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Abbreviations

AEL  Asiatic Exclusion League
CCF  Co-operative Commonwealth Federation
CCP  Chinese Communist Party
CFM  Council of Foreign Ministers
CIA  Central Intelligence Agency
CLPD  Canadian League for Peace and Democracy
CPC  Combined Policy Committee
CPV  Chinese People’s Volunteers
CYC  Canadian Youth Congress
DEA  Department of External Affairs
DRV  Democratic Republic of Vietnam
FEAC  Far Eastern Advisory Council
FEC  Far Eastern Commission
GMD  Guomindang (Nationalist Party)
GHQ  General Headquarters (of SCAP)
ICSC  International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam
ICFTU  International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ILO  International Labour Organization
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>IPR</td>
<td>Institute of Pacific Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMTFE</td>
<td>International Military Tribunal for the Far East</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSC</td>
<td>National Security Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPS</td>
<td>Policy Planning Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
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<tr>
<td>PWC</td>
<td>Pacific War Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROK</td>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAC</td>
<td>Strategic Air Command (US)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCAP</td>
<td>Supreme Command(er) of the Allied Powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFPT</td>
<td>San Francisco Peace Treaty</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWNCC</td>
<td>State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNTCOK</td>
<td>United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea</td>
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<tr>
<td>VTLC</td>
<td>Vancouver Trades and Labour Council</td>
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**A Note on Language**

In general, I have conformed to East Asian usage in terms of people’s names: family name first and given name second, except where the names are commonly used otherwise in the English language sources. Where necessary, I have provided the contemporary names of people and places as well as the terms used at the time.
Introduction

This book examines how concepts of race and empire “oriented” Canada and the Transpacific in the first half of the twentieth century. The term “oriented” is used in both the conventional sense – providing a particular direction – and in a critical sense, turning Asia and its diverse peoples into a racialized “other,” a notion initially developed by Edward Said in his now famous Orientalism. I have purposefully chosen the term “transpacific.” The welding together of “trans” and “Pacific” captures the geographic focus of the narrative as well as the notion of continuous movement and transformation. It best reflects the dynamic flow of ideas and peoples engaged in border-crossings on both sides of the Pacific. This particular study focuses on interactions among the peoples and governments of Canada, China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam and, to a somewhat less extent, India.

How did concepts of race and empire come to occupy centre stage in Orienting Canada? An initial project examining Canada and the “Cold War” in East Asia ended in the uncomfortable realization that questions of race were essential to the telling of the story but that they were not easily written about or readily received by traditional diplomatic historians. Once broached, however, the concept of race demanded serious attention, and a close examination of its impact on Canadian foreign policies was imperative. This opened up very different horizons and fundamentally altered my views on Canadian and East-Asian history. It required a broader yet more
focused inquiry that could capture enough of the past to actually map the contours of race and empires as they evolved.

The bookends for this volume are the 1907 race riots in Vancouver and the 1954–56 Geneva Accords for Indochina. *Orienting Canada* follows a seam that is clearly “Canadian,” yet it also delves into substantive historical issues in East Asia that had an impact on transpacific experiences. The interconnections between the “Canadian” and the “East Asian” constitute this book’s specific realm of inquiry. Thus, the voices of Korean comfort women and Canadian prime ministers, Chinese head tax payers and Japanese diplomats, Chinese forced labourers in Japan and Canadian feminists in China, Japanese “traitors” and Vietnamese communists, Japanese-Canadian soldiers and Hiroshima survivors are brought together in what might at first appear a dissonant chorus. In fact, they are what one scholar has recently called the “stories of an uncommon past,” that is, the past “in the sense of rarely remembered, ignored, or erased, but also uncommon in terms of being unique, different, or not assimilated into a common narrative.” These unique stories offer a new frame, one that transcends commonly held views about Canada and Asia and that allows us to better perceive the often unspoken relationship between race and empire.

Looking back from the vantage point of another half century or more later, the shadows of this past remain perceptible – in the political landscape of East Asia, in continuing demands for redress and reconciliation in both Asia and Canada, and in ongoing battles connected with memory-making and foreign policy. As shifting economic dynamics turn the world’s attention towards Asia once again, the present and the past come together to underscore a main theme of this book: the Transpacific has played a foundational role in Canadian and world politics in ways that are too often neglected and/or are poorly understood.

Anyone who teaches about Asia in North America is aware of the problem of Eurocentrism – how a persistent emphasis on European history or Canada’s European links marginalizes Asia, not to mention Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The research for this project not only underscores the pervasiveness of the problem but also goes to the heart of the matter – opening up the historical process that created the bias and that allows it to be continually reproduced. Indeed, much English-language scholarship often tends to refract the past and the world through a Eurocentric lens that eliminates, downplays, or denigrates the role of those excluded from the centres of power. As Erez Manela explains in his new study on the Versailles peace talks of 1919: “In the standard narrative of the peace
conference, non-Western regions and peoples figure most often as inert masses of territory and humanity that the great powers carved up in an unprecedented expansion of imperialism.”

This not only holds true for the prewar period but also continues to reproduce itself in histories of the wartime and postwar periods. Furthermore, it spans the political spectrum. A recent critique of the US role in the Second World War, for example, does an admirable job of demystifying the American role in Europe during the war but completely ignores its important contributions in the Pacific.

Eurocentrism has relegated the story of the war in the Pacific to a minor spot behind the conflict in Europe, despite the fact the war there began in 1937 with the invasion of China, a full two years before the invasion of Poland. And if the Pacific War is given prominence of place, it is often contrived as a chronicle spanning Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima, highlighting the role of the United States, a protagonist determined in war, beneficent in victory. As a result, “Asian contributions to defeating the emperor’s soldiers and sailors were displaced by an all-consuming focus on the American victory in the “Pacific War.” A similar problem affects the writing of the postwar Pacific, in which Asia is construed as a subject area of contention in a bipolar world dominated by the Soviet Union and the United States. The wars in Vietnam and Korea are often portrayed as proxy wars, and, in many English-language accounts, this 1950s’ Cold War perspective continues to shape both scholarly and popular perceptions of the past, denying those in Asia any substantial form of agency in world history.

The Transpacific fares just as badly if not worse in Canadian history writing. The crafting of this country’s past has tended to be Atlantic-centred, focusing on European immigrant experience that displaces “First Nations peoples at the same time that it erases our Pacific past.” Social historians have made impressive strides in correcting this trend, particularly in regard to Aboriginal, class, and gender history, provoking Jack Granatstein, the eminence gris of traditional nationalist historians, to accuse them of “killing” Canadian history. Yet, even among social historians, neglect of the Transpacific remains a problem. And, although there have been changes recently, a Eurocentric narrative continues to grip Canadian diplomatic history, rendering Asia a “distraction” (at best) or, more often than not, relegating it to the oblivion of the omitted.

Fortunately, streams of non-Eurocentric scholarship have also evolved, providing the basis for alternative perspectives on the past. For many years, Canadian scholars of Asia have authored important studies on Canada and the Transpacific, many of which I cite later in this book. From the 1970s on,
scholars associated with the Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars (now Critical Asian Studies), including John Dower, Laura Hein, and Mark Selden, have published prodigious and widely acclaimed studies on US-Asia relations. The recent field of world history has also made its mark in overcoming past biases. Andre Gunder Frank's ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age, among others, has made an important contribution to reassessing the world system from a five-hundred-year perspective. As well, Asian-American studies and, more recently, Asian-Canadian studies have proven extremely fertile areas of innovative research. Transnationalism has finally come of age and scholars in Asia, particularly in Japan, China, and Korea, are developing new and fascinating regional perspectives on the past. The rise of postcolonialism, with its emphasis on the subaltern, has proven one of the most innovative fields of research, and a whole new generation of transpacific scholars is examining postwar history, including the Cold War in East Asia. I draw heavily on the insights offered in these critical perspectives, and they have helped frame the concepts of race and empire that I employ in Orienting Canada.

