

**The London School of Economics and Political Science**

*Japan and the British World, 1904-14*

Cornelis Heere

A thesis submitted to the Department of International History of  
the London School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy, London, October 2016

## DECLARATION

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. Quotation from it is permitted, provided that full acknowledgement is made. This thesis may not be reproduced without my prior written consent.

I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party.

I declare that my thesis consists of 98,966 words.

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyses the effect of the rise of Japan on the 'British world' during the early twentieth century, from the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5) to the outbreak of the First World War. Victory over Russia in 1905 transformed Japan's international position, elevating it to the rank of a Great Power, and allowing it to become an increasingly significant actor in East Asia and the Pacific. As its presence expanded, so did the scope for interaction with the British imperial system, bringing Japan into closer, and often frictious contact with Anglophone communities from the China coast to western Canada. This dissertation seeks to analyse that process, and assess its significance both for the changing nature of the Anglo-Japanese relationship, and the evolution of the British imperial system. By incorporating sources from Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the China coast within a single study, this dissertation integrates disparate historiographies that have taken either the imperial metropolis or the colonial nation as their object of study.

It reaches three primary conclusions. First, it demonstrates that the imperial 'periphery' came to play an increasingly central role in how the British relationship with Japan was construed. Second, it showcases that a sense of external pressure from Japan, often interpreted in racial as much as geopolitical or commercial terms, became a prominent factor in how colonial elites came to redefine their position in a wider British world. Third, it shows that diverging racial views, in particular, came to constitute a structural problem in the management of the Anglo-Japanese relationship. The following study opens with an analysis of British assessments of the Russo-Japanese War, and proceeds to scrutinise several contexts in which Japan's rise presented new forms of competition and rivalry: the British 'informal empire' in China; Japanese immigration to North America; and naval defence in the Pacific. Finally, it examines how these new controversies, in turn, forced the Anglo-Japanese alliance to evolve. As such, this dissertation aims to shed new light on both on the internal dynamics of the British imperial system, and its changing position in the world.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project threw many obstacles in my way, but involuntary solitude was never one of them, and I pledge my sincere gratitude to all those who lent their support along the way. First honours are due to my supervisor, Antony Best, who is an exemplary scholar and without whose guidance I would have stranded at an early stage. This project would not have been possible without the generous support of the London School of Economics, the Fundatie Vrijvrouwe van Renswoude, the Dr Hendrik Muller Fund, the Royal Historical Society, the British Association for Canadian Studies, and the Japanese studies programme of the Suntory and Toyota Centre for Economic Research and Development. I am truly grateful to them all.

Every PhD is a journey, and mine took me across three continents and two-dozen archival repositories. All are well served by a dedicated staff, to whom I am duly grateful. My fellow travellers, Jesse Tumblin, Graeme Thompson, Bart Zielinski, and John Mitcham, broadened my intellectual horizons along the way. A particular word of thanks must go to my old *betman* Chai Lieven, who has been a constant source of support and continues to be an inspiration.

I was fortunate to call the LSE my intellectual home for the past four years, where I shared the company of an exceptional group of fellow scholars. Paul Keenan has been a mentor and a friend since I first arrived at the School. I am grateful to Oliver Eliot, Jin Lim, Scott Gilfillan, Chris Parkes, Zhong Zhong Chen, Jonas Fosli Gjersø, Natasha Telepneva, Simon Toner, Yu Suzuki, Taka Yamamoto, Tommaso Milani, Anne Irfan, Bastiaan Bouwman, Alexandre Dab, Boyd van Dijk, Alex Mayhew, Michael Rupp, Max Skjønberg, and Eline van Ommen for their peerless companionship. Sharing my idiosyncratic interest in empire with a group of brilliant undergraduate students has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life, and I am very grateful to Joanna Lewis for her unfailing support in this, as in much else.

Life in London would not have been the same without the friendship of Anika Mashru, Dominka Gamalczyk, Benjamin Levy, Emma Godden, Fred Potter, and Gemma Fox, all of whom were daily wellsprings of much-needed distraction. Babak Mohammadzadeh, Wesley Stuurman, Ece Aygün, Nilofar Sarwar and Morten Fausboll, and Marianna Ferro have been true friends all, and I apologise for imposing on them with near-endless talk about my research. I'll stop now, I promise. Above all, I could not have done this without the love and unwavering support of my family: my brother, Thijs, and my parents, Albert and Sophia. My grandmother, Elze Heere-Bijlsma, swore that she would see 'my book' finished, and kept her promise. I dedicate this to her memory.



*Voor Elze*  
(1934-2017)





## CONTENTS

<i>Abstract</i>	3
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	5
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	10
Introduction:	11
1. A War for Civilisation, 1904-5	30
2. Making Equals, 1905-06	52
3. 'The merry game of dollar-grinding': China, 1905-1911	75
4. 'A well nigh-impassable gulf': The Immigration Crisis, 1907-8	96
5. The Pacific Problem, 1906-09	129
6. Rethinking the Japanese Alliance, 1910-11	155
7. 'Must the bar of race be permanent?': The British world and Japan, 1911-14	174
Conclusion	196
<i>Bibliography</i>	205

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AWM	Australian War Memorial, Canberra
BL	British Library, London
BLO	Bodleian Library, Oxford
<i>CAPD</i>	<i>Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates</i>
CCAC	Churchill College Archives Centre, Cambridge
<i>CGEM</i>	Lo, Hui-min (ed.), <i>The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison, Vol. I, 1895-1912</i> (Cambridge, 1976)
CID	Committee of Imperial Defence
CL/WDS	W.D. Straight Papers, Cornell University Library, Ithaca
<i>CPD</i>	<i>Canadian Parliamentary Debates</i>
CRL	Cadbury Research Library, Birmingham
CUL	Cambridge University Library
DUL/AG	Albert Grey, 4 <sup>th</sup> Earl Grey Papers, Durham University Library
FRBL/JOPB	J.O.P. Bland Papers, Fisher Rare Book Library, Toronto
HC	House of Commons
HSBC	Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation
HR	House of Representatives
ICS	Institute for Commonwealth Studies
LAC	Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa
LHC	Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, London
LSE	London School of Economics
<i>LTR</i>	Morison, E.E. (ed.), <i>The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt</i> , (8 Vols.), (Cambridge, MA, 1951-54)
ML	Mitchell Library, Sydney
NAA	National Archives of Australia, Canberra
<i>NCH</i>	<i>North China Herald</i>
NI	News International Archive, London
NLA	National Library of Australia, Canberra
NMM	National Maritime Museum, Greenwich
<i>NZH</i>	<i>New Zealand Herald</i>
<i>NZPD</i>	<i>New Zealand Parliamentary Debates</i>
PA	Parliamentary Archives
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
<i>SMH</i>	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>
TNA	The National Archives, Kew

## INTRODUCTION

Japan joined the great powers on the morning of 27 May 1905, when the Russian Baltic Fleet steamed into the Strait of Tsushima. Seven months earlier, the tsar had ordered the armada to leave its base in Kronstadt and embark for the Far East, in an attempt to wrest back control of the sea from Japan. Its progress had been slow and difficult. Following an incident in the North Sea, where the fleet mistook a group of British fishing trawlers for Japanese torpedo boats, it was barred from taking on coal at British ports. Supplying the fleet during its 18,000-mile voyage had been a logistical nightmare. Exhausted, demoralised, and in desperate need of supplies, it steamed on, hoping to make a dash for Vladivostok, Russia's sole remaining naval base in eastern waters. At Tsushima, the narrow strait between Korea and Japan, the Russians finally met their Japanese adversaries. By the morning of the following day, it was over. Japan had won a crushing victory: without losing a single major vessel, it had destroyed six Russian battleships and captured the remaining two. Over five thousand sailors, including the Admiral Rozhdestvensky, the fleet's commanding admiral, were taken prisoner.

News of Tsushima rippled around the globe. In Britain, Japan's treaty ally since 1902, and where rivalry with Russia ran deep, it met with general elation. When the Russo-Japanese War broke out in February 1904, the terms of the Anglo-Japanese alliance had allowed Britain to remain on the sidelines, but as London celebrated Japan's latest victory, the British press made no claim to neutrality. 'Every Englishman will join in the joy which is felt in the land of his allies', wrote the *North China Herald*, the mouthpiece of British trading communities on the China coast.<sup>1</sup> In the centenary of Trafalgar, parallels were inevitably drawn to Britain's own naval past. 'In the hundred years gone by since Nelson decided the destinies of Europe,' opined *The Times*, 'no such action has been fought at sea as that which begun on Saturday in the Straits of Tsushima, and no such victory has been won.'<sup>2</sup>

Almost overnight, Tsushima catapulted Japan into the upper ranks of the international order. Its rise over the previous decade had been dramatic; indeed, compared to the miseries that befell its larger Chinese neighbour during the same period, it was nothing short of astonishing. Before the 1890s, certainly, Japan had barely featured in the politics of East Asia except as the subject of the ambitions of other powers. Its foreign relations were hemmed in by a quasi-colonial regime of 'unequal treaties'. Japan's modernisation, its victory over China in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), and the revision of its commercial treaties with the Western powers had improved its international standing, but still few observers had expected the island kingdom to be able to stand up to Russia's vastly greater resources. In the event, not only did Japan win, the

---

<sup>1</sup> 'The War', *NCH*, 2 June 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Editorial, *The Times*, 30 May 1905.

scale of its victory took even its most sanguine supporters by surprise. Tsushima, as the first occasion on which an Asian state defeated a European great power in a modern war, seemed to signal a turning point in world history. ‘The line of demarcation between Europe and Asia has been broken down,’ declared H.W. Wilson, a leading pro-Japanese journalist. ‘The era of inequality between the races is over. Henceforth white and yellow man must meet on an equal footing.’<sup>3</sup> *The Times* drew the same conclusion: Japan had proved itself equal to the great European powers ‘judged by every standard of modern civilization’. As for the fear that Japan’s victory portended a conflict between Europe and a rising Asia – the so-called ‘Yellow Peril’ – *The Times* waved it aside:

We can conceive no surer way of averting the danger or racial antagonism, if it in reality exists, than an alliance between the two Island Empires of the West and the East based on a community of peaceful interests, on joint responsibilities of mutual defence, and on kindred ideals of patriotism, progress, and freedom.<sup>4</sup>

To *The Times* then, the Russo-Japanese War was a vindication of the liberal and ‘civilised’ international order, the face that the *pax Britannica* liked to present to the world. Yet many others saw it differently. According to Harry Johnston, an old colonial hand, Japan’s triumph was less a vindication of liberalism than a rallying cry against the West, an ‘electric shock to the coloured peoples of the world’. It offered proof that white Europeans, despite the staggering expansion of their collective empires over the past decades, were not invincible. ‘It was the first set-back of the Caucasian since the Neolithic period; of the Christian since the relief of Vienna.’<sup>5</sup> This may have exaggerated Japan’s Promethean touch, but not by too much: Tsushima spoke to the imagination of nationalists and modernisers across Eurasia, from China to Egypt. Jawaharlal Nehru, still a schoolboy at Harrow, recalled rushing down for the papers for news of the war, and trying to immerse himself in Japanese history – though he felt ‘rather lost’ in it. The Chinese nationalist Sun Yat-sen found himself congratulated on the news of Tsushima by Egyptian dockworkers as he passed through the Suez Canal. When he arrived in Tokyo to found the Tongmenhui, a nationalist society, he found eager recruits among the thousands of Chinese students now flocked to Japanese schools and military academies. In Aceh, in northeast Sumatra, local nationalists hoped for Japan’s assistance in the ‘speedy expulsion of the Dutch’. To all, Japan appeared as a model of successful resistance to European encroachment, a country that had adopted the tools of Western modernity without falling either into the twinned traps of colonial tutelage or slavish imitation.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> H.W. Wilson, “Japan’s Trafalgar”, *National Review*, July 1905.

<sup>4</sup> Editorial, *The Times*, 5 June 1905.

<sup>5</sup> Harry Johnston, *Views and Reviews from the Outlook of an Anthropologist*, (London, 1912), pp. 260-61.

<sup>6</sup> For the impact of the Russo-Japanese War on Asia and the Islamic world, see Klaus Kreisner, “Der Japanische Sieg über Russland (1905) Und sein Echo unter den Muslimen,” *Die Welt Des Islams* 21, no. 4 (1981): 209–39; Orhan Kologlu, “Turkish and Islamic Perspectives of Japanese Modernisation: the Role of the Japanese Victory Over Russia

It was easily possible then, to interpret the Japanese victory as a blow to the global imperial order, and to the British ‘world system’ that formed its dominant component.<sup>7</sup> Certainly, this interpretation seemed to become more persuasive in the years that followed, as Japanese expansion – in a commercial and demographic as well as territorial sense – began to press on the outer fringes of the British system. New zones of Anglo-Japanese friction developed. The British expatriate communities in the ‘treaty-ports’ scattered along the China coast had once cheered Russia’s defeats; after 1905, they increasingly denounced Japan’s growing power. In the Anglophone settler societies on the Pacific, Japan’s rise added a geopolitical coating of to existing hostilities towards Asian immigration. A modern, assertive Japan, they feared, would soon demand the revision of the restrictive immigration policies – the ‘great white walls’ – they had built up over the previous decades.<sup>8</sup> A racist backlash was already in the making. Two weeks before Tsushima, delegates from local labour organisations in San Francisco founded the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League, an organisation dedicated to stopping all further East Asian immigration into California.<sup>9</sup> In the summer of 1907, a wave of anti-Japanese agitation swept the western coast of North America, culminating in race riots in Vancouver in September. In Australia and New Zealand, racial angst fed calls for the formation of autonomous military forces to secure their self-declared ‘white man’s countries’ against the looming menace to the north. Amid growing anti-Japanese agitation in the ‘white Pacific’ and the China coast, Britain’s relationship with its Asian ally became increasingly Janus-faced: while the British government continued to view the alliance as beneficial and necessary, other parts of the British world viewed Japan through a darkening prism of geopolitical and racial antagonism.

This dissertation examines how Britain and the British world responded to the challenges that arose with Japan’s growing power. It traces the evolution of the Anglo-Japanese relationship, in its political, strategic, and cultural dimensions, from the Russo-Japanese War to the outbreak of the First World War, examining the major issues and controversies that came to

---

1904-1905,” *Turkish Review of Middle East Studies* 11 (2000): 9–42; Renée Worringer, ““Sick Man of Europe” or ‘Japan of the Near East’?: Constructing Ottoman Modernity in the Hamidian and Young Turk Eras,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 36, no. 1 (May 24, 2004): 207–30; Selcuk Esenbel, “Japan’s Global Claim to Asia and the World of Islam: Transnational Nationalism and World Power, 1900-1945,” *The American Historical Review* 109, no. 4 (October 2004): 1140–70; Steven G. Marks, “Bravo, Brave Tiger of the East: the Russo-Japanese War and the Rise of Nationalism in British Egypt and India,” in John Steinberg *et al.* (eds.) *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero, Vol. I*, (Leiden, 2005), 609–27; Harold Schiffrin, “The Impact of the War on China,” in Rotem Kowner (ed.), *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War*, (New York, 2007), 169–82; and Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought*, (New York, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> John Darwin, *The Empire Project: the Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970*, (Cambridge, 2011); for an assessment of the term, see Stephen Howe, “British Worlds, Settler Worlds, World Systems, and Killing Fields,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 40, no. 4 (November 2012): 691–725.

<sup>8</sup> Robert A. Huttenback, *Racism and Empire: White Settlers and Colored Immigrants in the British Self-Governing Colonies, 1830-1910*, (Cornell, 1976); Charles A. Price, *The Great White Walls Are Built: Restrictive Immigration to North America and Australia, 1836-88*, (Canberra, 1978); Andrew Markus, *Fear and Hatred: Purifying Australia and California, 1850-1901*, (Sydney, 1979); Adam McKeown, *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders*, (New York, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: the Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion*, (Berkeley, 1977).

define it during this period: competition in China; disputes over immigration; the spectre of naval rivalry in the Pacific; and Japan's growing frustration that its achievements in peace and war had translated into fully equal standing. It shows how Japan's racial identity, in particular, proved an enduring complication that could encroach on traditional considerations of strategy and diplomacy. Since the impact of Japan's rise was felt most sharply on what is still sometimes referred to as the imperial 'periphery', it also offers a window on the dynamics of imperial policy-making, and the making of national, racial, and imperial identities in the British world.

It posits three primary arguments. First, it contends that the rise of Japan had a profound impact on British policy, and the cultural, racial and geopolitical assumptions in which it was embedded. In so doing, it addresses a subject only patchily covered by the existing literature: much historical writing on British foreign and strategic policy in the Edwardian era remains overcast by the shadow of the First World War, and affords little space either to Japan or to East Asia in a broader sense.<sup>10</sup> Other studies, which deal specifically with Anglo-Japanese relations, have also left chronological gaps in their rush to bring their narratives forward to 1914.<sup>11</sup> No study has comprehensively addressed how Britain coped with Japan's rise to the standing of great power, an omission that this dissertation seeks to redress. In the process, it highlights a number of developments that tend to be left by the wayside on the road to Sarajevo, including the formation of a new regional order in East Asia; immigration as a major international controversy; and the emergence of the Pacific as a zone of geopolitical rivalry – all three of which resurfaced with a vengeance in the immediate aftermath of the First World War.

Second, it argues that the evolution of Anglo-Japanese relations unfolded within a wider 'British world', and needs to be understood as such. After 1905, London attempted to turn the growth of Japanese power to its advantage, soliciting Tokyo's assistance in the defence of India and leaning ever more heavily on its Asian ally for naval support in Asia. Yet in those areas of the British world where Japan's sudden proximity was felt more directly, the story was very different. In Australia, New Zealand, and western Canada, the emergence of a strong, assertive Japan was magnified into a new 'Yellow Peril', held by many to pose a lethal menace to the survival of white civilisation in the Pacific. Exclusionist leagues in Vancouver, Seattle, and San Francisco denounced the Japanese immigrants arriving in North America as the vanguard of a 'yellow invasion'. Some were haunted by nightmares of a racial Armageddon: thus according to the Australian journalist Frank Fox, the Pacific would be the site of 'the next great struggle of civilisation, which will give as its prize the supremacy of the world.'<sup>12</sup> This might have struck

---

<sup>10</sup> The pitfalls of looking at Edwardian foreign policy 'backwards' from the First World War are cogently set out in Keith Neilson, *Britain and the Last Tsar, 1894-1917*, (Oxford, 1995), xii-iii.

<sup>11</sup> For the major studies of Anglo-Japanese relations during this period, see Peter Lowe, *Great Britain and Japan, 1911-15: a Study of British Far Eastern Policy*, (London, 1968); and especially Ian Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires, 1894-1907*, (London, 1966); and Nish, *Alliance in Decline: a Study in Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1908-1923*, (London, 1972).

<sup>12</sup> Frank Fox, *Problems of the Pacific*, (London, 1912), pp. 1-2.

many in London as empty sensationalism; to the governments of Australia and New Zealand, it was deadly serious.

The 'Japanese question' provoked a set of disputes between Britain and its Pacific dominions – replicated within Canada between Ottawa and British Columbia – on connected issues of diplomacy, strategy, and immigration, and became a vexed question in broader debates on the future of the imperial system. Competing strategic priorities – Germany in the North Sea against Japan in the Pacific – bedevilled efforts for a joint programme on imperial defence. As late as the summer of 1914, with war clouds gathering over Europe, the Australasian dominions were decrying Britain's neglect of their oceanic neighbourhood. In turn, racial exclusion, and the rise of anti-Japanese rhetoric across the British Pacific, came to intrude ever more persistently on the strategic dimensions of the Anglo-Japanese relationship. As the *Round Table*, a new imperial review, pointed out in 1911, when it came to the Japanese question, neither Britain nor the dominions were 'masters of their own policy':

England cannot carry on her alliance with Japan if the Dominions are unreasonable in their treatment of the Japanese and the Dominions cannot secure the purity of their white society without the support of the British navy.<sup>13</sup>

Worse, given that the Japanese scares ran in parallel with a rising controversy over Indian immigration, they also risked sharpening the racial fault lines within the empire itself. 'The danger of it is obvious,' concluded a leading official in the Colonial Office. 'We may conceivably have to choose between our self-governing Dominions and the Japanese alliance; we may conceivably have to choose at some future date between India and the self-governing Dominions.'<sup>14</sup>

Third, as the above illustrates, these controversies could not be separated from the problem of race, an aspect of the Anglo-Japanese relationship that has long remained understudied. Here, this dissertation analyses the interplay of several developments. As the responses to Tsushima cited above illustrate, Japan's rise severely complicated existing notions of international hierarchy, and gave a new urgency to the issue of racial equality. Its dramatic triumph over Russia showed just how well it had appropriated the Western institutional arsenal; indeed, the belief that Japan had discovered a new standard of 'national efficiency' made it the subject of considerable interest in Britain.<sup>15</sup> Certainly, it meant that Japan could insist that, after four decades of being subjected to the 'unequal treaties', it should now be treated in every respect as an equal member of the West. This was not merely a matter of national pride: as the sole non-white great power, Japan continued to fear international isolation. For its part, had Britain played a key role in facilitating Japan's entry into the international order, and London understood that the health of the Anglo-Japanese relationship hinged, to a significant degree, on avoiding signs of

---

<sup>13</sup> [Philip Kerr], "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance," *Round Table*, March 1911.

<sup>14</sup> C.P. Lucas, "Asiatic Immigration," 23 Sept 1908, TNA, CO 532/9/34812.

<sup>15</sup> Geoffrey Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency: a Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1899-1914*, (Oxford, 1972), pp. 57-59.

differential treatment towards its 'Asiatic' ally.

In the wake of the Russian war, the optimists expected lingering racial prejudice to melt away as Japan presented its civilised credentials. In fact, the opposite happened: the harder Japan was seen to push against the boundaries of its status, the firmer they became. The issue of immigration, which required the racial boundary to be laid down in law, became particularly controversial. Within a few years of the war, tentative moves towards liberalisation were reversed in the face of overwhelming pressure from white opinion on the Pacific coast. Although the Japanese government acquiesced in practical exclusion, so long as its equal status was recognised in theory (this was the essence of the 'gentlemen's agreements' it concluded with Canada and the United States), suspicion of Tokyo's intentions continued to be rife. In the treaty-ports of China, where the colour bar was a lived reality, racial paranoia took on a different form, as British settlers resented the intrusion of a new, Asian competitor, and fretted that Chinese anti-foreign sentiment (or 'Boxerism') might prove susceptible to Japanese manipulation. Although 'Yellow Perilist' fears of invasion and displacement were most intense in zones of direct contact, they were also not without influence in Britain itself: here too, a fixation on racial prestige could provoke ambivalence about the Anglo-Japanese alliance.

