual dinner of the Portuguese staff.

\begin{center}
\textit{Annual dinner of the Portuguese staff of the Hongkong Bank, ca. 1940}

J.M. Braga Pictures collection, National Library of Australia
\end{center}

By the 1930s, sporting teams had become well established in the Portuguese community, and these were reflected in the sporting activities of the bank clerks. Hockey and soccer became the games of choice, and there were plenty of candidates for the teams set up within the Bank. Its new building was divided by a splendid entrance hall, so a North vs. South competition was held. The clerks on the north
side of the vestibule played the clerks on the south side, a spectacular example of the insularity into which this community had slipped.

Jim Silva, a bank officer of that era reflected in 1999:

> We were comfortable with a lot that placed us on an economic level much lower than that of the European colonials, but also at the same time we were economically better off than the Chinese. There was never much in the way of dissent or rebellion against a system that was overtly racist, not to say inherently unfair and unjust.\(^{1273}\)

On the contrary, until World War II, this was seen to be part of the natural order, instantly rent asunder by the Japanese Occupation. Not all could let go. Philippe Yvanovich, a young member of the Bank staff, wrote of his boss, who like himself was a POW at Shamshuipo Camp, and would go down to the parade ground each evening and bow to the Bank, clearly visible across the harbour.\(^{1274}\)

Already deeply institutionalised, the Portuguese employees of the Hongkong Bank became even more so after World War II. A senior officer of the 1960s, John Allen, Head of the Securities Dept from 1963 to 1966, and Acting Chief Accountant in 1966, has given a useful account of the role of the bank’s Portuguese employees just before they began to leave. Nothing had changed since the 1930s.

> There were between 40 and 50 in the Securities Dept, all but two of whom were Portuguese. This department was part of the Chief Accounts Dept, where there were hundreds of Portuguese. The Portuguese were in charge of the various sections of this department. Indeed all the clerical and supervisory staff were Portuguese. I relied heavily on Mr Hyndman, who was Chief Supervisor of Inward Bills. All the cashiers were Chinese, but the Comprador, who was in charge of cash, was more important than the Chief Cashier.\(^{1275}\)

It is interesting to observe the respect of Allen, aged 36 in 1963, for the senior Portuguese clerk, his subordinate.

The rapid recovery of Hong Kong’s economy after 1945 was accompanied by a severe housing shortage. The renovation of badly looted premises and the provision of new construction lagged well behind employment opportunities. The Bank had

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\(^{1274}\) P. Yvanovich, *My wartime experience*, p. 22. This was possibly Luigi Ribeiro, whose memoirs proudly recount his loyalty to the Bank and his promotion ahead of others. Even on his own account of it, this was based not just on ability and merit but also subservience to his boss’s unreasonable demands (L. Ribeiro, ‘Personal account of war experiences’, p. 15).

\(^{1275}\) John Allen interview, 28 February 2011.
shown itself throughout its history to be a good employer within the cultural constraints of colonial society. It continued to be so after the war, and in 1949 took an important initiative in providing housing. Sir Arthur Morse, who succeeded Sir Vandeleur Grayburn as Chief Manager, authorised the construction of the ‘Luso Apartments’ in northern Kowloon. Most of the sixty apartments in three blocks were for families, as the bank’s clerical staff resumed their pre-war occupations and social life. In 1955 these buildings were replaced by three much larger buildings, prosaically named A, B and C Blocks, with a D Block added for bachelor accommodation. A resident of the ‘Bank Flats’ later estimated the total population as 520, including 110 single men in D Block. ‘Billy’ Soares, a former Bank clerk and resident of the Bank Flats, added:

When the buildings were completed bank employees who were selected to get an apartment were only charged 10% of their monthly salary. Regardless of what one was earning, the staff were given similar quarters for 10% of their salary. The selection process was conducted by the Portuguese Staff Association who had a committee with guidelines giving priority to those with seniority in service, their marital status, the number of children they had and other criteria which included job performance.1276

This program was so successful and the flats so eagerly sought after that the Bank later built an additional block of apartments. However, not long after this was completed, the flats were no longer needed. Following the serious riots in 1967 many Portuguese left the colony and the Bank had difficulty in filling the apartments. Some years later the Bank Flats were sold to the general public. By then there was no-one left to bow to the Bank.

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1276 José Alexandre ‘Billy’ Soares, interview with A.M Jorge da Silva, The Portuguese community in Hong Kong, vol. 2, p. 50. Management lacked the imagination to give the buildings Portuguese names, though a moment’s thought could have supplied suitable heroes from Portugal’s era of greatness.
Part 3 – Other communities: Indians, Jews and Americans

It is important to see how the Portuguese community, that ‘community apart’, fared in comparison with other non-Chinese communities. Three of these will be discussed. In 1941, the Portuguese, numbering some 10,000, was the largest, while the Indians, also with a well-defined niche in Hong Kong society, were next in size, numbering over 7,000. They offer some distinct similarities to the role occupied by the Portuguese as well as wide differences. The other two are the small Jewish community, enormously important in a colony where making money had always been the main pre-occupation. Last are the Americans, who from the 1950s onwards both rode a great wave of prosperity and propelled it forward with the unique drive and self-belief that American capitalism has come to possess. Neither the Jewish nor the American community should be seen in isolation from each other, or from the way in which a significant number of the Portuguese remnant also became part of the surge of prosperity as Hong Kong became what Jan Morris described as an ‘immense manufacturing and financial centre.’ With the large ‘clerk class’ having departed, they were able at last to set aside the stigma of disadvantage and inferiority and, though few in number, assumed a significant role in the commercial and professional life of Hong Kong. It is not proposed to analyse these three communities in depth; for the purpose of this thesis they will be sketched briefly in order to view Hong Kong society through a prism entirely different from the one in which the Portuguese had been seen for most of Hong Kong’s history.

Indians

The researcher into community relations in late colonial Hong Kong is indebted to the important pioneering study made in 1971 by K.N. Vaid into the Indian community. Taking the form of a research report rather than an article or a book, it discussed the historical background of the early Parsee merchants, moving on to the strong Indian presence in the security sector in the early twentieth century, then concluding with a survey, chiefly based on interviews, with the Indian mercantile community of the post-World War II era. It is much to be regretted that no similar
study was taken of the Portuguese community at about the same time, before most of its members left Hong Kong for good.

The comparisons and contrasts between the two are striking. In the first place, both of these groups, far more numerous than the transient expatriate British community, were scarcely noticed by their British rulers. They were subservient functionaries, of whom little notice was taken. This was because in the period under discussion both occupied well-defined and quite rigid occupational niches in the social and economic structure of colonial Hong Kong.

In order to discuss the Indian community in relation to the Portuguese, it is necessary to outline its development. The significance of the nineteenth century Parsees has been discussed in an earlier chapter. Although they were less than 0.25% of India’s population, their importance was considerable. They were free from the taboos on overseas travel that inhibited orthodox Hindus and were quick to learn English before other Indians did. Like most nineteenth century merchants, they gained rapid wealth by trading in opium, moving as well to liquor and cotton, and became major suppliers of entrepreneurial and managerial talent. Unlike later Indians, they made their mark in Hong Kong, the benefactions of Mody and Ruttonjee being particularly important. Besides his immense and lasting contribution to the establishment of Hong Kong University, viewed with strong disfavour by British colonial officials and merchants, Sir Hormusjee Mody paid for the canopied statue of Queen Victoria in Statue Square, the centrepiece of Chater’s vast praya reclamation. That, but not the university, won the acclaim of the British community. However, the endogamous nature of the Parsees eventually brought their presence to an end, accelerated by the abolition of the opium trade and the rise of a textile industry in Bombay, whence they had come and where they returned. In Hong Kong their numbers were always miniscule, their impact out of all proportion.

As the Parsees went, the Punjabis and Sikhs arrived, but in an entirely different role. The lawlessness of early Hong Kong has been referred to; the first five British governors were unable to overcome the ‘squeeze problem’ that sapped the

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1280 K.N. Vaid, op. cit., p. 49.
1281 Ibid., p. 61.
1282 In 1908 there were 110 Parsees in Hong Kong, and 80 in 1938. They are commemorated in the names of Mody Road in the Mid-Levels and Bisney Road in Pokfulam.
effectiveness of Chinese police. In the 1860s McDonnell dealt with it by recruiting police from Punjab, where he had prior experience. It was done adroitly. Recruits were village boys who, according to Vaid, lacked social awareness and political consciousness.\textsuperscript{1283} The Shanghai Municipal Council adopted a similar policy; in both places, it was highly effective. By 1871, the Hong Kong Police Force was Indian with British officers, though from 1890, Chinese were again recruited.\textsuperscript{1284} By then, it was recognised that the Indians, while effective at law enforcement, were hated by the local population.