Concepts of Race and Empire

Redress for Japanese-Canadian internment, for the Chinese head tax, and for the abuse of Aboriginal children in residential schools has meant that, in Canada, few today would deny that injustices occurred in the country’s past. Yet there remains a deep-seated reluctance, what might almost be termed an avoidance syndrome, to openly identify racism in Canada as a problem, past or present. One historian has termed this an “ideology of racelessness,” part of a nationalist mythology that emphasizes Canada’s difference from the United States. Another problem is that, by the early 1900s, racism was being challenged internationally, and its advocates went to some lengths to code or mask their work. Once this is taken into account, however, it becomes apparent that questions of race permeated transpacific landscapes in ever-changing ways – from racist immigration laws in Canada to the collapse of Wilsonian ideals at Versailles; from the Chinese Exclusion Act to the opening of the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo; from the uprooting and destruction of the Japanese communities during the war to rampant bigotry during the Korean conflict. Observing and documenting race is one thing – understanding it as a process is another. How and why Asian Canadians finally won the franchise in the 1947-49 period, for example, turns out to be a question of immense complexity – the culmination of a historical process.
with local, transpacific, and global dimensions involving questions of race as well as other dynamics.

Recent theoretical developments in the scholarly understanding of race have proven useful in coming to grips with this issue, and I have adopted and integrated this concept based on the following premises. There is little basis in reality for categorizing humans according to race. When used in Orienting Canada, the term “race” refers to social relations that have been defined by reference to it and that have thereby become social constructions reflecting power relations. In general, racism refers to an ideology that asserts a group’s superiority or inferiority based on physical appearance, ethnicity, or culture. It usually involves the capacity to dominate. I employ the term “racialization” to refer to the process of constructing “race.” Also of great importance is the term “white,” which is often the invisible other of racialization. Also a social construct, it reflects the historical integration of groups of non-Anglo-Saxon European peoples as the dominant group in Canada’s body politic. However, race also interacts with other factors, including class, gender, region, and religion, and is thus contingent and contextual, part of a complex matrix of power and privilege that is constant yet that changes with circumstances. For stylistic reasons, I generally avoid using quotation marks around terms such as “race,” “racialization,” “white,” and so on. In any case, I believe the general anti-racist thrust of Orienting Canada outweighs the potential risks of misinterpretation.

The concepts of “empire” and “imperialism” are key to deconstructing the history of the Transpacific. As with questions related to race, few would deny the importance of British colonialism in Asia prior to, for example, the Second World War. However, until recently, there has been much less consensus regarding other types of empires. In the case of the United States, for example, that country’s role in the Second World War, its anti-communism, its support of the Allies, its anti-colonial pronouncements, and its professed adherence to freedom and democracy made some scholars hesitate to talk of US imperialism. The war in Vietnam began to change this, but, for the most part, discussion of a US empire remained limited – if it was discussed, it was often done so through the use of terms such as “informal empire.” However, the end of the Soviet Union left the United States in a position of global domination, without a clear adversary. Even before George Bush took office, Chalmers Johnson, a former conservative scholar and doyen of Asian studies in the United States, came to the conclusion that an ongoing global US military presence was “striking evidence, for those who care to look, of
an imperial project that the Cold War obscured.” He suggested that this would inevitably result in some form of “blowback.” In light of 9/11 and Iraq, his work was prophetic. Today, the discussion is not about the existence of an American Empire but, rather, about its nature. To some, such as Niall Ferguson of Harvard or Canada’s Michael Ignatieff, the United States is a “liberal” imperial power, which they see as better than many alternatives. To others, such as Hardt and Negri, globalization has meant a transition from imperialism to an empire that has “no territorial center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers.” Although the United States has a privileged position, the new empire lacks a nation-state at the centre of its imperial project.

The debate on the nature of US power in the world reflects, among many things, the lack of any scholarly consensus regarding definitions of imperialism and empire. It may be that classical definitions have, as Mommsen suggests, run their course. A plethora of models still remains – from the Leninist views of imperialism as the “highest” stage of capitalism to development theory, from world systems analysis to postcolonialism. In defining the term I draw on a number of insights. I agree with the thesis, cogently argued by Gallagher and Robinson over fifty years ago, that imperialism has both economic and strategic dimensions and, depending on specific circumstances, that it adopts formal (colonial) or informal (interventions short of colonization) means to achieve the desired aim of capitalist integration. However, my focus is definitely not on economic aspects of imperialism; rather, I draw on a more recent dimension of scholarly inquiry, that is, the relationship between power and culture in imperial relations, particularly as articulated by Edward Said and then developed by various schools of “postcolonialism.” As an early proponent of postcolonialism suggests, imperialism has faced challenges before, including “nationalist rebellions against imperialist domination and Marxism’s unrelenting critiques of capitalism and colonialism. But neither nationalism nor Marxism broke free from Eurocentric discourses.” Postcolonialism, he suggests, rejects the universalist discourse associated with Europe’s historical experience. A “catachrestic combination of Marxism, poststructuralism, Gramsci and Foucault,” postcolonialism seeks to undo the “appropriation of the other as History.” The impact of these trends has now reached into diplomatic history, to the point at which many now accept the view that “racialized cultural hierarchies” were an integral part of imperial projects. In this regard, Jane Jenson’s study, Race and Empire, is of particular note for its attempt to provide an
overview, based on Euro-American examples, of the historical links between imperialism and racism. In *Orienting Canada*, I employ the term “imperialism” in its “modern” sense, that is, as a world system that produced and reproduces unequal relations between capitalist centres and peoples in the peripheries. Its existence is predicated on its projection and protection by state powers. Empire is the geographical and conceptual scope of specific instances of imperialism. Although the question of Soviet imperialism is addressed, it remains secondary, given the preponderance of Euro-American intervention in East Asia in the period under discussion. I also attempt to map Japanese imperialism into the trajectories of empires in Asia and to integrate questions of race as well as organized resistance to both racism and empire.

Focusing on race and empires in a transnational study brings to light different questions about the past. How did concepts of race and empire change over time or, more concretely, why did Canada not have diplomatic relations with China until 1943? What are the implications of mapping Japanese expansionism onto the constellation of imperial powers that, in the postcolonial critique, are usually characterized as European, or “Western”? Did the struggle for Asian-Canadian equality reinforce the struggles for decolonization in Asia, as the struggle for Afro-American freedom reinforced the quest for African freedom? Was there a “deep entanglement” between beliefs about race and modern imperialism and, if so, how did this affect Canadian relations with East Asia?

*Orienting Canada* is the culmination of research undertaken over the past ten years. It relies on archival materials from Library and Archives Canada, located in Ottawa, as well as on archival materials from London, Tokyo, and places in between. Field trips to Japan, Korea, and China provided an opportunity to interview both participants in and scholars of the events described. Where appropriate, I draw on newspaper accounts to illustrate popular perceptions related to specific issues. The book is organized into two sections, the first chronicles the wartime and immediate postwar period, and the second documents the period commonly referred to as the Cold War, but which I describe as the remilitarization of the Pacific. A prologue provides the historical background essential to understanding the wartime and postwar dynamics.

