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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2016.1227029>

Title	‘Constituting a problem in themselves’ : countering covert Chinese activity in India : the life and death of the Chinese Intelligence Section, 1944-1946
Authors	Murphy, CJ
Publication title	Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History
Publisher	Routledge
Type	Article
USIR URL	This version is available at: http://usir.salford.ac.uk/id/eprint/39400/
Published Date	2016

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‘Constituting a problem in themselves’

Countering covert Chinese activity in India: The Life and Death of the Chinese

Intelligence Section, 1944-1946

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Abstract

This article explores the actions taken to address the issue of covert Chinese activities in India during the Second World War identified by Force 136, the Far East incarnation of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), which resulted in the creation of the Chinese Intelligence Section (CIS) in early 1945. It considers this development within the wider context of security intelligence in relation to British India, which has been the subject of increased academic study in recent years as a result of the increased availability of relevant archival material. The need for CIS to be established draws attention to the parameters within which the various intelligence and security agencies operated, their attention focused primarily upon clearly identifiable threats to British rule, particularly nationalism and communism. The issue of covert Chinese activity in India did not fit easily within this framework; the manner in which SOE’s concerns were ultimately addressed illustrates how the prevailing colonial security mindset shaped the conceptual horizons of security intelligence activity.

Keywords

Security intelligence, surveillance, special operations, Second World War, imperial security.

Article

This article explores the actions taken to address the issue of covert Chinese activities in India during the Second World War identified by Force 136, the Far East incarnation of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), which resulted in the creation of the Chinese Intelligence Section (CIS) in early 1945. In so doing, it illustrates a unique response on the part of the

Special Operations Executive (SOE) towards foreign nationals in its employ who were suspected of conducting a dual role; specifically, its Nationalist (KMT) Chinese agents, who were thought to be engaged in intelligence gathering in India on behalf of Chiang Kai-Shek while contributing to the covert war against the Japanese. The study also offers something more than an interesting footnote to the history of SOE, and can be placed within the wider context of intelligence and security issues at the twilight of British rule in India. SOE's efforts to address its concerns about Chinese recruits, along with the ultimate form taken by the Chinese Intelligence Section, provide us with an insight into the limitations of the work of the intelligence and security authorities, in both Delhi and London, which focused their attention, unsurprisingly, upon those threats that had clear potential to damage British interests. Through the study of the specific problem faced by SOE in terms of the reliability of its Chinese agents, this article aims to explore how security concerns that failed to fit easily within the parameters of imperial security were dealt with; specifically, how the problem posed by India's Chinese population was addressed.

Increased availability of archival material from the 1990s onwards has resulted in greater academic interest in the role of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus during the twilight years of the British empire. Studies that explore the activities of the various agencies either in specific imperial territories, or in relation to the British empire more generally, have followed. A number of works have explored security and intelligence issues in relation to British India, building upon Richard Popplewell's pioneering *Intelligence and Imperial Defence*, which chronicled the development of a security-intelligence apparatus in the early years of the twentieth century that, while small scale, was nevertheless global in its reach.¹ Further details about that apparatus have since emerged. Patrick French has illustrated the part played by the security and intelligence authorities in the maintenance of British rule in India beyond the 1920s and until independence, pointing in particular to the 'central role' of the London-based Indian Political Intelligence (IPI), which was 'devoted to the internal and

external security of British India', working in conjunction with the Delhi-based Intelligence Bureau (DIB or IB), the Indian equivalent of MI5.² Kate O'Malley's research into the links between Indian and Irish independence movements has provided further insight into IPI operations.³ More recent studies have seen a shift in organisational emphasis away from the Bureau and IPI; both Christopher Andrew and Calder Walton have drawn attention to the role of the Security Service (MI5), emphasising its imperial credentials and exploring its role during, and in the aftermath of, independence, culminating in the agreement of the Indian authorities for an MI5 Security Liaison Officer to be stationed with the Bureau.⁴ Andrew and Walton also emphasise the distinction between the activities of MI5 and police special branches, which have been the subject of some attention in relation to colonial security matters, arguing that 'colonial policing, which involved law and order, was not the same as imperial security intelligence, which involved national security, and operated in a realm outside the confines of law enforcement'.⁵ Attention has also been drawn to MI5's continued interest in independent India as a member of the Commonwealth.⁶

Through these studies, which provide an insight into the work of the various intelligence and security agencies concerned, we can discern what were considered, from the British perspective, to be the main threats to internal security in India, at the heart of which lay Indian nationalism, and the struggle for independence. During the early years of the twentieth century, security was threatened by the challenge to British rule posed by the Indian revolutionary movement, whose 'revolutionary terrorism' included an assassination attempt on the viceroy, Lord Hardinge, in December 1912.⁷ While some continued to advocate the use of force to achieve their goal, the nonviolent path adopted by Congress during the interwar years was complicated by the emergence of Communism, which added a new dimension to the nationalist threat to the security of British India. As Walton notes, while MI5, along with IPI and the Bureau continued 'to keep a close watch on the main anti-colonial political leaders in India', the main focus 'increasingly became communist agents travelling between Britain and

India’, with files being opened on ‘many Congress and Muslim league leaders...not because the intelligence agencies viewed Congress and the Muslim league as “subversive”...but because some of their members were known or suspected to be closely affiliated with communism’.⁸ All of this supports Richard Aldrich’s observation that ‘British colonial governments in India, Malaya and Hong Kong...developed, over decades, effective, if narrowly focused, security intelligence services designed to address internal threats from nationalists, communists or other types of “agitators”’.⁹ But what about other concerns and perceived threats to Indian internal security that failed to conform to this prevailing British colonial mindset? As Aldrich continues, the same security apparatus effectively ignored ‘the problems of external foreign threats and potential adversaries in Asia’, such as Japan and China. Concerns over covert Chinese activity in India, an issue that blurred the distinction between internal and external threats, do not figure prominently in the existing studies detailed above, which tend – reasonably enough – to follow the grain of the newly available archival material. This article does not seek to claim the discovery of a ‘missing dimension’ in the existing literature. Rather, the absence can be considered an accurate reflection of the priorities of the intelligence and security agencies themselves. As such, its significance lies in what it suggests about the limitations of the British colonial security mindset.

I

While remaining low throughout the nineteenth century, Chinese settlement in India, focused primarily upon Calcutta, began to grow during the early twentieth century, in part a consequence of the ongoing struggle between the Nationalists and Communists in China during the interwar years.¹⁰ The figure continued to rise following the onset of the Second World War, as Chinese troops were despatched to India to shore up British forces in Burma. In late 1942, over 20,000 Chinese soldiers arrived at Ramgarh, close to the Burmese border, where they ‘established a little extra-territorial concession’.¹¹ This development led the

Government of India to establish the Chinese Intelligence Wing (CIW) under Brigadier Walter Cawthorn, Director of Intelligence from India Command.¹² Alongside these developments, the Delhi-based Intelligence Bureau (IB), the organisation responsible for security intelligence throughout India, also began to extend its interest in Chinese affairs. Initially, the Bureau's attention was focused upon a very specific security issue; the various ways in which the Japanese were feared to be employing Chinese agents to gather intelligence.¹³ Over the following months, the Bureau began to turn its attention to the activities of India's Chinese population more widely. A significant shift took place in August 1941, at which point the Bureau acknowledged that 'very little' was known about Chinese activity in India, and suggested that it 'would be worthwhile paying special attention to all forms of Chinese activity in this country, as constituting a problem in themselves'.¹⁴ This development was supported by the Government of India, which ordered the registration of Chinese nationals a few months later – a step which, a Bureau report noted, 'will provide information regarding the numbers of Chinese in this country, and will enable intelligence authorities to gauge the size of the problem with which they are faced in improving information about them'.¹⁵ The 'Japanese' section of the weekly DIB reports was subsequently renamed 'Japanese and Chinese', and information concerning a wide range of issues was now recorded, including illegal Chinese immigration to India, Chinese attitudes towards Congress and Chinese intelligence gathering in India. At one point, concerns over public order were also raised. A report from January 1943 drew attention to an episode of friction between Indian and Chinese workers on a crowded train between Sealdah and Kanchrapara, where many Chinese workers were employed in RAF workshops. Believed to be the result of 'the superior attitude adopted by Chinese technicians and craftsmen whose earnings are often three times those of Indians doing similar work', when the train came to an emergency stop some 2,000 Indians were reported to have attacked a group of 500 Chinese, resulting in serious injuries to a handful of those concerned, while a larger number 'received injuries which required treatment at a hospital', alongside the theft of