Prison officers were also largely recruited from the same Indian communities, and for a longer period, since it was not important to have local people visible on the streets, as it was with the police. In 1939, there were 226 Indian prison officers, again all Punjabi Muslims or Sikhs.\textsuperscript{1285} The Peakites, last to arrive in Stanley for internment in 1942, found themselves in the Indian prison warders’ quarters there for nearly four years, experiencing at first hand the inequalities of the British colonial system. Other internees rather unkindly referred to the place as ‘the Peak’, and its inhabitants as the ‘Peak coolies’.\textsuperscript{1286}

\textsuperscript{1283} They knew nothing of the nascent demands for swaraj, and until the Amritsar massacre of 1919, the Sikhs had no quarrel with the British. K.N. Vaid, op. cit., pp. 37-38.  
\textsuperscript{1284} In 1871 there were 182 Sikhs and 126 Punjabi Muslims. By the early twentieth century, though the number of Indians had increased to 700, there was an equal number of Chinese policemen to deal with a much larger population. There were still 744 Indian police in 1939. K.N. Vaid, op. cit., pp. 38, 41. However, in the event of trouble, the Indians were armed, but not the Chinese. P. Snow, op. cit., Photograph 6, between pp. 196 and 197.  
\textsuperscript{1285} K.N. Vaid, op. cit., p. 41.  
\textsuperscript{1286} G. Wright-Nooth, Prisoner of the Turnip Heads, p. 100.
The war placed the Indian police and prison warders in a very difficult position. They were trained to give unquestioning obedience to the government of the day, but had no natural loyalty to the British Crown. Instructed to obey their new Japanese masters, they were also warned that those who refused would be shot. Eight were so dealt with; the others complied, for they had no option.\textsuperscript{1287} The Japanese were less successful in recruiting Indian soldiers into their Indian National Army, partly due to the steadfastness of the only officer remaining in the Indian POW Camp, Captain Mateen Ahmed Ansari, who endured months of torture for refusing to abjure the King’s Commission, and was posthumously awarded the George Cross for his most conspicuous gallantry.\textsuperscript{1288} While some Sikh guards were harsh, never forgetting Amritsar, others held an abiding regard for their former bosses, one of whom was given a bottle of rum by a former constable, now a warder, with the words ‘Sahib, Sahib, the Union Jack forever fluttering in my heart’.\textsuperscript{1289}

When the war ended, British bosses released from Stanley were amazed at the number of Indians as well as Chinese who were soon back at their old posts, and in the subsequent war crimes trials Indian testimony undoubtedly carried weight.\textsuperscript{1290} However, the era of Indians in law enforcement ended with the war and Indian independence, as the Hong Kong Police could no longer recruit the callow youths of rural Punjab, now part of Pakistan. By 1952, there were only three Punjabis left in the Hong Kong Police.\textsuperscript{1291}

The upheaval in India in 1947 brought a totally different group of Indians. These were Hindu Sindhis who fled to Bombay after Partition and then moved on to Hong Kong. Vaid identified two distinct occupational groups: Amils and Bhaibunds. The former were professionals. They were clerks and petty officials, while the Bhaibunds, much more numerous, were businessmen. Vaid characterised them sharply:

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{1287} They were stranded without any other means of livelihood, and the Japanese paid the wages of those who kept working. While the Chinese starved, the Indian civil servants received favoured treatment, including a special monthly allowance of 7 lb. of flour until December 1943. Supplies then ran out as the war turned against Japan. (P. Snow, op. cit., pp. 104, 173; K.N. Vaid, op. cit., p. 41).
\end{flushleft}  
\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{1288} O. Lindsay, \textit{At the going down of the sun}, pp. 116-121. These are the words of the citation, \textit{London Gazette}, 16 April 1946, p. 1949.
\end{flushleft}  
\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{1289} G. Wright-Nooth, op. cit., p. 96.
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\textsuperscript{1290} P. Snow, op. cit., pp. 268, 309.
\end{flushleft}  
\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{1291} K.N. Vaid, op. cit., p. 43.
\end{flushleft}  

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A Bhaibund Sindhi loves living in style and tends to measure a person’s social status by the size of his bank account and the weight of gold loaded on his womenfolk ... [They have] shrewd bargaining instincts, smell for the market and adaptability ... [They have made] a smaller contribution to Hong Kong than the Parsees earlier ... [They are] more money-minded, less socially oriented ... [They are] shopkeepers and money-lenders and have remained such ... consequently they fail to make their presence felt ... even to serve their own community.1292

Not surprisingly, people like this became some of the prime movers in Hong Kong’s booming economy after the Korean War and the severe reverses of the 1967 riots. Similar communities of Indians in Kenya, Fiji and Papua incurred savage retribution from less entrepreneurial local people, but in materialistic Hong Kong, they did phenomenally well. Vaid treats them at some length. For the purposes of this study, it is sufficient to indicate the size and scope of the Bhaibund Sindhi group in Hong Kong. Vaid secured interviews with 184, reporting that ‘our respondents were very sensitive to the economic, social and political situation in the Colony’.1293 Of the 184 interviewees, 113 had come to Hong Kong between 1950 and 1959, and all had good commercial contacts before coming. Vaid identified 810 Indian businesses.

It is striking that the Indian businesses on Hong Kong Island in 1971 were concentrated around the crowded Hollywood Road, Wyndham Street and Wellington Street district which had been occupied principally by the very self-contained Portuguese community from the 1870s until the 1920s.

1292 Ibid., pp. 64, 65, 71, 77.
1293 Ibid., p. 78. A questionnaire sent out to 81 Indian businesses in 1971 proved unavailing, there being only eight respondents. These people, like the Portuguese, were insecure and fearful of the future, lest they become stateless persons in a Hong Kong abandoned by Britain.
Indian businesses in Hong Kong, 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hong Kong Island</th>
<th>Kowloon</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Import/export</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailors</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other occupations</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The tailors were almost all in Tsimshatsui on the Kowloon side, for, like the Portuguese, the Indians tended to be territorial. As Vaid pointed out, some expressed doubt as to whether Hong Kong had a community in the sense that the word is understood elsewhere, regarding it as a plural society comprising refugees and expatriates not seeking integration into a larger community. Some remarkable similarities and then some sharp differences between the two groups, Indians and Portuguese, should now be examined.

SIMILARITIES

When Vaid remarked that ‘unfortunately, historians of Hong Kong have conveniently by-passed the contributions made by Indians in developing the Colony’, he could easily have been writing about the Portuguese. He added that they ‘resigned themselves to letting the British claim all laurels’. More to the point, both were subject to British control of Hong Kong’s economic and political direction, at least until the 1984 Accord, by which time the Portuguese had largely departed.

Both communities were ‘unable to beget social esteem’. There were of course exceptions, but the British regarded both with contempt as inferior in a variety of ways, all stemming from entrenched attitudes developed in the high noon of Victorian imperialism and not fundamentally shaken until well after World War II. Yet neither became hostile towards their British masters. The Indians did not bring

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1294 Ibid., pp. 89, 90.
1295 Ibid., p. 98.
1296 Ibid., p.103.
to Hong Kong the violent passions that tore India asunder, while the Portuguese, originally from Macau, came from the only Portuguese overseas territory that did not join the violent upheaval between the 1950s and 1970s against the repressive regime of Salazar. The Indians and Portuguese in Hong Kong were content quietly to accept Pax Britannica. Writing in 1950, Harold Ingrams observed that both would wish the Colony to be British rather than Chinese.\textsuperscript{1297}

In consequence, both became self-contained and inward looking. The territorial characteristics of both have been noted, but for the Portuguese, it was for a long time a religious concentration. Orthodox Jewish communities often seek to set up an eruv, a physical demarcation of the boundary of the distance that a worshipper might walk to synagogue on the Sabbath. Similarly, the Portuguese community had to live within the sound of church bells, akin to an aural eruv. For the religiously and culturally diverse Indians, this was not a consideration, their concentration being driven more by occupation. There were tailors in Tsimshatsui on the Kowloon side and small merchants in what had been the Mato Moiro district on the Hong Kong side. Strangely, as late as 1971, there were only three Indian restaurants in each of these concentrations, whereas the Portuguese generally frequented Chinese restaurants.\textsuperscript{1298}

Neither had strong cultural interests beyond food and religious observances. Vaid looked in vain for an Overseas Indian cultural life of any substance in 1971. Beyond nightclub singers, it was absent from the Portuguese community also.\textsuperscript{1299} Apart from the Portuguese fondness for Chinese food, neither absorbed much from the majority Chinese culture or gave anything to it, beyond the adoption of a few Portuguese words such as comprador, praya, shroff and nullah. Even tiffin, in general use as a term for lunch, had disappeared by the 1950s. Relatively strong in numbers, they were weak in influence, unlike the Jews and Parsees, influential far beyond their numbers.