In focusing on these themes and areas, *Orienting Canada* spawns its own “others,” those whose stories do not receive the attention they merit. Following a Canadian seam has meant concentrating on areas in which
there was significant Canadian government intervention (i.e., China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam). This has meant that the roles of peoples in India, the Philippines, and other Southeast Asian states, as well as the Pacific Islanders, are not represented as they might be. Nor is there serious consideration either of the economic dimensions of imperialism or of its complex gender implications and intersections (i.e., the relationship between patriarchy and imperialism). In these and other ways, this book remains a very partial deconstruction of the politics of race and empire in the Transpacific.
PART 1

RACE, EMPIRE, AND WAR
Prior to the Second World War, Canada’s Department of External Affairs (DEA) was a small body, composed of staff officers made up almost exclusively of white men educated in elite universities in England or the United States. Among this group was Lester Pearson, the son of a Methodist minister, a graduate of Oxford, a sporting enthusiast, and a man of good cheer. In 1935, Pearson was an up and comer in the DEA, responsible for British Empire affairs and the League of Nations before being sent to Great Britain as first secretary, where he attended the London Naval Conference of 1935, a follow-up to the 1930 meeting. The 1935 conference ended with Japan’s announcing its abandonment of the naval agreement after the United States and Great Britain refused to agree to the Japanese government’s demand for complete parity in naval tonnage. Prior to the conference, Pearson, under the pseudonym “T,” provided a detailed analysis of Canada’s position regarding Japan and its expectations going into the 1935 Naval Conference. This analysis appeared in an important article in *Foreign Affairs*, the prestigious, mainstream journal published by the US Council for Foreign Affairs. Entitling his essay “Canada and the Far East,” Pearson argued that the Japanese government was angered because Japan “had played the game according to traditional rules, which some at least of her accusers have not yet themselves abandoned. She has wrapped herself in the mantle of injured pride, stirred up the militant patriotism of her people, and driven straight forward with her plans for hegemony in the Far East.” Japan was like
Germany at the end of the nineteenth century, Pearson argued. At the 1930 London Naval Conference, the United States had been given parity with the British Navy, and, “to Japanese eyes, Anglo-Saxon supremacy [had been] established in the Pacific.” Now Japan demanded equality, which would be perceived by others as Japanese “supremacy in the Pacific.”

Pearson emphasized that the little Canadian interest in Asia that did exist was focused on matters of trade and immigration, particularly with regard to Japan. As had the United States, Canada restricted Japanese immigration, but, Pearson suggested, unlike the United States, it had done so without irritating the Japanese. The government, Pearson lamented, had no such qualms with regard to China. Pearson also pointed to Canadian prime minister Arthur Meighen’s role in the 1921 Imperial Conference, at which Canada “imposed on a reluctant, even hostile, British Government, the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese alliance.” He then argued that geography placed Canada between Japan and the United States in the north Pacific and that there was no question of a neutral Canada “to play the part and pay the penalty of ‘gallant little Belgium.” That the Canadian government’s loyalties lay with its southern neighbour was clear, but, at the same time, Pearson hoped to maintain some semblance of what was known at the time as the Washington treaty system: “Questions of fundamental import remain unsettled – Japan’s need for markets, the recognition of Manchukuo, the Japanese ‘Monroe Doctrine.’ Agree on these questions, and a naval treaty becomes, if not easy, at least possible. Fail to agree on them, and the system built up at Washington and London will collapse.” Pearson seemed inclined towards accepting Japan’s control over Manchuria (northeast China), gained after it invaded in 1931, as the price of collective security: “The Anglo-Saxon states must realize Japan’s special needs and interests in the Far East; Japan must realize that the collective system is in very truth ‘the lifeline of civilization.’” Canada, concluded Pearson, would back every exploration for an agreement based on “collective and internationalist ideals.” However, if such an agreement were not achievable, everything would be done to ensure that “failure [would] not destroy or even weaken the close understanding and friendly cooperation between the Anglo-Saxon peoples.”

Pearson was very much a department man, and his views regarding the history of Canada and the Pacific are of considerable interest. In particular, his appreciation of the different treatment of Japanese and Chinese immigrants, Canada’s role in ending the Anglo-Japanese alliance, the need to recognize Japan’s “special needs and interests,” and his emphasis on unity among the “Anglo-Saxon” states and peoples reflect a developed appreciation of the
politics and values of that era. Anglo-Saxon unity as an ideal reflected not so much the ideas of Pearson as an individual as it did decades of racist exclusions and the edification of the Canadian state to the point that “whiteness,” or Anglo-Saxonism, had become normative. In that sense, Pearson’s views represented colonial knowledge, that is, they reflected the specific conditions that had evolved in Canada as a colonial settler state of the British Empire with close ties to the United States.

**Race and Empire**

In the past decade, Canadian historians have paid increasing attention to the history of colonial contact, that is, to the history of European-Aboriginal relations in the formative years of the Canadian state. Such studies, and the struggles of Aboriginal peoples for justice, have changed the intellectual landscape and language of Canadian history. These developments have also created a new frame within which to view the history of Asian communities in Canada.

Over the past thirty years, important strides have been made in documenting the process of racializing peoples from Asia, the extensive discrimination that resulted, and the resilience displayed by such communities despite often perilous circumstances. There have also been notable studies highlighting the local-global interconnections of such communities. Recently, there have been important steps in the study of inter-raciality and in integrating questions of race with those of class and nation. All too often, however, these histories have been siloed as ethnic histories or contained within the binary of European-Asian relations. To the extent that they have been integrated into a larger whole, it has been principally as part of “British Columbian” history. However, when taken with the growing body of newer contact literature, the history of Asian communities in Canada offers an opportunity to better appreciate the complex process of colonial state formation. This chapter offers a brief outline of that process, with a particular focus on the question of immigration and of racializing the “Oriental other,” which, I suggest, was fundamental to state formation, to the creation of notions of “whiteness” in Canada, and to the construction of Anglo-Saxonism in international affairs as articulated by Canadian officials such as Lester Pearson.

Conventional notions about Asians in Canada centre on the idea that they were latecomers, that Canada had already been settled and that their arrival posed new questions in ethnic relations. To be sure, in Atlantic and eastern Canada, the early history of colonization and settlement is the story...
of early Aboriginal-European relations, dating from Cartier’s early voyages of 1534-35, to the founding of Nouvelle France, to the British-French wars of the 1750s, and onwards. In terms of western Canada, however, settler colonization really only gains momentum after the 1840s. And from that perspective, Asians were present from the beginning. The first recorded arrival of Chinese is from the eighteenth century, when a group of Chinese carpenters was brought to Nootka in 1759. Mass migration begins in the 1850s. Colonization of the west coast opened up contact with the Pacific, and it was easier for Chinese to reach that area than it was for those coming from Europe. Thousands of Chinese migrants, almost exclusively males, arrived in Victoria in 1858, and, some years later, peoples from Japan and South Asia also began to arrive. From the outset, colonial officials on the Pacific coast faced new and complex questions.

As Bernard Cohn illustrates in his study of colonial India, the production of local knowledge through the interaction of imperial officials with local populations was integral to colonial rule. This process involved creating racial classifications as well as other modes of knowledge. In a settler colony such as that of pre-Confederation Canada, officials and policy makers faced different conditions than did their counterparts in India. First and foremost was the foundational question of how to control the Aboriginal population. With the arrival of Chinese immigrants, however, new questions arose, and, as Renisa Mawani illustrates in her recent work, the colonial construction of their local identities was interwoven with that of Aboriginal peoples and others. Often the local elite drew on previous colonial knowledges, initially from British and American sources. For example, the newspaper the Victoria Gazette declared that Californian and Australian experience had shown the Chinese were little more than slaves and were undesirable as permanent settlers. This view was echoed by James Douglas, the colony’s first governor, who perceived the Chinese as a class of people unsuited for settlement. And the father of Confederation, John A. Macdonald, expressed similar sentiments at the founding of Confederation.