While race exercised a powerful influence, it is important to place its role into context. Alternative markers of difference could be stressed to include Japan in the global society of 'civilised nations'. During the Russo-Japanese War, the loudest voices in British public opinion were those that portrayed the Anglo-Japanese alliance as a coming together of like-minded, progressive island-nations: 'the Englands of East and West'.<sup>16</sup> Tokyo's own propaganda similarly insisted that, in its fight against Russian autocracy, Japan was effectively fighting for 'civilisation' and free trade. Although such ideas dissipated after the war, they nonetheless offered an antidote to the 'Yellow Peril' at a crucial time. In addition, the emergence of a powerful Japan also gave new weight to the careful management of the racial question: allowing global politics to be conducted along the colour line might leave Japan remain permanently alienated from the international order, and dangerously susceptible to the siren song of pan-Asianism. The only 'Yellow Peril' the West had to fear, some commentators stressed, would be a Frankenstein's monster of its own creation.<sup>17</sup> By the same token, openly identifying British policy with the cause of white solidarity, as some settler politicians now demanded, might well heighten racial tensions within the imperial system itself – thus connecting the Japanese issue to wider debates on race, identity, and 'imperial citizenship'.

This dissertation, then, attempts to reveal and analyse the variety of ways in which elites in Britain and the wider British world engaged with the emergence of the first Asian great power. In the process, it uses the rise of Japan as a case study to converse with several larger themes in

---

<sup>16</sup> See, for instance Henry Dyer, *Dai Nippon, the Britain of the East*, (Glasgow, 1904).

<sup>17</sup> Demetrius Boulger, "The Yellow Peril Bogey," *Academy*, Jan 1904; Sidney L. Gulick, *The White Peril in the Far East: An Interpretation of the Significance of the Russo-Japanese War* (London, 1905).



British international and imperial history, and it engages with two historiographical developments in particular. First, it seeks to contribute to the growing willingness of international historians to apply insights from other disciplines, notably cultural history and the history of ideas, to their understanding of global politics. Second, by taking Japan as an external influence on the formation of national, imperial, and racial identities in some of Britain's major settler colonies – Australia, New Zealand, and western Canada – this dissertation engages with the recent boom in imperial history, and especially the rediscovery of an interconnected 'British world'.

### *Historiography*

Japan's ascent to the ranks of the great powers was rapid: barely a decade elapsed between the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), often taken as the start of its rise to prominence, and its victory over Russia. By the end of the First World War, certainly, it appeared self-evident that Japan was to be included in the 'Council of Ten' that would steer the proceedings of the peace conference, and that it would subsequently join the Council of the League of Nations as a permanent member. Its relationship with Britain had been crucial to this process. In 1894, Britain became the first Western power to revise its 'unequal treaty' with Japan, effectively recognising that it had become a 'civilised' power that could be trusted to abide by Western conventions of international conduct. During the Boxer crisis (1900-1) British and Japanese forces cooperated closely in defence of the 'civilised' order in China. Above all, it was the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1902 that secured Japan's seat at the international table, and allowed it to become a full participant in the hitherto Eurocentric world of great power politics.

The history of British engagement with Japan during this period, and the alliance in particular, has broadly been examined through two major strands of interpretation. The traditional view, first articulated in Ian Nish's foundational study, has presented the alliance (at least in its initial years) as a cordial and mutually beneficial partnership, resting on a foundation of overlapping diplomatic and strategic interests.<sup>18</sup> Most accounts identify two prime movers for its emergence. First, a general problem of British overstretch and diplomatic isolation, felt acutely after the South African War (1899-1902); and second, a specific anxiety over the political future of China, following its defeat to Japan in 1895. The key problem was Russia, whose advance in northeast Asia, driven along the new trans-Siberian railroad, seemed most likely to initiate a general partition of China. Japan had its own reasons to fear Russian encroachment, which

---

<sup>18</sup> Studies exploring the origins of the alliance from a strategic-diplomatic perspective include Nish, *Anglo-Japanese Alliance*; and Nish, "The Origins of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance: In the Shadow of the Dreibund," in Philips Payson O'Brien (ed.), *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-1922*, (London, 2004), 8-25; Neilson, *Britain and the Last Tsar*; Otte, *China Question*. For the historical memorialisation of Anglo-Japanese cordiality, see Antony Best, "The 'Ghost' of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance: an Examination Into Historical Myth-Making," *The Historical Journal* 49, no. 3 (September 2006): 1-22.

seemed to edge perilously close to Korea, the proverbial ‘dagger’ pointed at the Japanese home islands. The alliance could arise, then, out of a mutual interest in containing Russia. It proved an unexpectedly successful diplomatic coup: the alliance reinforced Japan’s determination to resist Russia’s intrusions, and allowed it to fight its duel of 1904-5 in a closed international arena. Although Japan’s victory marked the recession of the common threat that had bound the allies together, Nish stressed that the alliance continued to yield benefits for both parties. For Japan, it was the instrument that tied it into the European alliance system; it gave legitimacy to its expansion on the Asian continent; and blunted the antagonism of the United States. For Britain, which became increasingly concentrated on the deterrence of Germany, Japan’s friendship kept the empire’s flank in East Asia while the Royal Navy concentrated its fighting strength in European waters.

Yet as Japan’s power grew, a greater degree of friction came to spoil this picture of Anglo-Japanese harmony. As Peter Lowe has demonstrated, the Chinese revolution in 1911, which collapsed the regional order, widened the scope for conflict.<sup>19</sup> Matters grew worse when the outbreak of the First World War provided further openings for Japanese expansionism, as epitomised by its attempt to impose the so-called ‘Twenty-One Demands’ on China in January 1915.<sup>20</sup> In the absence of a common enemy, the Anglo-Japanese alliance gradually became an instrument to manage the growing rift between the allies themselves. In the traditional interpretation, then, both the rise and the decline of the Anglo-Japanese relationship flowed with the shifts in the international landscape, and followed a reasonably objective assessment of the respective interests of both powers. It assumes that British policy towards Japan obeyed the rules of strategy and diplomacy as understood by the ‘official mind’, and did not differ in essence from that towards other world powers: its ‘Asianness’ in other words, did not play a major role. This assumption broadly resonates, furthermore, with a set of studies that have examined Japan’s entry into ‘international society’ by stressing its adoption of Western concepts of diplomacy and international law.<sup>21</sup>

More recently, this narrative has been complicated by a second strand of interpretation, which has sought to widen the study of Japan’s integration in the international order from this traditional emphasis on diplomacy to other forms of engagement, particularly in the cultural realm. The influence of this turn has been particularly pronounced in the study of Japanese-American relations, where the work of Akira Iriye has been an early guide, but has also made

---

<sup>19</sup> Lowe, *Great Britain and Japan*, chs. 3-5.

<sup>20</sup> For a recent study, see Naraoka Sōchi, ‘Japan’s First World War-Era Diplomacy, 1914-15,’ in Oliviero Frattolillo and Antony Best (eds.), *Japan and the Great War*, (Basingstoke, 2015), 36-51.

<sup>21</sup> Gerrit Gong, *The Standard of Civilisation in International Society* (Oxford, 1980); Hidemi Suganami, ‘Japan’s Entry into International Society,’ in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford, 1984); Tomoko Okagaki, *The Logic of Conformity: Japan’s Entry into International Society*, (Toronto, 2013).

inroads into the British case.<sup>22</sup> In the process, scholars have begun to draw attention to one of the central paradoxes of the Anglo-Japanese relationship: how did these two powers, thought to be separated by a wide cultural and racial gulf, draw closer together in an age where racial ideas exercised a growing influence on political culture? Recent work on Japan, certainly, has shown that the Japanese elite was not only aware the prevalence of racial thinking in the West, but was deeply anxious over its political implications. As Naoko Shimazu has demonstrated, Japan's bid to introduce a 'racial equality clause' into the Covenant of the League of Nations had a long pre-history, rooted in the insecurity of its position as the sole Asian power in a world dominated by white Europeans and their transatlantic progeny.<sup>23</sup> Scholarship on the origins of pan-Asianist thought, moreover, has shown that the notion of an inherent antagonism between 'East' and 'West' acquired a considerable following, even if it remained on the political margins until the 1930s.<sup>24</sup>

The literature on the British side has been sparser. Here, a number of studies have examined the construction of the image of Japan in British society, or the formation of particular cultural tropes – from the 'queer and quaint' exoticism of *The Mikado* to the Edwardian infatuation with the *samurai*.<sup>25</sup> Others have specifically engaged with racial views towards Japan.<sup>26</sup> For the most part, however, these are self-contained cultural histories that steered clear of the implications for the Anglo-Japanese relationship. Insofar as the political implications of racial views have been considered at all, this has mostly been done in reference to the issue of Japanese immigration to the dominions, where the alarmist rhetoric in Australia, New Zealand, and British Columbia provided an obvious counterpoint to the traditional story of diplomatic alignment. Both Nish and Lowe recognised this difficulty, and tried to assess the significance of the issue on

---

<sup>22</sup> Akira Iriye, *Across the Pacific: an Inner History of American-East Asian Relations*, (New York, 1967); and Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement: Japanese and American Expansionism, 1897-1911* (New York, 1972); Joseph Henning, *Outposts of Civilization: Race, Religion, and the Formative Years of Japanese-American Relations*, (New York, 2000); Izumi Hirobe, *Japanese Pride, American Prejudice: Modifying the Exclusion Clause of the 1924 Immigration Act* (Stanford, 2001); and Michael Auslin, *Pacific Cosmopolitans: A Cultural History of U.S.-Japan Relations* (Cambridge, MA, 2011). For Britain, see Gordon Daniels and Chushichi Tsuzuki (eds.), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000, Vol. V: Social and Cultural Perspectives* (Basingstoke, 2002); and the multi-volume *Britain and Japan, Biographical Portraits* (London and Leiden, 1995-2013) series. See also Antony Best, "The 'Cultural Turn' and the International History of East Asia: a Response to David Reynolds," *Cultural and Social History* 3, no. 4 (2006): 482–89.

<sup>23</sup> Naoko Shimazu, *Japan, Race and Equality: the Racial Equality Proposal of 1919*, (London, 1998); see also the pioneering work by Robert B. Valliant, "The Selling of Japan: Japanese Manipulation of Western Opinion, 1900-1905," *Monumenta Nipponica* 29, no. 4 (1974): 415–38.

<sup>24</sup> On pan-Asianism, see Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia*; Eri Hotta, *Pan-Asianism and Japan's War, 1931-45* (New York, 2007).

<sup>25</sup> Jean-Pierre Lehmann, *The Image of Japan: From Feudal Isolation to World Power, 1850-1905*, (London, 1987); Toshio Yokoyama, *Japan in the Victorian Mind: A Study of Stereotyped Images of a Nation, 1850-80*, (Basingstoke, 1987); C. Holmes and A.H. Ion, "Bushido and the Samurai: Images in British Public Opinion, 1894-1914," *Modern Asian Studies* 14, no. 2 (1980): 309-329; Yorimitsu Hashimoto, "White Hope or Yellow Peril?: Bushido, Britain, and the Raj," in David Wolff et al. (eds.), *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero, Vol II*, (Leiden, 2007), 379–402

<sup>26</sup> Graham Prince, "The Yellow Peril in Britain", Unpublished PhD Thesis (McGill University, 1987); Rotem Kowner, "Lighter Than Yellow, but Not Enough: Western Discourse on Japanese "Race," 1854-1904," *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 1 (2000): 103–31; Akira Iikura, "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the Question of Race," in O'Brien (ed.), *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 222–36.

the evolution of the Anglo-Japanese alliance.<sup>27</sup> Yet their studies retained a tight focus on decision-making in Whitehall: both confined their analysis to those moments, such as the imperial conferences of 1911 and 1921, when the dominion governments were able to engage directly with British officialdom. As such, their assessments were limited in scope, and hampered further by their lack of access to dominion sources. Overall, one emerges from these studies with the impression that while dominion antagonism was a factor, it was one that London, armed with the logic of *Realpolitik*, could marginalise without undue difficulty.

Historians in the former dominions themselves have presented a very different picture. In Australia, and to a lesser extent in New Zealand, the rise of Japan has been generally understood as a transformative event in the development of an autonomous perspective on global affairs, and a key external driving force in the development of Australian nationality. Early disputes over the establishment of the 'White Australia' policy at the turn of the twentieth century; Australia's decades-long 'search for security' against the growth of Japanese power; and the post-war Australian-Japanese rapprochement have all formed prominent avenues of inquiry.<sup>28</sup> Scholars have also begun to recover the histories of Australia's Japanese communities.<sup>29</sup> Canadian studies have been fewer, but follow a similar narrative arc: an early history of contact, followed by rising racialism, and finally a gradual post-war liberalisation.<sup>30</sup> Most of these studies remained guided by the notion that anti-Japanese views developed alongside an emerging 'colonial nationalism'; their aspiration was to scrutinise the role that fears of Asia played in the evolution of national identity, racial wars and all. Reflection on specific racial traumas, especially the interment of Japanese during the Second World War, was often crucial to their framing. As a result, many of these histories retain a strong national or local focus, and remain relatively inattentive to the wider context in which their engagement with Japan and the rest of East Asia unfolded.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Ian Nish, "Australia and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1901-1911," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 9, no. 2 (November 1, 1963): 201-12; Peter Lowe, "The British Empire and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1911-1919," *History* 54, no. 181 (June 1969): 212-25.

<sup>28</sup> A.T. Yarwood, *Asian Migration to Australia: The Background to Exclusion, 1896-1923* (Melbourne, 1968); Andrew Markus, *Fear and Hatred: Purifying Australia and California, 1850-1901*, (Sydney, 1979); Sean Brawley, *The White Peril: Foreign Relations and Asian Immigration to Australasia and North America, 1919-1978* (Sydney, 1995); Neville Meaney, *A History of Australian Defence and Foreign Policy, 1901-23: Volume I, the Search for Security in the Pacific, 1901-14* (Sydney, 1976), and *Volume II, Australia and the World Crisis* (Sydney, 2009); David Walker, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia, 1850-1939*, (St Lucia, 1999). On New Zealand, see G.P. Taylor, "New Zealand, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the 1908 Visit of the American Fleet," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 15, no. 1 (March 1969): 55-76; M.P. Lissington, *New Zealand and Japan, 1900-1941* (Wellington, 1971).

<sup>29</sup> Henry Reynolds, *North of Capricorn: the Untold Story of Australia's North*, (Sydney, 2005); Yuriko Nagata and Jun Nagatomo, *Japanese Queenslanders: A History* (Brisbane, 2007).

<sup>30</sup> See W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Towards Orientals in British Columbia*, (Montreal, 1978); John Price, *Orienting Canada: Race, Empire, and the Transpacific* (Vancouver, 2011); and especially Patricia Roy's multi-volume study: *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1895-1914*, (Vancouver, 1989); *The Oriental Question: Consolidating a White Man's Province, 1914-41*, (Vancouver, 2003); and *The Triumph of Citizenship: the Japanese and Chinese in Canada, 1914-67*, (Vancouver, 2007).

<sup>31</sup> For a recent observation along these lines, see Benjamin Mountford, "The Open Door Swings Both Ways: Australia, China, and the British World System, ca. 1770-1907," DPhil Thesis, (University of Oxford, 2012); Mark Hearn,

This persistent bifurcation between ‘metropolitan’ and ‘colonial-nationalist’ studies obscures that when it came to dealing with Japan, diplomatic and strategic considerations could not be kept neatly separated from awkward questions of immigration and race. The ‘Japanese question’ involved actors and interests from across the imperial system – a point that many contemporary observers considered self-evident. This dissertation, therefore, seeks to piece this fragmented historical picture back together. In doing so, it seeks to build on a broader tendency to read the histories of Britain and its major settler colonies as distinct, but nonetheless closely integrated stories. Beginning in the 2000s, scholars in different parts of the Anglophone world have pioneered the concept of a ‘British world’, that held the global British diaspora within a single cultural fabric, and which was sustained through long-term patterns of exchange.<sup>32</sup> The effects of this turn, which itself forms part of a still broader move away from the nation-state as the central framework of historical enquiry, have been wide-ranging, although its primary effects may be summed up as twofold. First, it has allowed historians of the dominions to recognise the enduring importance of a sense of ‘Britishness’ or a ‘Britannic nationalism’ to the development of distinct identities in the settler colonies. It is now increasingly acknowledged that for most Australians, New Zealanders, and Anglophone Canadians, a sense of belonging to larger family of ‘British nations’ was not at odds with the development of an individual national identity. Indeed, it was often vital to it.<sup>33</sup> The same can be said of Britain itself. Historians have found it difficult to capture the effects of the imperial experience on British society, yet the recognition that the idea of ‘empire’ sooner evoked notions of kinship rather than domination has opened up new and fruitful avenues of inquiry.<sup>34</sup> Second, it has allowed historians to situate the evolution of the British world within broader currents of global economic, geopolitical, and ideological change.<sup>35</sup> This in turn has allowed for a greater recognition of the role of the settler sphere in the

---

“Bound with the Empire: Narratives of Race, Nation, and Empire in the Australian Labor Party’s Defence Policy, 1901–21,” *War and Society* 32, no. 2 (August 2013): 95–115.

<sup>32</sup> For the original rallying cries, see Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich, “Mapping the British World,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 31, no. 2 (May 2003): 1–15; and Philip Buckner, “Reinventing the British World,” *The Round Table* 92, no. 368 (January 2003): 77–88; as well as the volumes that emerged out of the ‘British world’ conferences: Philip Buckner and R Douglas Francis (eds.), *Rediscovering the British World*, (Calgary, 2003); Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich, *The British World: Diaspora, Culture, and Identity*, (London, 2003); For subsequent work adopting a ‘British world’ approach, see Gary Magee and Andrew Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, C. 1850-1914*, (Cambridge, 2010); Simon Potter, *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System* (Oxford, 2003).

<sup>33</sup> On Australia, see Neville Meaney, “Britishness and Australia: Some Reflections,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 31, no. 2 (May 2003): 121–35; on Canada, Phillip Buckner and R Douglas Francis, *Canada and the British World*, (Vancouver, 2006); for the more complicated South African story, see Saul Dubow, “How British Was the British World? The Case of South Africa,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37, no. 1 (March 2009): 1–27.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example Andrew S. Thompson, *Imperial Britain: the Empire in British Politics, c. 1880-1932*, (Harlow, 2000); Bill Schwarz, *The White Man’s World*, (Oxford, 2011). Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*, (Oxford, 2006) remains the most needling assessment of the methodological difficulties involved.

<sup>35</sup> The most ambitious efforts have been James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: the Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939*, (Oxford, 2009); and Darwin, *The Empire Project*.

expansion of the British imperial system, as well as its contribution to that system's 'tenacious survival' in the twentieth century.<sup>36</sup>

As a historical concept, 'Greater Britain' remains somewhat tainted by the ethnic triumphalism of its original Victorian progenitors, and its recent historians have been quick to acknowledge that if a British world existed, it was girded by ideas of race. 'Racism,' as James Belich has noted, 'enabled settlers to perpetuate their European-ness over generations, and to claim continuing parity with and connection to their metropolis.'<sup>37</sup> Imperial ideology, as Duncan Bell has shown, also incorporated this idea. As the Victorian era gave way to the Edwardian, talk of imperial unity quietly abandoned the dream of a unitary 'Greater British' nation state. Instead, it came to favour a looser association of nationalities, bound by shared strategic and economic interests, but above all by a common racial heritage: 'the bond of common blood, a common language, common history and tradition,' as one prominent exponent put it, was stronger than any 'material interest' holding the empire together.<sup>38</sup> This vision of racial imperialism could appear breathtakingly expansive – in its looser forms, it clearly reached outwards towards the United States.<sup>39</sup> Yet it was also a highly reductionist definition, which often sat awkwardly with the reality of a multiracial empire that pivoted strategically on India.<sup>40</sup> While the boundaries of Britishness could be stretched to accommodate non-Anglophone whites, such as the Afrikaners and French Canadians, it explicitly excluded the empire's non-white subjects, even though many claimed 'imperial citizenship' on their own terms. 'Whiteness', as Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich have noted, formed a pivotal element in how a common pan-British identity was constituted.<sup>41</sup>

Some have sought to advance this argument further. In *Drawing the Global Colour Line* – the title nods to a 1900 essay by W.E.B. Dubois – Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds argue that racial views, hardened in the battle to exclude Asian immigrants, became the totem of white settler identity both in the British dominions and the United States.<sup>42</sup> As colonists insisted on racial purity as the *sine qua non* of national life, they came to subordinate their view of global politics, and their attachment to the British Empire, to 'the new religion of whiteness'. Lake went

---

<sup>36</sup> Darwin, *The Empire Project*, p. 145.

<sup>37</sup> James Belich, "Race and the Pacific," in *Pacific Histories: Land, Ocean, People*, in David Armitage and Alison Bashford (eds.), (Basingstoke, 2014), 263–81.

<sup>38</sup> Alfred Milner, *The Nation and the Empire, Being a Collection of Speeches and Addresses*, (London, 1913), p. xxxv.

<sup>39</sup> For the American dimension, see Stuart Anderson, *Race and Rapprochement: Anglo-Saxonism and Anglo-American Relations, 1895-1904*, (London, 1981); Paul A Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule Between the British and United States Empires, 1880-1910," *The Journal of American History*, February 15, 2002, 1315–53; Duncan Bell, "The Project for a New Anglo Century: Race, Space, and Global Order," in Peter Katzenstein (ed.), *Anglo-America and Its Discontents: Civilizational Identities Beyond West and East*, (London, 2012), 33–55.

<sup>40</sup> S.R. Mehrotra, "Imperial Federation and India, 1868–1917," *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 1, no. 1 (November 1961): 29–40; and Sukanya Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens: Indians in the Late-Victorian Empire*, (Durham, NC, 2010).

<sup>41</sup> Bridge and Fedorowich, "Mapping the British World," p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Man's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge, 2008).

on to argue that race could offer an alternative vision of a transnational community – a ‘white man’s world’, in which California fitted more comfortably than metropolitan Britain – that could compete with and even supplant Britishness.<sup>43</sup> This has been an influential interpretation, which resonates with several other works that have pointed to the circulation of racial knowledge, and the establishment of new forms of transnational cooperation between different settler societies.<sup>44</sup> Work on the extensive collaboration of the exclusionist projects in British Columbia and the Pacific states of the United States has been especially productive.<sup>45</sup> Yet Lake and Reynolds underestimated just how pivotal the British system was, both as an ideological and a political framework, to the establishment and endurance of racial exclusion. As a number of studies on New Zealand have pointed out, the aspiration to create and maintain an ideal ‘British nation’ was often central to the exclusionary impulse.<sup>46</sup> In practical terms, moreover, the vision peddled by exclusionists – of an expansive, prosperous, ethnically cohesive society – assumed a continuous supply of British trade, migrants, and investment, and on insulation from the diplomatic repercussions of their policies. Empire was the precondition of its existence.