money and personal possessions.¹⁶ In April 1943, the Bureau's thoughts turned to the implications for post-war India. Under the sub-heading of 'Chinese intelligence activities in India – Restaurants', its weekly survey drew attention to 'large numbers of Chinese seamen' who 'have left their ships and are living unemployed in certain Indian ports'. With 'no desire to return to sea', many of them had set up restaurants. Looking ahead to the end of the war, the report noted that 'there is but little doubt that those who are able to establish flourishing business connections may make determined efforts to stay on. The possibility of their being used in connection with the Chinese cultural approach to India or as a cover for the collection of commercial intelligence (for Chinese post-war planning and expansion) has been suggested'.¹⁷ During a discussion about the problem in the summer of 1944, Sir Denys Pilditch, Director of the Bureau, noted that 'the Chinese Government are extremely interested in India's internal problems and the steady infiltration of Chinese into India, mostly through illegal channels, is one which is a continual source of worry to the Central Government of India'.¹⁸

As noted above, it was possible for the Bureau to frame some of its interest in Chinese affairs within an imperial security context – no less a figure than Chiang Kai-Shek himself touched a nerve through his support for Indian independence. Churchill was keen that Chiang should make speeches 'which favoured the British line' during a visit to India in 1942. Chiang did not cooperate, choosing instead to make clear 'his preference for the nationalist leaders over his colonial hosts', and turning somersaults at a picnic with Nehru.¹⁹ He continued to make further interjections into Indian politics in support of Congress that came to the attention of both the Government of India and the War Cabinet in London. Later in the year, at a meeting with the British Ambassador following the arrest of the Congress leadership, he 'urged that a peaceful solution should still be sought', stating that China 'could not assume a policy which would estrange Indian feeling, and that it was important that Indians should feel that one member, at least, of the Allied nations was in sympathy with them'. To that end, he 'asked that

personal messages from himself should be delivered to the Indian leaders under arrest', a request Linlithgow refused. The Ambassador was subsequently 'instructed to represent strongly to the Generalissimo that attempts by the Chinese Government to communicate directly with the Congress leaders of [sic] publish statements in China displaying sympathy with the Congress party must, in the existing circumstances, seriously handicap the effort of the Government of India to maintain law and order'.²⁰ It would not have been a great leap to associate certain aspects of Chinese behaviour in India with the attitude displayed by the Generalissimo; for example, by the end of 1942 the Government of India 'had increasing evidence of Chinese political intrigues in India which involved a serious misuse of diplomatic privilege'; the Chinese Commissioner 'had been handing messages to the Indian press criticising Government handling of the Indian internal problem, while his Principal Secretary was known to have Congress connections and to be employing members of Congress in his office'.²¹ While the security intelligence authorities could find examples of dubious behaviour on the part of elements of India's Chinese population, it was more difficult for them to explain what lay behind it. In this regard, there appears to have been little more sophisticated on offer than a vague notion of 'advantage', be it on a national or personal level, that was heavily reinforced through disparaging, stereotypical remarks about the Chinese character, which emphasised such traits as opportunism and self-interest. When discussing Chinese support for independence in October 1942, Lord Linlithgow described the Chinese as 'poker players. Their sole interest in this business is the future of China'.²² In July 1941 the Intelligence Bureau drew attention to the 'report of a secret agent' which detailed 'considerable agitation' against the Chinese Consul-General at Calcutta, C.C. Huang, among the local Chinese population on account of his 'strict investigation' of passport applications. It was believed that the action was sponsored by 'certain Chinese merchants in Calcutta' who, having tried to cheat customs regulations, discovered that Huang 'would not play their game and refused to plead for them once he had satisfied himself that they had in fact offended against the Customs regulations'.²³

Rather than pointing to the Consul General's actions, the agent's report was considered 'a reminder of the capacity for intrigue of the average Chinese, when a question of personal advantage arises'.²⁴ A Weekly Survey distributed by the Bureau in May 1942 drew attention to what was considered 'the casual attitude of the Chinese towards essential regulations and formalities', while a survey from August noted that 'During the last six months the problem of the Chinese in India has become increasingly troublesome', the situation explained as the result of 'lack of discipline, and open contempt for passport and security regulations'.²⁵ The report openly acknowledged that 'much of the trouble they have caused has not been of direct interest to the security authorities', but nevertheless maintained that 'a potential threat to security is inseparable from the presence of large Chinese communities in areas of military importance'. The situation was 'aggravated by the variety of the Chinese organisations, official and quasi-official, the constant changes in their personnel, the sometimes rather vague definitions of the latter's duties, and the continuous two-way stream of passenger traffic between China and India'. Such confusion provided 'favourable cover' not only to 'those who may be working against the Chungking regime or for the enemy', but also for 'unscrupulous Chinese, whose main preoccupation seems to be to line their own pockets'.²⁶ It was within this existing atmosphere of growing concern over Chinese activity in India that Force 136, the Far Eastern incarnation of the British Special Operations Executive (SOE), came to appreciate its own Chinese security problem.

II

Force 136 was slow to get to grips with security affairs in general, and to appreciate the potential security risk posed by its Nationalist Chinese recruits in particular. Formed in the aftermath of the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk and the fall of France, SOE was designed to both encourage and develop resistance movements in Nazi occupied territory, and to carry out targeted acts of sabotage.²⁷ SOE's immediate focus was

occupied Europe, but it was not long before the organisation turned its attention further afield. An Oriental Mission was established in Singapore in May 1941, under Valentine Killery. This was followed by an India Mission headed by Colin Mackenzie, which took on many of the staff of the Oriental Mission following the fall of Singapore to Japanese forces in February 1942, eventually becoming known as Force 136.²⁸

Force 136 lacked dedicated Security provision until early 1944, in marked contrast to developments at SOE headquarters in London, where a Security Section was established within three months of the creation of SOE itself.²⁹ The need for such a section was recognised during the summer of 1943, and resulted in the appointment of Lt Col John RE Guild as Chief Security Officer, who arrived to take up the position in March 1944, followed by further security personnel.³⁰ Considered a ‘shrewd and practical “Business man”’ who possessed ‘plenty of initiative, drive and cunning’, Guild spent his first three months reviewing the security situation in India, visiting all Force 136 establishments.³¹ He began his first report to SOE London by noting that ‘By and large, the operational and internal security of Force 136 is good’, describing the mission staff as ‘definitely security minded’.³² However, Guild felt that there were certain aspects of security that required further attention. These were the product of specific regional circumstances, and he advocated the development of ‘entirely new’ methods to address them, arguing that ‘attempts to adapt European methods to the Asiatic field’ would prove ineffective.³³ Alongside problems caused by geography and language,³⁴ Guild expressed concern over the ‘types of agents recruited’; of the 456 recruits currently undergoing training, he observed that just under half were Chinese.³⁵ In contrast to the attitude that had previously prevailed at the Mission, support from the Nationalist Chinese authorities having initially been much appreciated, Guild felt that the Chinese recruits represented ‘by far the most important problem facing the Security Section’.³⁶ Beyond a general concern about Chinese security, the perceived weakness of which led Guild to observe that ‘we can never be sure that we are not infiltrated by Japanese agents’, of more pressing concern was the fact that one of the sources of

recruits was Dai Li, Head of the Military Affairs Commission Bureau of Investigation and Statistics (MSB, or Jungton), part of Chiang Kai-shek's intelligence service.³⁷ For Guild, this connection constituted a 'dangerous security problem':