However, the racialization of Chinese took place against a backdrop of other factors, including class, gender, and religion. For example, to the consumers of Chinese labour – such as the Canadian Pacific Railway, the BC coal baron James Dunsmuir, or households who hired servants – Chinese labour was a valued commodity. James Douglas considered Chinese labour useful, but he distinguished between Chinese (who were not suitable for settlement) and African Americans (whom he welcomed as permanent settlers). Race was unsettled terrain in these early years. In the mining
fields, prospectors often reacted violently against the influx of Chinese miners. Within a few years, the preponderance of anti-Chinese sentiments outweighed the perceived benefits of their labour. A rising tide of racialization led to moves to limit the rights of Chinese, Indians, and others within the colonies. Shortly after Confederation, the BC legislature voted to dis-enfranchise Chinese and Indians, and, by 1875, they had been removed from the voters lists. By this time, anti-Chinese agitation was commonplace in the province.

The 1884-85 Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration was an important federal initiative whose purpose was to curtail Chinese immigration, and it followed on the heels of US legislation that completely barred people from China from entering the United States for a period of ten years. The commission held hearings in the United States as well as in British Columbia, and the testimony was varied and complex. A number of people gave evidence regarding the contributions of Chinese migrants, yet others gave testimony that reinforced stereotypes about the Chinese as foreign, in-assimilable, and inferior. In the end, the commission recommended a ten-dollar head tax to deter Chinese immigration, which the federal government arbitrarily increased to fifty dollars in legislation that summer. Not only did the local Chinese community protest, so did the Chinese government. Huang Sic Chen (Huang Cuxian), a consular representative, told the commission: “It is unjust in principle for Europeans to insist upon the right of unrestricted commercial relations with China, and at the same time to enforce unjust and unequal restrictions upon Chinese merchants and labourers.” Indeed, matters relating to immigration and trade had always been integrally connected in treaty negotiations between states. The evolution of the Chinese community, and the multifaceted identities associated with it, would reflect and affect these global interconnections, in particular, in the unfolding of the nationalist and anti-imperial movement in China. At this time, however, China’s international power was ebbing, and its capacity to stop the growing anti-Chinese movement in the United States and Canada was limited.

Racialization of the Chinese and the discriminatory measures associated with it were accompanied by new definitions of whiteness in Canada, in a way not dissimilar to the construction of whiteness in the United States. In early colonial reports, for example, there were references to many “races,” and the term was used as “ethnicity” is often used today. However, increasingly, a divide arose between people of colour (black, Aboriginal, Asians, mixed heritage, etc.) and the others – that is, whites. Settlement of the Prairies and British Columbia demanded large numbers of new settlers, and
thus Canadian immigration policy changed its focus from exclusively emphasizing a dwindling supply of Anglo-Saxon immigrants to promoting the recruitment of non-Anglo Europeans. For example, in the 1870s, 7,500 Russian Mennonites arrived in Manitoba, followed by Galicians (Western Ukrainians), and Doukhobors from Russia. The arrival of these European groups on the Prairies also provoked an ethnocentric response on the part of Anglo-Saxon settlers there. The newcomers were perceived as “second-class” and faced substantial discrimination. But their whiteness got them into the country and initially assured them of basic rights, including the right to vote and own land, at a time when migration from Asia was a distinct alternative but was rejected on the basis of racialized notions of the Chinese as inassimilable. Clifford Sifton, then in charge of Canadian immigration policy, defended these new white groups as appropriate farming settlers. But Clifton had no such feeling towards peoples of Asian descent, and he, even more than Laurier, was prepared to bring in federal laws to increase the head tax on Chinese immigrants and, furthermore, supported a federal version of the Natal Act, a law that originated in Natal, South Africa, and that restricted immigration to those who could speak a European language. Here we see a transition in concepts of race, from one that had been applied in some fashion to various ethnicities to one that created a rough institutional and legal divide between whites and non-whites. Within each of these broad categories were important distinctions and racial categories that reflected assessments regarding cultural hierarchy, labour, assimilability, and international power relations. Aboriginal peoples, already on the land, had to be contained and assimilated. Newcomers from southern and eastern Europe would face discrimination once in Canada but were generally welcomed as settlers. The Chinese, on the other hand, were classified as inassimilable and, thus, as a danger to the body politic.

Perils of the Colonial State

Despite the imposition of the head tax, disenfranchisement, and various other racist measures against the Chinese and Aboriginal populations, the Canadian state faced a crisis at the turn of the century that, in 1907, erupted in the form of race riots in Vancouver. The origins of this crisis can be found in important changes taking place both in terms of migration and international power relations. For one thing, the fifty-dollar head tax on Chinese in 1885 proved ineffective at limiting Chinese arrivals, and, within a few years, annual immigration was reaching two thousand per year. Furthermore, migrants from Japan and India added new and complex dimensions
to the question of race. The first recorded Japanese resident in British Columbia was Nagano Manzō, who arrived in New Westminster in 1877. Although Japanese communities would initially grow more slowly than Chinese communities, by the turn of the century, approximately fifteen thousand people from Japan (including Okinawa) had arrived in British Columbia. Most proceeded on to the United States, and, thus, the census figures record only 4,738 Japanese residents in Canada in 1901. However, in the eyes of many in the white communities, the Japanese were, like the Chinese, part of a growing problem. Thus, the Japanese faced racialization and institutional discrimination on a scale similar to that faced by the Chinese, and, like the Chinese community, fought to overcome such challenges. For example, Homma Tomekichi, supported by the Japanese community, challenged the denial of voting rights and won in the BC Supreme Court only to see that decision overturned in 1902 by the British Privy Council.

Pressure from the BC government obliged the federal government to convene another Royal Commission in 1901, this time focusing on both Chinese and Japanese immigration. The conclusions it reached were different for each. The commission deepened the critique of Chinese inassimilability and recommended a complete prohibition on Chinese labourers coming to Canada. This was to be done through “treaty supported by legislation,” and, in the interim, the head tax was to be increased to $500. Regarding the Japanese, however, the commission reached different conclusions. On the one hand, it suggested that Japanese immigrants were in some ways more acceptable than Chinese immigrants; on the other, because they were keener competitors and had “more energy, push and independence, [they were] more dangerous in this regard than the Chinese.” However, the commissioners appended to their report extensive correspondence from Joseph Chamberlain, British minister of colonial affairs, indicating the British government’s reservations regarding how to restrict Japanese immigration. This correspondence revealed another dimension of the importance international relations had in such matters. The commissioners suggested relying on the Japanese government to restrict passports being issued for travel to Canada as a means of limiting immigration, but they also suggested that, should this not prove effective, legislative measures along the lines of the Natal Act should be adopted.

The arrival of Japanese was accompanied by an influx of substantial numbers of immigrants from India. Reports about Canada probably reached India after a number of Indian soldiers of the British Hong Kong regiment
travelled through the country on their way back to Hong Kong after attending Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in London in 1897. Subsequently, approximately five thousand Indians – British subjects, almost exclusively male Sikhs from the Punjab – arrived in British Columbia at the turn of the century. In the eyes of many, what had begun as a “Chinese” problem had now become an “Oriental” problem. The arrival of substantial numbers of Asians in British Columbia, particularly in 1906-7, and a surge in anti-Asian actions south of the border set the scene for hemispheric riots on the Pacific coast. Exacerbating the tensions were new developments in international power relations.

Joseph Chamberlain’s concern not to offend the Japanese government, as expressed in the correspondence included in the 1902 report on Chinese and Japanese immigration, reflected the rise of Japan as an imperial power in East Asia and the resulting alliance with Great Britain. Adopting the slogan “fukoku kyōhei” (rich country, strong army), the Japanese government had forced marched Japan into industrialization and militarization. By 1895, the Meiji government succeeded in abolishing its semi-colonial status, overturning the unequal treaties first imposed by the United States in 1858 and defeating China in the 1894-95 Sino-Japanese War. Its major deployment to quell the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900 convinced the British government to strategically ally itself with Japan, and, in 1902, the two governments signed the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. The alliance included a promise of military intervention if either party went to war and a third party intervened, exchanges of intelligence, and, potentially, British access to the ports and resources of Japan in times of war. From the perspective of Japanese policy makers, an alliance with Great Britain provided them with ample assurance that they could challenge Russia’s appetite for territory in northeast China and Korea without fear of third party intervention.