This dissertation shows how the rise of Japan brought these issues into clearer focus. From the 1890s onward, Tokyo had insisted that the exclusion of Japanese immigrants violated its claim to international equality. After 1905, it seemed to possess the means to back up its protests with diplomatic clout and even military force. By extension, the growth of Japanese power also drew a more explicit connection between race, immigration, and imperial defence. The latter in particular has, again, long remained fragmented between individual national contexts. In the Australian case, beginning with the work of Neville Meaney, the rise of Japan has often been understood as a turning point in the development of an autonomous defence policy, and particularly as a catalyst for the establishment of an Australian navy in 1909.<sup>47</sup> Some scholars have since called the centrality of Japan into question, arguing that the formation of an autonomous naval policy is more properly understood as an expression of colonial nationalism

---

<sup>43</sup> Marilyn Lake, “British World or New World? Anglo-Saxonism and Australian Engagement with America,” *History Australia* 10, no. 3 (2013).

<sup>44</sup> Jeremy Martens, “A Transnational History of Immigration Restriction: Natal and New South Wales, 1896–97,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 34, no. 3 (September 2006): 323–44; and “Richard Seddon and Popular Opposition in New Zealand to the Introduction of Chinese Labour Into the Transvaal, 1903–4,” *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 42, no. 2 (2008): 176–95; McKeown, *Melancholy Order*; R.K. Bright, “Asian Migration and the British World, 1850–1914,” in *Empire, Identity, and Migration in the British World*, in Kent Fedorowich and Andrew Thompson (eds.), (Manchester, 2013), 128–49.

<sup>45</sup> Erika Lee, “The ‘Yellow Peril’ and Asian Exclusion in the Americas,” *Pacific Historical Review* 76, no. 4 (November 2007): 537–62; Patricia Roy, “Canadian and American Treatment of the Nikkei, 1890–1949: a Comparison,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 45, no. 1 (April 8, 2015): 44–70; Kornel Chang, “Enforcing Transnational White Solidarity: Asian Migration and the Formation of the U.S.–Canadian Boundary,” *American Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 671–96.

<sup>46</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Honolulu, 2002); Brian Moloughney and John Stenhouse, “‘Drug-Besotten, Sin-Begotten Fiends of Filth’: New Zealanders and the Oriental Other, 1850–1920,” *The New Zealand Journal of History* 33, no. 1 (1999): 43–64.

<sup>47</sup> Meaney, *Search for Security*; and *Fears & Phobias: EL Piesse and the Problem of Japan, 1909–39*, (Canberra, 1996).

than a response to a new external threat.<sup>48</sup> The smaller literature on New Zealand, meanwhile, gives similar precedence to the role of nation-building over strategic imperatives.<sup>49</sup>

These positions are not fundamentally opposed, but rather stress different aspects of a single process. In the increasingly threatening strategic climate of the early twentieth century, in which Japan loomed largest (though not alone), Australasian nation-building came to be understood a matter of strategic urgency: true security could only be obtained by shedding a passive, 'colonial' mentality, and replacing it with a vigorous commitment to a 'national' defence. To its local advocates, moreover, this was not to repudiate the British connection, but to strengthen it: self-sufficiency was held to be their prerogative as 'British nations', and was typically tied to the aspiration to play a more active role in the defence of the imperial system. It did not, however, imply meek subordination to British *policy*: for Australia, and with some delay for New Zealand, the desire for imperial cooperation was increasingly geared towards consolidating the Pacific presence of the 'British race' (or 'Anglo-Saxon', if the Americans were included), against the latent threat of Asia. As Stuart Ward has noted, the 'expectation of racial solidarity' marked Australian and New Zealand attitudes to defence until the 1960s.<sup>50</sup> 'It seems to me that this question is fundamental,' wrote the Australian Round Table Frederic Eggleston in 1913. 'If the Empire does not stand to protect the British race or nationality I do not know that it has any real justification for its existence as an Empire.'<sup>51</sup>

This was an expectation, however, that often went unreciprocated, both in practice and in the subsequent historiography. Historians of British defence policy have been traditionally inclined to see the Edwardian period as the run-up to the First World War, and as such, considered colonial fretting about Japan a distraction from weightier questions. The growth of German naval power in the North Sea was the real issue.<sup>52</sup> Some may have imbibed the prejudices of their subjects: Winston Churchill, in particular, had little but contempt for colonial 'tin-pot navies' during his time at the Admiralty.<sup>53</sup> Recent work, however, has begun to reveal a greater complexity in the Edwardian debates on imperial defence. Some have attempted to contextualise the German menace, by showcasing the alternative pressures on British strategy.<sup>54</sup> Russia, in particular, continued to be a source of concern: by the summer of 1914, only the outbreak of the First World War appeared to have forestalled a new round of the 'Great Game'

---

<sup>48</sup> Ross Lamont, "A.W. Jose in the Politics and Strategy of Naval Defence, 1903-1909," in *Southern Trident: Strategy, History, and the Rise of Australian Naval Power*, ed. David Stevens and John Reeve, (Allen & Unwin, 2003), 197–213; Sheila Dwyer, *Sir William Rooke Creswell and the Foundation of the Australian Navy*, (Newcastle, 2014).

<sup>49</sup> Ian McGibbon, *The Path to Gallipoli: Defending New Zealand, 1840-1915*, (Wellington, 1991); Richard Jackson, "New Zealand's Naval Defence, 1854-1914," in Stevens and Reeve (eds.), *Southern Trident*, 119-24.

<sup>50</sup> Stuart Ward, "Security: Defending Australia's Empire," in Deryck Schreuder (ed.), *Australia's Empire*, (Oxford, 2010), 232–58.

<sup>51</sup> Eggleston to Grigg, 21 July 1913, BLO, Round Table Papers, c. 798.

<sup>52</sup> Arthur Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*, (Annapolis, 1961) has long been the dominant work.

<sup>53</sup> Christopher M Bell, "Sentiment vs Strategy: British Naval Policy, Imperial Defence, and the Development of Dominion Navies, 1911–14," *The International History Review* 37, no. 2 (February 5, 2014): 262–81.

<sup>54</sup> Jan Rüger, "Revisiting the Anglo-German Antagonism," *The Journal of Modern History* 83, no. 3 (September 2011): 579–617, offers an overview of recent developments.



in Central Asia.<sup>55</sup> In the naval sphere, too, recent work has challenged the notion that British policy after 1905 was solely governed by the German factor. As Nicholas Lambert has argued, although Germany loomed undoubtedly large, Britain's strategic orientation remained emphatically global in scope.<sup>56</sup> Nor can these debates be entirely reduced to cold calculations of strategy and tactics. Defence, and naval power in particular, carried strong cultural connotations: throughout the British world, it came to form a key element in local, national, and imperial identities.<sup>57</sup> In racial terms, it found expression in the popular belief that the bonds between the British 'family of nations' revealed themselves at their finest through military cooperation. This notion was to reach its apogee during the First World War, yet as recent work by John Mitcham has demonstrated, it was already firmly in place by the Edwardian era.<sup>58</sup> In light of this, the anxieties over Japanese naval power raised in Australasia, and their growing demands for a system that expressed the racial solidarity of the 'British peoples', appear less as voices crying in the wilderness, and more as participants in a broader set of debates on strategy, identity, and the future of the British imperial system.

In the Pacific, fears of Japanese expansionism before 1914 remained mostly speculative. In its immediate neighbourhood of East Asia, by contrast, the growth of Japanese power was already remaking the regional order. After 1905, it declared a protectorate over Korea, formally annexing the territory in 1910. China offered a still greater field for Japanese visions of territorial, commercial, as well as demographic expansion; tens of thousands of settlers crossed the Yellow Sea to settle in Korea, Manchuria, and the treaty ports.<sup>59</sup> 'The rise of Japan,' noted the British envoy in Beijing in 1905, 'has as completely upset our equilibrium as a new planet the size of Mars would derange the solar system.'<sup>60</sup> The metaphor was well chosen: the awareness that British relations with Japan evolved within the context of a broader 'Far Eastern' question, constantly in motion and subject to conflicting gravitational forces, has long shaped the historiography. L.K. Young, Ian Nish, and (most thoroughly) T.G. Otte have all noted how British anxieties about the future of China were a crucial forcing-house for the formation of the Anglo-Japanese alliance.<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Jennifer Siegel, *Endgame: Britain, Russia, and the Final Struggle for Central Asia* (London, 2002). The resurgence of Anglo-Russian rivalry has also been incorporated into revisionist studies on the outbreak of the First World War. See Zara Steiner and Keith Neilson, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War* (Basingstoke, 2003); and Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe went to War in 1914* (London, 2012).

<sup>56</sup> Nicholas Lambert, "Economy or Empire? the Fleet Unit Concept and the Quest for Collective Security in the Pacific, 1909-1914," in *Far-Flung Lines: Studies in Imperial Defence in Honour of Donald Mackenzie Schurman*, ed. Keith Neilson and Greg Kennedy, (London, 1996), 55–83; and Lambert, *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution*, (Columbus, SC, 1999).

<sup>57</sup> Jan Rüger, *The Great Naval Game: Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire*, (Cambridge, 2007).

<sup>58</sup> John Mitcham, *Race and Imperial Defence in the British World, 1870-1914*, (Cambridge, 2016). I am grateful to Dr Mitcham for allowing me use of the manuscript.

<sup>59</sup> For Japan's continental turn, see Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement*; Peter Duus, Ramon Meyers, and Mark R. Peattie (eds.), *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937*, (Princeton, 1989).

<sup>60</sup> Satow to Dickins, 27 Jan 1905, TNA, Satow Papers, PRO 30/33/11/6.

<sup>61</sup> L.K. Young, *British Policy in China, 1895-1902*, (Oxford, 1970); Nish, *Anglo-Japanese Alliance*; T.G. Otte, *The China Question: Great Power Rivalry and British Isolation, 1894-1905*, (Oxford, 2007).

Yet it remains an equally common assumption that the formation of that alliance, and Japan's subsequent victory over Russia, settled the 'China question' as it had preoccupied the chancelleries of Europe since 1895. Otte, who takes the Russo-Japanese War as the end-point of his study, makes the point explicitly: Russia's defeat had foreclosed the scenario of a partition directed from Europe. 'Far eastern diplomacy now ran in quieter channels'.<sup>62</sup> From the perspective of the Foreign Office (the centrepiece of Otte's study) such a conclusion might be justified: as E.W. Edwards has shown, in the crucial matter of railways, British China policy after 1905 was increasingly marked by financial cooperation with its erstwhile European rivals.<sup>63</sup> But the return to normality it suggests is deceptive: the years after 1905 were marked by the rapid growth of the Chinese nationalist movement, culminating in the revolution of 1911, as well as the consolidation of the Japanese sphere in southern Manchuria – an imperial project that was, as Yoshihisa Matsusaka has argued, far more ambitious than anything attempted by the Europeans during the so-called 'scramble for China'.<sup>64</sup> The war, then, terminated one 'China question' only to replace it with another: how would the British presence – the 'Raj', as some China coasters significantly described it – navigate the straits between a Japanese Scylla and a Chinese Charybdis?

This dissertation approaches that question from the perspective of the British communities in China's treaty-ports, who felt the ripples of Tsushima keener than most. After 1905, as the commercial and demographic impact of Japanese expansion made itself felt, coastal China became another zone of interaction between Japan and the British world. Here too, Japan emerged as a focal point for debates on the future of the British world-system – all the more so since it challenged the delicate racial order that was central to treaty-port life.<sup>65</sup> Long neglected, recent work by Robert Bickers has done much to salvage the historical role of the port communities, both as conduits for Britain's engagement with China, and as 'colonial' societies in their own right.<sup>66</sup> Like the larger, more successful settler communities in the dominions, the 'Shanghaianders' vocally claimed membership of the British world. They also developed their own particular ideas on the proper application of imperial power – although, as John Darwin has noted, when measured against the ambitions of some of its exponents, Shanghai's sub-imperialism in the Yangzi valley failed miserably.<sup>67</sup> After 1905, Japan came to occupy a central role in these debates, both as a menace to local British interests – of which, the China coasters

---

<sup>62</sup> Otte, *China Question*, p. 336.

<sup>63</sup> E.W. Edwards, *British Diplomacy and Finance in China, 1895-1914*, (Oxford, 1987).

<sup>64</sup> Yoshihisa T. Matsusaka, *The Making of Japanese Manchuria, 1904-1932*, (Cambridge, MA, 2001).

<sup>65</sup> For one example, see Robert Bickers and Jeffrey Wasserstrom, "Shanghai's 'Dogs and Chinese Not Admitted' Sign: Legend, History and Contemporary Symbol," *China Quarterly* 142, no. 2 (1995): 444–66.

<sup>66</sup> See Robert Bickers, 'Shanghaianders: the Formation and Identity of the British Settler Community in Shanghai, 1843-1937', *Past and Present*, 159 (1998), 161–211; *Britain in China: Community, Culture and Colonialism, 1900-1949* (Manchester, 1999); *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832-1914* (London, 2011).

<sup>67</sup> John Darwin, "Imperialism and the Victorians: the Dynamics of Territorial Expansion," *English Historical Review* 122, no. 447 (1997): 614–42.

complained, the ‘little Englanders’ back home were sorrowfully neglectful – and a model for the kind of imperial projects they themselves wished to pursue. This is a story which, in many aspects mirrors many of the concerns expressed in the British Pacific, and which this dissertation examines as part of a wider story of hopes, fears, and challenges with which the rise of Japan presented the British world.

### *Outline*

This dissertation pursues that story across a ten-year period, from the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904 until the beginning of the First World War. It does not pretend to offer a full picture of the Anglo-Japanese relationship – as this would require a sustained analysis of Japanese-language materials – but rather examines the role of Japan as an external force, capable of shaping politics, ideas, and identities throughout the British world. As such, its source base is considerably broader than that of previous studies of Anglo-Japanese relations, and marks the first attempt to bring the available archival material from Britain, the dominions, and the China coast within the scope of a single study. Its narrative draws from three founts in particular. First, this dissertation does not dispense with the sources that have formed the traditional basis of our understanding of British engagement with Japan: the official correspondence housed in the records of the Foreign and Colonial offices, triangulated with the papers of officials, ambassadors, and government ministers, both in Britain and its major dominions.<sup>68</sup> These clearly remain indispensable. Yet the workings of the ‘official mind’ can only offer a partial picture of the chaotic reality of international politics, and official records are often poorly situated to capture either the political processes that drive decision-making, or the more nebulous role of cultural and ideological factors. To address this, this dissertation also explores the role of those who sought to shape attitudes or influence policy from outside the official channels of government. This includes the private papers of journalists and editors – the archive of *The Times* being a particularly valuable and underused source – as well as a coterie of self-declared ‘imperialist’ thinkers, many of whom conducted a regular correspondence with policy-makers throughout the British world. For the British communities in China, which maintained few institutional ties to Britain – the heir of the once-powerful China lobby, the China Association, was a much-reduced force by 1904 – these informal connections are particularly necessary, and this dissertation was able to draw on the extensive personal records of several prominent China coast residents to

---

<sup>68</sup> On the dominions, this study relies primarily on archival materials drawn from the Library and Archives of Canada, and the National Archives and National Library of Australia. On New Zealand, there are few archival collections of immediate relevance for the dominion’s dealings with Japan, bar those of Col. James Allen, minister for defence, 1911-1915. One potential source, the papers of Joseph Ward (prime minister, 1906-1912), were destroyed following Ward’s death in 1930. The newspaper press and parliamentary debate offer some remedy. Although this dissertation makes occasional reference to parallel events in South Africa – particularly on questions of race and migration – Japan appears to have had little direct bearing on the fourth major dominion.

assemble an image of Anglo-China's evolving relationship with Japan.<sup>69</sup> Finally, this dissertation supplements the official documentary record with public sources, particularly the newspaper and periodical press, and parliamentary debates. As such, it acknowledges a debt to the ongoing process of digitisation, which has made it possible for the historian to access vast amounts of material in more targeted ways.

The dissertation follows a broadly chronological structure, though individual chapters focus thematically on particular aspects of Japan's interaction with the British world. The first two chapters focus on the Russo-Japanese War and its immediate consequences. Chapter one examines the competing interpretations of the war in the British public sphere. It shows how both the Japanese government and its supporters in Britain came to portray the conflict as a 'war for civilisation': a confrontation between a progressive, modern Japan, and a 'backward', autocratic Russia. Such an interpretation, however, was in constant conflict with racist interpretations of the war, and prompted significant politicking between Japan's supporters and detractors in different corners of the press. Chapter two analyses the war's immediate aftermath, and concentrates on the effects of the bid for international equality that lay implicit in Japan's victory. It begins by examining the revision of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, amended during the war to reflect Japan's new status. It also shows how the war re-opened the issue of Japanese immigration in the Pacific, and how both Canada and – albeit more hesitantly – Australia, explored new ways of accommodating their policies to a Japan that had demonstrated its 'civilised' credentials.

These were the halcyon days of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. In subsequent years, however, Japan's expanding presence in the international order – in both a material and symbolic sense – began to touch on (and grate against) the boundaries of the British world. The following three chapters examine the emergence of these new pressure points. Chapter three examines China, where the impact of Japan's growing military and economic heft was most pronounced. As hopes of a commercial renaissance gave way to alarm over Japan's own ambitions in the region, the 'Shanghai mind', turned from one of Japan's greatest supporters to its most vocal detractor. Something similar happened across the Pacific. As noted in the fourth chapter, in California and British Columbia, white hostility against Japanese migrants, now tied to fears of Japan's growing naval and military power, provoked a sharp backlash, as a wave of anti-Asian violence swept across the Pacific coast in the autumn of 1907. The sudden outbreak of the 'immigration crisis' confronted Ottawa, Washington, and London with the spectre of a new form of global politics, structured along racial, rather than national lines. As chapter five shows, such

---

<sup>69</sup> These are the papers of Dr G.E. Morrison, Beijing correspondent for *The Times*, and J.O.P. Bland, the paper's Shanghai correspondent, and the would-be Cecil Rhodes of the China coast (Darwin, *The Empire Project*, p. 133). Both are extensive collections of both -in and outgoing correspondence, and offer much insight into the evolving views of the Anglo-Chinese community.

ideas were already gaining widespread traction in Australia and New Zealand, where local politicians enlisted fears of Japan in a drive to reinforce the imperial ramparts in the Pacific.

Under this multi-pronged assault, the British government was forced to rethink its own relationship with Japan, a process analysed in chapter six. When Britain initiated a renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1911, it did so under very different conditions, and guided by a set of very different considerations. Increasingly, the alliance was construed – and presented to sceptical audiences in the dominions – both as an instrument to check the ambitions of its Japanese ally, and to contain potential racial conflict. Chapter seven, finally, examines the period between renewal and the outbreak of the First World War, when racial politics, in the form of a new immigration crisis in California, combined with a deepening controversy over naval security in the Pacific, again intruded forcefully on the Anglo-Japanese relationship. Yet these same disputes also demonstrated the risks of allowing the ‘colour line’ to shut Japan out of the equal status it had claimed, ever more assertively, over the past decade.

## ONE

### A War for Civilisation, 1904-5

In the night of 8 February 1904, three Japanese torpedo boat flotillas under the command of Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō launched a surprise attack on the Russian squadron anchored in Port Arthur, marking the outbreak of a war that would last for nineteen months and remake the political order in East Asia. By the time the two belligerents signed their peace treaty in September 1905, Russia had been humbled, and its hold over northeast Asia all but broken. Although a decisive military breakthrough – a ‘Sedan’ – had eluded Japan, it had emerged victorious out of every major engagement with the Russian army: at the crossing of the Yalu in May 1904; at Liaoyang in September; and at Mukden in February 1905, where over half a million combatants fought a month-long battle in midst of the Manchurian winter. The fortress at Port Arthur, the linchpin of Russia’s Far Eastern sphere, fell to a Japanese assault in January 1905. Some speculated Vladivostok might be next.<sup>1</sup> The war at sea, culminating in Japan’s dramatic victory at Tsushima, had been more decisive still. In the ultimate test of modern war, waged with conscript armies on densely fought, highly lethal battlefields, Russia was defeated by what many at the St Petersburg court had derided as a country of ‘little yellow monkeys’.<sup>2</sup>

Although Britain had been formally allied to Japan since 1902, the terms of its alliance stipulated that it was only obligated to intervene if its ally found itself at war with more than one power; in other words, if Russia’s ally France joined the fray. ‘We are only required to keep the ring,’ as Arthur Balfour, the prime minister, reminded his more jittery cabinet colleagues.<sup>3</sup> Even in the absence of direct British involvement, however, the Russo-Japanese War exercised opinion throughout the British world. Its most sensational feature was the ‘new Japan’ itself: an Asian power waging war with modern methods, yet also meticulously observing the rules of ‘civilised’ warfare. Its successes against Russia – for all its failings still a white, Christian, European power – raised profound questions over the relationship between culture, ‘civilisation’, and race. As one supporter of Japan, the journalist Alfred Stead, put it, the war had demonstrated ‘the fallacy of artificial barriers between races’. The ‘colour line’ had been washed away. ‘The world has become again a community of nations, not a series of unequal, water-tight compartments.’<sup>4</sup> Others were not so certain. While older stereotypes of a moribund ‘Asiatic’ race were clearly unsuited to Japan, racial thought was flexible enough to accommodate the reality of a modern, efficient, yet still distinctly Asian power, and many observers continued to place it on the other side of a racial

---

<sup>1</sup> Morrison to Chirol, 8 June 1905, *CGEM*, pp. 316-19.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Sites, ‘Russian Representations of the Japanese Enemy,’ in Steinberg *et al.* (eds.) *The Russo-Japanese War*, pp. 395-410.

<sup>3</sup> Balfour to Selborne, 23 Dec 1903, BLO, Selborne Papers, 34.

<sup>4</sup> Alfred Stead, ‘Port Arthur and After,’ *Fortnightly Review*, Feb 1905, p. 223.

barrier. 'I believe that Japan will take its place as a great civilized power of a formidable type,' Theodore Roosevelt confided to one of his English correspondents, '[yet] with motives and ways of thought which are not quite those of the powers of our race.'<sup>5</sup> This also raised the more fundamental question of whether Japan could ever truly be integrated in an imperial order that justified itself by notions of racial and cultural hierarchy. At its most extreme, this manifested itself in the fear that Japan would place itself at the head of a 'Yellow Peril' by leading the rest of Asia in revolt against the West.