There seems to be little doubt that Dai Li's main interest in supplying us with recruits lies in the complementary information he can obtain from them as to British plans, both military and political, in the Far East, quite apart from the information as to the training and use made of this personnel, which must be officially communicated to him.³⁸

SOE made it a point of policy to 'abstain from Security measures of a "snooping" character and to rely upon close relations between the Security department of the organization and the appropriate outside Security authorities to bring to notice any personal Security cases', typically resulting in the involvement of the Security Service (MI5).³⁹ However, neither the Intelligence Bureau nor the Chinese Intelligence Wing could adequately fulfil that function for Force 136. Despite its reported interest in Chinese affairs, the Bureau lacked a dedicated Chinese Section, while the main role of CIW appears to have been censoring mail bound for China, simultaneously gathering intelligence from its contents.⁴⁰ As such, Guild proposed the creation of a unit within Force 136 itself, designed to both 'bring to the surface any possible Japanese agents' and uncover 'Chinese intelligence methods'.⁴¹ This marked a significant departure from SOE's established procedure for dealing with security cases. Nevertheless, it was looked upon favourably both within Force 136 and beyond: it received the 'strong support' of the Commander of the Mission, Colin Mackenzie, while at SOE Headquarters in London the plan was approved by the organisation's Director of Intelligence and Security, Archie Boyle.⁴² Perhaps most significantly, the plan won the support of Sir Denys. Aware that the cooperation of the Bureau would be 'essential if anything is to be done in this direction', Guild had been careful to discuss the proposal with him 'in detail'. Sir Denys recognised that such an organisation would 'doubtless be able to supply the I.B. with some valuable information if our

agents were in any way successful in unearthing Chinese intelligence methods in this country'. Promising Guild that he would provide 'all possible help',⁴³ he proceeded to cable Indian Political Intelligence (IPI), the organisation that monitored Indian nationalism across Europe and acted as liaison for the Bureau in London, 'asking that all support may be given to the scheme'.⁴⁴ His support was further reflected in his willingness to share the financial burden involved, agreeing to 'bear cost of administration and all other expenses'.⁴⁵

Despite receiving such support, the difficulties experienced in finding the 'extremely highly trained' officer that Guild believed was needed to run the Section meant that progress was slow. Guild thought that such an officer could be provided 'from one of M.I.5's affiliated organisations which have conducted counter espionage abroad', but any hopes that MI5 would be able to help proved unfounded.⁴⁶ Forwarding a copy of Guild's Security Report to 'Tar' Robertson, Head of MI5's B1(a) Section, John Senter, Head of SOE Security in London, asked whether a suitable officer could be seconded to SOE 'to deal with the Chinese problem', noting that SOE would be 'most grateful' for such help.⁴⁷ Having recently 'sent a great many officers to work in 21 Army Group' MI5 did not relish the prospect of losing any more, a sentiment that was reflected in Robertson's reply.⁴⁸ Such a lack of support from MI5 slowed the scheme down considerably, although the organisation appreciated the problem; Robertson acknowledged that Tai Li's intelligence organisation was 'an extremely good one', designed 'to collect the maximum amount of intelligence that it can from China's allies' for transmission to Chungking. As far as Robertson was concerned, this made Tai Li a 'highly undesirable' source of agents 'from a security point of view', concluding that it would be 'better' for SOE 'to have no agents at all'.⁴⁹ Undeterred by MI5's concerns, and despite the continued absence of a suitable officer to run the Section, a formal application for funding was prepared for SOE's Director of Finance, John Venner, by the Deputy Director for SOE's Overseas Groups and Missions, Lt Col L.F. Sheridan. The scheme was now presented as a collaborative effort that would see SOE work in tandem with the Intelligence Bureau. Sheridan explained that it

was impractical for SOE to proceed alone ('our relations with the Chinese would be fatally damaged if it became known that we ourselves were enquiring into the Chinese agents or contacts that had been provided for us'), but equally unreasonable to expect the Bureau to take on the extra work ('D.I.B's answer would probably be that while they agreed on the necessity for a Chinese Department for general purposes, it is not reasonable to ask them to undertake a great deal of work for S.O.E. without S.O.E. making some contribution').⁵⁰ As such, an 'amalgam' was proposed, 'whereby D.I.B. set up a Chinese Department, receiving some assistance, financial or otherwise, from S.O.E.'⁵¹ While the main objective of the proposal was to bolster Force 136 security, addressing the issue of the 'numerous Chinese agents and supervisors sent out to us... whose loyalty is primarily to the Chinese Government', it was clear that the Government of India also stood to gain: 'in investigating our problems the Department would certainly unearth ramifications not connected with S.O.E. but damaging to the Government of India', including 'Chinese illegal infiltration into India', smuggling activity, and 'the activities of the Chinese Intelligence Service in India, which are known to be extensive'.⁵² Both aspects of the scheme were considered to be mutually reinforcing; Sheridan explained how 'in exploring on their own initiative channels by which secret communications or money flow from China to India, D.I.B. may well trace sources of leakage of S.O.E. plans'. Considered 'in the nature of an experiment', funding for the scheme was only requested for two years, thereby limiting SOE's financial liability in the context of a war that was considered likely to continue for some time. At the end of this period, 'the matter would come up for review'. Venner approved the proposal.⁵³

The continuing need for the Section was reiterated by Mackenzie in December. Writing to Boyle, he expressed his hope 'that the right man may be found for the Counter Espionage scheme, as I consider it to be of very great importance'. This importance had been heightened by the decision to continue training agents in Calcutta. While this had been based on sound practical considerations, Mackenzie pointed out that Sir Denys had admitted that 'security in

the Calcutta area is practically out of the question...it is therefore essential that we should do everything humanly possible to prevent leakages or interference in connection with our agents. GUILD's scheme is the only way I can see for effectively dealing with this problem'.⁵⁴ That the scheme would benefit the Government of India also continued to stand in its favour. Mackenzie suggested that its takeover by the Bureau at the end of the war ('providing it was working properly') was a *fait accompli*, and felt that this constituted 'a strong recommendation in its favour':

I am sure that the India Office will strongly support the view that there is going to be a major Chinese problem in India after the war and an agency of this kind would be of great assistance to the Home Department, Government of India.⁵⁵

Progress was finally made on finding a suitable candidate to run the Section later in the month. Sir George Moss, who advised SOE about its work in the region, suggested Lt Col Kenneth Morrison Bourne, and enquiries were made about his availability.⁵⁶ Born in November 1893, Bourne had been a member of the Shanghai Municipal Police from 1919, becoming Commissioner in 1938.⁵⁷ In Canada on leave when war broke out, and 'having his leave pay only', he subsequently found employment with British Security Co-ordination (BSC) in New York, the wartime body responsible for liaison between the British and American intelligence communities.⁵⁸ Bourne was described as a 'first-class executive' by an unnamed SIS officer, and 'a man of experience and ability'.⁵⁹ When approached, he proved 'keen' to take the job, and BSC had 'no objection' to his release.⁶⁰ Bourne arrived in India in February 1945, with instructions to report directly to Sir Denys Pilditch, not ('repeat not') to Force 136.⁶¹ Sir Denys wrote to Vickery at IPI on 22 February, noting that Bourne had arrived safely and observing that 'He appears to me just the sort of man we want to help us out in our present difficulty... I am extremely grateful to S.O.E. for having arranged to send him over'.⁶²

III

Bourne was introduced at a meeting at the office of the Commissioner of the Calcutta Police, Mr Rae, on 24 February.⁶³ The minutes of the meeting record that Rae was initially ‘slightly suspicious’ – perhaps unsurprisingly, given that this was the first occasion on which he had heard about the plan. However, when it was explained that ‘there were no strings attached...and that, in fact, the organisation was initiated to aid the Police in Calcutta while fulfilling a certain number of Force 136 intelligence requirements’, Rae became ‘considerably more enthusiastic’.⁶⁴ Overtly part of the Calcutta Police, it was agreed that Bourne’s Section would be housed in Security Control, Calcutta. Bourne’s duties were outlined as:

- (a) An investigation of the Chinese Intelligence Service in India, its methods and reporting centres.
- (b) An investigation of Chinese underground channels of communication between India and China, with special attention to C.N.A.C. [China National Aviation Corporation] and Chinese Broadcast Station, Calcutta.
- (c) Surveillance of contacts between Chinese students, agents and supervisors employed by Force 136 and other Chinese in India.
- (d) The introduction, for some months, of a C.I.S. agent into Ceylon, to observe contacts between Force 136 Chinese and local Chinese and to investigate any Chinese underground channels of communication between Ceylon and India, or elsewhere.
- (e) The detention of possible Sino-Japanese agents in India.⁶⁵

Strict precautions were put in place to ensure that the connection between CIS and Force 136 remained secret. In all written correspondence, Bourne’s section was to be referred to as ‘Bristol’. Only nine Force 136 officers were to be told about its existence, while Major K. Tosh, a Force 136 Security Officer, was designated as the only contact between Force 136 and CIS – and even here contact was to be made through a cut out.⁶⁶ Such strict secrecy was also to

be observed beyond the confines of Force 136. Sir Denys introduced Bourne to Brigadier Walter Cawthorn, DMI GHQ India, simply as ‘a new officer transferred to him for special duties in Calcutta, without any reference to his present or future contacts with Force 136’, while Col Fox Holmes, who as head of the Chinese Intelligence Wing had proved himself ‘a trifle too curious about the writers of Chinese letters he was asked to censor’, was also to remain unaware of the existence of the new Section. The meeting ‘closed in a good atmosphere’, Bourne having ‘made an extremely good impression on all those present’.

The enthusiasm expressed in Calcutta was not echoed when the minutes were received in London, as the duties outlined went far beyond what SOE had been expecting. Boyle felt that the directive was ‘far too all-embracing’, noting that points (a), (b) and (e) encroached upon the ‘proper functions of an Intelligence-Security Service’.⁶⁷ He believed that the actual ‘requirements of Force 136’ were adequately contained within points (c) and (d), and that those ‘should have sufficed for the directive’.⁶⁸ Boyle expressed his concerns in a letter to Mackenzie, noting that the document strayed far ‘outside any proper S.O.E. charter’. Pointing out that ‘we are not a Security authority’, Boyle was keen to avoid treading on departmental toes.⁶⁹ Bourne’s new section also faced early difficulties in India, as it found itself almost immediately merged with the existing Chinese Intelligence Wing.

Little material detailing the subsequent activities of CIS has survived, save for a detailed report written by Bourne in August which provides some insight into how the work of the Section proceeded to develop, alongside his ‘ideas as to the future’ of the section.⁷⁰ Forwarding the report to Mackenzie, in a lengthy covering letter Guild outlined the difficulties Bourne had faced. While the proposed amalgamation with CIW had been avoided, the Commissioner of the Calcutta Police, Mr Rae, had proceeded to take ‘little or no interest’ in the Section, while Bourne also had to work with the ‘notoriously difficult’ Captain Tolson, DIB’s representative in Calcutta. ‘Fortunately’, Guild reported, through the exercise of ‘a great deal of tact’, Bourne had ‘been able to establish cordial relations’ with him.⁷¹ Guild also

pointed to the replacement of Sir Denys with the ‘fearsome’ Norman Smith, who ‘certainly’ took less interest in the work of the Section than his predecessor.⁷²

By August, Bourne was running five agents, under the code-names ‘Mayfield’, ‘Robin’, ‘Heathfield’, ‘Rotherfield’ and ‘Tony’ (who had two sub-agents, both of whom were known as ‘Chalmers’), and hoped that a further agent, ‘Benenden’, would soon arrive from Chungking.⁷³ Different agents were used for different aspects of the Section’s work (‘TONY for instance is for rough work when a disregard of the letter of the law may be desirable, while MAYFIELD obtains information in more respectable circles. ROBIN and HEATHFIELD are good in local criminal activity’), and Bourne hoped to ‘obtain a few more agents as opportunity offers possibly through the recommendation of satisfactory men already employed’.⁷⁴ He went on to detail the two key activities of his Section. The first dealt with SOE’s concern, through the identification of ‘any members of Force 136 Chinese Staff who associated with undesirables or who arouse suspicions’. Bourne explained that a Card Index of all Chinese staff had been created, allowing for quick identification of those who were a cause of concern. One such agent, Liu Po Nan, had been cleared, while another investigation was ongoing. Yet despite being the reason why the section had been created, Bourne pointed out that his ability to carry out such investigations was limited:

It is impossible without exposing the connection of this office with Force 136 to turn my agents on to numerous Chinese in 136 but a few selected cases can be managed, and for the rest a continuous check of agents reports with our Card Index is the best we can do.

In contrast, while there were limitations on what could be achieved in relation to the Force 136 security problem, it became clear that the concerns communicated from London had fallen upon deaf ears, as Bourne noted that his section was also ‘extensively engaged’ in a wider investigation of ‘the crime and political set up in [the] Calcutta Chinese Community’. His investigative work involved twelve separate ‘lines of enquiry’, which included the

investigation of suspected Chinese spies (particularly those in contact with British Forces); opium gangs; gambling gangs; criminal gangs; smuggling gangs and Chinese secret societies, while also keeping abreast of 'Chinese Policies in Burma, Siam, Malay and India'. The development of the Section's work along these lines was likely influenced by Bourne's time with the Shanghai Municipal Police, a fusion of both his experience of criminal Chinese activity and exposure to the prevailing attitudes towards the Chinese population. In terms of criminal activity, Bourne could certainly speak with some authority. He pointed to the situation that had developed in the French Concession during the late 1920s, when the 'chief gangsters...became so powerful through opium, drugs and gambling, and even kidnapping, that they could practically defy their own government'.⁷⁵ He also drew attention to the connections between organised crime and politics, highlighting the case of Tu Yueh-sheng, head of the 'Green Gang' who had assisted Chiang in his purge of Chinese communists from the KMT in 1927: 'he did not do this for nothing and he remained the greatest underworld power right up to 1937'.⁷⁶ At the same time, Bourne also brought with him something of the prevailing attitude towards the Chinese character widely held in interwar Shanghai, which considered all Chinese to be 'unreliable, corrupt, inefficient, inaccurate and so on'.⁷⁷ Indeed, Robert Bickers has drawn attention to the fact that the very terms of service of the Shanghai Municipal Police themselves stated that 'the criminal classes were chiefly Chinese', and that the Chinese, be they members of the police or the general population, 'needed watching',⁷⁸ a view Bourne now applied to the situation in India, arguing that its Chinese population 'needed watching continuously'.⁷⁹ His justification for such surveillance drew heavily upon a stereotype of the Chinese character; while having 'many good qualities' and being an 'agreeable cheerful people', Bourne nevertheless characterised the Chinese as 'sly and clever...to turn a Chinese back if he sights safe profits, whether honest or dishonest, is a major operation'.⁸⁰ These qualities formed the basis of Bourne's concerns for the future.