Japan’s victory in the 1904-5 Russo-Japanese War had a dual effect in the Euro-American world. On the one hand, British policy makers felt vindicated in their decision to sign the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902. In the United States, Theodore Roosevelt expressed his admiration for the wonders of the Japanese war effort and Japan’s continuing economic expansion. Yet, accompanying this praise was also trepidation for the future. Japan, Roosevelt mused, would one day become the arch competitor of European powers in Asia. Even more significantly, Roosevelt and many others in both the United States and Canada worried about Japanese emigration. Japan’s triumph in the war became a catalyst for renewed racialization, raising the spectre of a “yellow peril” in which Japanese immigrants would play...
the role of a fifth column for Japanese imperialism in North America. This was a new phase in the exclusion movement. Spearheaded by the *San Francisco Chronicle* in February and March 1905, while the Russo-Japanese War was still going on, it targeted what it perceived as the Japanese “menace.” A few weeks later, on 12 May 1905, exclusionists led by San Francisco trade unions gathered to form the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League. The fact that Chinese immigration had already been banned as of 1882 made their inclusion in the league’s name appear to be unnecessary. A year later, on 18 April 1906, San Francisco was rocked by a major earthquake followed by fires. The catastrophe stoked racist passions, and in the aftermath Chinatown was threatened with elimination. In the meantime, the Exclusion League pressed home a campaign to force students of Japanese descent out of public schools, along with the Chinese who had already suffered the lash of school segregation. On 11 October 1906, the school board voted to segregate the Japanese students. This provoked an international crisis as the Japanese government vigorously protested such action to Theodore Roosevelt. In the spring of 1907, Roosevelt brokered a deal in which the school board agreed to withdraw its segregation order for Japanese students and, in a quid pro quo, he passed an executive order prohibiting Japanese immigration into the United States via Hawaii, Canada, or Mexico.

The surge of racism and Roosevelt’s measures diverted many Japanese migrants heading for the United States to Vancouver, contributing to the perception of a Japanese “invasion” of that city. The Asiatic Exclusion League (as the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League was renamed in 1907), reinforced by its success in the school board campaign, spread its influence and, by 1907, had made contact with labour organizations in Seattle and, subsequently, in Bellingham, Washington, as well as Vancouver, British Columbia. The Vancouver Trades and Labour Council (VTLC) initiated the formation of a local Asiatic Exclusion League (AEL) in July, and, at a meeting on 12 August, the Vancouver AEL called for a parade to protest Asian immigration. In Bellingham, shortly after the 2 September Labor Day activities, a number of people began harassing South-Asian workers employed in that town’s sawmills. A few days later, the harassment escalated into wholesale attacks, and groups of workers raided sawmills and dormitories, beating up a number of people and forcing many South Asians to flee for their lives. Exaggerated news reports immediately circulated (including in Vancouver), further fanning the already volatile situation preceding the 7 September parade. The details of Vancouver’s race riot have been recounted elsewhere and involved much of the city’s populace in one way or
Another. The Japanese and Chinese communities reacted by organizing vigorous defences, with a number of people taking up arms. A general protest strike was organized by the Chinese community. The race riots made headlines around the world, including in New York, London, Taiwan, Tokyo, and Beijing. In Japan, all the major newspapers, including the *Asahi* and *Jiji shimpō*, reported critically on the riot. However, both the Japanese government and the newspaper editors were mollified by a prompt apology on the part of the Canadian prime minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and by his offer to create a commission to assess the damages to Japanese businesses with a view to providing compensation. This, and the Meiji leaders’ belief in the strength of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, helped to mitigate any immediate harm the riot might have had on Canada-Japan relations.

In other ways, however, the impact of the race riots were far reaching. Hitherto, the federal Liberal government under Laurier had tried to balance the demands for exclusion of Asians with the need to preserve and reinforce the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Laurier had also hoped to increase trade with Japan. After the race riots, however, the Laurier government shifted its policy, and control of Asian immigration became its main concern. The ramification of what otherwise might appear as a subtle shift in emphasis was dramatic. On the one hand, the government moved quickly to negotiate a formal agreement with Japan to limit immigration to Canada; on the other hand, it took decisive measures to prohibit South-Asian immigration to Canada. It also began to work much more closely with the US government to coordinate immigration policies and to promote closer Anglo-American relations. Gaining greater control over immigration demanded a higher diplomatic profile, better capacity to deal with the complex treaty issues involved, and greater autonomy within the British Empire. It is not surprising, then, that shortly after the Vancouver race riots the government moved to create the Department of External Affairs (DEA).

Limiting emigration from Japan was not easily accomplished. Laurier had to dispatch his minister of labour, Rodolphe Lemieux, and secretary of state, Joseph Pope, across the Pacific to Japan in the hope of obtaining a commitment from the Japanese government to limit Japanese emigration. The Japanese government tried to prevent the trip, but pressure from the British and Canadian governments obliged it to accept the delegation. Backed by the British government, Lemieux pressed Hayashi Tadasu, Japan’s foreign minister, to adopt regulatory measures to limit Japanese emigration. The discussions concluded with a draft agreement to cap labour emigration at four hundred per year. Lemieux was ready to sign the agreement on
behalf of the government, but Laurier remained sceptical and ordered Lemieux and Pope home. The agreement was only ratified in January 1908 after Lemieux’s return.

**Closing Gates, Building Bridges**

Laurier’s fear that the Lemieux-Hayashi Agreement would be ineffective predisposed him to make common cause with the US government on immigration matters. Roosevelt had closely followed events in Vancouver, telling Henry Cabot Lodge that they would have two positive effects: (1) they would convince the British public that the dominions would take the same attitudes as the United States’ west coast states, and (2) they would make Japan realize that “she [would] have to face the same feeling in the British Empire which she [did] in the American Republic.” Roosevelt criticized the illegality of the race riots but was very clear that “the attitude which [was] back of the movement [was] in each case sound.” Roosevelt reached out to Mackenzie King, a deputy minister assigned to convene three commissions on the Vancouver riots, inviting him to Washington to discuss matters of mutual concern. Shared interests in exclusion and hopes for a united front against Japan were the wellspring for this initiative.

On 25 January 1908, Roosevelt met King in the White House. According to King’s diary, during the course of the lunchtime conversation, Roosevelt suggested that if King were to visit England he might, on behalf of Roosevelt, ask for British assistance since Great Britain was allied with Japan. A word from an ally might go far as: “the Japanese must learn that they will have to keep their people in their own country.” Roosevelt believed that the Japanese government was refusing to limit immigration to the United States and he told King: “[The Japanese are] simply taking advantage of our politeness. I thought they had done this, and I decided to send the fleet into the Pacific, it may help them to understand that we want a definite arrangement.” The Great White Fleet was a battle fleet that made an around-the-world trip symbolizing the United States’ arrival as a global naval power. It was ironic that Roosevelt won the Nobel Peace Prize for brokering the peace settlement between Japan and Russia in 1905 and then proceeded to launch a major effort in gunboat diplomacy to intimidate the Japanese government and to prevent Japanese from coming to the United States.