*Japan, Britain, and the coming of war*

The roots of the Russo-Japanese War stretched back to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, when the two East Asian states went to war over the fortunes of Korea.<sup>6</sup> At the outset, most European observers had predicted a Chinese victory: as George Curzon put it, 'the mighty millions of the Yellow Race would roll back the small island population into the sea'.<sup>7</sup> Yet with superior organisation, and confusion and incompetence on the Chinese side, Japan won a string of victories. It exacted a heavy price for peace. China was to acknowledge Japanese primacy in Korea, and pay a hefty indemnity. Japan was to be admitted to the treaty-port system on the same terms as the Western powers. Most controversially, China would cede territory: the island of Taiwan, and the Liaodong peninsula on the southern tip of Manchuria. Japan had established itself as the rising force in the Far East; China, with its structural weaknesses now laid bare, seemed to teeter on the brink of collapse: 'rotten to the core' was the verdict of Lord Kimberley, the British foreign secretary.<sup>8</sup> During the decade that followed, the prospect of China's imminent disintegration – which seemed again perilously close during the Boxer Rising of 1900-01 – turned East Asia into the storm-centre of international politics. The new 'Chinese question', commented Lord Rosebery, the prime minister (1894-95) seemed 'pregnant with possibilities of a disastrous kind; and it might result in an Armageddon between the European Powers struggling for the ruins of the Chinese Empire.'<sup>9</sup>

The opening salvo of that struggle was sounded in April 1895, when a European cabal composed of France, Germany, and Russia intervened in the peace negotiations and forced Japan to surrender its claim to Liaodong. The following years saw an escalating 'scramble' for naval bases and railway concessions, as each of the three members of the *Dreibund* went on to extort quasi-territorial rights from a friendless, capital-starved China. Of the challengers, by far the most formidable was Russia, whose Siberian empire bordered directly on the Qing's northern borderlands. In 1896, in exchange for promises of support against Japan, Russia acquired a

---

<sup>5</sup> Roosevelt to Spring-Rice, 16 June 1905, TNA, Lansdowne Papers, FO 800/116.

<sup>6</sup> For the origins and effects of the war, see S.C.M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895*, (Cambridge, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> George Curzon, *Problems of the Far East: China-Japan-Korea*, (London, 1894), pp. 397-98.

<sup>8</sup> Otte, *China Question*, p. 52

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

railway lease to build a southern branch of its new trans-Siberian railway across Chinese territory in Manchuria. Two years later, responding to the German seizure of the port of Qingdao, it demanded the lease of Port Arthur, the naval base on the Liaodong peninsula, as well as the right to link the port to the trans-Siberian line. Already in this skeletal form, the Russian sphere possessed the makings of a quasi-colonial realm, from which it could establish a dominating position in northeast Asia. 'Given our enormous frontier line with China and our exceptionally favourable situation,' predicted Sergei Witte, the Russian finance minister, 'the absorption by Russia of a considerable portion of the Chinese Empire is only a question of time.'<sup>10</sup> Conquest 'by bank and railway,' would allow Russia to detach Manchuria's economy and politics from Beijing, and turn the region into an appendage of Siberia. The Boxer Rising provided the opportunity to accelerate the process, and the entirety of Manchuria was now placed under military occupation. Despite promises to evacuate, it was clear that it had little intention of abandoning control of its new sphere. The formation of a 'Viceroyalty of the Far East,' headquartered at Port Arthur, in August 1903, signalled both the direction and the scale of the Russian intentions. Unless its expansion was checked, warned Ernest Satow, the British envoy in Beijing, Russia would become 'the dominant Power in this part of the world, and will swallow up at least all northern China'.<sup>11</sup>

For Britain, still straining under the burdens of the South African War, such an outcome was deeply unpalatable. Russia entrenched in northern China would exercise a commanding influence on Beijing, and with France and Germany acting as jackals to the Russian bear, a general partition might become inevitable. To keep its share of the *gâteau chinois*, Britain might have to fall back on its own sphere in the Yangzi valley. Worse, the concentration of Russian sea power at Port Arthur would open up a new naval front on Britain's exposed Pacific flank, which might threaten Hong Kong, Singapore, and even Australia. In Japan, meanwhile, Russia's move into Manchuria provoked even greater apprehension. That the Russians would stay on the far side of the Yalu, which separated Manchuria from Korea – the proverbial 'dagger' aimed at the Japanese home islands – seemed unlikely. From April 1903, a timber company sponsored by the Russian state had begun to acquire strategically placed concessions on the southern bank of the Yalu, backed up by a military infrastructure of barracks and telegraph lines.<sup>12</sup> Unless its expansion was checked, Japan's influence in continental Asia – and by extension, its status as a regional power – would be permanently circumscribed.

It was possible, then, to chart the emergence of a community of strategic interests that drew Britain and Japan closer together. Crucially, this process was matched by a growing British willingness to acknowledge Japan as a 'civilised' state, and a potential partner in the containment

---

<sup>10</sup> S.C.M. Paine, *Imperial Rivals: China, Russia, and Their Disputed Frontier* (London, 1996), p. 209.

<sup>11</sup> Satow to Lansdowne, 27 Aug 1903, NA, Lansdowne Papers, FO 800/120.

<sup>12</sup> Ian Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (London, 1985), p. 169; Ian Nish, 'Stretching out to the Yalu: a Contested Frontier', in Steinberg et al. (eds.) *The Russo-Japanese War*, Vol. I, 45-64.



of a common enemy. Following the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, Britain effectively acknowledged Japan's claim to civilised status by agreeing to replace its 'unequal treaties' with a new commercial agreement. The following year, Rosebery's government had refused to join the Triple Intervention expressly to avoid alienating 'the rising Power in the East'.<sup>13</sup> In 1900, the two powers worked closely together in the suppression of the Boxers.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, a number of prominent British commentators, including Admiral Sir Charles Beresford, and George Curzon, the coming man of the Conservative party, took to describing Japan as the 'Britain of the Far East': a fellow maritime empire on the edge of Eurasia, whose interests were presumably aligned with those of Great Britain.<sup>15</sup> An Anglo-Japanese alliance, as the political expression of these commonalities, gradually became thinkable.

The formation of that alliance was not a foregone conclusion. A combination with Japan was one of a number of possible combinations contemplated by the Salisbury cabinet in the winter of 1901, and it prevailed over the alternatives largely because it appeared to secure Britain's interests in East Asia without tying its hands in Europe.<sup>16</sup> Yet set against the background of the Russian challenge in Manchuria, the new alliance could be presented as a natural combination between powers with a joint interest in preventing the carve-up of China, and preserving an 'Open Door' for trade. In this broad sense, the treaty could be presented as a liberal pact aimed at protecting the 'civilised', free-trading order in East Asia: its preamble set out the allies' joint commitment to 'the independence and territorial integrity' of China and Korea, and their desire to maintain 'equal opportunities in those two countries for the commerce and industry of all nations'. Tellingly, this phrasing was in keeping with the 'Open Door' policy put forward by the United States during the Boxer crisis. Although it was not intimately concerned with the Open Door, presenting the alliance as a point of ideological as well as strategic convergence certainly appealed to Japan: after joining the comity of 'civilisation', Tokyo now stood with its progressive vanguard.

This small-l liberal interpretation also secured the new treaty a soft landing in British public opinion, and encouraged commentators to look for further points of historical and ideological convergence. For the *North China Herald*, the mouthpiece of British trading communities on the China coast, the alliance represented a coming together of 'the Englands of the West and the East', that would guarantee 'peace and the open door for all'.<sup>17</sup> By the same token, it was possible to imagine the Anglo-Japanese coalition as a link in a broader progressive coalition with the United States. When the new treaty was debated in Parliament, Lord

---

<sup>13</sup> See Otte, *China Question*, p. 58.

<sup>14</sup> Nish, *Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, p. 91.

<sup>15</sup> Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, p. 396. For Beresford's views, see Otte, "A Very Great Gulf," p. 140.

<sup>16</sup> The standard accounts of the emergence of the alliance are Nish, *Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, Chs. 6-8; Neilson, *Britain and the Last Tsar*, Ch. 7; Otte, *The China Question*, Ch. 6.

<sup>17</sup> 'The Agreement between England and Japan,' *NCH*, 12 February 1902.

Cranborne, Salisbury's eldest son, stressed that the agreement had Washington's 'full approval'.<sup>18</sup> The Liberal MP Joseph Walton similarly noted that the alliance secured 'practically the same objects' as the Open Door notes, and would enjoy 'the moral if not the practical support' of the United States.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, many commentators appear to have thought of the new combination with Japan as an American alliance on the sly. 'Implicit in the reception given by the people of this country to the Anglo-Japanese alliance,' noted Sydney Brooks in *Fortnightly Review*, 'there has lain the assumption that the United States is, in some sort, a third party to it'.<sup>20</sup> Although Brooks dismissed this as wishful thinking, such optimism was not wholly without foundation: in the aftermath of the Boxer crisis, a number of American commentators, including the minister in Beijing, W.W. Rockhill, and the naval writer A.T. Mahan, flirted with the idea of a Japanese-American partnership in China.<sup>21</sup> All three states were united in agreement that Russia constituted the greatest menace to their interests in China – a fact that the *New York Times* considered sufficient reason to write of an 'Anglo-American-Japanese entente'.<sup>22</sup>

Despite such vaulting rhetoric, London's hopes for the alliance were modest. Aligning itself with Japan would place a check on further Russian forward moves in northeast Asia, freeze the territorial status quo in China, and strengthen Britain's bargaining position in the event of another Far Eastern crisis. The treaty's primary purpose, noted Lord Lansdowne, the foreign secretary, was to preserve 'the general peace in the extreme East'.<sup>23</sup> In addition, London hoped it might act as a restraint on Japan, whose unpredictability as an 'Oriental' nation remained a matter of concern.<sup>24</sup> It failed on both counts: Russia continued to stall its withdrawal from Manchuria, and in Japan, the alliance effectively bolstered the case for a military confrontation. Already in the summer of 1903, senior figures in the Japanese army were advocating war.<sup>25</sup> Japan's civil leaders opted for negotiation: throughout the summer and autumn of 1903, they attempted to commit St. Petersburg to a mutual recognition of spheres – *Man-kan kōkan*, or 'Manchuria for Korea' – that recognised Japanese primacy in the Korean peninsula. In addition, it demanded a guarantee of the status quo: Japan was willing to tolerate Russia's presence in Manchuria as a *fait accompli*, but it drew the line at annexation. The negotiations were marked by frustration, confusion and long delays, and served to convince Tokyo that Russia lacked interest in a diplomatic solution. If anything, the Russian position grew more intransigent: during the final round of talks in December 1903, the most it was prepared to offer was a 'neutral zone' extending south of the Korean border, while Manchuria was off the table altogether. 'The crisis of the Russo-Japanese

---

<sup>18</sup> Cranborne, 13 Feb 1902, *Hansard*, 4th Series, HC, Vol. 102, c. 1287.

<sup>19</sup> J. Walton, 13 Feb 1902, *Hansard*, 4th Series, HC, Vol. 102, c. 1309.

<sup>20</sup> Sydney Brooks, 'America and the Alliance,' *Fortnightly Review*, April 1902.

<sup>21</sup> Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>22</sup> 'Russia's Defiance,' *New York Times*, 9 May 1903.

<sup>23</sup> Nish, *Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, p. 236

<sup>24</sup> Best, "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the International Politics of Asia," p. 24.

<sup>25</sup> Nish, *Origins*, p. 157.

negotiations is at hand,' Satow now predicted, 'and everything points to war.'<sup>26</sup> The fear that the completion of the Far Eastern railways, and the arrival of naval reinforcements from Europe, would tilt the military balance permanently in Russia's favour settled the Japanese government on war. On 8 February 1904, the Japanese navy launched its surprise attack on the Russian squadron in Port Arthur. The Russo-Japanese War had begun.

*A war for civilisation*

Japan did not fight Russia out of an altruistic regard for liberal principles: its reasons were strategic, and sprang from a determination to resist the establishment of a Russian sphere on its Korean doorstep. At the same time, Tokyo was keen to present the war as a principled stance in defence of territorial sovereignty and freedom of commerce. In the rhetoric that Tokyo directed at its British and American supporters, the war against Russia became a war for 'civilisation' and the Open Door.<sup>27</sup> In an interview with Sir Claude Macdonald, the British minister in Tokyo, shortly after the outbreak of hostilities, Japan's foreign minister stressed Japan was fighting for 'the maintenance of the integrity of China', warning that a Russian victory would turn the whole of northeast Asia into a closed-off Russian preserve. Even the Yangzi valley would be at risk.<sup>28</sup> Japan, by contrast, would restore Chinese sovereignty over Manchuria, and keep the Open Door ajar for foreign trade. Japan did not want Russia's railway leases, noted Itō Hirobumi, one of Japan's leading elder statesmen, but would favour their neutralisation through takeover by an international syndicate.<sup>29</sup>

Given later developments, it is too easily forgotten that such statements still represented the spirit of Japanese policy: not even the more expansionist elements in Tokyo contemplated an extension of Japan's own sphere into Manchuria, although Korea was another matter.<sup>30</sup> Yet proclaiming its championship of the Open Door also served a clear purpose: it allowed Tokyo to present Russia as the real aggressor, and stressing Japan's liberal motives counteracted any tendency to interpret the conflict in racial terms. In a widely circulated interview with the *Japan Daily Mail*, Japan's prime minister, Count Katsura, insisted that the war was waged across a fault line that separated progress from reaction, not Asia from Europe. 'With differences over race or religion it has nothing to do; and it is carried on in the interests of humanity, and the commerce and civilisation of the world.'<sup>31</sup> It stressed Japan's alignment with Britain and the United States in a global liberal coalition that extended across racial boundaries. As Francis Brinkley, *The Times'*

---

<sup>26</sup> Satow to Curzon, 18 Jan 1904, TNA, Satow Papers, PRO 30/33/14/14.

<sup>27</sup> See Valliant, "The Selling of Japan".

<sup>28</sup> Macdonald to Lansdowne, 28 Jan 1904, TNA, FO 46/581, No. 30. Komura repeated these assurances during the summer of 1905 to William Rockhill, the American minister to China. Satow to Lansdowne, 1 June 1905, TNA, PRO 30/33/14/15.

<sup>29</sup> Macdonald to Lansdowne, 22 Nov 1904, TNA, FO 46/579, No. 333.

<sup>30</sup> Yoshihisa Tak Matsusaka, *The Making of Japanese Manchuria* (Cambridge, MA, 2001).

<sup>31</sup> 'Count Katsura on the Yellow Peril,' *NCH*, 10 June 1904.

Tokyo correspondent, declared, Japan was fighting as ‘the champion of ideals which Anglo-Saxons, all the world over, hold in reverence’. If this was the meaning of the ‘Yellow Peril’, then it was a consummation devoutly to be wished.<sup>32</sup>

The idea that the war represented a clash between Japanese ‘civilisation’ and Russian backwardness found eager support among pro-Japanese commentators in Britain. According to the journalist Henry Wilson, the leader-writer for the *Daily Mail*,

it cannot be denied by thinking men that [Japan], rather than Russia, represents civilised ideas, the freedom of human thought, democratic institutions, education and enlightenment — in a word, all that we understand by progress. It is Russia who stands for barbarism and reaction...<sup>33</sup>

*The Times* endorsed Wilson’s verdict, similarly noting that ‘in this controversy the Asiatic Power represents the forces of civilizing process, and the European power those of mechanical repression’.<sup>34</sup> With such an interpretation came the hope that a Japanese victory would help to safeguard Britain’s own interests in a free-trading East Asia: Russia’s southward drive would be arrested; the drift towards a partition of China reversed; and spheres of influence would be replaced with nobler forms of commercial expansion. Under such conditions, China might finally enter the economic renaissance that boosters of the ‘China market’ had long anticipated. A Japanese victory would, according to one writer, open ‘vast new fields to the trade of all nations’.<sup>35</sup> Such hopes were particularly prevalent among the China traders themselves: the *North China Herald* matched even *The Times* in the warmth of its support for Japan in its ‘fight for civilisation’. At the annual dinner of the China Association, the merchants’ lobby, William Keswick, the former *taipan* of Jardine-Matheson, waxed lyrically over the ‘gallant Japanese’: Japan, he declared, was not merely fighting for its own interests, but ‘for the good of the world in general’.

If their ideal is realised, if we have the great Empire of China thrown open to commerce... if we have Korea thrown open... just think of the vista that opens up to us in the trade of the Far East.<sup>36</sup>

Even a more prosaic gathering (the semi-annual board meeting of HSBC) could still hope that ‘the searchlight of Japanese activity’ would remove ‘the dark shadow’ hanging over China.<sup>37</sup>

Such statements purposefully turned the ‘Yellow Peril’ on its head. Rather than lead China into a revolt against the West, British commentators predicted that Japan would exercise a

---

<sup>32</sup> Macdonald to Lansdowne, 19 May 1904, NA, FO 46/578, No. 154.

<sup>33</sup> H.W. Wilson, *Japan’s Fight for Freedom: The Story of the War Between Russia and Japan*, (London, 1904), p. vi.

<sup>34</sup> Editorial, *The Times*, 6 Feb 1904.

<sup>35</sup> E.G.J.M., ‘The Consequences of a Japanese Victory,’ *Blackwood’s Magazine*, Jan 1905.

<sup>36</sup> China Association Annual Banquet, minutes, 18 Nov 1904, SOAS, CHAS/A/4.

<sup>37</sup> HSBC Half-Yearly meeting, minutes, 20 Aug 1904, HSBC Archives, J18/3.

benevolent, steadying effect on Beijing. Japanese influence would forestall a revival of 'Boxerism', and might even act as a conduit for the entry of Western modernity into China. For one writer, Japan was 'the energising force, moral and practical, which is to awaken China out of the lethargy that has held her spellbound for ages'.<sup>38</sup> Henry Dyer, a British engineer who had served as an advisor to the Japanese education ministry, thought Japan's brand of centralised modernisation 'the chief progressive force in the Far East', and hoped for its extension to China.<sup>39</sup> The *North China Herald* was similarly expressive: the 'Japanising of China,' it declared, 'means the uplifting of this Empire by the spread of Western enlightenment and civilisation'.<sup>40</sup> Even as seasoned a China hand as Sir Robert Hart, the head of the Imperial Maritime Customs, was confident that 'the pluck of Japan' would 'electrify' China: 'the psychological moment seems to have at last come: I expect *progress* will now take root and the strength of the Empire be developed.'<sup>41</sup> By extension, a number of commentators argued that the danger of China being turned against the West was more likely to come from 'semi-Oriental' Russia than from 'civilised' Japan. 'Indeed,' one contributor to the *Nineteenth Century* argued, 'Russia is in race, customs, art, thought, and general culture more yellow than white, more Asiatic than European.'<sup>42</sup> It, rather than Japan, might be true the 'Yellow Peril': as Cecil Spring-Rice, the viscerally anti-Russian diplomat curiously out of place at the St Petersburg embassy, wrote to Theodore Roosevelt, Russia had relied on 'Asiatic' manpower since the days of Ivan the Terrible. 'Why should not Russia use Mongolian or Chinese troops as she has used her Tartars – to coerce the Teutons & Europeans?'<sup>43</sup>

Casting the Russo-Japanese War as a 'war for civilisation' also allowed commentators to dodge the thorny issue of religion. During the past half-century, Japan's indigenous religions – local Buddhism and Shintō – had remained stubbornly resistant to the efforts of Christian missionaries, and more than once, Japanese 'heathenism' had formed an obstacle to its integration in international society.<sup>44</sup> During the Russo-Japanese War, however, a number of missionaries added their voices to the chorus of 'civilising' rhetoric.<sup>45</sup> Its constitutional guarantee of religious freedom stood in stark contrast to the bloody wave of pogroms sweeping across Russia. Clerical observers cited the bravery, self-sacrifice, and Spartan lifestyle of the Japanese soldiers as evidence that Japan possessed 'the instinct of the Gospel' to a greater degree than

---

<sup>38</sup> Thomas H. Reid, 'The Menace of the East,' *Contemporary Review*, Jan 1905.

<sup>39</sup> Henry Dyer, *Dai Nippon, the Britain of the East: A Study in National Evolution* (London, 1904), p. viii.

<sup>40</sup> 'The Yellow Peril Bogey Again,' *NCH*, 30 June 1905.

<sup>41</sup> Hart to Campbell, 28 Feb 1904, in John K. Fairbank et al. (eds.), *The I.G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Imperial Maritime Customs, 1868-1907* (Cambridge, MA, 1976), pp. 1399-1400.

<sup>42</sup> O. Eltzbacher, 'The Yellow Peril,' *Nineteenth Century*, June 1904.

<sup>43</sup> Spring-Rice to Roosevelt, [n.d., content suggest 1904], CCAC, Spring-Rice Papers, 9/2.

<sup>44</sup> Best, "Race, Monarchy, and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance," pp. 178-79.

<sup>45</sup> See also Joseph M. Henning, "White Mongols? The War and American Discourses on Race and Religion," in Kowner (ed.), *Impact*, pp. 153-66.

nominally Christian Russia.<sup>46</sup> Religion also blended with geopolitics, as an East Asia stabilised and guided by Japan promised a revival of evangelical prospects: Bishop William Awdry, the head of the Anglican mission in South Tokyo, was already planning a new missionary drive into Manchuria, which he proposed to bring under the remit of the missionary hierarchy of Japan. The gospel, he hoped, would enter northern China ‘through Japanese influence’.<sup>47</sup> Some even hoped that Japan itself might be on the edge of conversion, with one Australian bishop declaring that Japan had already adopted a ‘practical Christianity’, and that its formal conversion would inevitably follow.<sup>48</sup>

Race was another marker of difference that could be mitigated through ‘civilising’ rhetoric. Rotem Kowner has noted a marked tendency among British observers to project Japan’s new image onto the bodies of its soldiers, who seemed to become ‘taller, stronger, and better nourished’ in the process.<sup>49</sup> Confronted with a modernised Japan, racial thinking could adapt by ‘whitening’ its people. Thus, according to the writer Henry Dyer, the Japanese possessed a healthy dose of ‘Anglo-Saxon virility’, while Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, war correspondent for the *Standard*, considered them ‘undoubtedly the finest race physically that exists... To see a Japanese jump is a revelation.’<sup>50</sup> Some of his colleagues pointedly referred to the Japanese soldiers as ‘Tommies’, while their commanders were frequently equated with their British counterparts: Tōgō, in particular, was hailed as ‘Japan’s Nelson’.<sup>51</sup> General Ian Hamilton, the Indian Army’s senior observer in Manchuria, professed to prefer the Japanese soldier to the ‘City-bred Dollar hunters’ that he believed had diluted Britain’s own racial stock: ‘In the whole of Tokio I have not seen a single soldier who is flat-footed, narrow-chested or slouching.’<sup>52</sup> Asked for his views on the ‘Yellow Peril’, the journalist and traveller Stafford Ransome came closest of all to hauling Japan across the colour line:

if you were to place side by side a Japanese soldier and a Siberian Russian, and ask yourself which was the whiter of the two, you would unquestionably choose the Japanese... As regards their international dealings, the Japanese have already proved themselves “whiter” than many of the nations who profess a higher civilisation.<sup>53</sup>

To be sure, this ‘whitening’ of the Japanese remained a very partial process. Praise often contained a note of condescension: Hamilton compared the Japanese soldiers to the Gurkhas he

---

<sup>46</sup> A. Morris Stewart, ‘The Revelation of the East,’ *Contemporary Review*, July 1904.

<sup>47</sup> Awdry to Montgomery, 29 June 1905, BLO, SPG Papers, CLR/91.