IV

Amid the ‘hastily arranged bonfires’ that accompanied the transition to independence, as ‘Nationalist parties that had previously been the principal targets of colonial security organizations were suddenly transformed into their prospective political masters’, the issue of covert Chinese activity in India provided a point of continuity, an issue that in many respects transcended the question of who was in charge.⁸¹ Bourne believed that Chinese activities in India ‘should be kept under supervision so long as British interests are in any way concerned’, which meant looking beyond the cessation of hostilities. He argued that ‘organised counter intelligence’ should continue post-war as he was in ‘no doubt’ that the Chinese Nationalists were ‘taking a great interest in their “Overseas Chinese”’, and that ‘So long as British interests are concerned it will be of first importance to be a jump ahead of K.M.T. plans to exploit British Political difficulties to their own advantage’. Bourne saw a threat that would only be heightened by the end of British rule, arguing that ‘there is little doubt both the K.M.T. and individual Chinese have an eye on India, Burma, Ceylon and the Strait Settlements in the hope that with lessening British control they may step in’.⁸²

A similar point was made in London by a staff officer on SOE’s Far East desk, codename AD6, in September 1945, by which point the question of the post-war future of CIS was being given urgent attention. Following the Japanese surrender, it constituted an unnecessary expense that SOE’s Director of Finance, John Venner, was keen to put an end to as quickly as possible.⁸³ In a lengthy paper, the officer outlined a number of points which he considered ‘sufficiently convincing to justify the retention of Bristol (or a similar organisation), whether it be retained solely for U.K. and/or Commonwealth interests or for the more narrow interests of India alone’.⁸⁴ While the prospect of an independent India had obvious implications for the existing British intelligence machinery, the officer argued that such covert Chinese activity would continue, irrespective of who held power:

The necessity to watch Chinese activities in all countries in the Far East is not only in the interests of the British Commonwealth, but is a direct interest to India. It is a necessity that surely will assume greater importance if India should become an independent, self-governing unit in the Commonwealth. Therefore apart from the more general aspect of the importance of watching Chinese activities, it would be a great mistake for India to omit their share of the observation.⁸⁵

Echoing the arguments previously put forward by Bourne, the officer noted that both Nationalist and Communist Chinese alike would ‘doubtless maintain close contact with all Chinese communities in the Far East outside China’, and use these ‘in the interests (a) of party politics in China, (b) of Chinese aspirations and (c) of Chinese diplomatic relations with other powers’. In this context, he argued that Bourne’s surveillance work could continue to serve a useful purpose:

There surely is no doubt but that intelligence derived from observation upon Chinese communities outside China will not only throw light upon more localised activities and aspirations, but may reflect indications of likely major direction of Chinese policy and her diplomatic relations with others to achieve this policy.

The officer also reminded his readers of Chiang’s 1942 visit to India, after which the importance attached by the Nationalists to its relationships with Indian politicians, ‘particularly with those of the Congress Party’, had become increasingly apparent. Such links, he argued, would continue to represent a ‘potential weapon’ against Britain and the Commonwealth: ‘The Chinese have associated themselves with India in condemning “imperialism” and they would have no scruples should they wish to make difficulties for the Commonwealth by endeavouring to use India to embarrass and inconvenience the British or the Empire as a whole if they thought it suited their purposes’.⁸⁶ Boyle agreed that it was ‘in the interests of...all clandestine

departments and of the Government of India and of H.M.G. to keep alive and to improve an organisation of the Bristol type'.⁸⁷ However, it proved impossible to persuade any of the relevant organisations to take it on; neither the Security Service nor SIS were interested, while the new Director of the Intelligence Bureau, Norman Smith, proceeded to haggle over financial responsibility.

On 28 December, with SOE itself a matter of days away from dissolution, Gubbins cabled Brigadier John Anstey, the deputy head of Force 136 who was wrapping up its affairs in India, with the instruction that the liquidation of CIS was to be completed by 31 December. Any agents required by the Intelligence Bureau were to be taken on by them by that date, while Bourne was instructed to return to the UK, where SOE would 'try and find him another job to suit his circumstances'.⁸⁸ Anstey responded with a telegram to Boyle the following day, outlining a shift in Smith's position concerning the Bureau taking financial responsibility for the Section.⁸⁹ However, such horse-trading was now academic; a scribbled note across the top of an otherwise heavily redacted letter, dated 2 January 1946, recorded that '[Venner] has rung up to say that SOE in liquidation cannot and will not pay for this – it is up to DOB[sic]/SIS'.⁹⁰ It is unclear whether the Intelligence Bureau proceeded to take on any of Bourne's agents, while Bourne himself returned to the UK on 22 January.⁹¹

The demise of CIS did not mark the end of Bourne's involvement with Indian security affairs. Through the recent release of the post-war diaries of Guy Liddell, wartime Director of MI5's B Division, it is clear that Bourne continued to press his views on the threat posed by covert Chinese activity as an officer of the Security Service. On 24 January Bourne met with Liddell, who recorded the meeting in his diary. Much of their discussion focussed on the work of the Bureau, and concerns over Chinese activity. Bourne explained that the organisation was 'so much concerned with the Congress Party and internal politics that they gave little thought to the activities of the Chinese', such as gambling houses, on which the Bureau 'took the view

that all Chinese gambled and that there was nothing to be done'. Warming to his well-rehearsed theme, Bourne pointed out that 'this was exactly how bandit armies started':

They began by having guards to look after gambling houses and then some potential warlord got control of all these guards and started to run various rackets. Ultimately he became extremely rich and a great power in the land. Bourne had seen this happen in Shanghai over and over again. In his view the only thing to do was to nip it in the bud.⁹²

Surveillance of India's Chinese population could also, Bourne believed, help secure the post-independence future of the Bureau. However, he had found little support for his arguments:

The fact is that Civil Servants in India are so disheartened by the general trend of things that they are not bothering very much, although if DIB are to survive they could sell themselves much better to any Indian Govt. if they had a knowledge of attempts at penetration by the Chinese than if their knowledge was merely confined to Indian organisations.⁹³

Liddell was clearly impressed by Bourne, recording that he 'might be extremely valuable to us as a Chinese adviser at SIFE', the recently established multi-agency organisation which served as a central point for both collating and distributing intelligence related to British interests in the Far East.⁹⁴ At an MI5 staff meeting held on 7 February it was agreed that Bourne 'should be taken on as head of SIFE or DSO Singapore for two years'. From available archival material, the nature of his eventual appointment remains unclear.⁹⁵

With independence fast approaching and following considerable discussion over the future of intelligence from India, an agreement was reached whereby MI5 could appoint a liaison officer with the Intelligence Bureau.⁹⁶ On 4 June, Liddell attended a meeting of the Joint Intelligence Sub Committee, at which he reported on his recent tour of both the Far East and Middle East. He informed the JIC that, after discussing the matter with Smith, he had visited Sardr Patel, who was soon to take responsibility for the Intelligence Bureau, 'and put to

him the suggestion that the Security Service should appoint a liaison officer with D.I.B.’ While Patel had agreed to this, Smith had unexpectedly thrown a spanner in the works by suggesting to him ‘that the British liaison officer should be someone who had had no previous connection with the Indian Police or the India Civil Service, so as to avoid any grounds for suspicion. It was hoped nevertheless to fill the appointment with a man who had had some experience in India’.⁹⁷ It was not too great a stretch to fit Bourne to this criteria. On 30 June 1947, Liddell recorded that agreement had been reached within MI5 that Bourne was ‘the most suitable person’ to become the Security Liaison Officer (SLO), and it was suggested that he ‘should come home for briefing at once and take up his position in Delhi on August 1st’, on which date it was also proposed that MI5 would absorb IPI.⁹⁸ Both suggestions received the approval of the newly appointed Director General, Sir Percy Sillitoe.⁹⁹ In mid July, Liddell lunched with Bourne and Vickery, and subsequently saw the DG with Bourne. Liddell recorded that Bourne’s terms of reference were ‘being worked out by I.P.I.’,¹⁰⁰ and Bourne departed for Delhi on 29 July.¹⁰¹ It soon became apparent that the job would not be without its teething problems. In October, Liddell recorded a discussion based on a note received from Bourne ‘in which he points out the difficulties of getting any information on internal affairs in India without arousing suspicion. Officials in D.I.B. were obviously self-conscious about the whole thing. He thought it unwise to press them, particularly since the attitude of ‘I told you so’ has caused a certain amount of resentment against British officials’.¹⁰² Bourne did not remain as liaison officer for very long; on 5 December, Liddell recorded that Bill U’ren was to succeed him as SLO.¹⁰³