\textsuperscript{1297} H. Ingrams, \textit{Hong Kong}, p. 248. Ingrams gave Colony a capital ‘C’.
\textsuperscript{1298} A.M. Jorge da Silva, \textit{The Portuguese community in Hong Kong}, vol. 2. p. 54. Jorge da Silva observed that ‘Chinese restaurants were very popular as the food was very much to the liking of the Portuguese community and conformed to their unwritten criteria of “the three Bs” - “Bom, bonito, barato” (good, attractive, and cheap)’.
\textsuperscript{1299} Pace Caroline Braga, who became a significant concert pianist as well as a music teacher. However, she did not identify with the Portuguese community.
DIFFERENCES

While both groups suffered from stereotypes, these were opposite. Not all Indians were rich, although they were considered to be rich, because of the conspicuous display of wealth by some. Vaid established that by far the majority ran small businesses, employing mainly family members and working very long hours for small rewards, and living in cramped, often squalid accommodation.\textsuperscript{1300} Similarly, but contrastingly, not all Portuguese were ill-paid clerks, humble in both senses of the word. The decision in 1871 to make St Joseph’s College an Anglophone school, followed by several generations of higher education for a few, eventually succeeded in establishing an upper middle class with some wealthy individuals.

A major point of difference between the two communities was the Japanese Occupation. It placed the Indians in a difficult position, with most of them having to come to terms with the Japanese rulers.\textsuperscript{1301} The difficulties faced by the Portuguese were of a different order. They had a strong loyalty, if not to the British, then to Hong Kong, which in the course of several generations, had become their homeland. It was a loyalty the Indians never had, and few, if any, served in the HKVDC. Apart from the several hundred Portuguese POWs imprisoned in Hong Kong, thousands fled to Macau, with few remaining in the waste land that Hong Kong had become. The Indians had nowhere to go.

The major differences emerged in the two decades between 1950 and 1970. For the most part, the Portuguese remained socially and economically static, whereas the Bhaibund Sindhis, far more entrepreneurial, exploited their economic opportunities to the full. Thus, while most of the Portuguese decided to get out, the Indians arrived in large numbers. The 10,000 who identified themselves as Portuguese in 1941, still roughly the same number in 1961, fell away to perhaps 1,000 in the early twenty-first century, many of them being ethnic Chinese with some Portuguese background.

\textsuperscript{1300} K.N. Vaid, op. cit., p. 30. This may account for the small number of Indian restaurants at the time of his study.
\textsuperscript{1301} The business empire of the Harilelas originated with a small tailoring shop behind the Peninsula Hotel, renamed by the conquerors the Toa (i.e. East Asia) Hotel. Here they stitched uniforms for Japanese officers. P. Snow, op. cit., p. 159.
By contrast, the Indian community, numbering 7,379 in 1941, increased by 1966 to between 17,500 and 22,000.  

There remains one major difference, perhaps the most important. After the Parsee leaders of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Indians did not produce any significant community leaders thereafter. Their concentration on money-making is perhaps the main reason for this, together with the powerful rise of Chinese leadership after 1967. Indeed, it might be said that there was no real sense of an Indian community. By contrast, the Portuguese community had a very strong sense of identity: nossa gente. It produced a succession of significant leaders, not only of their own community, but of the whole of Hong Kong. First was J.P. Braga, ‘that great old Hong Kong citizen’, as Henry Ching epitomised him. He led the way for others, who stood on his shoulders: Leo d’Almada, Sir Albert Rodrigues, Sir Roger Lobo and Comendador Arnaldo Sales, to name the most significant.

Vaid put his finger on this important deficiency among the Indians in severe terms. ‘Money, unless it is used for wider social purposes, is more likely to generate contempt than prestige’, adding that the Indian community ‘should use its talents and resources to enrich the quality of life in the Colony’. By contrast, members of the Portuguese community over a long period of time left their mark on Hong Kong in several significant ways.

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Jews. In sharp contrast to the Portuguese community was the small but very significant Jewish community. Stereotypes never quite fit, but with these two groups the risk should be taken. One was entrepreneurial, the other unenterprising; one assertive, the other submissive; one seized business opportunities, the other inclined to let them slip through their fingers. In short, one grew very rich, while the other remained poor, as it had been since 1640. Initially, Jewish wealth came through opium, a fact freely recognised by the Jewish community. It was ‘a trade that

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1303 In the course of a very long and distinguished public service, Sales easily earned a knighthood, but had decided to retain his Portuguese citizenship, not having been born in Hong Kong. He received high awards in Portuguese orders and the Order of the Bauhinia, Hong Kong’s own honours system.
1304 K.N. Vaid, op. cit., pp. 103-104.
brought swift prosperity’. Though initially and predominantly based in Shanghai until after World War II, the Jews retained the significance they had already gained in the economy of Hong Kong far beyond their numbers. The importance of the Sassoons and Kadoories, two Sephardic families, has already been discussed, but from the 1930s, the Jewish community grew larger and more diversified. There had been a Jewish cemetery from 1855, and a synagogue from 1881, when there were 71 Jews in Hong Kong. A Jewish Recreation Club was paid for in 1909 by Elly Kadoorie; he and his son Lawrence were the leaders of the Jewish community for most of the twentieth century until the latter’s death on 25 August 1993.

During the twentieth century it came to have a more cosmopolitan character. In 1900 there were 165 Jews in Hong Kong, but upheavals in Europe led by 1941 to the flight of some 20,000 Russian and Central European Jews to Shanghai, the only city in the world that would accept refugees without a visa. Some travelled further, to Hong Kong. There developed for the first time a community of Ashkenazim, refugees lacking the conspicuous wealth of the well-established Sephardim. World War II affected the Jews as much as other people in Hong Kong. Fourteen names are listed on the synagogue’s Roll of Honour – a high proportion for a small group. Too British to claim any other nationality, Lawrence and Horace Kadoorie were rounded up and sent to Stanley Camp, but their influence secured their release and they went to Shanghai, where Sir Elly was allowed to spend his last two years at Marble Hall, though his two sons, Lawrence and Horace, were interned. On 12 September 1945 Lawrence made his way back to Hong Kong as soon as possible, most appropriately sitting on a pile of bank notes being flown in by the R.A.F. to replace the Japanese Military Yen.

Despite the horrors of the Holocaust, anti-Semitism was still evident in post-war Hong Kong, and Jews continued to be ostracised, even in the Parents’ Association of King George V School, where a Jewish mother was not wanted on the

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1306 It was replaced in 1902, when the fine Ohel Leah (‘House of Leah’) synagogue was built in memory of his mother by Sir Jacob Sassoon, baronet, at 70 Robinson Road, at the edge of the large Portuguese community at Mato Moiro. D. Maynard & G. Ngan, A History of the Jewish Community in Hong Kong 1843-1995, pp. 15-19. This is the source of most of the information in this section.
1307 Those who remained in Shanghai endured two more major catastrophes: the Japanese Occupation of Shanghai, no less severe than it was in Hong Kong, and then the Communist revolution in 1949. Most then fled again, often for the third time since reaching Harbin, their first city of refuge. Hong Kong was the transit point for most, but some remained there.
1308 N. Cameron, Power, p. 151. He told the story to Nigel Cameron with much relish nearly forty years later; F.S.V. Donnison, op. cit., p. 205.
The community became, like the rest of non-Chinese Hong Kong, increasingly diverse after World War II. By 1995, the Ohel Leah Synagogue had 235 families on its roll of members, with seventeen nationalities. It was not a community much given to religious observance. In 1963, a prominent Jewish visitor to Hong Kong deplored that fact that there was no established Jewish community, though there were about 200 Jews in Hong Kong. He had attended two services at the Synagogue, but on both occasions there was not a quorum of ten people, so the service could not start. Yet thirty years later, there was sufficient strength and interest to refurbish and redevelop the synagogue and the site of the old Recreation Centre in what by then had become a district of high rise apartments. Long gone was the ‘leafy well vegetated area amidst mainly large residences in expansive grounds’.

Americans. Quite different were the Americans. The great Jewish families of the Far East were dynastic; the Americans were not, and few of them made their homes in Hong Kong. In terms of their movement, the American community affords another remarkable contrast to the Portuguese community. As the Portuguese community was departing en masse in the 1960s and 1970s, Americans, like the Sindhi Indians, were beginning to arrive in large numbers. They were not, of course, immigrants, as the Portuguese had been in the previous century. Ironically, while many Americans were coming to Hong Kong seeking opportunities for greater wealth as the British had done a century earlier, many Hong Kong Portuguese were going to America, also seeking opportunities to better themselves and their families. Broadly speaking, both groups succeeded.