Returning to Ottawa from his talks with Roosevelt, King reported to Laurier the president’s suggestion that King act as a go-between with the British in the search for greater US-British collaboration. Laurier endorsed the idea and sent King back to Washington where he again met Roosevelt,
along with Root and the British ambassador to Washington, on 31 January and 1 February 1908. Roosevelt informed Laurier in a personal letter written immediately afterwards that, in the course of the meetings, it was agreed that King would go to London to gain British support. Roosevelt stressed the common interest not only of Canada, Great Britain, and the United States in regard to Asian immigration but also of Australia. As it turned out, Australian prime minister Alfred Deakin had invited the American battle fleet to visit Australia, an invitation to which Roosevelt had enthusiastically agreed because “such a visit would symbolize the unity of the English-speaking peoples of the Pacific.” Herein lies the wellspring for an alliance among the Anglo-Saxon states and an important impetus for what would later be called Atlanticism.
King did travel to England in the spring of 1908 and, furthermore, took a round-the-world trip to England, India, China, and Japan later that year to investigate and report on immigration issues.\textsuperscript{61} A hemispheric agreement on exclusion proved elusive because British officials believed such an arrangement might be too transparent and offensive to its allies, particularly Japan. The elusiveness of a hemispheric agreement reflected the close but distinct relationship between race and empire. The British alliance with Japan in East Asia would remain an impediment to Anglo-American unity until the Canadian government finally took the initiative to subvert it in 1921.

King’s voyages did have some immediate impact, however. He wrote an important report on South-Asian immigration, in which he articulates why Indians, nominally British subjects, are to be excluded. This is because: “a native of India is not a person suited to this country.” Such people are used to a “tropical climate” and have manners and customs “so unlike those of our own people,” along with an “inability to readily adapt.” This results in “privation and suffering which render a discontinuance of such immigration most desirable in the interest of the Indians themselves.”\textsuperscript{62} King believed that policies adopted by the colonial government of India, pressure on the steamship companies, and the Canadian government’s implementation of a continuous voyage stipulation would put an end to the problem.\textsuperscript{63} Fortunately, concluded King, the restrictive measures contemplated meant that “enacting legislation either in India or in Canada which might appear to reflect on fellow British subjects in another part of the Empire ha[d] been wholly avoided.”\textsuperscript{64}

The Lemieux-Hayashi Agreement and the Continuous Journey Act were passed with the specific goal of adding Japanese and South Asians to the list of the excluded, thereby closing the gate to those deemed inassimilable and unsuitable to the emerging white body politic. This was soon followed by regulatory limits preventing African Americans from settling in Canada’s west, completing the immigration colour bar that had begun with the head tax in 1885.\textsuperscript{65} At the same time, however, resolving the crisis opened the door to a newly imagined role for Canadian diplomacy – as an honest broker between the “motherland” and its American cousins.

The Conservative Party, elected in 1911 and in power until 1921, embraced the racial politics of Laurier’s Liberals. The Conservative prime ministers, Robert Borden and Arthur Meighen, stringently applied and reinforced the terms of exclusion while pursuing the role of honest broker in international relations. In regard to immigration, the Komagata Maru affair was the most notable event during Borden’s first term.\textsuperscript{66} The Conservative
government refused entry to Gurdit Singh and 375 other South-Asian passengers who arrived in Vancouver aboard a chartered Japanese vessel, the *Komagata Maru*. The ship anchored in Burrard Inlet, but, with the exception of twenty passengers who were returning residents, no one was allowed to land. For nearly two months, a running battle raged between the passengers and Canadian officials as the authorities tried to force the ship to leave. The Sikh community rallied behind their South-Asian brethren on the ship, providing food and legal support. On Sunday, 21 June 1914, the Khalsa Diwan Society and the United India League called a support meeting downtown – over four hundred South Asians jammed into the hall, along with 125 whites, mainly from the Socialists Party of Canada, for whom class interests theoretically trumped race interests.67 On 21 July, in its first official commission, the fledgling Royal Canadian Navy sent the HMCS *Rainbow* to Burrard Inlet, where it trained its guns on the *Komagata Maru*. Two days later, the *Komagata Maru* departed. However, this was not the end of the affair. Upon the
ship’s arrival in India near the end of September, the British colonial police tried to force its passengers onto a train to the Punjab. A violent clash ensued, and twenty of the passengers were killed and many others wounded.

With the basic structures of exclusion in place, succeeding governments proceeded to tighten the restrictions. Loopholes in the Lemieux-Hayashi Agreement allowed a significant number of Japanese picture brides to arrive in Canada after 1908, but such was not the case for the Chinese and South-Asian communities. Fears of miscegenation (specifically, of Asian men having sexual relations with white women) provoked an early debate regarding gender and family in which some advocated the loosening of the regulations to allow Asian women to enter the country. However, the economic downturn after the First World War saw a resurgence of racist agitation, putting an end to any ideas of allowing Asian women into the country and increasing pressure for even stricter prohibitions against Asian immigration. In Halifax alone there were at least six violent incidents, including a riot involving hundreds of veterans and others that targeted Chinese restaurants. Throughout the country, white supremacists began to agitate for more effective ways of excluding the Chinese. In 1920, the Vancouver Board of Trade and the Victoria Chamber of Commerce both called for exclusion as well as for school segregation. After the 1921 federal election that brought the Liberal government back to Ottawa, King moved to enact overt exclusion laws, using the excuse that the Chinese government could not control emigration. This provoked further mobilization in Chinese communities across the country and led to the creation of the Chinese Association of Canada. Over one thousand people attended a rally in Toronto, and a representative group travelled to Ottawa to lobby against exclusion (albeit to little avail). No one in Parliament opposed exclusion, and the Chinese Immigration Act, known in the Chinese community as the “43 harsh regulations,” went into effect on 1 July 1923. The impact of this legislation was significant. With the exception of a few merchants and students, no Chinese immigrants were allowed into the country, and, in 1941, according to census data, the number of people of Chinese descent in British Columbia declined to 18,619, fewer than in 1911. The community, however, proved to be much more resilient than anticipated, resorting to illegal means to circumvent the barriers and thus, according to the community newspaper Dahan Gongbao (Chinese Times), there were about thirty thousand people of Chinese descent in British Columbia. Nevertheless, the new act was an additional impediment, and its effects were felt not only by those in Canada but also, and particularly, by women left behind in China. In 1923, the re-elected Liberal
government negotiated with the Japanese government to further limit the immigration quota for labourers from four hundred per year to 150, but no agreement could be reached on the inclusion of wives in this number. In 1928, the King government moved to reduce the quota of Japanese immigrants from four hundred to 150 and closed the loopholes that had allowed many “picture brides” to come into Canada. These changes capped twenty years of increasing regulation, under both Conservative and Liberal governments, the purpose of which was to cut off Asian immigration to Canada.

Race and Atlanticism
The aftermath of the First World War created a new era in international relations in which Atlanticism – the north Atlantic triangle of the United States, Canada, and Great Britain – came to the fore as an informal global network linking the American and British empires. Many scholars have identified this trend, but only recently have a few addressed the role of race in the edification of this international alliance. What had begun as a Roosevelt initiative in the aftermath of the Vancouver race riots flourished after the First World War.

Canada, under Borden’s Conservatives, embraced the goals of the British Empire and entered the “Great War” against Germany and Austria. The United States remained neutral until 1917, a source of tension with both the British and Canadian governments. The arrival of Japanese warships off the Pacific coast to protect Canada’s western flank from German submarines, an action stemming from the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, resulted in some mitigation of anti-Japanese sentiments in British Columbia for the duration of the war. However, in the secluded offices of imperial policy making, concerns were being expressed about Japanese attempts to expand influence in China. These concerns were shared by the US government under Woodrow Wilson. With war raging in Europe, Japanese imperial forces were able to seize German colonial possessions in China (Shandong) and its island territories north of the equator. Shortly afterwards, the Japanese government tabled the infamous “Twenty-One Demands,” which would have effectively reduced China to a Japanese protectorate. Both the American and Chinese governments became part of the Allied forces in 1917. Unknown to them at the time, the British government had signed a secret memorandum with the Japanese regarding postwar treaty talks. In it Great Britain agreed to support Japan’s claim to the German territories in Shandong and the Pacific Islands in exchange for Japan’s recognition of
British control of the south Pacific Islands. These issues would be thrashed out in Versailles in 1919.

