

Abstract

Despite the vast research by scholars on international history during the era of the Pacific War, comparatively little has been written about the bilateral relationship between the Chinese Nationalist government and the British government and their discussions during 1942–1949 over a post-war settlement in Asia. These were dominated by two underlying themes: the elimination of the British imperialist position in China and the establishment of an equal and reciprocal bilateral relationship. In particular, these discussions focused on three matters: treaties (the 1943 Sino-British treaty and the discarded Sino-British commercial treaty); the future of Hong Kong; and the political status of Tibet. Drawing on archival sources in Britain, the United States and China, the book demonstrates that negotiations over a post-war Sino-British settlement had an encouraging start in 1942–43 but by 1949 had failed to reach a satisfactory settlement. Not only did they fail to rebuild the two countries' commercial relations on an equal and reciprocal basis but they also did not terminate the informal British empire in China. The reasons for the failure were complex, encompassing both internal and external factors, including the powerful influence of the United States.