By the time of Bourne’s departure as the first SLO in newly independent India, he would in all likelihood have been satisfied that the recently formed Security Intelligence Far East (SIFE) had turned its attention towards ‘Chinese activities’ as one of its three main subjects of study, alongside ‘Communism’ and ‘Russian Activities’.¹⁰⁴ However, as Bourne’s reports from New Delhi have not survived, while surviving SIFE material is only now starting

to appear in the public domain, it is currently impossible to expand further.¹⁰⁵ While further research in the archives of the Intelligence Bureau itself would be necessary in order to chart post-Independence developments, it appears that the rise of Mao and China's turn to Communism went some way towards taking the edge off the security threat posed by India's Chinese population. While it was considered 'likely' that India's Nationalist Chinese would 'transfer their allegiance to any Government in China (whether Communist or a Communist-dominated Coalition) which may emerge', the Joint Intelligence Committee (Far East) concluded that, provided that the Communist Party of India continued to be classed as an illegal organisation, developments in China were unlikely to have a significant impact in India.¹⁰⁶ This sentiment was shared by Krishna Menon, who in a detailed letter to Sir Archibald Nye noted that, with China engaged in a period of 'political consolidation and economic rehabilitation', India 'need not therefore fear any serious danger from China directly in the near future'.¹⁰⁷

A study of SOE's efforts to address suspicions concerning its Chinese recruits ultimately casts an interesting sidelight on security intelligence in India in the twilight years of the British empire. The need for CIS, in the absence of a Chinese Section of the Intelligence Bureau, illustrates how poorly prepared the Indian security authorities were to deal with threats that did not conveniently fit within the parameters drawn by colonial rule; the Chinese were not, yet, of concern on account of Communism, while Chiang Kai Shek's support for Congress and an independent India appears to have seen him regarded as an irritant to be scolded about his behaviour, rather than a serious threat to the established order. It can be suggested that this lack of an immediate, explicit imperial dimension to the threat likely goes some way towards explaining the short life of CIS, and the reluctance of any of the permanent organs of the security-intelligence apparatus to adopt it upon the dissolution of SOE in early 1946. The subject also brings up a further, tangential point of interest, in terms of the organisational make-up of CIS and its remit, as the body essentially combined security intelligence with

criminal investigation. Walton and Andrew note that ‘colonial policing, which involved law and order, was not the same as imperial security intelligence, which involved national security, and operated in a realm outside the confines of law enforcement’.¹⁰⁸ While that may more usually be the case, the Chinese Intelligence Section illustrates a body whose activities very clearly blurred the boundaries between these two worlds.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Dr Jim Beach, Dr Dan Lomas and Professor Philip Murphy for their helpful comments on an earlier draft. Errors remain the responsibility of the author.

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¹ Richard J. Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence: British Intelligence and the Defence of the Indian Empire 1904-1924*, London: Frank Cass 1995.

² Patrick French, *Liberty or Death: India's Journey to Independence and Division* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), xxii; British Library Paper Catalogue, entry for 'L/PJ/12: Public and Judicial department (Separate) Files, 1913-1947'.

³ Kate O'Malley, *Ireland, India and empire: Indo-Irish radical connections, 1919-64* (Manchester: MUP, 2008).

⁴ Christopher Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorised History of MI5* (London: Penguin, 2009) and Calder Walton, *Empire of Secrets: British Intelligence, the Cold War and the Twilight of Empire* (London: HarperPress, 2013).

⁵ Calder Walton and Christopher Andrew, 'Still the "Missing Dimension": British Intelligence and the Historiography of British decolonisation' in Patrick Major and Christopher R. Moran (eds.), *Spooked: Britain, Empire and Intelligence since 1945* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 81.

⁶ Paul M. McGarr, "'A Serious Menace to Security": British Intelligence, V.K. Krishna Menon and the Indian High Commission in London, 1947-52', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 38(3) (September 2010), 441-69.

⁷ French, *Liberty or Death*, 9.

⁸ Walton, *Empire of Secrets*, 24, 17, 131.

⁹ Richard J. Aldrich, 'Britain's Secret Intelligence Service in Asia During the Second World War', *Modern Asian Studies* 32 (1) (1998), 184.

¹⁰ Oxfeld, 'India', 344.

¹¹ Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies*, 196.

¹² CIW took responsibility for 'the Chinese aspect of Indian internal security'. (Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War Against Japan*, p.152.) Based in Calcutta, CIW was headed by a former medical missionary, Lt Colonel George Fox-Holmes. Fox-Holmes issued regular intelligence summaries, primarily derived from intercepted postal communication, divided into 'Information', 'Security' and 'Commercial' concerns. Little further is known about the organisation on account of a dearth of archival material, although examples of its Reports can be found in TNA, FO371/41680, WO208/2888, WO208/422 and WO 208/325.

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- ¹³ See for example ‘Survey No.10 of 1939’, British Library (hereafter BL), L/P&J/12/506; ‘Survey No.13 of 1941 for the week ending 29th March, 1941’, BL, L/P&J/12/508.
- ¹⁴ ‘Survey No.30 of 1941 for the week ending 02.08.41’, BL, L/P&J/12/508.
- ¹⁵ ‘Survey No.41 of 1941 for the week ending 25.10.41’, BL, L/P&J/12/508.
- ¹⁶ ‘Survey No.3 of 1943 for the week ending 23.1.43, BL, L/P&J/12/511.
- ¹⁷ ‘Survey No. 18 of 1943 for the week ending 08.04.43’, BL, L/P&J/12/511.
- ¹⁸ India: Security Report No.1, 14 June 1944, TNA, HS8/872. Intelligence was communicated to China ‘by various underground means’. Sir Denys highlighted the role played by Chinese consulates as ‘the main collecting centres’. Shortly after Guild and Sir Denys had discussed the problem, the Bureau issued a report which highlighted a number of known instances of Chinese intelligence gathering in India. (See ‘Survey of foreign intelligence activities directed against India security: Use of Chinese officials for the Collection of Intelligence’, 24 July 1944, BL, L/P&S/12/2324.)
- ¹⁹ French, *Liberty or Death*, 136; Fenby, *Generalissimo*, 372-3.
- ²⁰ ‘War Cabinet Report for the Month of August 1942 for the Dominions, India, Burma and the Colonies and Mandated Territories’, TNA, CAB 68/9/43.
- ²¹ ‘War Cabinet Report for the Month of November 1942 for the Dominions, India, Burma and the Colonies and Mandated Territories’, TNA, CAB 68/9/43.
- ²² Viceroy to secretary of state, 2 Oct. 1942, cited in Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies*, 197.
- ²³ ‘Survey No. 29, Week ending 26.07.41.’, BL, L/P&J/12/508.
- ²⁴ ‘Survey No. 29, Week ending 26.07.41.’, BL, L/P&J/12/508.
- ²⁵ ‘Survey No.19 of 1942 for the week ending 16.5.42’, ‘Survey No.31 of 1942 for the week ending 22.8.42’, BL, L/P&J/12/510.
- ²⁶ ‘Survey No.31 of 1942 for the week ending 22.8.42’, BL, L/P&J/12/510.
- ²⁷ For a general history of SOE, see Foot, *SOE*.
- ²⁸ While the official historian of SOE in the Far East dates this name at 16 March 1944, he notes that Mackenzie ‘adopted the new designation only after his headquarters moved from Meerut in India to Kandy in Ceylon on 16 December’. (Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East*, 83.) For purposes of clarity, the India Mission will be referred to as Force 136 throughout.
- ²⁹ In the absence of a dedicated Security Section, the Mission’s Finance and Administration Section dealt with general security matters, while the operational Country Sections dealt with their own operational security needs as necessary. (History of the Security Section – Indian Mission, 1, The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA), HS7/116.)
- ³⁰ See Murphy, *Security and Special Operations*, 68-73; SOE War Diary: India and the Far East, April – July 1944, 651, TNA, HS7/261. An advertising executive and businessman during the inter-war years, Guild had spent the early years of the war employed by MI5. Upon joining SOE in January 1944, he spent some weeks at both SOE Headquarters and a number of the organisation’s outstations, assimilating ‘the SOE set up’ before leaving for India on 14 March. (Section Head’s Report (New Arrival), 30 March 1944, TNA, HS9/633/3; SOE War Diary: India and the Far East, January – March 1944, 560, TNA, HS7/260.)
- ³¹ Summary Sheet, TNA, HS9/633/3.
- ³² India: Security Report No.1, 14 June 1944, TNA, HS8/872.
- ³³ India: Security Report No.1, 14 June 1944, TNA, HS8/872.
- ³⁴ The Mission was spread over a vast geographical area, which necessitated the division of Guild’s Section into five areas ‘for the purposes of security control’. This meant that ‘the discussion of secret matters’ over the telephone was unavoidable, resulting in efforts to develop ‘an internal cypher system whereby certain categories of words (operational) were encyphered and inserted into the conversation’. (India: Security Report No.1, 14 June 1944, TNA, HS8/872.) A further problem derived from a lack of availability of Field Security Officers (FSOs) fluent in the required languages, which resulted in the role of Field Security in India

inevitably being more limited than that carried out by FSO's in the UK, where they accompanied recruits on their training courses, reporting back to SOE's Security Section in London on their 'security mindedness'. (For more on the role of FSO's in relation to SOE training, see Murphy, *Security and Special Operations*, Chapter 3.)