Canada’s prime minister Robert Borden led its delegation to Versailles. Besides reinforcing Canada’s autonomy in international relations, Borden continued to pursue the idea of Canada’s acting as an honest broker in harmonizing US-British relations while seeing to it that its own racist legislation was not threatened by new international regulations. In preparation for the Versailles peace conference, Borden wrote to British prime minister Lloyd George, extolling the merits of Atlanticism:

You know my own conviction that there is at least possible a League of the two great English speaking commonwealths who share common ancestry, language and literature, who are inspired by like democratic ideals, who enjoy similar political institutions and whose united force is sufficient to ensure the peace of the world. It is with a view to the consummation of so great a purpose that I should be content, and indeed desire, to invite and even urge the American Republic to undertake worldwide responsibilities in respect of undeveloped territories and backward races similar to, if not commensurate with, those which have been assumed by or imposed upon our own Empire.

Versailles represented a step in this direction. Conventional accounts of Versailles, including the well known *Paris 1919* by Margaret MacMillan, have largely focused on the European implications of the peace treaty. Omitted or downplayed have been the enormous implications of Versailles for the forces of decolonization in Asia and the rest of the world. These played out at Versailles in the marginalization of Afro-Asian liberation movements, the rejection of a racial equality clause, the ceding of Chinese and Pacific Islander territories to the Japanese and British empires over the objections of Chinese representatives, and the gutting of equality clauses in the charter for the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Concerning the racial equality clause, the governments of Great Britain and the United States refused to endorse a Japanese proposal despite vigorous and prolonged lobbying by the Japanese delegation. When the delegation then proposed a watered-down clause, brokered by Robert Borden, it passed by a majority (eleven out of seventeen votes) in the League of Nations Commission. Wilson, with British support, used his position as chair of the session to veto the resolution. The defeat of the racial equality clause was not the end of discussions related to race at Versailles. The issue resurfaced
as part of discussions related to the labour-related proceedings.\textsuperscript{87} According to the labour commission’s original draft of a charter for the ILO, an institution that continues to this day, clause 8 included the statement: “In all matters concerning their status as workers and social insurance, foreign workmen lawfully admitted to any country and their families should be ensured the same treatment as the nationals of that country.”\textsuperscript{88} Borden, Hughes, and others in the British Empire delegation decried this suggestion because it would give Asian workers the same rights as white workers. Borden wrote to Lloyd George on 27 March 1919 complaining that Canadian conditions were not being fairly considered: “For example, in British Columbia there is Provincial legislation which reserves certain industries for white labour. Apparently the eighth article of the proposed report would call upon us to override this legislation. Any such proposal would arouse the fiercest resentment and might lead to the most serious consequences.”\textsuperscript{89} In one of the darker moments of Canadian diplomacy, Borden secretly substituted his own draft charter for the ILO, which effectively nixed equal treatment for workers regardless of race.\textsuperscript{90}

The final item at Versailles that had profound consequences was the resolution of the Japanese demand to retain the former German colonial holdings on the Shandong peninsula in China and the Pacific Islands north of the equator. The Japanese delegation already had the support of the British, and Wilson, fearful the Japanese would reject the creation of the League of Nations if they were defeated on both racial equality and Shandong, decided to allow the concessions despite strong opposition from the Chinese representatives as well as from his own advisers. In the process, Wilson, having effectively scuttled the racial equality clause, had the temerity to lecture Wellington Koo, the Chinese representative, on matters of race: “A long time ago, the Kaiser set himself up as the enemy of your race, and we all remember his famous speech on the Yellow Peril. He would not have tried to govern France and England; it would have been enough to vanquish them to seize all that pleased him afterwards. One of the results of this war was to save the Far East in particular.”\textsuperscript{91} Lloyd George was not far behind Wilson in rationalizing the beneficence of the West. In discussions with Wilson and Makino, the Japanese representative at Versailles, Lloyd George declared: “China’s stagnation justifies a great part of what foreigners have done there. The Chinese are like the Arabs, a very talented race, but at a stage that doesn’t allow them to progress further. China would have been destroyed by the Taiping Rebellion if Gordon hadn’t been there to organize her army.”\textsuperscript{92}
In the end, the US Senate failed to ratify the peace treaty and the United States remained outside the League of Nations. Many scholars and commentators have perceived this failure to ratify the Versailles Treaty and the subsequent decision not to join the League of Nations as the onset of American “isolationism.” As Asian specialist John King Fairbank points out in his memoirs, such a view of American foreign policy distorts reality: “We actually had three policies at once: east toward Europe, no entangling alliances, ‘we keep out’; south toward Latin America, the Monroe Doctrine, ‘you keep out’; and west across the Pacific, the Open Door, ‘we all go in.’”

Across the Pacific, however, was also Japan.

Japan’s representatives at Versailles had won their demand for further concessions in China, but this, and the Japanese military’s prolonged occupation of Siberia as part of the Allied intervention against the Soviet Union, raised warning flags among its imperial rivals. As Antony Best shows in his study of British military intelligence between the wars, racism remained strong within the British defence and foreign policy communities. Distrust of the Japanese prompted the Committee of Imperial Defence to recommend the building of a major base at Singapore, noting “the most likely war for some time to come would be one between the white and yellow races whose interests lay in the Pacific.”

Canadian prime minister Arthur Meighen, who had replaced Borden as head of the Conservative Party, played a key role in putting the final nail in the coffin of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance during the 1921 Imperial Conference in London. As early as February that year, Meighen had written Lloyd George suggesting abrogation of the treaty and the convening of a “Conference of Pacific Powers.” Otherwise, Meighen cautioned, renewal of the treaty risked being seen by the US government as an “unfriendly exclusion and as a barrier to an English speaking accord.” Meighen’s motivations for actively advocating abrogation are not difficult to ascertain. Earlier in the month, Newton Rowell, a prominent lawyer and founder of the League of Nations Society in Canada, had met with advisors to president-elect Warren Harding and communicated to Meighen Washington’s antipathy towards the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. In Washington, leading opposition to the renewal of the alliance came from Henry Cabot Lodge and William Howard Gardiner. In 1912, Lodge had spearheaded a racist anti-Japanese corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, and he had led the opposition to US ratification of the League of Nations. For his part, Gardiner was a former president of the English-Speaking Union.
Arthur Meighen was assisted in the preparations for the conference by Loring Christie, the legal advisor to the DEA. According to one scholar, Christie was the “principal architect of the Canadian assault on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.” Immigration, trade, and ending the Anglo-Japanese Alliance constituted the focus of Canadian officials. Meighen’s intervention at the meeting effectively prevented the Imperial Conference from extending the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, and, furthermore, it prompted the colonial secretary, a young Winston Churchill, to declare against renewal of the treaty. In the United States, President Warren Harding unofficially announced on 10 July 1921 that his government would welcome an international forum on Pacific problems to be held in Washington the following year. The Washington Conference opened on 12 November 1921 and lasted almost three months. In Japan, both hostility and fatalism greeted the events. The conference ended with the signing of numerous accords, including the Four Power Treaty among the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and France, replacing the Anglo-Japanese Alliance; the Five-Power Naval Limitation Treaty, aimed at curbing the naval arms race then taking place among Great Britain, Japan, and the United States; and the Nine-Power Treaty regarding China. Most commentators on these treaties either herald them as an impressive achievement in a new internationalist, multilateral order or as acts of folly that left the major powers unprepared for Japanese aggression. However, another perspective is possible.