The British in Hong Kong kept the Americans at arm’s length as long as they could. American traders came through the 1st Chinese War between 1839 and 1842 with little trouble by acceding to Lin Zexu’s demands; it did not endear them to the British, many of whom sustained great losses. Several American firms retained their

1309 ‘Poor Mrs Frenkel, no-one seconded my proposal that she be put down on the list of candidates for the Committee, until Mr Jennings finally did so himself. Of course she wasn’t voted in, but two people who hadn’t troubled to attend the meeting were!’ Louie Braga to Audrey Braga, 30 March 1954. Paul Braga Papers. [I knew her son Robert Frenkel, who was in my class at KG Five School in 1951. He was known to be Jewish.]
1311 K. McDougall and B. Pettman, The Ohel Leah Synagogue, Hong Kong, p. 19.
importance for some decades, notably Russell & Co. and Heard & Co. Douglas Story’s envy in 1907 of the ‘enterprising Americans’ has been referred to in an earlier chapter. An early example of that enterprise was their importation of ice in 1847.\textsuperscript{1312} With their acquisition of the Philippine Islands in 1899, they came much closer, and there were also many American Protestant missionaries in China.\textsuperscript{1313} The British Establishment did not much care for the Americans, who did not fit readily into Hong Kong’s rigid hierarchies. Sir Vandeleur Grayburn (it is impossible to imagine an American having a name like that!) possibly spoke for others in the acidulous comment, ‘there is only one American in the Bank and that is one too many.’\textsuperscript{1314}

In the 1920s, the Braga boys who went to North America travelled in liners named \textit{Empress of Japan} and \textit{Empress of Australia}. In 1940, the \textit{Empresses} were used for the evacuation of British civilians. In the 1960s, the emigrants seeking a new life in America went aboard the \textit{President Cleveland} and \textit{President Wilson}.\textsuperscript{1315} Few yet travelled by plane, but the first casualty of the Japanese air strike at Kai Tak airport on 8 December 1941 was, oddly enough, a Panam Clipper, sunk in Kowloon Bay at 8.00 a.m., its scheduled time of take-off.\textsuperscript{1316}

The economic take-off came soon after the war. With Britain’s position in the world greatly diminished and its hold on Hong Kong uncertain, the United States was

\textsuperscript{1312} J. Morris, \textit{Hong Kong}, p. 111. The innovation is preserved in the name of Ice House Street in Central. It had earlier been imported by Jardine Matheson in 1843, but this may not have been the beginning of regular shipments. The arrival of the first cargo of ice from Chusan (Zhoushan) on 7 February 1843 was seen in Hong Kong as an historic event (W. Tarrant, op. cit., p. 77).

\textsuperscript{1313} It was through American missionaries that Olive Braga was converted in 1906, not the China Inland Mission or the Church Missionary Society, both British missions, and much better known in Hong Kong than American missions.

\textsuperscript{1314} F.H.H. King, \textit{The History of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation}, vol. 3, p. 266.

\textsuperscript{1315} A. Jorge da Silva, \textit{Diaspora Macaense to California}, pp. 15, 16, 55.

\textsuperscript{1316} G. Wright-Nooth, \textit{Prisoner of the Turnip Heads}, p. 46; G.E. Baxter, \textit{Personal experiences during the siege of Hong Kong}, p. 3. There was bad blood at Stanley Camp between the 316 Americans and the 2,551 British. The Americans were far better organised, and the British felt that they received better treatment from the Japanese. Snow considered that may indeed have been the case, with the Japanese Government hoping until May 1942 for a negotiated peace with the USA after its remarkable conquests throughout the Far East (P. Snow, op. cit., p. 136). The major battles in the Coral Sea in May and Midway in June ended any such hopes, but the American civilians were nevertheless repatriated in June (G.E. Baxter, \textit{Personal experiences}, pp. 29, 42-48). The number of internees is disputed between various sources. I have adopted the number given by an unidentified internee who added extensive notes to a copy of Baxter’s book in my possession. Obviously well-informed and precise in his detail, this man mentioned that he was in the HKVDC Army Service Corps. Reference to Tony Banham’s Hong Kong War Diary website suggests that he was one of three officers: Captain K.C. Hamilton, Captain A. Hutton-Potts or Captain T.R. Parsons.) www.hongkongwardiary.com. Accessed 19 August 2011.
overwhelmingly well-placed to muscle its way into the Hong Kong market, and it lost no time in doing so.\textsuperscript{1317} By 1950, Harold Ingrams, a senior British Colonial Officer appointed to write a book about Hong Kong, wrote, with a distinct note of disapproval, that there was ‘an American air about parts of Hong Kong’.\textsuperscript{1318} He observed that to money-making Chinese the American way of life makes a strong appeal.\textsuperscript{1319} Chinese wanting to learn spoken English now definitely preferred to speak with an American accent.

In 1950, the Korean War had the immediate effect of stopping Hong Kong’s commerce with China dead in its tracks. It forced Hong Kong’s businessmen to turn instead to manufacturing, which, with a pool of cheap, compliant labour, they did with vast success. American capital and managerial expertise were part of that success. In 1954, there were 50 American firms registered in Hong Kong, but by 1980 that had grown to 341. By 1990, with Hong Kong’s future clarified until 2047, Americanisation again accelerated, and the number had increased to 624.\textsuperscript{1320}

Cultural interchange grew rapidly in these years. For several centuries, Portuguese and Chinese cultures had little impact on each other in Macau or Hong Kong in terms of food, dress, architecture, language, religion or anything else. By contrast, within a couple of decades of World War II, the Hong Kong Chinese had readily begun to adopt American tastes, notwithstanding the 1967 riots. American and Japanese cars replaced British cars, though the Governor rode in a Rolls Royce until 1997, and the Peninsula Hotel continues to provide a fleet of them. In business, an American became Managing Director of Jardine, Matheson & Co.\textsuperscript{1321} The old Edwardian buildings on Chater’s 1903 praya were swept away, along with Grayburn’s 1935 ‘skyscraper’. In one of the new towers, overlooking the Hong Kong Club far below, perched the American Club on the 47\textsuperscript{th} floor.\textsuperscript{1322}

In all of this transformation, the small group of Portuguese who stayed in Hong Kong found a secure place. António Jorge da Silva listed 28 prominent professional

\textsuperscript{1317} P. Snow, op. cit., p. 330.
\textsuperscript{1318} H. Ingrams, op. cit., p. 32.
\textsuperscript{1319} Ibid., p. 122.
\textsuperscript{1321} P. Snow, op. cit., p. 332.
\textsuperscript{1322} J. Morris, op. cit., p. 113.
and business people, who remained. They were the educated elite of lawyers, doctors and architects who had already achieved success and who saw no reason to leave, but they were a small group. The two Portuguese clubs no longer served an ethnic community. Club Recreio was largely Chinese by 2005. Club Lusitano, just as ethno-centric as the Hong Kong Club had been for well over a century, endeavoured to remain so, and also rebuilt its premises late in the twentieth century, the club occupying an eyrie atop the resulting 27 storey office tower. In 1950 the old club had 450 members. By 2005 it had only 92, and was forced to widen its horizons.

Part 4 – Restive aspirations: ‘we wonder what the future will be’

The experience of the employees of the Bank served to show how utterly dependent the Portuguese community was on prosperity generated by others. Reviewing the twenty years in Hong Kong after World War II, a Macanese writer concluded:

The hardworking Portuguese community is poor. Their members are hard working with adaptable qualities that allow them to achieve the necessary remuneration for their survival. However this remuneration was inadequate to achieve their independence they so much yearned for and, in the majority, [they] relied on their English superiors, without being able to form their own trading firms that would have allowed them to own properties in association with their own countrymen and a guarantee of certain independence.