<sup>48</sup> ‘Japan and Christianity,’ *SMH*, 14 June 1905.

<sup>49</sup> Rotem Kowner, ‘Becoming an Honorary Civilized Nation: Remaking Japan’s Military Image During the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905,’ *The Historian*, December 20, 2006, 19–38.

<sup>50</sup> Dyer, *Dai Nippon*, p. 402; Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, *Port Arthur: the Siege and Capitulation*, (London, 1905).

<sup>51</sup> Glenn R. Wilkinson, *Depictions and Images of War in Edwardian Newspapers, 1899-1914*, (New York, 2003), p. 41.

<sup>52</sup> Ian Hamilton, *A Staff-Officer’s Scrap-Book of the Russo-Japanese War, Vol. I*, (London, 1905), p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> ‘Will the Yellow Men Combine?’ *Daily Mail*, 12 May 1904.

had commanded in India, another ‘martial race’ untainted by the softness of civilised life.<sup>54</sup> Others rejected it altogether. J.O.P. Bland, the Shanghai correspondent for *The Times*, found the Japanese ‘ridiculous’ in appearance: ‘I respect and admire them immensely except when one of them is in my office to remind me of the descent of man.’<sup>55</sup> The writer Thomas Crosland, author of the splenetic pamphlet *The Truth About Japan*, was harsher still: ‘A stunted, lymphatic, yellow-faced heathen, with a mouthful of teeth three sizes too big for him, bulging slits where his eyes ought to be, blacking-brush hair, a foolish giggle, a cruel heart, and the conceit of the devil.’<sup>56</sup> Such naysayers notwithstanding, the general thrust was clear: in the eyes of most British observers, the war dispelled whatever doubts still lingered over Japan’s status as a ‘civilised’ power. In turn, stressing Japan’s championing of a liberal, progressive order in East Asia, or even of ‘Christian civilisation’, allowed British commentators to sidestep the inconvenience of their ally’s Asian heritage: Japan was winning precisely because it was more civilised, more modern, and even ‘whiter’ than its Russian opponent.

### *The ‘Cult’ of Japan*

Running in parallel with the ‘civilising’ narrative was the belief that Japan’s successes owed as much to a distinct ‘national spirit’ as to its ability to master the tools of Western modernity. For the Fabian thinker Beatrice Webb, the Japanese way became an object of enduring fascination, as she confided to her diary by the end of 1904:

I watch in myself and others a growing national shamefacedness at the superiority of the Japanese over “our noble selves” in capacity, courage, self-control... They have suddenly raised the standard of international efficiency – in exactly those departments of life that we Western nations imagined ourselves supremely superior to the Eastern races.<sup>57</sup>

To Webb, Japan stood out as an alternative model of modernity: a society organised on collective principles, capable of acting as a single unit, and forged together by a deep sense of patriotism. Her comments exemplified what later historians have dubbed the ‘cult of Japan’: a brief, but intense flowering of Japanophilia that took hold among a section of the British elite at the time of the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>58</sup> The young Leo Amery, then a journalist involved in several movements for imperial and national reform, later confessed how he had felt powerfully drawn to ‘the legend of a people inspired by a more than medieval sense of knightly chivalry and by a

---

<sup>54</sup> Hamilton, *Staff-Officer’s Scrap-Book*, p. 9.

<sup>55</sup> Bland to Chirol, 3 Aug 1904, FRBL./JOPB, 3.

<sup>56</sup> T.W.H. Crosland, *The Truth About Japan*, (London, 1904), p. 1-2. Jean-Pierre Lehmann uses Crosland as his primary example of ‘Yellow Peril’ thinking in Britain. This inflates the importance of Crosland’s racial diatribe, while leaving more substantial flirtations with racialism unaddressed. See *The Image of Japan*, pp. 169-71.

<sup>57</sup> Webb Diary, 22 Dec 1904, LSE, Passfield Papers.

<sup>58</sup> For the ‘Cult’, see Holmes and Ion, “Bushido and the Samurai” ; and Hashimoto, “White Hope or Yellow Peril?”

superhuman contempt of death'.<sup>59</sup> Lord Rosebery penned the foreword for a book presenting Japan as a paragon of 'national efficiency'.<sup>60</sup> H.G. Wells named his guardians of the 'World State' in *A Modern Utopia* (serialised from October 1904) after the *samurai*. Even Curzon was caught up in the admiring mood: '[W]e could not have done what the Japs [*sic*] have done,' he wrote, 'for as a nation we are growing stale, flaccid, and nerveless.'<sup>61</sup>

In the praise they lavished on Japan, British commentators bought into a mythology the Japanese state was weaving around itself. In the late nineteenth century, as the Meiji state came to exercise more direct control over civil and military education, it reinvented elements of its own martial past. As Oleg Benesch has noted, by the 1890s the *samurai* (pensioned off in 1873), along with their chivalric code of *bushidō*, could be safely rehabilitated as cultural symbols, and were tied into a nationalist ethos that stressed patriotic service to the country and the emperor.<sup>62</sup> Naoko Shimazu has similarly argued that Japan's mythologised patriotism was a contingent response to the social strains imposed by mass mobilisation in what remained an agrarian, pre-industrial society.<sup>63</sup> Japan's martial zeal, therefore, was not the ancient cultural habit many Western observers assumed it to be, and several old Far Eastern hands were frankly dismissive of the 'fetich [*sic*] worship of Bushido' now *en vogue* in London society.<sup>64</sup> One British resident in Japan perceptively noted that despite the 'fearful lot of gush and nonsense' written about the patriotic fervour of Japanese recruits, 'all who have lived among the people of the land know only too well that this joy is too often very much put on'.<sup>65</sup> Towards the end of the war, Bishop Awdry similarly felt compelled to write to *The Times* to puncture his countrymen's over-romanticised view of the Japanese. Disillusion would inevitably set in, he warned, 'if at this stage English enthusiasm credits them with virtues which they have not yet attained'.<sup>66</sup> That the old Japan hands shook their head at the sudden outburst of 'Japan-worship' was not surprising: it was Japan's very unfamiliarity that allowed it to be reinvented as a paragon of national virtue.

In truth, the 'Cult' was always more concerned with condemning what it saw as the deficiencies in British society than accounting for the qualities of the Japanese. The sudden popularity of Japan as a model of national reform was a response – one among many – to a perceived sense of national decline that arose out of the widespread dissatisfaction with the deficiencies of the British military system exposed by the South African War.<sup>67</sup> In a larger sense, declinist anxieties reflected the emergence of a more competitive global politics, in which

---

<sup>59</sup> Leo Amery, *My Political Life, Volume I: Before the Storm, 1896-1914* (London, 1953), p. 218.

<sup>60</sup> Searle, *National Efficiency*, pp. 57-60.

<sup>61</sup> Curzon to Godley, 23 March 1905, BL, Curzon Papers, MSS Eur F111/164.

<sup>62</sup> Oleg Benesch, *Inventing the Way of the Samurai*, (Oxford, 2014), Ch. 3.

<sup>63</sup> Shimazu, "Patriotic and Despondent: Japanese Society at War, 1904-5."

<sup>64</sup> Bland to Murray Stewart, 17 Dec 1905, FRBL/JOPB, 4.

<sup>65</sup> F. J. Norman, *The Fighting Man of Japan: the Training and Exercises of the Samurai*, (London, 1905), p. 43.

<sup>66</sup> William Awdry, 'The Character of the Japanese People,' *The Times*, 2 Oct 1905.

<sup>67</sup> John Darwin, "The Fear of Falling: British Politics and Imperial Decline Since 1900," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 36 (1986): 27-43; Geoffrey Searle, "'National Efficiency' and the 'Lessons' of the War," in *The Impact of the South African War*, ed. David Omissi and Andrew S. Thompson, (Basingstoke, 2002).



Britain's pre-eminent position appeared increasingly threatened by more 'efficient' rivals.<sup>68</sup> High on the indictment were an out-dated adherence to *laissez-faire*; a reluctance to exercise the power of the state as a constructive force; a preference for amateurism over 'scientific' methods of government; a political system that enshrined social divisions and favoured party loyalty above the 'national interest'; and the absence of institutions to engender imperial cohesion. Many connected this to a deeper diagnosis of national malaise, in which the spread of capitalism, urbanisation, and material, 'sensual' culture – together with the more recent menaces of foreign immigration, socialism and feminism – combined to produce a state of decadence and racial degeneration.<sup>69</sup> Against this picture of decline, Japan could appear as a shining example of martial prowess, 'scientific' organisation, and social harmony. One writer made the point explicitly: *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, published anonymously in 1905, purported to be a history of the 'sudden Fall of our great Western Ally', written in the year 2005 by a Japanese historian. Analysing Britain's decline under a series of headings – including 'The Growth and Refinement of Luxury', and the 'Decline of the Health and Physique of the English People' – it ended with an exhortation to the Japanese not to repeat the mistakes of their fallen ally.<sup>70</sup> Baden-Powell made it required reading for aspiring Boy Scouts.<sup>71</sup>

Two elements of the 'Cult' stood out. The first was the ascetic, self-sacrificing ethos that British commentators used to explain Japan's successes against Russia. Much of this myth-making began at the front, among the war correspondents and military observers that watched the Japanese army at war. General Ian Hamilton, the Indian army's senior observer in Manchuria, was not untypical in his assessment of the Japanese soldier, whom he thought 'the fighting man of the future', exemplary in his 'intense patriotism & fearlessness of death... I never saw such discipline'.<sup>72</sup> As the war progressed, such admiration crossed over into hagiography: the assault on Port Arthur, in particular, produced a stream of accounts that explained the victory as a feat of 'splendid, unflinching courage', feeding the belief that the Japanese army consisted, as one account of the siege put it, of 'human bullets' propelled by love of country.<sup>73</sup> It also sparked an interest in the supposed origins of the Japanese martial ethos, and particularly in *bushidō*, which became shorthand for the 'national spirit' that had supposedly animated Japan's performance in the field. Thus Robert Baden-Powell instructed aspiring Scouts that the study of *bushidō* would strengthen 'the moral tone of our race', while Lord Meath professed the hope that his campaign

---

<sup>68</sup> Searle, *National Efficiency*, Ch. 3.

<sup>69</sup> Christopher Prior, *Edwardian England and the Idea of Racial Decline*, (Basingstoke, 2013).

<sup>70</sup> [Elliot Evans Mills], *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire: a Brief Account of those Causes Which Resulted in the Destruction of our Late Ally* (Oxford, 1905).

<sup>71</sup> Hashimoto, 'White Hope or Yellow Peril', p. 395.

<sup>72</sup> Hamilton to Kitchener, 26 May 1904, NA, Kitchener Papers, PRO 30/57/37.

<sup>73</sup> 'The Fall of Port Arthur,' *NCH*, 13 Jan 1905; Tadayoshi Sakurai, *Human Bullets: A Soldier's Story of Port Arthur*, (New York, 1907).

for a national 'Empire Day' would instil 'qualities of a virile nature' just as *bushidō* had done in Japan.<sup>74</sup>

This willingness to invoke Japan as a direct model illustrates that Edwardian Japanophilia was not a straightforward exercise in Orientalism: rather, Japan was held to have retained the qualities that Britain had possessed in its own pre-industrial past. Historical analogies abounded: according to Claude Macdonald, Japan was experiencing its 'Elizabethan' age, while Ashmead-Bartlett compared the Japanese army to that of the British in the Peninsular War, 'our zenith as a fighting race'.<sup>75</sup> Curzon reached for yet another simile: 'In point of national ardour and power of self-sacrifice the Japs [*sic*] stand about where we did at Agincourt'.<sup>76</sup> Particularly to commentators of a conservative, militarist bend, the Japanese model seemed to offer modernity without the degenerative 'materialism' that many commentators blamed for the decline of pre-modern values in British society. 'How unfavourable to ourselves is the comparison between England and Japan,' Ashmead-Bartlett lamented. 'It almost seems as if England had reached the point where her civilisation means the decay of the primitive virtues possessed by man, and that she bids fair to descend the reverse slope day by day.'<sup>77</sup> Hamilton drew a similar conclusion: while the Japanese were 'as civilised as us', they had not yet developed 'the luxury, sensuality and nerves which, with us, have insensibly grown up *pari passu* with the refinements and mechanical facilities of life'.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, what drew British commentators to *bushidō* was how well adapted Japan's 'ancient martial ethos' seemed to be to the demands of modern industrialised warfare: through conscription and mass education, the Japanese state had apparently succeeded in transforming an elite ethos into a genuinely national ideology.<sup>79</sup>

This was the second component of the 'Cult': the belief that modern Japan was the product of conscious *dirigisme* as much as of the inheritance of its pre-modern past. For the diverse set of campaigners for 'efficiency', it seemed to exemplify the requirements for survival in a more competitive age of global politics: a disciplined population; an ethos of unity and national service; and a government capable of 'organising' the nation and directing it to a single purpose. Rather than a 'collection of individuals,' claimed the journalist Alfred Stead, Japan was 'a living and sentient reality, throbbing with all the life and vigour of the millions of human beings within its island shores, all striving in one common direction'.<sup>80</sup> For Lord Rosebery, who penned a preface to Stead's book, modern Japan similarly illustrated the virtues of 'a directing and

---

<sup>74</sup> R. Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: The Original 1908 Edition*, (Oxford, 2005), pp. 44, 237; Lord Meath, 'The Soul of a Nation' and Empire Day', *The Times*, 20 Oct 1904; for the introduction of the concept to the British public see 'The Soul of a Nation,' *The Times*, 4 Oct 1904; also Holmes and Ion, "Bushido and the Samurai".

<sup>75</sup> Macdonald to Lansdowne, 21 July 1904, NA, FO 46/578, No. 220; Ashmead-Bartlett, *Port Arthur*, p. 481.

<sup>76</sup> Curzon to Godley, 23 March 1905, BL, Curzon Papers, MSS Eur F111/164.

<sup>77</sup> Ashmead-Bartlett, *Port Arthur*, p. 488.

<sup>78</sup> Hamilton, Staff-Officer's Scrap-Book, p. 16.

<sup>79</sup> Charles á Court Repington, *The War in the Far East*, (New York, 1905), pp. 374-85.

<sup>80</sup> Alfred Stead, *Great Japan: A Study in National Efficiency*, (London, 1906), pp. 1-2.

vitalizing Government'.<sup>81</sup> The tariff reformer J.L. Garvin agreed that Japanese society was 'entirely the creation, not certainly of *laissez-faire*, but of Government action'.<sup>82</sup>

As G.R. Searle has noted, there was a distinct authoritarian streak in such admiring appraisals of Japanese society as a collective entity, with an obedient population marching to the tune of a masterful government.<sup>83</sup> Beatrice Webb admitted as much in her diary: Japan's successes, she noted, appeared to tell 'in favour of organisation, collective regulation, scientific education, physical and mental training – but on the whole not in favour of Democracy'.<sup>84</sup> This did not trouble Webb, but others were less enamoured of the ruthlessness and the sacrifice of individuality that the Japanese 'model' seemed to require. In a different light, the Japan imagined by the efficiency campaigners bore an eerie resemblance to the 'Yellow Peril'. In the hands of less sympathetic observers, it was easy to recast the myth of the 'human bullets' into a caricature of 'Oriental' zealotry, with the Japanese appearing 'like so many mad dervishes'.<sup>85</sup> One notable doubter was Frederick McKenzie, the war correspondent for the *Daily Mail*, who felt ill at ease with the 'fanatic' chauvinism he encountered in Tokyo.<sup>86</sup> Writing under a pseudonym in the *Fortnightly Review*, Garvin similarly criticised Japan's 'Oriental' way of war, which he believed over-relied on frontal assaults, was indifferent to casualties, and made up for its lack of tactical innovation only through its willingness 'to spill blood like flowing water'.<sup>87</sup> Even Hamilton, whose published account painted a highly sympathetic picture of the Japanese army, had his reservations. 'It don't [*sic*] cost a Jap [*sic*] much to die,' he noted in his private diary. 'He does not care enough about life to make it much of a sacrifice... Pity, love, as we understand them are not in their repertoire.'<sup>88</sup> Looking on the Russian dead after one engagement, he could not help but feel a pang of anxiety: 'How silent; how ghastly; how lonely seemed this charnel house where I, a solitary European, beheld rank upon rank of brave Russians mown down by the embattled ranks of Asia.'<sup>89</sup>

### *Yellow Perils*

Hamilton was not alone in voicing unease over the war's racial implications. Some commentators professed their sympathy with Russia as a fellow European nation; others warned

---

<sup>81</sup> Lord Rosebery, 'Foreword,' in Stead, *Great Japan*.

<sup>82</sup> J.L. Garvin, 'The Principles of Constructive Economics as Applied to the Maintenance of Empire,' *Compatriots' Club Lectures* (London, 1905), p. 54.

<sup>83</sup> Searle, *National Efficiency*, pp. 57-60.

<sup>84</sup> Webb Diary, 22 Dec 1904, LSE, Passfield Papers.

<sup>85</sup> B.L Putnam Weale [Bertram Lennox-Simpson], *The Re-Shaping of the Far East, Volume I*, (London, 1905), p. 247.

<sup>86</sup> F.A. McKenzie, *From Tokyo to Tiflis: Uncensored Letters From the War*, (London, 1905), pp. 1-10.

<sup>87</sup> 'Calchas' [J.L. Garvin], 'The Limits of Japanese Capacity,' *Fortnightly Review*, Nov 1904.

<sup>88</sup> Duncan Stuart Ferguson, "'Splendid Allies" or "No More Deadly Enemies in the World?" General Sir Ian Hamilton, the British Military and Japan 1902-1914,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* no. 4, no. 4 (2010): 523-36.

<sup>89</sup> R.F. Kornicki, "General Sir Ian Hamilton (1853-1947) and the Russo-Japanese War," in *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits, Volume VII*, ed. Hugh Cortazzi, (London, 2010), 162-78.

that its defeat would threaten the established racial order, with dire consequences for British rule in Asia. At its most extreme, this anxiety manifested itself as a belief in the 'Yellow Peril', a geo-racial prophesy which predicted that white supremacy would be challenged by the 'Mongolian races' at some point in the coming century. The precise origins of the 'Peril' remain somewhat convoluted: it drew on a range of Sinophobic tropes, blending stereotyped images of the Chinese developed since the opium wars with the grassroots hostility to Chinese immigration that had its roots in the white settler societies of the Pacific Rim. Notably, it was an Anglo-Australian historian, Charles Pearson, who first articulated the notion of a white world under pressure from the 'black and yellow races' in his 1893 work *National Life and Character: A Forecast*. Unable to thrive in tropical climates, Pearson predicted, whites had reached the outer limit of their capacity for expansion. The future would see their fortunes reversed, as the expansive power of Asia would throw the white world on the defensive:

We shall wake to find ourselves elbowed and hustled, and perhaps even thrust aside by peoples whom we looked down upon as servile and thought of as bound always to minister to our needs. The solitary consolation will be that the changes have been inevitable.<sup>90</sup>

It was China, rather than Japan, whose sheer size and power haunted Pearson; indeed his failure to account for China's weakness, dramatically exposed in the Sino-Japanese War, was one of the grounds on which Curzon subsequently criticised the book.<sup>91</sup> Yet Pearson's racial reading of global politics resonated widely. One of his most prominent readers was the German emperor, Wilhelm II, who would popularise Pearson's thesis as '*die Gelbe Gefahr*', or 'the Yellow Peril', at the time of the Triple Intervention.<sup>92</sup> The Kaiser returned to his theme of race war during the Russo-Japanese War, repeatedly professing his sympathy with Russia as the 'vanguard of Europe', holding back the tide of a rising Asia. The British courtier Frederick Ponsonby, who met him at Kiel in March 1904, found the emperor 'filled with fear of the Yellow Peril'.<sup>93</sup> Wilhelm's preoccupation with the subject fitted with contemporary caricatures of the Kaiser as an eccentric, even unhinged ruler, and while Ponsonby found it merely 'amusing', other British read the Kaiser's embrace of the 'Yellow bogey' as a crass attempt to curry favour with Russia. 'I believe the "Yellow Peril" is being made chiefly by Germany for German purposes,' Chirol concluded.<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> Charles H. Pearson, *National Life and Character: A Forecast* (London, 1893), p. 85.

<sup>91</sup> Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, pp. 401-417.

<sup>92</sup> On the 'Peril', see Heinz Hollwitzer, *Die Gelbe Gefahr: Geschichte eines Schlagworts, Studien zum imperialistischen Denken* (Göttingen, 1962), pp. 42-46; Iikura Akira, 'The "Yellow Peril" and its Influence on Japanese-German Relations,' in Christian W. Spang and Rolf-Harald Wippich (eds.), *Japanese-German Relations, 1895-1945: War, Diplomacy and Public Opinion* (London, 2006), 80-97.

<sup>93</sup> Ponsonby to Hardinge, 30 August 1904, CUL, Hardinge Papers, Vol. 7.

<sup>94</sup> Chirol to Strachey, 9 May 1904, PA, Strachey Papers, STR/4/9.

Yet the ‘Yellow Peril’ could not simply be dismissed as an idiosyncrasy of the Kaiser. During the Russo-Japanese War, racial mistrust of Japan had far wider resonance, and was credited with real political significance throughout continental Europe. According to the British ambassador in St Petersburg, dread of seeing its ‘Oriental neighbour’ armed with ‘Occidental ideas’ had featured prominently in the tsar’s decision to resort to war.<sup>95</sup> In France, the conservative press kept up a steady stream of racial rhetoric throughout the war. ‘The Yellow Peril is the order of the day here,’ Sir Francis Bertie, the British ambassador, reported from Paris.<sup>96</sup> Even the Dutch authorities in Batavia, a visiting admiral observed, lived in trepidation ‘of the Japs [sic] swooping down on their colonies’.<sup>97</sup> Nowhere was opinion on the subject monolithic, and many continental liberals and socialists relished seeing tsarist autocracy chastened; yet everywhere perceptions of racial difference exercised a structural influence on attitudes towards the war.

This was true even of Britain, where attitudes towards Japan were more sympathetic and more deeply influenced by civilisational rhetoric. On the whole, the British elite regarded the ‘Yellow Peril’, framed as a confrontation between Europe and Asia, as a paranoid fantasy: ‘a racial Frankenstein’.<sup>98</sup> Balfour was ‘completely sceptical’ about the idea: ‘The idea of Japan heading an Eastern crusade on Western civilisation seems to me altogether chimerical.’<sup>99</sup> Lansdowne similarly dismissed the notion as ‘absurd’.<sup>100</sup> Yet this did not mean that racial views were absent: set against those commentators that stressed Japan’s accession to civilisation, an equally vocal section of British opinion insisted that for all its achievements, Japan remained essentially ‘Asiatic’. ‘[S]he has donned a veneer of Western civilization,’ argued the old Japan hand Algernon Mitford at the time of the Boxer War. ‘But how deep does it go? Can the leopard change its spots so quickly?’ Beneath the ill-fitting European uniform, Mitford believed, still smouldered the ‘spirit of old Japan,’ whose ultimate ambition was to expel the European presence from Asia at the head of ‘a vast Manchu-Chinese-Japanese league’.<sup>101</sup> A number of prominent papers aligned with the Liberal party, including the *Spectator*, *Westminster Gazette*, and *Manchester Guardian*, had opposed the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1902 on similar grounds: as an Asian country only recently or partially ‘civilised’, Japan was not a suitable ally for the world’s leading power.<sup>102</sup> *The Economist* went further; denouncing denounced the treaty as a betrayal of white solidarity with potentially dire consequences:

---

<sup>95</sup> Scott to Sanderson, 6 Jan 1904, NA, Lansdowne Papers, FO 800/115.