The end of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was met with mixed feelings on the part of Japanese officials. From the perspective of people such as Shidehara Kijūrō, there was little to be done: “We would only embarrass the British government if we insisted on the alliance being continued.” Charles Elliot, British ambassador in Tokyo, reported that the Washington Conference was seen there as “a secret coalition between Great Britain and the US at the expense of Japan.” The limits imposed on the Japanese navy created fertile fields of resentment within its ranks. The following year, in fact, a revised national defence policy suggested that the “Asiatic” policy of the United States was based on an “economic invasion” of China and racial prejudice against Japanese and that “sooner or later a clash with our Empire [would] become inevitable.” Fifteen years after the Vancouver race riots, the efforts to build an Anglo-Saxon accord regarding East Asia culminated in the Washington agreements, rendering Japan a subordinate imperial power while keeping China open for imperial business.

Even the establishment of the Canadian legation in Tokyo a few years later reflected the intensified racism of the era. Writing in his diary in
October 1927, King rationalized the opening of a Canadian legation: “It seems to me that our only effective way to deal with the Japanese question is to have our own Minister in Japan to vise passports. This will be the way to meet the Tory policy of ‘exclusion’ which we can never consent.” Respect for Japan’s imperial status and hopes for trade were also significant in King’s decision to open a legation, but his desire to enforce exclusion through passport and visa controls in Tokyo came first, and this reflects the institutionalization of state racism during this era.

**Diaspora, Nationalism, and Decolonization**

The origins of the Second World War in Asia are often traced to Japanese militarism and expansionism in East Asia and rightly so. But too often conventional English-language histories portray the Washington treaties through the lens of Japan-US relations, that is, as an era of multilateral internationalism in the joint exploitation of China, a process interrupted in 1931 by the Japanese invasion of northeast China. But just as Eurocentric views of Versailles displace its fundamental relationship with decolonization (or, to be more precise, its lack thereof), so, too, the liberal interpretation of the Washington treaties displaces a fundamental character of the period – the rise and, indeed, triumph of anti-colonialism in China. The movements that shaped this emerging force had a major impact not only on Chinese politics but also on imperial policies and Canadian attitudes.

In 1925, thousands of people in the Chinese communities in Toronto, Vancouver, and Victoria gathered together to protest the killing of Chinese anti-imperial demonstrators in Shanghai in what is known as the May 30th Incident. The incident, which saw British forces in Shanghai fire on unarmed protestors, reflected a burgeoning nationalist movement in China that challenged imperial control. In the meetings in Canada, the Chinese raised thousands of dollars to support the new Guomindang (GMD), or Nationalist, government that was taking shape. They also demanded that any settlement with the imperial powers in China include a deal to repeal Canada’s Chinese Exclusion Act, 1923. For many, the transnational linkage between imperialism abroad and racism at home was transparent at this time. Understanding these connections is as important for understanding the origins of the war in the Pacific, where Canadian troops first saw action in the Second World War, as it is for understanding the evolution of racialized communities in Canada.

In the wake of Versailles and the May 4th protests in China that were its result, GMD and communist forces united to create the first united front...
and a northern expedition to vanquish warlordism and to unite China. This movement was pushed forward by popular actions such as the Hong Kong Seaman’s strike of 1922, an action in which race was key in so far as the strikers demanded wage parity with white sailors. On 15 May 1925, a demonstration against the firing of two Chinese workers at a Japanese-owned cotton mill in Shanghai led to the murder of Ku Cheng-hung. This provoked mass protests, and on 30 May Shanghai military police under British direction fired on Chinese demonstrators, killing eleven and wounding scores of others. The confrontation escalated after a confrontation in Shanghai’s international settlement, and the Shameen (Shamian) massacre of 23 June saw fifty-two Chinese protesters killed by British-led forces near Guangzhou. A general strike in Hong Kong-Guangzhou, mass protests, and a boycott movement swept the country, with British imperialism the main target. This was soon to change, however. As Chinese military forces approached northern China, Japanese imperialism came under increasing attack, particularly after three military interventions by Japanese troops in the Shandong region in 1927-28. The tensions that arose led some in Japan’s elite to question the maintenance of its “formal” empire (i.e., colonial control over Korea, Taiwan, and northeast China). For others, however, the way out of the crisis was increased military intervention. The global economic depression of the early 1930s further exacerbated these contradictions, and, in 1931, military officers stationed in northeast China took matters into their own hands.

Northeast China: The Invasion of Manchuria

Japan’s invasion of Manchuria, or China’s northeast provinces as they are referred to in Chinese, began on 18 September 1931 with an explosion near the Japanese-controlled rail line outside of Shenyang (Mukden). Japanese authorities blamed “Chinese bandits” for this act of terror, but, in fact, it was Japanese military officers who were responsible. The fighting spread to Shanghai in early 1932, with the Chinese army waging a valiant effort against Japanese imperial forces – an effort that inspired many Chinese both at home and abroad. In the end, however, the GMD decided not to carry on the war, and soon Japanese forces controlled most of the region, establishing the puppet kingdom of Manchukuo and enthroning the last Chinese emperor, Pu Yi. The invasion provoked much resentment among Chinese abroad. In Canada, Chinese communities across the country organized support leagues and raised thousands of dollars to support the resistance in China.
The Canadian government did little to support China at this time, refusing to establish diplomatic relations with China until 1942. Consular services were under the jurisdiction of Canada’s legation in Japan. Canada’s first ambassador to Japan, Herbert Marler, a former Cabinet minister in the Mackenzie King government in the early 1920s, was an unabashed anglophile and pro-Japan.\footnote{113} The British war and foreign offices agreed that the main problem regarding Japan’s invasion was that pro-League of Nations opinion might damage relations with Japan and that League sanctions against Japan would have a disastrous effect on “our interests in the Far East.”\footnote{114} That Japan should expand in northeast China did not overly concern the British foreign ministry, given that British interests were mainly concentrated in the Yangtze Valley. In fact, there was a distinct advantage: Japanese expansion created a larger force as a buffer against the Soviet Union, which the British government, as well as the Japanese, perceived as trying to undermine its interests in China and elsewhere.

In 1932, delegates gathered at the League of Nations in Geneva to debate the conclusions of the Lytton report, the League-commissioned study of the situation in Manchuria. C.H. Cahan, secretary of state in the Conservative Bennett Cabinet, addressed the assembly and largely supported Japan’s position, declaring its actions as being similar to those of Great Britain in China in 1927, questioning China’s right to a seat at the League, and supporting Japan’s denials of any attempts to split Manchuria from China.\footnote{115} Cahan had been influenced to some degree by the British foreign minister, and the Canadian government was so unhappy with this transparent appeasement that it disavowed his position, lobbying instead to bring together the British and American positions.\footnote{116} Canadian officials were convinced that all they could do was duck and run. In Tokyo, Hugh Keenleyside remarked on the continual pull towards the British: “The minister spent Saturday afternoon playing golf with the British Ambassador and is consequently back again in his anti-Chinese, anti-League, pro-Japanese attitude from which he varied only after a lot of hard work on the part of Kirkwood and myself and some indirect comments from Dr. Skelton.” The racism that underscored Marler’s views did not go unnoticed: “The minister is still talking about the ‘oriental mind’ and the fact that we must not judge the orient by the occidental standards – especially with relation to such things as the Kellogg Pact, the Covenant of the League, etc., etc. This I cannot swallow. The inscrutability of the Orient and the ‘oriental mentality’ are largely a fiction of lazy minds.”\footnote{117} The dissension over Manchuria rendered the Institute
of Pacific Relations (IPR), a transpacific think tank in which Canadians actively participated, less effective than it might otherwise have been.\textsuperscript{118} In the end, the Japanese Empire extended its grip in northeast China, consolidating the state of Manchukuo and extending its military control to just outside of Beijing.

Lester Pearson thus arrived in London in late 1935 to observe the Japanese delegation withdraw from the Naval Conference after the Euro-American powers rejected its demand for naval parity. Pearson’s predictions regarding “the close understanding and friendly cooperation” of the Anglo-Saxon peoples had indeed proved prescient. The Chinese people, at home or in the diaspora, remained the excluded “other” and were left to their own devices to face the armed Japanese Empire.