The Bank looked after its clerical staff in a benign and paternalistic way. That held true also for most of the British companies as their staff filtered back after the war. Many turned up to their old posts, helped get things going again, and their presence was largely taken for granted. That was certainly true of the treatment given to the former members of the HKVDC. One of the first decisions of the

1324 H. Ingrams, op. cit., p. 250.
1325 In December 2010, the University of NSW law alumni in Hong Kong, all Chinese, headed by a judge of the High Court, held a dinner there in honour of Sir Anthony Mason, the former Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia. It would have been unthinkable fifty years earlier for them to choose such a venue, or for the club to accept them.
1327 P. Snow, op. cit., p. 268. The elderly Chinese head ‘Boy’ in the English mess of the Bank was back behind the bar on the day the bank re-opened. It was still spoken of appreciatively years afterwards. Information from John Allen, sometime Head of the Securities Department.
British Military Administration in September 1945 was to extend generous benefits to the European members of the Volunteers, including repatriation and cash benefits. Their pay extended to the date of their release. Yet this decision excluded the Chinese, Portuguese and Eurasian members of the Volunteers. Some 300 Portuguese had worn the King’s uniform and 26 were killed.\footnote{1328} The service of the survivors was deemed to have ended on the day of the British surrender in 1941, not the Japanese surrender in 1945.\footnote{1329} Soon after the return of the British, Caroline Braga wrote:

Had Father lived, he would have been sadly disappointed with conditions today. All the promises made to the Portuguese volunteers before the war were not fulfilled by the British Government. They have no-one who will fight for them as Father did, so we wonder what the future will be for them.\footnote{1330}

It was an appalling injustice, which led to lasting bitterness and alienation.\footnote{1331} Donnison, the historian of the British Military Administration, admitted that ‘these provisions discriminated to some extent in favour of Europeans and ... aroused considerable feeling’. However, his bland statement that ‘the situation was ultimately satisfactorily cleared up on the basis of liberal and, as far as possible, equal treatment for all’ is wide of the mark.\footnote{1332} During the war, the shared privations of camp life broke down social barriers, but following this decision they reappeared almost at once.\footnote{1333}

The returning British civilian administration did indeed make some concessions.\footnote{1334} The repeal of the Peak District (Residence) Ordinance in 1946 was, commented the British writer Philip Snow, a ‘spectacular break with the past’.\footnote{1335} A significant step in the endeavour to utilise the talents of key members
of the local community was the appointment of Leo d’Almada as President of the General Military Court, trying Japanese war criminals and collaborators. Sir Mark Young came back as governor in May 1946 with a plan for political reform to engage local people, but it was swept aside by the on-rush of events as the Nationalist government collapsed in China, and more than a million refugees flooded the colony, overwhelming all its services and ending any thought of political reform. Whereas Churchill’s government had been reluctant to bolster the Hong Kong garrison in 1941, Attlee’s Labour government did so in 1950. There were then 30,000 troops in Hong Kong, and they seemed to give a much greater degree of solidity and permanence to the British presence. Young was replaced in 1947 by Sir Alexander Grantham, who had served in Hong Kong between 1922 and 1934, beginning as a cadet in the Colonial Service, and who comfortably returned to the old ways. He was strongly opposed to constitutional reform, and the Young Plan was quickly forgotten.

As a result, the old arrogance, at first greatly humbled by the war, soon returned. John Braga, accepted as a European in China Light in the 1930s, and despite his Home Leave entitlement, found himself treated as a Portuguese clerk in the 1950s, with the social stigma that implied. Younger men in that community reacted badly against this; for them the world was changing. Horatio Ozorio, a bank clerk in the Hongkong Bank who later became a bank executive in California, expressed what was a common experience for many people in a similar position.

My father’s generation and the generations before his, to put it bluntly, were obsequiously servile under their British masters ... World War II seems to have cleansed the atrophy from the thinking of the Macanese by having knocked down what had been their bailiwick in the three-tiered society that was Hong Kong’s

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1336 Its proceedings were extensively reported by the South China Morning Post. A file of undated press cuttings in the writer’s possession reporting the trials, compiled by an unknown member of the HKVDC, runs to 18 foolscap pages. D’Almada died in Hong Kong aged 93 in 1996. Among the obituaries was an Australian one: J.B. Correa, ‘Eulogy to Leonardo D’Almada e Castro, C.B.E., LL.D., Q.C.’, Casa Down Under: Newsletter of the Casa de Macau, Australia, October 1996.

1337 S. Tsang, ‘Grantham, Sir Alexander, in in M. Holdsworth and C. Munn (eds), Dictionary of Hong Kong Biography, p. 163. Grantham noted approvingly in his memoirs that ‘in a crown colony the Governor is next to the Almighty. Everyone stands up when he enters a room. He is deferred to on all occasions.’ A. Grantham, Via Ports, p. 107.

1338 Discussed in some detail by Philip Snow, whose sources included interviews in the 1990s with Hong Kong people who in the 1950s and 1960s would never have opened their mouths. The absence of written evidence is telling. P. Snow, op. cit., pp. 321-324.
before the war. With the Chinese gaining ascendancy, the younger
generation started looking overseas for a better life. Glowing
reports filtered back from America by the courageous few who had
taken the plunge and left the Far East for greater opportunities in
America. So, feeling as I did about the colonials and the colonial
system, I joined the Macanese exodus from Hong Kong. 1339

Several others expressed similar feelings about the pushes and the pulls that
intending emigrants always experience. One judgment was severe. ‘Not to mince
words, a colonial structure such as Hong Kong’s was fundamentally racist and
essentially toxic.’ 1340 For another Macanese, Gerry McDougall, the contempt with
which his father was treated by Jardine, Matheson & Co., the ‘princely hong’, was
enough to make him want to leave.

My father, a British subject, had once been taipan of Jardines in
Swatow (Shantou) before World War II ... at the end of the war
Jardines sent him to Hong Kong where he was one of their senior
accountants. After an accumulated 30 years of loyal service with
Jardines he was told to step down from his position when Jardines
brought a young expatriate from the UK to replace him. To say my
father was devastated is putting it mildly! To add insult to injury, my
father now had to teach this younger and less-experienced man his
job and then become this man’s subordinate. 1341

The egalitarianism of a younger generation exposed to American culture led to
restive aspirations. These received a sudden and decisive shock in the riots which
swept over Macau and Hong Kong in 1966 and 1967. It should have come as no
surprise that the Chinese wanted the British out. There was a long history of unrest,
some of which has been referred to in this thesis. 1342 The 1925-1926 General Strike
and boycott was easily the most serious episode, and was poorly handled by Sir
Reginald Stubbs, with his open contempt for the Chinese, who had begun to realise

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1339 H. Ozorio, in A.M. Jorge da Silva, Diaspora Macaense to California, pp. 42-43.
1340 Arthur J. Remedios, in A.M. Jorge da Silva, Diaspora Macaense to California, p. 40
1341 Still rankling from his father’s humiliation, McDougall, who worked for China Light, experienced
a minor slight of his own, trivial but telling. Given 25 cents by a newly-arrived expatriate engineer
from the UK to buy him a 20 cent bottle of Coca Cola, McDougall was told to keep the change. ‘It
still galls me today’, added McDougall in 2009. A generation earlier, a member of the ‘Portuguese
clerk class’ would have accepted the implied mendicancy without demur. No longer! (G. McDougall,
in A.M. Jorge da Silva, Diaspora Macaense to California, p. 45). John Allen (interview, 4 April
2010) observed that, arriving in 1955 aged 29, he could not have done without Mr Hyndman. This
may have been Henrique Hyndman, #25453, (b. 4 October 1891, d. 18 May 1959), then a senior
member of the Portuguese staff.
1342 Two nineteenth century examples are the poisoning incident in 1857 and the strenuous opposition
to cleansing measures in the plague of 1894.
the efficacy of the strike and the boycott as weapons against the privileged position of the foreigners in China.1343

Part 5 – To find a better future: the Diaspora of the Hong Kong Portuguese community

Protracted negotiations in 1944 and 1945 between the governments in London and Chungking did not lead to the return of Hong Kong to China together with the end of extraterritoriality, to the fury of Chiang Kai-shek. The fact that the People’s Republic of China left Hong Kong and Macau alone in 1949 ought not to have been seen by their rulers as Chinese acquiescence in the presence of these two reminders of China’s years of weakness, but it was.

Two aspects of the British return in 1945 were indicative. The second massive wave of looting in late August showed that the looters rejected the legitimacy, not only of the presence of the British but their property as well. The second was that as soon as the British fleet arrived, Chinese flags flew everywhere. Henry Ching’s gossip column in the South China Morning Post, ‘A bird’s eye view’, noted: ‘Plenty of Chinese flags up yesterday but very few British.’1344 The Union Jack flew only on government and military buildings. More than a decade later, riots in 1956 triggered by the removal of a Chinese Nationalist flag led to the deaths of more than sixty people. They were fomented, according to the governor, by ‘gangsters and hooligans’.1345 No real change followed.