<sup>96</sup> Bertie to Lansdowne, 17 Jan 1905, NA, Lansdowne Papers, FO 800/126.

<sup>97</sup> Tufnell to Noel, 5 Dec 1904, NMM, Noel Papers, 4/A/1.

<sup>98</sup> Demetrius Boulger, ‘The Yellow Peril Bogey,’ *The Academy*, Jan 1904.

<sup>99</sup> Balfour to Spring-Rice, 17 Jan 1905, BL, Balfour Papers, Add MS 49729.

<sup>100</sup> Lansdowne to Bertie, 19 Jan 1905, NA, Lansdowne Papers, FO 800/126.

<sup>101</sup> Algernon Freeman-Mitford, ‘Japan and the Chinese Crisis,’ *The Times*, 12 July 1900.

<sup>102</sup> Gordon Daniels, ‘The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the British Press,’ in *Studies in the Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902-1923)*, (London, 2003), 4–13.

Great Britain has quit decidedly... that unwritten alliance between all white races against all coloured races, through which alone the supremacy of Europe over Asia and Africa can finally be established.<sup>103</sup>

As the Russo-Japanese War broke out, a number of commentators again touted a racist line that echoed the ‘Yellow Perilism’ circulating in continental Europe. Early on in the war, one writer in the *Nineteenth Century* restated the ‘Asianness’ of the Japanese, whom he believed were ‘an intensely secretive, astute, and self-contained race, very difficult to understand, because of the ineradicable racial difference between them and ourselves’.<sup>104</sup> Others went further, and predicted that Japan would use its victory over Russia as a launching pad for a wider anti-European crusade. According to the *Spectator*, whose editor, John St Loe Strachey, was a leading sceptic of the alliance, it was Japan’s ‘natural ambition to lead the yellow race, and to show the world that she is capable of regenerating Asia’.<sup>105</sup> Strachey warned that if Japan were freed from European constraints, it would emerge as ‘a new Empire... which must dominate the North Pacific’, and diminish ‘the safety of every white Power... which has grave interests or broad territories on the Asiatic Continent’.<sup>106</sup> The veteran journalist Frederick Greenwood, another prominent voice in the racial chorus, warned that Japan would lead China in a ‘general rising’ of the ‘races of the Far East’, to establish ‘a triumphing Mongol Empire on the ruin of European prestige’.<sup>107</sup> This would leave Britain with a fateful choice, which Greenwood mechanically hammered home from the columns of the *Westminster Gazette*: ‘to break away from her political arrangements with Japan or stand with that nation and its Asiatic congeners against Europe’.<sup>108</sup>

Even among those who did not suspect Japan of harbouring pan-Asianist ambitions, some still warned that the overturning of the racial order in East Asia was bound to have ramifications for the British Empire. Imperial expansion, even in the more aggressive incarnation that had emerged in the 1880s, was a collaborative as well as a competitive exercise. This was especially true in East Asia, where as recently as 1900, the European powers, together with Japan and the United States, had acted jointly to defend the treaty-port regime during the Boxer crisis. By encouraging the rise of a power from outside the European cabal, some observers argued, Britain was playing fast and loose with this unwritten pact. Russia was a formidable rival, yet it was still European, Christian, and white; a Japanese victory would challenge Britain’s position in Asia on a much more fundamental level. ‘When we back Japan we virtually endorse the cry, “Asia for the Asiatics,”’ declared the *Daily News*, a Liberal newspaper.<sup>109</sup> There were wider repercussions to consider: already, nationalist elites in Britain’s own colonies were pointing out

---

<sup>103</sup> ‘The Treaty with Japan,’ *The Economist*, 15 Feb 1902.

<sup>104</sup> C.A.W. Pownall, ‘Russia, Japan, and Ourselves,’ *Nineteenth Century*, March 1904.

<sup>105</sup> ‘The War,’ *Spectator*, 13 Feb 1904.

<sup>106</sup> ‘The Battle on the Yalu,’ *Spectator*, 7 May 1904.

<sup>107</sup> Frederick Greenwood, ‘East and West,’ *Westminster Gazette*, 5 May 1904.

<sup>108</sup> Frederick Greenwood, ‘The Orientation of England,’ *Westminster Gazette*, 22 Sept 1904.

<sup>109</sup> Cited in Ikura, ‘The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the Question of Race,’ p. 227.

the implications of the blows that Japan had dealt to Europe's collective prestige. In May 1904, the acting viceroy of India, Lord Amphill, reported that the war was having a profound effect on the 'Asiatic mind':

All the vernacular and Indian-owned newspapers are writing on the subject and pointing the moral in a very marked manner. The political diaries from our various Agents show that there is the keenest interest in the war in the bazaars of Afghanistan and Persia.<sup>110</sup>

In light of this, warned the *Spectator*, Britain might yet have cause to regret its collusion in the collapse of Russian power in Asia: 'Britain will stand in lonely isolation, the only white Christian power among nine-hundred millions of brown, non-Christian men'.<sup>111</sup> The prominent courtier Lord Esher similarly hoped that the war would not result in the total collapse of Russian prestige. It would be better, as he noted to a friend, if 'the West is not hopelessly beaten by the East. It would not be a good thing for us, *in the long run*, if that were so.'<sup>112</sup>

Another strain of hostile sentiment seeped into British opinion from the war correspondents stationed in Japan. At the outbreak of the war, Tokyo was already awash in foreign correspondents, hoping to secure an assignment with the Japanese army. Japan's military leadership thought differently: it imposed strict controls on the movements of foreign journalists, leaving many to kick their heels in Japan for several months before being allowed to go to the front. Already in April, the image of the marooned war correspondent had become something of a trope: the *Westminster Gazette* ran a sketch of one journalist trying to smuggle himself to the front in his own luggage.<sup>113</sup> Inevitably, the souring mood affected the tone of press coverage. The correspondents, according to one observer, were 'penned up like sheep', growing more restless with each passing day.<sup>114</sup> Macdonald too, noted widespread resentment among the foreign press corps, and reported that his legation was beset by a torrent of complaints over the 'pedantic strictness of the censorate'.<sup>115</sup> Lionel James, the special correspondent for *The Times*, who also found himself marooned in Japan, offers one particularly striking instance. James had come to Tokyo hoping that *The Times'* past support for Japan would translate into preferential treatment: he hoped to employ a steamer carrying a wireless radio to relay his dispatches back to London ahead of those of the other papers. The scheme stumbled on Japanese concerns over military secrecy. By mid-May, James was still stuck in Tokyo, fuming against what he perceived as Japan's duplicity: 'As it is with *The Times* so it is with the Nation. We shall one day pay heavily for this Alliance of ours. Already the cloven foot is appearing.'<sup>116</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> Amphill to Godley, 31 May 1904, BL, Amphill Papers, MSS Eur E 233/37.

<sup>111</sup> 'Asia and Europe,' *Spectator*, 9 Jan 1904.

<sup>112</sup> Cited in Best, "Race, Monarchy, and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance," p. 180.

<sup>113</sup> 'At the Front,' *Westminster Gazette*, 12 April 1904.

<sup>114</sup> Bland to Morrison, 10 Sept 1904, FRBL./JOPB, 4.

<sup>115</sup> Macdonald to Lansdowne, 29 June 1904, NA, FO 46/578, No. 193.

<sup>116</sup> James to Moberley Bell, 12 May 1905, NI, TT/MGR/CMB/1.

Set against the background of the more explicit 'Yellow Peril' rhetoric in Europe, the circulation of these views in the British public sphere gave pause to Japan's supporters. From Manchuria, Ian Hamilton railed against the racialist flirtations of the *Spectator* and the *Westminster Gazette* as his prime culprits. Britain's 'enemies in Japan', Hamilton wrote to Leo Amery, then on the staff of *The Times*, were making sure that 'all the pro-Russian & Yellow Peril rubbish of the Stracheys & Greenwoods' was circulated in the Japanese papers.<sup>117</sup> Britain's neutrality made it all the more necessary to maintain a sympathetic tone in the press, Hamilton warned, or Japan might well wonder how committed London truly was to the alliance. From St Petersburg, Spring-Rice reported that such an opinion was certainly forming in Russia: 'It is openly said that England is getting sick of Japan.'<sup>118</sup> Nor did the racial *ostinato* go unnoticed in official circles. In January 1905, following the capture of Port Arthur, Sir George Clarke, the secretary of the CID, observed that Britain might consider advising Japan to make an early peace to prevent its public support from eroding. 'Further Japanese successes on a large scale,' he warned, 'would probably tend to produce an exaggeration of the 'Yellow Peril' alarms from which we are not wholly exempt in this country.'<sup>119</sup>

Several forces worked to contain the racial bogey. One was the Japanese government itself, which was at pains to demonstrate that it was not motivated by pan-Asian or anti-European motives.<sup>120</sup> Already in the run-up to the war, Japan had decided not to court Chinese support, worrying this might stoke European fears of a 'Yellow' bloc.<sup>121</sup> Japan also sought to influence Western opinion more directly: in January 1904, Tokyo charged two diplomats, Suematsu Kenchō and Kaneko Kentarō (educated at Cambridge and Harvard, respectively) with directing a public diplomacy campaign aimed at deflating the 'Yellow Peril' in Europe and the United States. By all accounts, Suematsu, who spent most of the war in London, was an effective and prolific spokesman for the Japanese cause, and his efforts were significantly aided by a coterie of influential pro-Japanese journalists.<sup>122</sup> These included H.W. Wilson of the *Daily Mail*, Edward Dicey, who provided the foreign affairs sections of the *Empire Review* and the *Nineteenth Century*, and Alfred Stead, the son of the *Review of Reviews* editor W.T. Stead. Japan's most formidable ally was *The Times*, and particularly its influential foreign editor, Valentine Chirol.<sup>123</sup> Touring the region in the 1890s, Chirol had personally engaged the paper's network of East Asian correspondents, and by 1904 *The Times* could still boast the most extensive Asian coverage

---

<sup>117</sup> Chirol to Hardinge, 23 Aug 1904, CUL, Hardinge Papers, 7.

<sup>118</sup> Spring-Rice to Chirol, 28 Sept 1904, CCAC, Spring-Rice Papers, 1/20.

<sup>119</sup> Clarke to Balfour, 4 Jan [1904?, content and placement suggest 1905], BL, Balfour Papers, Add MS 49700.

<sup>120</sup> Valliant, "The Selling of Japan. Japanese Manipulation of Western Opinion, 1900-1905."

<sup>121</sup> Nish, *Origins*, pp. 200-1

<sup>122</sup> Ian Nish, "Suematsu Kenchō: International Envoy to Wartime Europe,' *On the Periphery of the Russo-Japanese War*, (London, 2005), 12-24.

<sup>123</sup> Linda B Fritzingler, *Diplomat Without Portfolio: Valentine Chirol, His Life, and "the Times,"* (London, 2006).



of any British newspaper.<sup>124</sup> All four of its permanent correspondents – Francis Brinkley in Tokyo, J.O.P. Bland in Shanghai, Dr G.E. Morrison in Beijing, and Murray Stewart at Hong Kong – favoured Japan, most of all Brinkley, who had lived there for nearly forty years, had married a Japanese woman, and enjoyed close connections to official circles in Tokyo. Morrison, Bland, and Stewart also approved of the growing closeness of Britain’s ties to Japan, in the hope that it might stiffen the spine of British policy in China. By 1904, Morrison in particular had become so closely identified with the Japanese cause that more than one of his correspondents complemented him personally when ‘his war’ finally broke out. ‘I am unfeignedly glad that war has come,’ Morrison wrote to Chirol. ‘I have no fear of the result. Japan will astonish Europe.’<sup>125</sup> Throughout the Russo-Japanese War, *The Times* acted as the self-appointed champion of the Japanese cause – so much so that the British ambassador in St Petersburg, Sir Charles Hardinge, asked Chirol to tone down the paper’s anti-Russian rhetoric. The foreign editor refused, declaring that ‘our interests & those of Russia are fundamentally antagonistic, whilst those of Japan & ours are fundamentally identic.’<sup>126</sup>

Under Chirol’s editorial regime, *The Times* made it deliberate policy to act as a counterweight to the racialism that poured out of from other quarters of the press, and which Chirol believed reflected a deliberate attempt to erode British sympathy for Japan. ‘There is a very clever press campaign going on here,’ he noted to Spring-Rice in St. Petersburg, ‘to create the necessary prejudice against the yellow pagan.’<sup>127</sup> If unchallenged, it might exercise an osmotic effect on the British public, and particularly on the Liberal opposition, whose support for the alliance had always been cooler. If the Balfour government should fall, ‘it is not at all improbable that we shall betray our allies in the name of Christianity & civilisation.’ A few days later, he reiterated these concerns to Satow in Beijing: Russia was waging a ‘vigorous propaganda’ in the British press, carefully tailored to appeal to different sections of the British public. ‘I am afraid all this is producing some effect, & I am not quite sure that it is not receiving a certain measure of encouragement in high quarters.’<sup>128</sup>

The airing of such racialism, Chirol believed, carried a still greater danger: it risked giving Japan the impression, just as it was about to complete its integration in the international system, that its claim to equality would never truly be recognised. The result would be to permanently alienate it to from the West. Writing to Strachey, Chirol thus implored him to soften the *Spectator*’s tone, arguing that the only ‘Yellow Peril’ the West had to fear would be one it created for itself:

---

<sup>124</sup> Antony Best, ‘Alliance in Parallel: the Rise and Fall of the Times’s Love Affair with Japan, 1895-1922,’ read at the BIHG Annual Conference, Liverpool, 6-8 Sept 2007.

<sup>125</sup> Morrison to Chirol, 9 March 1904, *CGEM*, p. 256.

<sup>126</sup> Chirol to Hardinge, 14 June 1904, CUL, Hardinge Papers, 7.

<sup>127</sup> Chirol to Spring-Rice, 18 April 1904, CCAC, Spring-Rice Papers, 1/10.

<sup>128</sup> Chirol to Satow, 27 April 1904, NA, Satow Papers, PRO 30/33/10/7.

[Japan] stands at the present moment midway between the East & the West. We can drive her back upon the East by telling her that, because of her yellow skin, she can never have part or lot with the West. We can lead her, I believe, still nearer to the West by telling her that she shall be dealt with according not to her skin but to her deeds.<sup>129</sup>

By way of reply, Strachey retorted in an editorial that Japan would not fit into the international system as easily as Chirol believed: the rise of the first Asian great power would, by its geopolitical position alone, fundamentally reorder the politics of East Asia. To speak of a 'Yellow Peril' was simply to acknowledge the 'enormous mass of force' that East Asia, under the right conditions, would be able to exercise. It was not intended as a racial smear: 'There is nothing in whiteness that we know of which constitutes inherent superiority.'<sup>130</sup> Nonetheless, the intervention appeared to have had some effect: in August, Chirol noted to Amery that Strachey had moderated his stance.<sup>131</sup>

Chirol took much the same line when it came to anti-Japanese noises from his own correspondents, particularly the increasingly truculent Lionel James. Following the latter's denunciations of Japanese official secrecy, Chirol commented that James had 'entirely lost his head', and was now writing 'the most foolish things about the treachery of the Japs [*sic*] ... the Yellow Peril etc. etc.' His editorial department blocked the publication of such 'rot', 'so it doesn't do any harm'.<sup>132</sup> When James attempted to evade the Japanese censors, he was officially recalled.<sup>133</sup> For Chirol, the controversy over war correspondents again came down to the issue of equality: James and his colleagues needed to understand that Japan was perfectly entitled to place its own interests over those of the foreign press corps, even the correspondent of the venerable *Times*. 'We have no claim upon the 'gratitude' of the Japs [*sic*].'<sup>134</sup> Even within Printing House Square, however this line was not universally accepted, and Chirol's heavy-handed use of the editorial scissors drew criticism from his own staff. Even G.E. Morrison, who was no less supportive of the Japanese cause, found Chirol's editing of his telegrams grating: '[I] wonder what good end is served by *such unrestrained adulation of the Japanese*.'<sup>135</sup> His colleague at Shanghai agreed that there was 'something fulsome' in the paper's editorial stance: 'However brave and successful our allies, a white race has nothing to gain by truckling to Orientals and can only lose by it.'<sup>136</sup> Racial anxiety could affect even Japan's staunchest supporters.

---

<sup>129</sup> Chirol to Strachey, 9 May 1904, PA, Strachey Papers, STR/4/9/6.

<sup>130</sup> 'The True Yellow Peril,' *Spectator*, 28 May 1904.

<sup>131</sup> Chirol to Amery, 23 Aug 1904, CCAC, Amery Papers, 2/5/3.

<sup>132</sup> Chirol to Morrison, 17 Aug 1904, *CGEM*, pp. 275-76.

<sup>133</sup> Chirol to Bland, 15 Sept 1904, FRBL/JOPB, 17.

<sup>134</sup> Chirol to Morrison, 24 June 1904, *CGEM*, p. 265.

<sup>135</sup> Morrison to Bland, 8 Aug 1904, *CGEM*, p. 270. Emphasis in original.

<sup>136</sup> Bland to Morrison, 15 Aug 1904, FRBL/JOPB, 3.

## *Conclusion*

As the first occasion on which an Asian state defeated a white European power in a modern war, the Russo-Japanese War marked a decisive turning point in global history. It reordered the political order of East Asia, while casting wider doubts over the validity of assumptions of racial hierarchy, and the legitimacy of an international order that took these for granted. In Britain, Japan's European ally, it intensified existing debates on Japan's identity, and started new ones on the wider implications of the rise of an Asian power for Britain's own imperial system. Two aspects stood out. The first was the sheer diversity of responses to the spectacle unfolding in East Asia. Britain received the Russo-Japanese War neither in a spirit of unqualified admiration nor one of racialist panic – the same was true, as noted below, of the wider British world. Rather British commentators attempted to reconcile the fact of a modern, 'efficient', but still recognisably Asian power with their own assumptions on culture and race. This inevitably required a degree of mental flexibility: Japan's 'civilisational' achievements could be used to marginalise the persistence of religious, cultural, or racial differences, to the extent that some commentators were able to imagine it as a society about to convert itself to Christianity and bread-eating.

Those who continued to subscribe to a racialist view of Japan, on the other hand, were still confronted with a nation that seemed to defy conventional notions of hierarchy, and which on some scores even seemed better equipped for the challenges of the modern era. Following Charles Pearson, therefore, racialist interpretations often struck a defensive, pessimistic tone: for commentators like Strachey or Greenwood, Japan's victory, and the broader 'rise of Asia' it seemed to portend, posed an existential danger to a colonial order that implicitly assumed European superiority. The second feature of these debates is the extent to which British commentators engaged with the political implications of where they placed the 'new Japan' in the international order. Its supporters understood that rejecting Japan's application to the club of 'civilised nations', by imposing new barriers of race, would be understood as an act of hypocrisy, and might permanently alienate Japan from the West. This was to become a salient argument as the backlash against Japan's entry began to take shape in the years that followed: the surest way to turn the 'colour line' into a political reality was to start behaving as if it already was. During the Russo-Japanese War, such worries were mitigated by the chorus of praise heaped on Japan's accomplishments. The following months would show whether practice would follow rhetoric.

## TWO

### Making Equals, 1905-06

The Russo-Japanese War ended on 5 September 1905, in an assuming office building spruced up with furniture carted in from the White House, where Sergei Witte and Komura Jutarō, under the smiling auspices of Theodore Roosevelt, put their signatures to the peace treaty. Japan had emerged from the greatest trial in its modern history with its rival humbled, its prestige enhanced, and the scope of its power significantly widened. The peace of Portsmouth acknowledged Japanese primacy in Korea, over which it declared a protectorate a few months later. It further strengthened its position on the Asian mainland by taking over the lease of the Russian naval base at Port Arthur, along with the southern half of Russia's Manchurian railway. Its status as a great power seemed secure. The Anglo-Japanese alliance, whose renewal was announced shortly after Portsmouth, was converted into a 'full' bilateral alliance, under which Japan pledged its assistance to the defence of Britain's Indian empire. In the following months, the Japanese navy effectively took charge of the defence of Britain's Pacific possessions. In other ways too, Japan's regional presence grew stronger and more visible. Although it continued to lag behind in investment, it soon came to rival Britain as China's largest trading partner. Its shipping tonnage doubled between 1903 and 1908.<sup>1</sup> Japanese emigration in all directions, towards Korea, Manchuria, the China coast, Hawaii and North America, increased sharply. As Akira Iriye has argued, Japan's post-war expansion occurred simultaneously 'in all directions, westward as well as eastward, in reality and in imagination'.<sup>2</sup>

Victory against Russia redefined Japan's international status in a way that presented the other powers with an implicit claim to equality. It was clear that the 'new Japan' would expect to be treated on an equal basis with the Europeans. Nor would it allow new barriers to be raised along racial lines: its activist campaign against the 'Yellow Peril' had made that clear. To some of its supporters, such as the journalist H.W. Wilson, Japan's victory had proven that 'when tried by the sternest of all tests, the Asiatic is not inferior to the Caucasian':

The line of demarcation between Europe and Asia has been broken down.... The era of inequality between the races is over. Henceforth white and yellow man must meet on an equal footing. Yet one thing is certain – that the victory of civilisation is assured.<sup>3</sup>

The *Spectator* was more grudging, but even Strachey found it impossible to deny 'that a new and immense Power has established its claim to a new and heavy vote in the international Council of mankind'.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Tomohei Chida and Peter N. Davies, *The Japanese Shipping and Shipbuilding Industries: A History of their Modern Growth*, (London, 1990), p. 205.

<sup>2</sup> Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement*, p. 103

<sup>3</sup> H.W. Wilson, 'Japan's Trafalgar', *National Review*, July 1905.