³⁵ Alongside a significant number of French agents and 'relatively small' numbers of other ethnic groups. The internal History of the Security Section suggests an even greater figure of Chinese recruits at the time of Guild's arrival, noting that 'A large percentage of the agents employed by the Mission were Chinese recruited through various agencies in China and, at the time of the formation of the Security Section, three agents in every four under training were Chinese'. (History of the Security Section – Indian Mission, 11, TNA, HS7/116.)

³⁶ The Mission's gratitude – along with a desire to make a good impression upon its benefactors – is clearly evident from surviving file material. When the arrival of the first group of 18 Chinese recruits to be trained for work in Burma (code-named 'Pandas') was imminent, a note to the Commandant of the training school emphasised the significance of the development: 'The agents are the first to be supplied to us by the Chinese National Gvt...it is most important for our future relations with CHUNGKING that these men should receive the very best training and treatment that we can offer'. (Chang Shen Report, 19 Sept. 1943, TNA, HS1/29.) Despite such early enthusiasm, the results ultimately proved disappointing; the Burma Country Section history noted that 'In September 1943, after very prolonged and high level negotiations, we were supplied by the Chinese D.M.I. with 18 Chinese agents. They were all supposed to know Burma and Burmese. In fact a number of them did not. They received a careful and comprehensive training but this served to cast considerable doubts on their suitability as agents and to cut a long story short, all but seven were finally returned to China.' (Burma Country Section General History 1941-1945, Chapter IV, 2, TNA, HS7/104.)

³⁷ Referred to interchangeably in UK archival sources as 'Tai Li' (using the Wade-Giles system) or 'Dai Li' (pinyin system), for the purposes of consistency the pinyin system is used throughout this article. For further details on the origins and development of MSB, and its place within the wider Nationalist Chinese intelligence service, see Wakeman Jr., *Spymaster*. For further information on literature dealing with Chinese intelligence, see Chambers, 'The Past and Present State of Chinese Intelligence Historiography'.

³⁸ India: Security Report No.1, 14 June 1944, TNA, HS8/872.

³⁹ 'Report to the Director of Special Operations, Mediterranean Area, from Deputy to Head of the Division of Intelligence, Security, Liaison and Personal Services, S.O.E., H.Q., London', 28 March 1944, TNA, HS8/846.

⁴⁰ AD.4 to D/Fin, 8 Nov. 1944, TNA, HS1/181.

⁴¹ India: Security Report No.1, 14 June 1944, TNA, HS8/872.

⁴² AD.4 to D/Fin, 8 Nov. 1944, TNA, HS1/181.

⁴³ India: Security Report No.1, 14 June 1944, TNA, HS8/872.

⁴⁴ Cipher telegram from Delhi (From Security), 7 Nov. 1944, TNA, HS1/181. IPI was formed in 1909, when Major John Arnold Wallinger, a senior officer in the Indian police, was seconded to the India Office in order to monitor the activities of Indian nationalists in Europe. Following the outbreak of the First World War, he was joined by Philip Vickery, also on secondment from the Indian police, who went on to become head of IPI in 1926, a position he held until the organisation was fused with the Security Service. For more details on the work of IPI, see O'Malley, *Ireland, India and empire*.

⁴⁵ Cipher telegram from Delhi (From Security), 7 Nov. 1944, TNA, HS1/181.

⁴⁶ That the plan had lost the attention of SOE Headquarters in London is suggested by a note from SOE's Director of Intelligence and Security, Archie Boyle, written in October: 'I have heard from AD/4 that Mr. Bamford of the I.P.I. wishes to see Lt. Col. Guild in connection with "his Chinese scheme", whatever that may be.' (A/CD to D/CE, 26 Oct. 1944, TNA, HS8/888.)

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- ⁴⁷ Senter to Robertson, 10 Aug. 1944, TNA, HS8/888.
- ⁴⁸ Robertson to Senter, 19 Aug. 1944, TNA, HS8/888.
- ⁴⁹ Robertson to Park, 21 Nov. 1944, TNA, HS8/888. Force 136 was not alone in its collaboration with Dai Li. The British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS or MI6) also worked with the Nationalist Chinese intelligence service; prior to his replacement in early 1943, Major J H Green, who ran the SIS station in Singapore (relocated to Calcutta in January 1942), had ‘established a relationship with George Yeh, local representative of the Nationalist Chinese Kuomintang’s intelligence service’. As part of their collaborative efforts, Yeh provided Green with twenty potential agents who were taken to India and ‘carefully trained for specific work in parts of Malaya, Siam and Indo-China’. (Jeffery, *MI6*, 582.) SOE’s American counterpart, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) also collaborated with Dai Li. (For further information on this relationship see Yu, *OSS in China*.)
- ⁵⁰ AD.4 to D/FIN, 8 Nov. 1944, TNA, HS1/181.
- ⁵¹ AD.4 to D/FIN, 8 Nov. 1944, TNA, HS1/181.
- ⁵² AD.4 to D/FIN, 8 Nov. 1944, TNA, HS1/181.
- ⁵³ A/CD to CD, 27 Nov. 1945, TNA, HS1/181; A.D.4. to D/CE.G (AD4/2825), 2 April 1945, TNA, HS8/888.
- ⁵⁴ Mackenzie to Boyle, 5 Dec. 1944, TNA, HS9/192/1.
- ⁵⁵ Mackenzie to Boyle, 5 Dec. 1944, TNA, HS9/192/1.
- ⁵⁶ Shai, ‘Britain, China and the End of Empire’, 291; D/CE.G to AD.4, 8 Dec. 1944, TNA, HS8/888. Progress was held up by a disagreement over what qualities the candidate required – specifically, whether it was necessary that they should be expert in double agent work – along with more mundane matters. On 9 December, Sheridan noted: ‘This matter has now got into a thorough muddle, not, I think, through your fault or mine, but because of Bamford of I.P.I. butting in when he was asked not to do so, but to go in consert [sic] with us; and partly because of Guild’s illness at a time when had he been fit he would have been tying these matters up with I.P.I. and other people in England’. (A.D.4. to D/CE.G, 9 Dec. 1944, TNA, HS8/888.)
- ⁵⁷ Summary sheet, TNA, HS9/192/1; Wasserstein, *Secret War in Shanghai*, 159.
- ⁵⁸ Liddell Diary, 24 Jan. 1946, TNA, KV4/467.
- ⁵⁹ [Name redacted, Broadway] to Boyle, 12 Dec. 1944, TNA, HS9/192/1.
- ⁶⁰ Cipher telegram from New York, For ACD For Security Executive From Security Division, 20 Dec. 1944, TNA, HS1/181; Cipher telegram from New York, From G for A/CD and AD4, 21 Dec. 1944, TNA, HS1/181.
- ⁶¹ Cipher telegram from Delhi, 29 Jan. 1945, TNA, HS8/888.
- ⁶² Vickery to Sheridan, 13 March 1945, TNA, HS1/181.
- ⁶³ ‘Memorandum of Meeting held at the Office of the Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, 24th Feb ’45’, TNA, HS1/181. The meeting was also attended by two Force 136 security officers, Captain Tolson of Security Control, Calcutta (who, while working under Rae, was also DIB’s agent), and Sir Denys.
- ⁶⁴ ‘Memorandum of Meeting’, TNA, HS1/181.
- ⁶⁵ ‘Memorandum of Meeting’, TNA, HS1/181.
- ⁶⁶ The cut out was Captain N Tolson, Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of security control in Calcutta.
- ⁶⁷ On the copy of the minutes released to the National Archives, Point (a) has been marked with a large pencilled cross.
- ⁶⁸ A/CD to AD/P, 19 March 1945, TNA, HS8/888.
- ⁶⁹ A/CD to B/B.100 through AD, 24 March 1945, TNA, HS9/192/1.
- ⁷⁰ Guild to Commander, 18 Aug. 1945, TNA, HS8/888.
- ⁷¹ Guild to Commander, 18 Aug. 1945, TNA, HS8/888.