Events in 1966 and 1967 were far more serious. It lies outside the scope of this thesis to discuss them in any detail, or to indicate how they changed the thinking of the British administrators who ran the Hong Kong Government and rather despised all

1344 South China Morning Post, 3 September 1945. ‘On nearly every house flew the flag of China’ added F.S.V. Donnison, op. cit., p. 202. However, it should be pointed out that very few Union Jacks would have survived the Japanese Occupation. To be discovered with one would have meant death. At the Fanling Babies’ Home, an orphanage in the New Territories run by two English missionaries, a Union Jack ‘had been made from oddments of red, white and blue cloth hastily assembled and raised with joy’. Unfortunately, this at once attracted looters. J. Doggett, The Yip family of Amah Rock, p. 193.
1345 A. Grantham, op. cit., p. 191.
beneath them. The trouble was so serious and far-reaching that it took many years before a detailed historical study could be undertaken in English.  

Like many major social and political upheavals, the flashpoint seemed almost trivial: an increase of fares on the Star Ferry in April 1966, which led to four days of rioting in Kowloon. Much worse was to come. At the end of the year, Macau lapsed into something approaching anarchy for several weeks. The mob’s first target was, predictably enough, the triumphalist statue in the Largo do Senado of Mesquita, who had humiliated the Chinese in 1849.

The following year, Hong Kong too was caught up from May until December in the turbulence of the Cultural Revolution in the People’s Republic. Transport was paralysed, and mobs roamed the streets daubing walls at will and chanting slogans at the gates of Government House. This was dismissed at the time as only a spillover from the Cultural Revolution in China, but Cheung’s study offered a more considered and complex view. He described this unprecedented explosion of popular fury as ‘Hong Kong’s watershed’, both for its people, and for their colonial masters. He maintained that this was the first generation of Hong Kong people to

1347 The Commission of Inquiry into the 1966 riots was chaired by Sir Lindsay Ride, who as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong was a leading member of the Establishment. The Commission concluded its report, completed in December 1966, with a blandly dismissive statement that almost immediately proved to be a serious misreading of a situation that was soon out of control. ‘We do not believe that political, economic and social frustrations were the direct cause of the 1966 riots but within the economic and social fields there are factors ... that need to be watched, lest they provide inflammable material which could erupt into disturbances should opportunity arise in the future’. Kowloon disturbances 1966; report of Commission of Inquiry, p. 148.
1348 L. & M. Ride, The Voices of Macao Stones, p. 53. Mesquita’s ornate monument in S. Miguel Cemetery was not touched, although it is just inside the cemetery gate and easily accessible.
feel a sense of belonging to this place, rather than to the heung ha, one’s own village, which earlier generations had thought of as home. If so, then British rule must come to an end; in effect, people wanted the British out because Hong Kong was theirs.  

Slowly, the British administration adjusted to this new momentum in the affairs of what was now called a ‘territory’, not a ‘colony’.

Following their removal during the Japanese Occupation, no royal statues remained in Statue Square for the mobs to tear down, but in the next few years, many other symbols of British superiority disappeared. The self-congratulatory icons of imperialism were removed more completely than they had been by the Japanese. Another large topic outside the scope of this thesis is the rapid implementation of real change in an administration that for the first time discarded its Olympian mantle and sought to engage with the Chinese, 99% of Hong Kong’s population. Policies to open doors in government and business to Chinese were set in place. A door that opened at last was that of the Hong Kong Club. Half a century earlier, Sir Cecil Clementi, who did more than any other governor to break down communal barriers, told the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce:

Nothing has been a cause to me of more anxiety ... than the fact that the Chinese and the European communities of Hong Kong, although in daily contact with each other, nevertheless move (as it were) in different worlds neither having any real comprehension of the mode of life or ways of thought of the other. This is a most regrettable misunderstanding which retards the social, moral and intellectual and even the commercial and material progress of the colony.

He went on to advocate the establishment of a new Sino-British Club, the Concord Club, in place of the exclusive and snobbish Hong Kong Club. Sadly, it was an idea well before its time.

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1349 Gary Ka-wai Cheung, op. cit., passim, but especially pp. 132-142.
1350 Two indicative examples will serve. Until 1974, English was the colony’s only official language. Chinese was then added, the language of the huge majority having been effectively ignored until then. In 1975, the Hong Kong Cricket Ground, set apart for public recreation, but sequestrated in 1851 for the sole use of a few British sportsmen, was quietly turned into a public park, Chater Garden. P. Snow, op. cit., p. 325. The shade of Robert Fraser-Smith, who had once set up a deck-chair on the cricket pitch in protest, would have been gratified.
1351 P. Snow, op. cit., p. 325.
In the rush to push local people forward after the riots, scant attention was paid to the Portuguese, numbering at that time about 10,000 people, more than any other local non-Chinese group. However, that was still less than 0.05% of the total population; inevitably, only a few key people achieved prominence in the professions or in public life. Leo d’Almada returned to the Legislative Council in 1946, and was appointed CBE in 1953, the honour that J.P. Braga had hoped for. Unlike Braga, who died in reduced circumstances as a refugee in wartime Macau, d’Almada remained in Hong Kong to enjoy a serene and comfortable old age, and was interviewed in 1987 by the writer Jan Morris, who recognised in him a patriarch with a significant familial link with the origins of Hong Kong. Braga’s successors on Legco, as it came to be called, were all moneyed men: d’Almada, Rodrigues and Lobo. D’Almada was succeeded in 1953 by Dr Alberto Rodrigues, a member of Legco until 1974 and of the Executive Council from 1962 to 1974. As Sir Albert Rodrigues, he became in 1971 the first Hong Kong Portuguese to be knighted. He was succeeded on Legco by Rogério Hyndman Lobo, a successful businessman. He too was knighted in 1985, at the end of his term of office, anglicising his name as Sir Roger Lobo. Both knights survived into the twenty-first century, their imperial titles continuing to be recognised in the Hong Kong SAR. While their honours were awarded towards the end of the old order, they had climbed to its pinnacle; if not to The Peak. António Jorge da Silva, the most recent commentator on the Portuguese community of Hong Kong, pointed out that before the changes forced by the 1967 riots, the higher honours were beyond the reach of the Portuguese.

Had the attitude of colonial Britain been different immediately after the Second World War, Leo d’Almada e Castro would certainly have been honoured more than being appointed CBE. The same is true of José Pedro Braga. In 1935, he was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE). A lower award, this was regarded as a less than adequate reward for his services.

There was no Portuguese appointee in 1985 to succeed Sir Roger Lobo on Legco, for the community was dwindling rapidly. Despite his prominence in public affairs,

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1353 C. Neves, ‘The Portuguese in Hongkong’, Voz dos Macaense de Vancouver, vol. 4 no. 4, November 2002. The British population was approximately 22,000. At least half were Service personnel.
1354 Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.
1355 J. Morris, op. cit., p. 105.
Arnaldo de Oliveira Sales did not secure this position, preferring to retain Portuguese nationality and identity. About the time of the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997, the Portuguese Consul-General estimated the remaining Portuguese community ‘at about 1,000, an aging community with comparatively few people’. The rest had departed long before. Jack Braga could not wait to get his valuable library out of Hong Kong at the first hint of trouble in 1966. Many more left after the serious trouble in 1967. In 1980, John Allen, returning to Hong Kong as Group Staff Controller after postings with the Hongkong Bank elsewhere, found a very different scene. All the Portuguese had gone.

Nearly thirty years later, António Jorge da Silva interviewed some who had gone to America. ‘Before the War none of us ever thought we would leave Hong Kong or Macau. We were born there, it was our home.’ The emigrants of the 1960s and 1970s did not regard themselves as temporary exiles, waiting for the first opportunity to return, as in the grim years of exile between 1942 and 1945. This was a final break with the place that had been home for generations. Asked how the Hong Kong Portuguese should be remembered, one of them responded:

they should be remembered as a people who shared a strong communal bond, who worked hard and played well, who were good cooks and enjoyed their food, who were committed to family, and most importantly, who had the courage to surrender their comfortable lives to seek a better life for their families in countries where they could be fully-fledged citizens.

It is a succinct summation of the views of thousands of others who went to the United States, Canada, Australia, Britain, Portugal and Brazil, there to find a better future.

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1359 John Allen Interview, 28 February 2011.
1361 Eleanor Orth, Washington State. Response to the author’s questionnaire. 11 December 2009. A.M. Jorge da Silva, The Portuguese Community in Hong Kong, vol. 2, p. 75. She added: ‘I enjoyed my life in Hong Kong and feel very privileged to have had all those wonderful experiences and opportunities. But I am immensely grateful for having had the opportunity to immigrate to the U.S., to become a U.S. citizen, and to enjoy a wonderful life in this great country. I not only have no regrets, I am happy and grateful to call the U.S. my home.’
Conclusion

For much of their long presence on the China coast, the Portuguese clung tenaciously to their toehold in Macau. Less than a century of affluence in Macau’s golden age that ended abruptly in 1640 was followed by a grim and very protracted determination to survive. Some prospered, among them the Rosa and Noronha families, both of whom arrived in the eighteenth century. They were forebears of many of the Hong Kong Portuguese, including the Braga family, but by the 1830s, they too had become trapped by the economic decline that accompanied the rise of British and other foreign commerce on the China coast.