The implications for Britain, and the wider British world, were considerable, as both London and its settler colonies were forced to develop new strategies for engaging with this more powerful, assertive Japan. Over the course of 1905, this led London to redefine its strategic partnership with Tokyo: the new Anglo-Japanese alliance, now stretching across a vast swath of Asia, was far more ambitious than the limited regional instrument of 1902. Meanwhile, for the string of British communities on the Pacific, from Shanghai to Melbourne and Vancouver, Japan now loomed larger and closer, and its rise provoked wide-ranging discussions as to how the ‘new Japan’ could be incorporated into external, commercial, and defence policy. The question of Japanese migration to the British settler colonies – which now stood out more starkly as an expression of systemic inequality – thrust itself back onto the political agenda. The results were mixed: while a number of smaller and larger inequities were ironed out to reflect its new power and status, it was already becoming clear that Japan’s ‘war for civilisation’ had failed to convince everyone that its truly belonged to the West – doubts that only increased as the effects of Japan’s ‘push’ into the international order were felt more keenly. These, in short, were the new politics of equality.

#### *Redefining the Anglo-Japanese Alliance*

It was a good thing, Chirol observed to Curzon, that Britain had initiated a renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance before Tsushima, or it ‘would have looked rather cheap’.<sup>5</sup> The new treaty, signed on 12 August 1905, and published in early September, differed from its predecessor in several respects.<sup>6</sup> The most important change was the removal of the old treaty’s cumbersome *casus foederis*, which was activated only if one of the allies became embroiled with two powers simultaneously; the new alliance was a more straightforward bilateral agreement to come to each other’s assistance in wartime. Other changes brought the treaty in line with the region’s new territorial order, by recognising that Japan now possessed the right to take on the ‘guidance, control and protection’ of Korea, by which London conferred its blessing on a Japanese protectorate. More controversially, its geographical scope was widened: no longer limited to East Asia, the alliance was extended to cover the Indian frontier, the Achilles’ heel of the British Empire. In the process, the new treaty also acknowledged Japan’s new status as a great power, presenting the two allies’ ‘special interests’ in the ‘regions of East Asia and India’ as equivalent to each other. From a purely regional pact in which Japan clearly played a subordinate role, the alliance was elevated into a bilateral partnership that proclaimed to keep the peace across a vast swath of Asia.

---

<sup>4</sup> ‘The Japanese Trafalgar,’ *Spectator*, 3 June 1905.

<sup>5</sup> Chirol to Curzon, 2 June 1905, BL, Curzon Papers, MSS Eur/F112/183, f. 58.

<sup>6</sup> Nish, *Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, Chs. 15-17.

The British government first began to contemplate an extension of the Japanese alliance in January 1905, after the fall of Port Arthur removed any lingering uncertainty over the war's ultimate outcome. In light of Japan's expected victory, urged Lord Percy, the junior minister at the Foreign Office, Britain's relationship with its Asian ally would have to reflect its elevated status.<sup>7</sup> The minister in Tokyo should be raised to ambassadorial rank – a symbolic marker traditionally reserved for the great powers. Percy also stipulated that the Meiji emperor should receive the Garter, a matter of diplomatic courtesy long overdue. After being browbeaten into bestowing the Garter on the Shah of Persia, the King had refused to grant the order to any further 'non-Christian princes', but Percy, joined by Lansdowne, insisted that an exception should be made for the Japanese.<sup>8</sup> Most importantly, the alliance itself would have to be renewed, both in recognition of Japan's position and to demonstrate that the relationship had not been weakened over the course of the war. Percy identified two immediate dangers: firstly, there was the possibility that the Liberals, their likely successors – Percy felt 'doubtful of the prolonged existence of the present Government' – might fail to renew the alliance once its five-year term was up. The treaty had never been popular in the Liberal Party: the radicals opposed it on principle, and many of the liberal imperialists would have preferred an accommodation with Russia. More troublingly still, Percy warned that the Liberal Russophiles might prove susceptible to the 'Yellow Peril' rhetoric emanating from the continent. In this, he was not alone: at much the same time *The Times* was demanding that the Liberal leadership end its agnosticism on the alliance.<sup>9</sup> Curzon, too, feared 'some weakening in the Anglo-Japanese alliance' by a Liberal government eager to come to terms with Russia.<sup>10</sup>

Further doubts existed about Japan's own commitment to the alliance, as Britain's aloofness during the Russo-Japanese War was thought to have eroded the reserve of Anglophilia built up since 1902. The terms of the treaty had allowed Britain to stand aside, and since any assistance to Japan would be met by an equivalent effort by France towards Russia, the British government had meticulously upheld its neutrality. It had declined to loan money to its ally, or to underwrite its bond issues on the London market. Its arms manufacturers were banned from dealing with either party.<sup>11</sup> While this strict interpretation of neutrality kept the conflict contained, it stood out in marked contrast to assistance that France or even Germany (whose colliers had supplied the Baltic Fleet on its eastward journey) provided to Russia. 'I am personally very doubtful about the *popular* sentiment in Japan towards this country,' Percy noted.<sup>12</sup> Disillusionment with Britain, in turn might strengthen the argument for a settlement with Russia.

---

<sup>7</sup> Percy to Balfour, 13 Jan 1905, BL, Balfour Papers, Add MS 49747.

<sup>8</sup> Best, "Race, Monarchy, and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance," p. 179.

<sup>9</sup> Editorial, *The Times*, 30 Jan 1905; 'The Japanese Alliance,' *Spectator*, 25 Feb 1905;

<sup>10</sup> Curzon to Satow, 16 Feb 1905, BL, Curzon Papers, MSS Eur/F112/183, f.13.

<sup>11</sup> H. Yabuki, "Britain and the Resale of Argentine Cruisers to Japan Before the Russo-Japanese War," *War in History* 16, no. 4 (September 15, 2009): 425–46.

<sup>12</sup> Percy to Balfour, 13 Jan 1905, BL, Balfour Papers, Add MS 49747. Original emphasis.

In April, when Britain's proposals to extend the alliance met with an unexpectedly long delay, Selborne noted to Lansdowne that he was anxious Japan was keeping its hands free for a Russian rapprochement: 'the contemplation of such a development fills me with foreboding. It would indeed create a serious situation for us, militarily in India, commercially in China.'<sup>13</sup>

These arguments failed to persuade Balfour, who had never been wholly converted to the Japanese alliance; in 1901, he had favoured an alternative alignment with the Triple Alliance. On that occasion, Balfour had argued that a purely regional pact with Japan alone was dangerously unbalanced: it left Britain with an open-ended commitment to Japan's security, while failing to protect more important British interests in the Near East and on the Indian frontier. As a result, Britain might face a global confrontation with France and Russia 'over some obscure Russian-Japanese quarrel in Korea'.<sup>14</sup> When such a quarrel did arise two years later, Balfour, now prime minister, had been willing to accept a Japanese defeat, effectively terminating its usefulness as an ally, on the grounds that it would leave Russia bogged down in northeast Asia.<sup>15</sup> Although subsequent events had raised Japan's profile in Balfour's estimation – he had thought the Japanese army incapable of mounting a ground offensive against Russia – the prime minister still refused to renew an agreement whose logic he had doubted from the beginning.

Ironically, it was Balfour's refusal to countenance a simple extension that drove the alliance's elevation to a more wide-ranging partnership. An early renewal, Balfour insisted, could only be justified if it widened the alliance's scope; this in turn offered an opportunity to revise the treaty's strategic 'imbalance' by committing Japan to a much broader range of British interests in Asia. Balfour's particular *idée fixe* was India.<sup>16</sup> Since the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, London had remained fearful that Russia would deflect its defeats in Manchuria by exercising pressure on India's northwest frontier, 'the weakest spot in our Imperial armour'.<sup>17</sup> 'Sooner or later,' a gloomy Curzon predicted, 'whether it be from the lust of victory, or from the anger of defeat, Russia will probably feel tempted to exert greater pressure on every side of India.'<sup>18</sup> Fears of a Russian feint towards the Hindu Kush were nothing new, but in the early months of 1905, they were compounded by several other concerns. Between London's failure to rein in Francis Younghusband's advance into Tibet, the strained relationship with Afghanistan, and a deepening row between Curzon and Lord Kitchener, the commander-in-chief of the Indian Army, India's frontier policy remained in a state of flux.<sup>19</sup> It was in this context that Balfour and the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) contemplated the extension of the Anglo-Japanese alliance to cover

---

<sup>13</sup> Selborne to Lansdowne, 26 April 1905, BL, Lansdowne Papers, Add MS 88906/22/26.

<sup>14</sup> Otte, *China Question*, p. 301-2.

<sup>15</sup> Balfour to Lansdowne, 22 Dec 1903, BL, Lansdowne Papers, Add MS 88906/17/5.

<sup>16</sup> For Balfour's preoccupation with Indian defence, see Jason Tomes, *Balfour and Foreign Policy: The International Thought of a Conservative Statesman*, (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 55-69.

<sup>17</sup> Balfour to Roberts, 8 April 1904, BL, Balfour Papers, Add MS 49725.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Wyatt, *Afghanistan and the Defence of Empire*, (London, 2011), pp. 63-66.

<sup>19</sup> Gordon Steward, "The War and the British Invasion of Tibet, 1904" in Kowner (ed.), *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War*, 430-43.

India's inner Asian frontier. In late March, Lansdowne sounded Tokyo on whether, in return for 'adequate concessions,' it would be willing to accept a commitment to India.<sup>20</sup> Sir George Clarke, the secretary to the CID, contemplated an additional corollary under which Japan would deploy a force of 150,000 men – or the equivalent of the entire Anglo-Indian army – on the Indian frontier in the event of war with Russia. In addition, he believed, the extended alliance should aim to cover Britain's possessions across Southeast Asia, and the integrity of the Dutch East Indies.<sup>21</sup> Adding to the pile, Balfour even proposed bringing eastern Persia within the scope of the new treaty.<sup>22</sup>

This meant that the new alliance, as it was taking shape in the spring of 1905, would be a far more expansive undertaking than the regional pact concluded in 1902. It attested both to London's continuing fixation on the rivalry with Russia, and to its elevated estimation of Japan's military capacity. That Balfour and Clarke should have wished the Japanese army to mount the battlements of India is not surprising. What is more puzzling is why they should have thought that Tokyo would be willing to take on such a burden at all: the preservation of the *status quo* in Central Asia was hardly a core Japanese interest. What Britain could offer, according to Clarke, was an elevation of Japan's international status:

Japan would, I conclude, welcome a direct Alliance as placing her at once in the position of a Great Power - a position which has been fairly won by the striking patriotism of her people, & the extraordinary efficiency of her fighting forces.<sup>23</sup>

In addition, Japan would welcome the chance to demonstrate that its relationship with Britain remained uninfected by the 'Yellow Peril'; an effect that would no doubt be magnified if the other powers were to raise 'sentimental objections to an alliance between a European & a coloured power'.<sup>24</sup> In all probability, Clarke warned Balfour, once the new treaty was announced, 'the 'Yellow Peril' bogey' would be 'held up to arouse the fears of Europe'.<sup>25</sup> Yet such concerns could be overruled: as Britain itself was an 'Asiatic Power', it could not afford to hamper itself by conducting its diplomacy on one side of the colour line: 'the alliance is – for us – a perfectly natural one,' part of a long-standing British tradition to ally with 'Oriental' states to maintain its position in Asia.<sup>26</sup> There would be no question of bringing 'an Asiatic people' into a 'white man's war'.<sup>27</sup>

Yet such 'sentimental' objections to the extension of the alliance, and its new Indian corollary, proved more trenchant than Clarke had anticipated. The government of India, which

---

<sup>20</sup> Lansdowne to Macdonald, 24 March 1905, BL, Lansdowne Papers, Add MS 88906/22/26.

<sup>21</sup> Memorandum by Clarke, 20 April 1905, BL, Lansdowne Papers, Add MS 88906/22/26,

<sup>22</sup> Memorandum by Balfour, 27 May 1905, NA, CAB 1/5/27.

<sup>23</sup> Clarke to Esher, 20 April 1905, CCAC, Esher Papers, 10/35.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Clarke to Balfour, 27 May 1905, BL, Balfour Papers, Add MS 49701.

<sup>26</sup> Clarke to Esher, 20 April 1905, CCAC, Esher Papers, 10/35.

<sup>27</sup> Clarke to Esher, 20 April 1905, CCAC, Esher Papers, 10/35.



had not been consulted, recoiled at the implication that Britain might have to rely on Japan, an Asian power, to defend its most important imperial possession. Lord Minto, Curzon's successor as viceroy, believed even the sight of Japanese troops being transported to the front would 'convey a sense of weakness on our part to the Indian population'.<sup>28</sup> Similar concerns came from the War Office: in a memorandum to the Cabinet, H.O. Arnold-Forster stressed 'the extreme importance of not allowing the defence of India to depend upon Japan.' Any benefit London hoped to derive from Japanese military assistance, he warned, would be offset by a commensurate effect on British racial prestige, the foundation on which the Raj ultimately rested.<sup>29</sup> The General Staff also weighed in: the deployment of Japanese troops on the Indian frontier would be interpreted as proof of Britain's 'national decadence', and 'would be highly detrimental, if not absolutely fatal, to our prestige throughout the Asian continent'.<sup>30</sup> There were also practical objections to consider: for one thing, although Japan had accepted the geographical extension of the alliance, this did not mean that it agreed to despatch an expeditionary force to India. Staff talks between the British and Japanese, held after much delay in May 1907, led to the conclusion that close cooperation between the two armies in the same theatre was out of the question: in the event of war with Russia, the Japanese army would fight in Manchuria, not Afghanistan.<sup>31</sup>

The bickering over India distracted from the quieter, but ultimately more significant strategic recasting taking place in the naval sphere, where the Japanese alliance came to underpin the Royal Navy's progressive concentration in European waters. Selborne, working with the new First Sea Lord, Admiral John 'Jacky' Fisher, had already proposed a sweeping redistribution of the fleet in December 1904, as part of a comprehensive overhaul of the navy.<sup>32</sup> Selborne proposed the merging of several smaller naval commands, the wholesale abolition of others, including the South Atlantic and West Indies squadrons. The naval bases at Halifax and Esquimalt were turned over to Canada. Most significantly, the five battleships on the China Station, the largest concentration of capital ships outside Europe, were to be redeployed once the Russo-Japanese War had ended. The cumulative effect was a pivot of naval strength to European waters, at the expense of the Western hemisphere and East Asia. In the west, Britain conceded that it could not hope to out-build the United States. In the east, naval security would be left to Japan. Already before Tsushima, the Director of Naval Intelligence, Captain Charles Ottley, noted that in view of the empire's current strategic requirements, maintaining a 'great fleet of British battleships in the China Seas' was 'an entire waste of force'.<sup>33</sup> The destruction of Russian naval power sealed the argument: as Selborne now noted to Fisher, to now maintain the present

---

<sup>28</sup> Minto to Morley, 22 Feb 1906, BL, Morley Papers, MSS Eur D573/1.

<sup>29</sup> Memorandum by Arnold-Forster, 2 June 1905, BL, Lansdowne Papers, Add MS 88906/22/26.

<sup>30</sup> Memorandum by the General Staff, 4 Nov 1905, BL, IOR L/MIL/5/711.

<sup>31</sup> K.M. Wilson, "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance of August 1905 and the Defending of India: a Case of the Worst Scenario," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 21, no. 2 (1993): 334–56.

<sup>32</sup> Memorandum by Selborne, 6 Dec 1904, in D. G. Boyce (ed.), *The Crisis of British Power: The Imperial and Naval Papers of the Second Earl of Selborne, 1895–1910* (London, 1990), p. 190.

<sup>33</sup> Memorandum by Ottley, June 1905, CCAC, Fisher Papers, 1/8/15.

strength of the China station would be ‘an unpardonable strategic blunder’.<sup>34</sup> This redistribution was not yet aimed at any one power; Fisher and Selborne carried it out in the context of a general efficiency drive to expand the striking power and bring down the cost of the Royal Navy. In subsequent months, the Moroccan crisis, and the passing of a new naval law by the Reichstag in the spring of 1906, narrowed the strategic focus to Germany. In the process, Japan came to serve an increasingly crucial role as in Britain’s system of imperial defence, not as a supplement for the Indian Army, but as the empire’s eastern naval bulwark.

Britain had renewed and extended its strategic partnership with Japan. The spirit of the new treaty was encapsulated by one of the Unionist posters for the January 1906 election, which featured John Bull shaking hands with a Japanese sailor in front of their respective flags, in an image of perfect equality, and the slogan: ‘Vote for the Conservatives, who gave you the alliance.’ In the wake of Tsushima, Japan’s integration into the international order seemed complete. By implication, the conclusion of the new alliance demonstrated that the British government considered itself unaffected by the ‘Yellow Peril’ rhetoric that had accompanied the Russo-Japanese War. The reality was not quite as rosy. The prospect of Britain and Japan mounting a joint defence of British India, in particular, was held to be scarcely compatible with the maintenance British rule over the Raj itself; this was the implicit argument behind the concerns over ‘prestige’ raised by India’s civil and military authorities. Such reservations notwithstanding, however, the new Anglo-Japanese alliance sent a clear message that London intended to recognise its ally’s claim to true international respectability.

*‘The only tolerated subject of conversation’: Japan’s rise and Australia*

Tsushima took on a very different colour for the Anglophone settler communities on the Pacific, who were now forced to confront the sudden emergence of a new great power in their oceanic neighbourhood. Geopolitical change became interwoven with older anxieties over Asian immigration: it was all too easy to imagine an expanding Asia, armed and organised with modern methods, casting envious glances towards the ‘empty spaces’ of northern Australia or the Pacific slope. This ‘georacialism’, a tendency to read global politics as a confrontation between distinct racial blocs (and which fixated on the ‘teeming millions’ of Asia), was to exercise a powerful influence on the way the dominions imagined their own national futures, and their position in the international landscape. According to Neville Meaney, in the wake of the Russo-Japanese War, ‘Australians not only came almost without dissent to accept the reality and pre-eminence of the Japanese menace, but their fears also attained an intensity without precedent in the nation’s history.’<sup>35</sup> In Australia, New Zealand, and to a lesser extent, British Columbia, fear of

---

<sup>34</sup> Selborne to Fisher, 3 July 1905, CCAC, Fisher Papers, 1/4.

<sup>35</sup> Meaney, *Search for Security*, p. 123.

Japan became the primary external justification for a nation-building project that expressed itself in defensive, even militarist terms.

At the same time, to characterise Greater Britain's response to Tsushima solely as one of racial panic is to underestimate both the diversity of perspectives on Japan, and the range of interactions that existed, or could be imagine, across the Pacific. The strands that sustained pro-Japanese opinion in Britain – hostility to Russia, admiration for Japanese 'efficiency', and Japan's claim to fight for 'civilisation' – also resonated with colonial audiences. Moreover, the notion that Japan's victory would inaugurate an age of commercial expansion in East Asia held particular appeal in colonial commercial circles, and the end of the war saw a new push by both Australia and Canada into the Japanese market. Opportunity loomed, as well as danger. Even on the vexed question of immigration, many now recognised that Japan's elevated status demanded new, less controversial ways of regulating the exclusion of Japanese immigrants.

This was even the case in Australia, the colonial society that had most explicitly enshrined a commitment to 'whiteness' at the centre of its national project. Hostility to 'Asiatic' immigration dated back to the arrival of the first Chinese immigrants during the gold rushes of the 1850s and 1860s, when fears that cheap labour would undercut white wages drove the emergence of the first anti-Chinese movements in Victoria. Economic anxieties were reinforced by a cluster of other prejudices, relating to hygiene, vice, and sexuality. To an Australian society that was beginning to define its own ethnic and social boundaries, the Chinese were as an alien, inassimilable, and ever more unwelcome presence. By the late 1880s, Sinophobia acquired the character of a full-blown panic.<sup>36</sup> Similar sentiments were extended to the Japanese, who first began to arrive in substantial numbers in the 1890s, recruited to fill the vacancies left by Chinese exclusion from the Queensland sugar plantations.<sup>37</sup> In its Japanese incarnation, moreover, the domestic dimensions of the 'Asiatic question' were closely connected to shifting geopolitical currents. Coming on the heels of a colonial carve-up of the South Pacific, Japan's emergence as a regional power in the wake of the Sino-Japanese war (1894-5) exacerbated fears that the traditional guarantees of Australian security – its isolation and distance from Europe – had lost their significance.<sup>38</sup> Strategic exposure, economic depression, and racial panic were fused together in an alarming vision of racial confrontation, in which Australia's tropical north was imagined as a battleground in a global struggle between the 'white' and 'yellow' races. For the Labour parliamentarian William Morris Hughes, the Asian presence in Australia constituted nothing less than a 'leprous curse'

---

<sup>36</sup> Benjamin Mountford, "The interest of our Colonies seems to have been largely overlooked: Colonial Australia and Anglo-Chinese relations," in Robert Bickers and Jonathan J. Howlett (eds.), *Britain and China, 1840-1970: Empire, Finance, War* (Abingdon, 2016), pp. 84-92.

<sup>37</sup> The Colonial Office estimated the total number of Japanese in Australia at just over 3,000 in 1901, of which two-thirds lived in Queensland.

<sup>38</sup> Darwin, *Empire Project*, pp. 162-5.

spreading its sway through Queensland unhampered and unhindered, and which threatens to make it a country no longer fit for a white man, because it will shortly be a country where no white man can compete with our cheap, industrious and virtuous, but undesirable Japanese and Chinese friends.<sup>39</sup>

This sense of vulnerability, as a white outpost on the edge of Asia, played a central role in the drive towards the federation of the Australian colonies during the 1890s, as survival in an age of geo-racial competition seemed to demand a unified policy on defence, immigration, and external affairs. ‘The sudden rise of Japan to the position of a naval and military power of the first magnitude,’ concluded the commander of the military forces of New South Wales in 1895, ‘has placed the importance of the defence of the Australian continent by mutual agreement... in the light of necessity’.<sup>40</sup> Japan, again, was the spectre at the feast of the Intercolonial Conference of 1896, when the Australian colonies – with the notable exception of sugar-growing Queensland – agreed to extend their Chinese exclusion laws to ‘all persons belonging to any coloured race’.<sup>41</sup> In a broader sense, the preservation of a ‘White Australia’ provided a common touchstone for divergent interpretations of Australia’s national future; it promised a democratic, egalitarian society in which racial solidarity would overcome divisions between labour and capital, town and country.

Through the introduction of a new, national, immigration law, this vision was enshrined at the heart of the young federation. In June 1901, brandishing his copy of Pearson’s *National Life and Character*, Edmund Barton, Australia’s first prime minister, introduced the Immigration Restriction Act as one of his government’s first substantive pieces of legislation.<sup>42</sup> The act proposed to restrict entry into the Commonwealth through a literacy test, a practice already adopted in West Australia, Tasmania, and New South Wales. The test, pioneered by the South African colony of Natal, had been endorsed by the colonial secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, at the 1897 Colonial Conference, as an ‘objective’ methods of exclusion, preferable to the colour bar. The colonies desired to exclude a certain type of emigrant, Chamberlain had declared, ‘not because a man is of a different colour from ourselves’, but ‘because he is dirty, or he is immoral, or he is a pauper or he has some other objection which can be defined in an Act of Parliament.’<sup>43</sup> As a compromise, it yielded very little to the notion of racial equality, while effectively allowing a colonial government to exclude at its own discretion: an undesired immigrant could be barred simply by being put to the in Finnish, Hungarian, or Portuguese. As Alfred Deakin, Barton’s lieutenant, pointed out, the test was never intended to be anything more than a legal subterfuge:

---

<sup>39</sup> W.M. Hughes, 12 Sept 1901, *CAPD*, HR, Vol. 37 (1901), c. 4822.