⁷² Guild to Commander, 18 Aug. 1945, TNA, HS8/888. SOE regarded Smith as ‘not a man of the same outstanding character and experience as Sir Denys’. Force 136 considered Sir Denys’s retirement to be ‘a great loss, because he took a particular personal interest in us from the very outset...we always felt we could rely on him to adjust any difficulties which might arise and help us in any manner that was possible’. (GSO1 (S) HQ Force 136 to A/CD through D/CE, 19 April 1945, TNA, HS9/192/1.)

⁷³ Bourne to Guild, 7 Aug. 1945 TNA, HS8/888. The agents were described as Burma Chinese, Calcutta/Burma Chinese, Malay Chinese and Hong Kong Chinese, the sub-agents both as Calcutta Chinese. A Shanghai Chinese (‘whose father is number two in the Ching Peng’), Bourne noted that there had been ‘every difficulty’ in arranging Benenden’s arrival.

⁷⁴ Bourne to Guild, 7 Aug. 1945, TNA, HS8/888.

⁷⁵ The French Concession had actually supported the activities of a ‘key Green Gang figure’, who also served as head of their Chinese detective squad. (Bickers, *Empire Made Me*, 116.)

⁷⁶ For further information, see Wasserstein, *Secret War in Shanghai*, 7-8, 25.

⁷⁷ Bickers, *Empire Made Me*, 59.

⁷⁸ Bickers, *Empire Made Me*, 72. See also Bickers, ‘Who were the Shanghai Municipal Police, and why were they there? The British recruits of 1919’, 174.

⁷⁹ Bourne to Guild, 7 Aug. 1945, TNA, HS8/888.

⁸⁰ Bourne to Guild, 7 Aug. 1945, TNA, HS8/888.

⁸¹ Philip Murphy, ‘Intelligence and decolonization: The life and death of the federal intelligence and security bureau, 1954-63’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 29(2) (May 2001), 103.

⁸² Bourne to Guild, 7 Aug. 1945, TNA, HS8/888.

⁸³ D/Fin to A/D, 27 Sept. 1945, TNA, HS8/888.

⁸⁴ AD6 to A/CD, 20 Sept. 1945, TNA, HS1/181.

⁸⁵ AD6 to A/CD, 20 Sept. 1945, TNA, HS1/181.

⁸⁶ AD6 to A/CD, 20 Sept. 1945, TNA, HS1/181.

⁸⁷ A/CD to AD/6, 24 Sept 1945, TNA, HS8/888. In August 1945 SIS had found itself ‘left with a sprawling deployment in India and China, generally geared to supporting the military needs of Mountbatten’s strategy for the war against Japan...SIS’s stations had been positioned more to support the military campaign in Burma and the recovery of Malaya than to gather longer-term intelligence required to support a re-established British presence in the region’. (Jeffery, *MI6*, 697.)

⁸⁸ Cipher telegram to Meerut, CD to B/B.900, 28 Dec. 1945, TNA, HS9/192/1.

⁸⁹ While he still believed that SOE was ‘under a moral obligation to retain Bristol for unexpired portion of two years’, Smith had contacted IPI ‘recommending that Bristol’s organisation should continue for the unexpired period under existing terms of financial responsibility modified only by DIB’s acceptance of responsibility for payment of agents as distinct from Bristol’s salary and allowances’. To Anstey, this appeared the ‘best possible solution...hope you will agree to its adoption’. (Cipher telegram from Meerut to London: BB900 to A/CD, 29 Dec. 1945, TNA, HS9/192/1.)

⁹⁰ B/B.3 to C.D. via A.D., 2 Jan. 1946, TNA, HS1/181. Beyond the date, the correspondents’ details and the scribbled note, the entire content of the letter has been redacted prior to release.

⁹¹ Summary Sheet, TNA, HS9/192/1.

⁹² Liddell Diary, 24 Jan. 1946, TNA, KV4/467.

⁹³ Liddell Diary, 24 Jan. 1946, TNA, KV4/467.

⁹⁴ Liddell Diary, 24 Jan. 1946, TNA, KV4/467.

⁹⁵ While the SIFE post went to Major Malcolm Johnston, Bourne’s SOE Personnel File blandly records that on 23 March 1946 he was ‘Posted to M.I.5 for Special duties’. (Liddell Diary, 7 Feb. 1946, TNA, KV4/467; Summary Sheet, HS9/192/1.) Liddell’s next reference to Bourne

followed the ‘frightful blow’ that Johnston had been killed in an air crash in February 1947. As thoughts turned to a possible successor, he recorded: ‘Bourne is out as he is in hospital with Malaria and it not likely to be fit enough to carry on’. (Liddell Diary, 27 Feb. 1947, TNA, KV4/468.)

⁹⁶ Much of the detail of the origin and development of the liaison post was recorded by Liddell in his diary. See entries for 7, 9, 14 Aug. and 21 Nov. 1946, TNA, KV4/467; entries for 21 Nov. 1946 and 13 Jan. 1947, TNA, KV4/468.

⁹⁷ ‘Confidential Annex: Visit of Captain Liddell, Security Service, to Far East and Middle East’, TNA, CAB159/1.

⁹⁸ Liddell Diary, 30 June 1947, TNA, KV4/469.

⁹⁹ Liddell Diary, 2 July 1947, TNA, KV4/469.

¹⁰⁰ Liddell Diary, 17 July 1947, TNA, KV4/469.

¹⁰¹ Liddell Diary, 29 July 1947, TNA, KV4/469.

¹⁰² Liddell Diary, 20 Oct. 1947, TNA, KV4/469.

¹⁰³ Liddell Diary, 5 Dec. 1947, TNA, KV4/469. Back in London in April 1948, Bourne visited Liddell, who recorded that he was ‘leaving for Canada...I have undertaken to write to Wood to see if there is any way in which he can help the R.C.M.P.’ (Liddell Diary, 5 April 1948, TNA, KV4/470. Bickers notes that ‘Canada’s Mounted Police absorbed Commissioner Bourne’. (Bickers, *Empire Made Me*, 322.))

¹⁰⁴ ‘Assessment of the Value of S.I.F.E. and D.S.O. Points in the Far East’ (undated), TNA, KV4/422.

¹⁰⁵ As Christopher Andrew notes in the authorised history of the Security Service, ‘The files of SLO reports from New Delhi, as from most of the Empire and Commonwealth, were, alas, later destroyed because of shortage of space in the Security Service Archives’. (Christopher Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorized History of MI5* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 936, n.1.)

¹⁰⁶ Nye to Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom in South East Asia, 5 Feb. 1949, TNA, DO133/16; ‘Likely Effects of Communist Successes in China’, 20 Dec. 1948, DO133/16.

¹⁰⁷ Menon to Nye, 12 Jan. 1949, TNA, DO133/16.

¹⁰⁸ ‘British Intelligence and the Historiography of British Decolonisation’, 81.