It was their good fortune that several determined men, notably João Vicente Rosa Braga and Delfino Noronha moved to Hong Kong in its early years when opportunities were still available and the situation fluid. Later Portuguese emigrants found themselves trapped again and manacled by a British socio-economic colonial system that placed them in a position of permanent inferiority. As Austin Coates succinctly expressed it:

They could not rise. They were not Protestants; they were not freemasons; and they were not really Europeans. As clerks they came, and as clerks they stayed, except for a small handful of professional men who were the natural leaders of the Portuguese community.1362

What made their position tolerable to them was that they were superior in social and economic status to the Chinese, the vast majority of the population. While in Hong Kong they were free from centuries of submission to the mandarins, the people from Macau had learned submission as a cultural norm. Henceforward, they had to be to be submissive to a British rather than a Chinese set of rulers.

In the generation following the first emigration to Hong Kong, in the 1870s, a few saw that they must move away if they were to participate in the vast opportunities for self-advancement that the industrial age offered to the British and other Europeans but not to them. The Pereira family led the way. Two more were João Joaquim Braga, who succeeded in establishing his family in Britain, and his brother Vicente

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Emilio Braga, who seized a golden opportunity in Japan, but at the cost of abandoning his family. A third was Vicente’s youngest son, José Pedro Braga, whose hopes for a career in law in Britain were denied him by a cruel turn of events.

All others, including J.P. Braga on his return to Hong Kong, had then to deal with a rigid and unyielding class system based on race, occupation and location that gave them limited opportunities and expected them to know their place. That meant a position of social inferiority, low pay (but well above the mass of Chinese workers), and exclusion from choice residential areas. An English police officer who arrived in January 1940 summed it up concisely. Hong Kong, he wrote, was ‘layered deep in snobbery.’

The vast majority of Portuguese immigrants, among the lower layers, were swept into the ‘Portuguese clerk class’, with only a few gaining access to the professions or succeeding in business.

J.P. Braga never accepted inferiority. He bestrides this thesis like a colossus, yet his life and career are enigmatic. Like most community leaders, he hungered after imperial honours, despite the contempt with which the colonial system treated him. He had no choice but to submit to it, while at the same time contesting it, yet never combating it successfully. His resolute attempts to change British attitudes had some success, especially in his role as the first Portuguese member of the Hong Kong Legislative Council, but most of the fruits of his labours were reaped by his successors.

He was brought up by his grandfather Delfino Noronha and his mentor Januário Carvalho in an atmosphere of commitment to public affairs and strong community responsibility. Thus by temperament, training and background he was well-equipped to use the mechanisms of the colonial system to create a unique role for himself in public affairs. His son Jack, drafting an unpublished obituary of his father in 1944 spelt out that role in eloquent words:

So nobly did he fulfil his duties that he opened the way to future Portuguese representation as he did in the other official posts which he occupied ... his part in many public questions proved that he was always on the side of the poor and helpless.

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1364 J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/7.2 /17 – Braga, José Pedro.
Nevertheless to succeed in Hong Kong meant to succeed in business. Although he was chairman of two successful companies in the 1930s, J.P. Braga was never thought of as a taipan. In 1996 I asked Caroline Braga what the European businessmen thought of her father. ‘Oh, they despised him’, she replied.\textsuperscript{1365} The frustration he must have felt seldom showed, but the press caught him in a revealing moment attacking ‘the bears of Ice House Street’, Hong Kong’s equivalent of Wall Street.\textsuperscript{1366} Many of those bears were caged some years later at Stanley Internment Camp, while J.P. Braga fled to Macau. Until December 1941 he gladly held British Passport no. 7178.\textsuperscript{1367} In June 1942 he left for Macau as a Portuguese citizen, travelling on Portuguese National Pass No. 3639. During his last two years it seemed that all he had worked for in half a century of public life had been destroyed and that his life’s work was a failure.

Yet in the long run the whole community benefited from his work. Among them were most members of J.P. Braga’s family, beneficiaries of an English education and brought up in the shadow of their father’s strong personal drive and restless aspirations. However, in the years before World War II, they too knew the limitations imposed by race and class. These things were never discussed, and rarely surfaced.

In 1927, Noel Braga befriended an English naval officer, Lieutenant S.J. Beadell, who came several times to the Gospel Hall while his ship HMS Danae was in port. So taken was he by Hong Kong and the friendship he had been shown that he thought of leaving the Royal Navy, joining the staff of China Light and bringing his wife out to Hong Kong. Noel and his family knew what the limits were.

I told Beadell I expected there would be a vacancy in a year’s time and explained the advantages he would have if he got a job in the Company. I warned him at the same time that he would need much grace, if he got the job, to keep on the same terms with us as he is at present. I said, too, that I sincerely trusted, if his wife came out here, that she would come as a real Christian lady, as otherwise, I was afraid, with the Hong Kong atmosphere like what it is, we should not be welcomed by her for very long after she came out.\textsuperscript{1368}

\textsuperscript{1365} Interview with Caroline Braga, 17 October 1996.
\textsuperscript{1366} \textit{Hongkong Telegraph}, 6, 8 October 1932. J.M. Braga Papers MS 4300/14.1/34, fol. 24, 25.
\textsuperscript{1367} In the possession of this writer.
\textsuperscript{1368} Noel Braga diary, 2 November 1927. Beadell remained with the Royal Navy (\textit{Navy List}, 1940).
Some years later, Caroline’s romance with Norman Mackenzie foundered on the same rock once Norman, newly arrived in Hong Kong, became aware of its cultural barriers. Caroline’s mother, Olive, who had nearly fifty years’ experience of being belittled by Hong Kong’s racism, saw clearly what was happening. Her handwriting was almost illegible and her English barely coherent, but what she sought to convey is clear enough. After the war Norman had nothing more to do with Caroline and did not answer her letters. Olive had already seen what would happen, and saw Norman’s attitude to her husband change too. As the war drew to its conclusion, she told her son James:

She has set her heart on him & we all fear the result – she is such a wonderful loving nature just the same as you & just as conscientious – she has never had any male friends & when this man came & made love (with what I believe) no intention but to mix with a nice girl – to keep himself good – he is a “Highbrow” – even his attitude to Father was toleration yet no-one discerned – most of all Father himself feted & made much of – yet this bitter pill to swallow.1369

Despite their palpable sense of inferiority, none of the Hong Kong Portuguese became militants. Not for them was the fiery oratory of the Indian radical M. R. Malik, who, obedient to his Japanese masters, proclaimed with windy rhetoric at a rally on ‘Indian Independence Day’, 26 January 1942, in Statue Square in Hong Kong that ‘British rule in India has been nothing but robbery, jobbery and snobbery’.1370 By implication, this applied to British rule throughout the Empire on which the sun had begun to set.

Their quiescence did not mean that the Hong Kong Portuguese, despite their subservience, were entirely happy with the pre-war status quo. Yet they knew that the economic miracle that Hong Kong became could never have occurred without the presence of the British. They created an enduring legacy of unimpeachable and excellent public administration that was stern and just, if aloof and unyielding. Many of those beneath them came to admire their calm if arrogant control, their firm and usually incorrupt insistence on the rule of law, their business skill, their excellent education system, and the liberalism and common humanity that were always present to a degree. It is these qualities that made J.P. Braga, who in 1929 became the first Portuguese member of the Legislative Council and six years later the first member of

his community to become an Officer of the Order of the British Empire, to support that Empire whole-heartedly. He and his compatriots knew that they were far better off under British rule than they would have been in Macau, mired in economic atrophy.

The disaster of war turned that perception upside down, but only for a time. The British returned, but on borrowed time and in what was clearly now a borrowed place, to adopt Frank Welsh’s apt title.\(^{1371}\) The Portuguese remained quiescent, as did the Chinese while their country remained in a state of turmoil. Eventually the vast Chinese majority began to assert their national identity and place irresistible pressure on the British. John Braga predicted in 1945, ‘the days of the European in Hong Kong are numbered and in the matter of a few years the Chinese will have everything.’\(^{1372}\) There was never any question where the Portuguese stood in this one-sided contest, for the riots of 1967 seemed to them to prefigure another catastrophe akin to the Japanese Occupation a quarter of a century earlier. Thousands emigrated just when it seemed that the situation had stabilised, while people from other countries made their way to Hong Kong to enjoy an unprecedented boom. A few Portuguese remained to share in this, but only a tiny minority of people well-placed to do so. Would the majority have enjoyed the same success had they stayed?

Clearly not. Their subordinate role in the old order was too well defined and too rigid. Neither they nor those above them in the big British banks and commercial firms expected any change in the way things were run. Change, when it arrived in these places, was driven by an aspirational Chinese middle class which was by then well able to push the old hierarchy aside.\(^{1373}\) Moreover, technological change was already rendering the clerk class obsolete. Had the Portuguese clerks stayed, there would soon have been no place for them at all. By leaving when they did, they narrowly escaped being once more trapped in a situation over which they had no control. This time there would have been no place of refuge to which they could escape.

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\(^{1371}\) F. Welsh, *A Borrowed place: the history of Hong Kong.*


A few families eminent in their community had already risen above this predicament. They are discussed in Chapter 13, and their significant role in Hong Kong continues. They saw no need to become part of the great Macanese Diaspora of the 1960s and 1970s. The four unmarried children of J.P. Braga saw no such need either, their careers not at risk. Those with children of their own looked abroad, as earlier Bragas had done. They adopted a different point of view to their father, who in 1940 had told Sir Elly Kadoorie ‘I will stay with Hong Kong through thick and thin’. 1374

They inherited characteristics of two men who had spent much of their lives in Hong Kong. Each made his distinctive impression. Of Delfino Noronha, Government Printer for more than forty years, that was true in a literal sense, as well as in the leading role he came to have in his own community. 1375 Two generations later, this was equally true of his grandson, José Pedro Braga, ‘that great old Hong Kong citizen’, as Henry Ching characterised him. After his death, John Reeves, the British consul in Macau, captured his career in a few words to his widow, Olive. She told her son James:

The B.C. [British Consul] himself – when I thanked him for the kindness shewn after Father’s death remarked “no man has ever done for H.K. what your husband has done”. 1376

His descendants, another two generations later, would choose to make their own impressions elsewhere, in Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States of America. After several centuries of being beholden to others, they and their descendants were at last in control of their own destiny.

1374 J.P. Braga to Sir Elly Kadoorie, 11 July 1940. Hong Kong Heritage Project, A02-15.
1375 ‘The most important among them was Delfino Noronha, an outstanding figure in the Portuguese position in society … on his level a big man’, Austin Coates told a conference in Manila. ‘Rizal in Hong Kong’, in Proceedings of the International Congress on Rizal, 4-8 December 1961, p. 288.
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MANUSCRIPT

Braga Family Papers – introductory note

Important sources for this thesis include three rich collections of letters and postcards written by several members of the Braga family during and immediately after the war years, 1942-1945.

Several other collections have also been used. These consist of personal papers as well as letters. They are listed below the three World War II collections.

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Braga Family Papers – World War II letters

James Braga

The first is a collection of letters made by James Braga, then living in Chicago, who spent many hours typing copies of letters sent with difficulty by other family members from Macau from 1942 to 1945. A few of the original letters were retained. After the war ended, James contacted his siblings asking them to send him any letters they might have as a permanent record of these unforgettable times. Only a few people had kept letters, principally his mother Olive and his sister Caroline, including a small but extremely important collection of Prisoner of War postcards from Maude at Stanley Internment Camp. Several family members travelled across the world in 1945 and 1946 in the whole process of massive adjustment to a vastly changed world. These were Maude, Clement, Noel, Hugh, John and Mary. No letters were sent by them to James, presumably because they all went out in the clear-up necessary when they left the Far East.

The collection commences in June 1942 when several letters were sent to James from Macau, and concludes in mid-1946. In December 1986 James, then aged 79, sent me his collection. It will be housed in the National Library of Australia on completion of this project. The collection is cited here as the ‘James Braga Papers’.

Paul Braga

The second significant collection of letters was kept in two folders by Paul Braga. This is part of a collection of papers from Paul Braga, sent to me by his daughter Frances in 1993. Paul wrote to his brother Hugh and sister-in-law Nora on 17 January 1986, concluding his letter, ‘Is Stuart still interested in writing about the Braga-Pollard roots? Ask him to let me know, and if “yes”, I would like him to have some material that came into my possession at different times.’ Paul died in 1989, and it is presumed that the letters and other papers sent to me by Frances comprise this collection. The citation for this collection is ‘Paul Braga Papers’.

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José Maria (Jack) Braga

The third collection is the file of family letters kept by Jack in the normal course of his methodical and systematic collection of materials of all kinds. These papers are in the National Library of Australia, forming sub-series 2.3 of the J.M. Braga collection, National Library of Australia, MS 4300. They are cited in the footnotes of this thesis as MS 4300/2.3, the notation used by the National Library of Australia.

Thus of the twelve Braga siblings, four, Jack, James, Paul and Caroline, kept the letters they received from other family members. Jack and Paul kept carbon copies of letters they typed. Without them, Chapters 9, 10, 11 and 12 of this thesis could not have been written.

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Braga Family Papers – other collections

Anthony Manuel (Tony) Braga

Tony Braga also retained his papers, including carbon copies of outgoing correspondence. However, most were lost after his death in 1994. Some were recovered and are held by his niece, Mrs Sheila Potter, Sydney. These are cited as ‘A.M. Braga Papers’.

A quite separate file contains letters and other papers sent to this writer between ca.1970 and 1991, and is separately cited as ‘A.M. Braga file’. The most important of these documents is a lengthy memorandum Tony wrote for an interview with Beverley Howells of the *South China Morning Post*, 8 April 1987. This led to the publication of an article about the Braga family in the *Sunday Morning Post*, 31 May 1987.

This file is cited as ‘A.M. Braga file’.

Hugh Braga

Hugh Braga, father of this writer, carefully culled his files towards the end of his life, keeping only a small number of personal papers that were made available to a group who successfully nominated him for the award of Senior Citizen of New South Wales for the year 1984. They are cited as ‘Hugh Braga file’.

José Pedro Braga

J.P. Braga’s eldest daughter, Jean, kept a small but important collection of her father’s early papers between 1886 and 1902, but nothing more recent. These were essential for Chapters 7 and 8. They are cited as ‘J.P. Braga Papers’. Passed to this writer following Jean’s death in 1986, they are now in the National Library of Australia. MS Acc08/113.
Noel Braga

Noel Braga kept a detailed diary between 1924 and 1928, which was made available by his daughter Mrs Janyce Luff, in May 2010. It was particularly useful for Chapters 8 and 10. It is cited as ‘Noel Braga Diary’.

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Hong Kong Heritage Project

This privately funded archive documents both the business and private activities of the Kadoorie family, set within the context of the development of Hong Kong in general and the Jewish community in particular. It holds

Correspondence from J.P. Braga, Hong Kong to Sir Elly Kadoorie, Shanghai, 1938. File A02/15.

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[N.B. The title ‘Colonial Secretary’ is used throughout this documentation in two different senses. The first refers to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, London, the Minister responsible for the administration of all Crown Colonies, and the governors’ immediate superior. Secondly, it refers to the second-in-command in the colony, and the governors’ immediate subordinate. Context always provides meaning].


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Index cards compiled by the Rev. Carl Smith (1918-2008), Hong Kong and Macau.

This collection of more than 139,000 cards, chiefly containing biographical information, was compiled by Carl Smith from ca. 1960 until shortly before his death. It is regarded by researchers into the history of Hong Kong and Macau as an indispensable research tool. It was described in a note by Elizabeth Sinn in the Newsletter of the Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch, May 2007. The importance of what is known as the Carl Smith Collection is emphasised in the Introduction to M. Holdsworth and C. Munn (eds), Dictionary of Hong Kong Biography, referring appreciatively to ‘the index cards he had compiled, containing data on tens of thousands of individuals gathered from government reports, newspapers, church records, tombstones and a plethora of other sources … Many of the entries here would have been impossible without his groundwork’ (p. ix). There is also an article by the editors on Smith in the Dictionary itself (pp. 397-398). The Carl Smith Collection is not itself a primary source, but gives access to obscure primary information.

Smith’s cards are held in two locations: the Hong Kong Central Library and the Arquivo Histórico, Macau. The Hong Kong collection has been digitised and indexed by the Hong Kong Public Records Office, which has prepared an introductory note for the on-line index:

Citation of the Carl Smith cards must therefore indicate which location is referred to. Following consultation in January 2011 with Marie Imelda Macleod, Director of the Arquivo Histórico de Macau, the following forms of citation were decided upon. Smith’s sources are given where possible. Two examples are:

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