<sup>40</sup> Meaney, *Search for Security*, p. 29.

<sup>41</sup> Helen Irving, *To Constitute a Nation: a Cultural History of Australia's Constitution*, (Melbourne, 1997), pp. 108-10.

<sup>42</sup> Luke Trainor, *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism*, (Melbourne, 1994), pp. 155-164; Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, pp. 137-150.

<sup>43</sup> For the origins and spread of the ‘Natal formula’, see Martens, “A Transnational History of Immigration Restriction”; McKeown, *Melancholy Order*, Ch. 7.

the government intended to implement White Australia ‘with unqualified and inflexible firmness’. ‘The unity of Australia is nothing,’ he declared, ‘if that does not imply a united race.’<sup>44</sup>

Much of the debate on the immigration bill revolved around Japan, whose standing as a civilised nation – and a rising regional power – complicated the exclusion of its nationals from the new Commonwealth. Deakin, who introduced the bill as attorney-general, professed that Australia had no desire to offend the Japanese, whom it recognised as superior to the ‘uneducated races of Asia’. Yet race remained an immovable obstacle: as Deakin put it, the Japanese were ‘incapable of being assimilated’ and required ‘to be absolutely excluded’. Indeed, it was Japan’s very achievements, their ‘inexhaustible energy, their power of applying themselves to new tasks’, that made Japanese immigration ‘the most dangerous’ of all.<sup>45</sup> This reasoning hardly made exclusion more palatable to Japan, and its diplomats lodged a succession of protests against the new law. As the Japanese consul in Melbourne pointed out, the supposedly neutral character of the literacy test fooled nobody: Australia intended the criteria for exclusion to be ‘racial, pure and simple’.<sup>46</sup> The Japanese minister in London formally raised the issue with the British government, complaining that the act was ‘aimed to discriminate against Japanese and others of different colour’.<sup>47</sup> London deliberated on whether to withhold the royal assent, but concluded that this was only likely to provoke Australia into adopting more discriminatory methods: a sizeable parliamentary faction had denounced the test as ‘a kow-tow’ to Japan, and favoured the introduction of an explicit colour bar.<sup>48</sup> The law was duly implemented, and according to Atlee Arthur Hunt, the ranking official at the department of external affairs, served its purpose well. ‘We continue to eject the industrious Jap and the wily Chow [*sic*] with persistence,’ he reported, and the act had ‘not exhausted its possibilities yet’.<sup>49</sup>

The exclusion debates cast a long shadow over Australia’s relationship with Japan. ‘There is a great dread here of Japanese immigration, which checks any strong pro-Japanese sentiment,’ observed Lord Northcote, the governor-general. ‘I think that dread is well founded – Japan must expand or burst.’<sup>50</sup> Such anxieties broke the surface during the Russo-Japanese War: when the Australian senate was called upon to pass a vote of condemnation following the Dogger Bank incident, a number of prominent senators refused to vote with the government. ‘I confess,’ noted the Labour senator George Pearce on the occasion, ‘that my sympathies are enlisted on behalf of the European, and not the little brown Asiatic nation’ – a point echoed by several of his colleagues.<sup>51</sup> Similar noises came from the populist papers, including *Truth*, *Worker*,

---

<sup>44</sup> A. Deakin, 12 Sept 1901, *CAPD*, House, Vol. 37, cc. 4802-17.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Eitaki to Hopetoun, 5 Oct 1901, TNA, CO 418/10.

<sup>47</sup> Hayashi to Lansdowne, 16 Dec 1901, TNA, CO 418/16.

<sup>48</sup> David Atkinson, “The White Australia Policy, the British Empire, and the World,” *Britain and the World* 8, no. 2 (September 2015): 204-224.

<sup>49</sup> Hunt to Barton, 28 May 1902, NLA, Barton Papers, MS 51/9.

<sup>50</sup> Northcote to Chamberlain, 14 Feb 1904, CRL, Chamberlain Papers, JC 19/1/1-8.

<sup>51</sup> G.F. Pearce, 28 Oct 1904, *CAPD*, Senate, Vol. 43 (1904), c. 6263.

and the *Bulletin*, for whom racial solidarity trumped their distaste for Russian autocracy.<sup>52</sup> As one grisly poem in *Truth* expressed it:

Though the dog-faced hordes are sweeping from the slums of Tokio,  
Though the cursed imps are rushing for to grapple with the foe,  
Though the transports land their thousands, plunder-mad, beneath your wall,  
Though the press is screaming, Ivan, that it's time you ought to fall,  
    There you stand and grimly fight,  
    For you're Christian and you're white.<sup>53</sup>

Australian fears also registered themselves in the London press. In an article for the *Contemporary Review*, Richard Crouch, a Protectionist MP, spelled out that he was anxious that a victorious Japan would renew its challenge to White Australia: 'In the face of such racial injustice, what is clearer than that if the opportunity comes, the Jap [*sic*] will seize it and force an entrance?'<sup>54</sup>

Tsushima amplified these ripples into a wave. At a stroke, Japan emerged as the strongest naval power in the western Pacific, a point that was further underlined as Britain began to wind down its own naval presence in eastern waters. As a great power, moreover, it was unlikely to tolerate the continued exclusion of its nationals from Australia for much longer. To a wide range of Australian commentators, it was evident that the only way to head off this combined racial and strategic menace was to reinforce and accelerate the national project: only a strong, populous, and assertive nation would be able to hold the Japanese challenge at bay, and demonstrate to London that 'White Australia' was worth preserving. One immediate consequence was a renewed emphasis on national defence. Two weeks after Tsushima, Deakin, still leader of the opposition, called for the establishment of an Australian navy.<sup>55</sup> Pearce too, argued that Australia could no longer be 'solely dependent on the British Fleet' for its own defences. To do so would be to deny, 'ostrich-like', the looming danger: 'is there any other country that offers such a temptation to Japan as Australia does?'<sup>56</sup> On 5 September – the day of the signing of the peace at Portsmouth – the Australian Defence League, which called for the introduction of universal military training, held its inaugural meeting in Sydney; Deakin, Hughes, and J.C. Watson, the leader of the Labour Party, were among its founding members. The Immigration League, founded the following month, was to organise the recruitment of new white migrants, with Deakin, again, among the organisers. 'Immigration and defence,' declared Richard Arthur, its first president, 'are the two consummate national questions for the next twenty years.'

---

<sup>52</sup> Meaney, *Search for Security*, p. 125n.

<sup>53</sup> J.F. Dywer, 'A Toast to Ivan,' *Truth*, 11 Dec 1904.

<sup>54</sup> R.A. Crouch, 'An Australian View of the War,' *Contemporary Review*, July 1904.

<sup>55</sup> Meaney, *Search for Security*, pp. 121-24.

<sup>56</sup> G.F. Pearce, 22 Nov 1905, *CAPD*, Senate, Vol. 47 (1905), cc. 5546.

Both arms and men would be needed to reinforce the white fortress, now ‘face to face with an awakened and militant Asia’.<sup>57</sup>

Historians have rightly stressed the importance of an embattled sense of ‘whiteness’ in the formation of identities, both in Australia and the wider British world.<sup>58</sup> Yet the Australian response to Japan’s rise should not be mischaracterised as a blind retreat into the racial *Laager*. Outside the readership of the *Bulletin*, the conclusion of the alliance in 1902 had been well received: Barton, as prime minister, thought it ‘exciting news... It seems to me fraught with good for the Empire (including Australia), China and Japan.’<sup>59</sup> George Reid, the leader of the opposition, went even further. ‘If the United States are behind Great Britain and Japan in this new development,’ he declared, ‘then we can welcome another great advance and an important stride towards... the ultimate fusion of the Anglo-Saxon race.’<sup>60</sup> This was not, as Neville Meaney has suggested, evidence of ‘flaccid thinking’: the belief that the Anglo-Japanese combination formed part of a progressive ‘Open Door’ coalition with the United States constituted a prominent element in British responses to the alliance. The prospects of expanding Australia’s Asian trade, admiration for Japan’s wartime conduct, and a deeply rooted Russophobia sustained a stream of pro-Japanese sentiment during the Russo-Japanese War. Subscription funds to support the Japanese Red Cross were set up in Sydney and Brisbane. The *Sydney Morning Herald* even ran a notice from the Japanese consul stating that, despite the overwhelming number of applications, Japan would not be taking Australian volunteers.<sup>61</sup> Some responses were reminiscent of the Japanophile mood in Britain itself, as one from a popular New Zealand newspaper attested:

The war... is the sole, the all-absorbing, the one necessary, the only tolerated subject of conversation... Cricket it has ousted completely... we are all “agin” the Russians. We are all – every man jack of us – for the Japs [*sic*]...<sup>62</sup>

Support for Japan was marred by the continuing exclusion of Japanese immigrants, but even here, a more conciliatory stance gathered momentum. In April 1904, at the prompting of commercial lobbyists, J.C. Watson’s Labour government declared it would exempt Japanese travellers, merchants, and students from the dictation test, provided they carried passports issued by the Japanese government; the arrangement was extended to India and Hong Kong the following year.<sup>63</sup> After Tsushima, a number of commentators called for still wider concessions, insisting that ‘White Australia’ had been too sweeping and too callously dismissive of Japanese

---

<sup>57</sup> Richard Arthur, ‘Immigration and Defence,’ *Sunday Times* [Sydney], 9 Sept 1905.

<sup>58</sup> Irving, *To Constitute a Nation*, Ch. 6; Trainor, *British Imperialism*, Chs. 7, 13; Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, Ch. 6

<sup>59</sup> Barton to Hopetoun, 18 Feb 1902, NLA, Hopetoun Papers, Mf. M936.

<sup>60</sup> Meaney, *Search for Security*, p. 117.

<sup>61</sup> ‘N.S.W. Volunteers: Japan only wants Japanese,’ *SMH*, 27 Feb 1904.

<sup>62</sup> Cited in Lissington, *New Zealand and Japan*, p. 5.

<sup>63</sup> Jane Doulman and David Lee, *Every Assistance & Protection: a History of the Australian Passport*, (Sydney, 2008).

sensibilities. It would be ‘utter madness’, one Free Trader senator declared, if racial myopia led Australia, a nation of four million people, into a permanent grievance with what was now the leading power in its vicinity.<sup>64</sup> The *Argus*, a Melbourne newspaper, campaigned for the removal of the ‘slur’ on a people that had entered ‘the fraternity of civilised nations’.<sup>65</sup> The Anglican bishop of Carpentaria, whose diocese included most of Australia’s tropical north, similarly insisted that it was Australia’s duty to ‘welcome’ Japan, ‘in a true Christian and democratic spirit’, into the comity of civilisation.<sup>66</sup> Significantly, the same sentiment extended to several senior political figures: George Reid and Sir William Lyne, a former premier of New South Wales, each approached the governor-general with proposals to liberalise immigration policy ‘out of compliment to Japan’.<sup>67</sup> To be sure, a wish to recognise Japan’s equality did not imply readiness to freely admit Japanese immigrants into Australia, which even the most sympathetic commentators thought neither feasible nor desirable. Rather, it expressed a recognition that immigration would need to be regulated through less contentious methods. In late September, two prominent Free Traders, Edward Pulsford and Arthur Bruce Smith, lodged proposals in both chambers of parliament to regulate migration through a direct bilateral agreement that would spare the Japanese the indignity of being subjected to a sham dictation test.<sup>68</sup>

The case for extending an olive branch to Japan could base itself on a broader vision of Australia’s relationship with Asia. If Australian nationality was to develop, both Pulsford and Smith argued, it could only do so through steady economic growth and under conditions of geopolitical security. Both required a more positive engagement with Japan and the rest of Asia. Racial isolationism was ultimately self-defeating: only a prosperous, commercially vibrant Australia could attract enough migrants to make ‘White Australia’ a reality.<sup>69</sup> At less than four per cent of total exports, trade with Asia remained trifling, but seemed to offer phenomenal prospects for expansion. Already exports to Japan had quadrupled since the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>70</sup> E.B. Suttor, the commercial agent for New South Wales in Japan, declared to a gathering of Sydney merchants that Asia would soon become ‘the commercial hub of the world’.<sup>71</sup> Not wanting to be left behind, Queensland and Victoria appointed their own representatives in Japan in 1904 and 1905 respectively. Expanding Australia’s trade in turn required a more flexible attitude on immigration; the ongoing boycott of American goods in China – in protest to increasingly stringent application of the Chinese Exclusion Act – showed

---

<sup>64</sup> A.J. Gould, 27 Sept 1905, *APD*, Senate, Vol. 39, c. 2804.

<sup>65</sup> [Editorial], *Argus*, 22 April 1905.

<sup>66</sup> ‘Australia and Japan: Bishop White’s Views,’ *Argus*, 11 Sept 1905.

<sup>67</sup> Nortcote to Chamberlain, 3 May 1905, CRL, Chamberlain Papers, JC 20/1/1-9.

<sup>68</sup> E. Pulsford, 27 Sept 1905, *CAPD*, Senate, Vol. 39 (1905), cc. 2788-89; A.B. Smith, 28 Sept 1905, *CAPD*, HR, Vol. 39 (1905), cc. 2941-58.

<sup>69</sup> Edward Pulsford, *The British Empire and the Relations of Asia and Australasia*, (Sydney, 1905), p. 20.

<sup>70</sup> Sandra Tweedie, *Trading Partners: Australia & Asia, 1790-1993*, (Sydney, 1993), pp. 33-34.

<sup>71</sup> ‘Life in the East’, *SMH*, 10 July 1906.



that excessive stringency carried a commercial price.<sup>72</sup> Defence provided another consideration, as the shifting naval balance in Asia placed a premium on Japanese goodwill. Such arguments resonated even beyond the narrow group of liberals who had opposed exclusion from the outset: no less a full-throated supporter of 'White Australia' than the *Sydney Morning Herald* admitted that it was in Australia's own interest to treat with Japan 'in the broadest possible spirit'.<sup>73</sup> At the same time, any concession to Japan was sure to be bitterly resisted by racist hard-liners, for whom any tampering with 'White Australia' was tantamount to treason: Pearce sneered that Pulsford's views on the subject warranted impeachment.<sup>74</sup> Nor were the representatives of the Labour Party necessarily persuaded of the need for trade with Asia. 'They can erect a wall 15,000 feet high around Japan for all I care', one member declared.<sup>75</sup>

Alfred Deakin, prime minister since July 1905, was no less committed to racial purity than his Labour coalition partners, yet he also understood that under present conditions, 'White Australia' remained a hostage to geopolitical fortune. The campaign for national *Bildung*, of which Deakin was a leading exponent, implicitly acknowledged that it would be the work of decades to defend Australia by its own strength alone. In the meantime, it would continue to shelter under the imperial umbrella. Yet in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War, and the renewal of the alliance, it remained an open question whether Britain would acknowledge an obligation to uphold 'White Australia', at least in its current absolutist form, in the face of Japanese objections. The signs were not encouraging. During the war, pro-Japanese journalists had repeatedly called for the abrogation of exclusion – 'a monstrosity of narrow-minded legislation', according to Alfred Stead.<sup>76</sup> From his correspondents in London, Deakin received various hints that a Japanese challenge to 'White Australia' was forthcoming. As Bernhard Wise, a veteran of the federation movement reported, 'there is no doubt but that the Japs [*sic*] intend to make a demonstration against Australia once the war is ended.'<sup>77</sup> Lord Tennyson, a former governor-general, similarly intimated that British opinion would side with Japan: 'We are hoping that Australia will admit the Japanese at once as our allies – *freely at once*.'<sup>78</sup>

More troublingly, these views also resonated in certain corners of Whitehall. George Clarke – who had previously served as governor of the Australian colony of Victoria – was particularly adamant that when the Anglo-Japanese alliance was renewed, Japan's new status would have to be recognised throughout the empire:

If such a Treaty as this comes into existence, our Colonies, Australia especially, will have to put Japanese on precisely the same footing as Frenchmen or Germans. Discrimination

---

<sup>72</sup> Guangha Wang, *In Search of Justice: the 1905-1906 Chinese Anti-American Boycott*, (Cambridge, MA, 2001).

<sup>73</sup> Japan and Australia, *SMH*, 24 Aug 1905.

<sup>74</sup> G.F. Pearce, 27 Sept 1905, *CAPD*, Senate, Vol. 39 (1905), c. 2789.

<sup>75</sup> J.C. Stewart, 23 Nov 1906, *CAPD*, Senate, Vol. 47 (1905), c. 5659

<sup>76</sup> Alfred Stead, 'Japan and the Policy of a "White Australia"', *Monthly Review*, July 1904.

<sup>77</sup> Wise to Deakin, 6 April 1905, NLA, Deakin Papers, MS 1540/1/10, f. 1132.

<sup>78</sup> Tennyson to Deakin, 25 Aug 1905, NLA, Deakin Papers, MS 1540/15/3, f. 442. Original emphasis.

against the Japanese, as a coloured people, would not be possible. It might be necessary to speak plainly to Australia; but Australians are not without sense, & their position is one of peculiar weakness except for our support, so that they would find it necessary to swallow this race prejudice as regards the Japanese.<sup>79</sup>

The British government, Clarke concluded, would not have its foreign policy dictated 'by the Trade Halls of Melbourne and Sydney'.<sup>80</sup> Balfour was not unsympathetic, and agreed there were 'obvious difficulties – not to say absurdities – in allowing Australia and our other Colonies to treat our Japanese allies as belonging to an inferior race,' yet he conceded that London could not coerce its colonies.<sup>81</sup> Neither did Japan raise the issue, although Viscount Hayashi, the Japanese minister in London, hoped that in the long term, the British alliance might lead the dominions to treat Japanese migrants more leniently.<sup>82</sup> London's silence on the question did little to reassure the colonists. As the editor of the *Wellington Herald* pointed out to Deakin, the Balfour government's introduction of Chinese indentured labour in South Africa was sufficient evidence that London cared little for its settlers' aspiration to 'whiteness': 'It seems to me that in light of the Transvaal iniquity we need not expect any protection from the Old Country against the victorious Jap [*sic*].'<sup>83</sup>

Uncertain of both Japan's intentions and London's backing, Deakin chose pre-emption: if 'White Australia' were to survive, it would have to be maintained through diplomacy, not defiance. Starting on 11 August, unbeknown to the Colonial Office, Deakin began sounding Iwasaki, the Japanese consul in Melbourne, on the possibility of a new arrangement on immigration, under which Japanese might be exempted from the dictation test. Iwasaki was at pains to reassure Deakin that Japan had little practical stake in the question: its concern was with the odium that the current law placed on Japan's international status. 'Our claim, as you know, is for recognition of our equal status with European nations in the numerous things which are compressed in the term "civilization."' <sup>84</sup> By November, the two had arrived at a tentative compromise. The Immigration Restriction Act would be amended: Australia would no longer require prospective immigrants to take the dictation test in a 'European language', a categorical discrimination against which Japan had previously objected. In addition to this mostly symbolic concession, the new law would provide for 'friendly arrangements' under which any country might be exempted from the dictation test altogether. After obtaining parliamentary sanction, the way would then be clear for a direct agreement whereby Japanese students and merchants, provided with passports from Tokyo, would be allowed to enter and reside in the

---

<sup>79</sup> Clarke to Balfour, 27 May 1905, BL, Balfour Papers, Add MS 49701.

<sup>80</sup> Clarke to Balfour, 14 Oct 1905, BL, Balfour Papers, Add MS 49702.

<sup>81</sup> 'The Anglo-Japanese Treaty. Notes on Renewal,' Memorandum by Balfour, 31 May 1905, NA, CAB 1/5/27.

<sup>82</sup> Nish, "Australia and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance," p. 205.

<sup>83</sup> Lukin to Deakin, 14 Aug 1905, NLA, Deakin Papers, 15/5/44, f. 2088.

<sup>84</sup> Iwasaki to Hunt, 20 Sept 1905, NAA, A1/1937/1511.

Commonwealth on a semi-permanent basis.<sup>85</sup> Exclusion would be practically maintained behind the fiction that it was class distinctions, rather than the colour line, that formed the criterion of entry. The journalist Richard Jebb, who visited Australia in January 1906, found Deakin sanguine that the arrangement would work:

His policy is to have *absolute reciprocity* with Japan in matters of immigration... Proposed that *each* Govt. shld agree to admit tourists & other respected visitors without any fuss at all, but to exclude permanent settlers of all kinds... No doubt this is the right policy.<sup>86</sup>

The parliamentary response to these proposals is revealing. Although many Labour members – particularly those from Queensland districts – remained dead set against any modification of ‘White Australia’, a majority of parliamentarians agreed that Japan’s status needed to be recognised in a modification of the law. Several prominent members eulogised its accession to the comity of ‘civilisation’. Joseph Cook, the leader of the Free Trader opposition, heartily endorsed the attempt ‘to remove a cause of offence to that great eastern nation’, which had made ‘mighty strides in civilisation’.<sup>87</sup> Robert Knox, another Free Trader, agreed that the Japanese had made great efforts ‘to adapt themselves to the conditions of Western civilisation’. It was ‘ludicrous’, he declared, to continue to belittle ‘a people who, by sheer force of their virtues, have attained an exalted position among the nations’.<sup>88</sup> More surprisingly, perhaps, revision also won the support of several Labour members, including William Maloney, who had recently returned from a tour of East Asia. Deeply suspicious of Japan, Maloney embodied Labour’s hard-line racialism, and delivered a rambling speech in which, among other things, he accused Japanese spies of surveying landing sites on the Australian coastline. Yet the same anxiety led him to favour symbolic changes in the law: the sheer fact of Japanese power made the removal of ‘offending’ parts of the legislation all the more desirable. Any concession would have to be a formality, however: if Japan should actually attempt to force the entry of its nationals, ‘it will be our duty to force them away by every means in our power’.<sup>89</sup>

Japan’s ascent sent Australia veering uncertainly between strategies of retrenchment and appeasement. Neither offered a ready solution to its core problem: the weakness of a White Australia that, not least when judged by the standard of its own vaulting ambitions, remained vulnerable and incomplete. Yet the same racial paranoia also limited the political space for a diplomatic settlement. The mostly symbolic concessions that Deakin was prepared to offer fell far short of any settlement that would have given Japan, fresh from victory, the equal status it claimed. Thus when Australia applied to adhere to the Anglo-Japanese commercial treaty in the

---

<sup>85</sup> Hunt to Iwasaki, 23 Oct 1905, NAA, A1/1937/1511.

<sup>86</sup> Jebb Diary, 27 Jan 1906, ICS, Jebb Papers, B/3. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>87</sup> J. Cook, 6 Dec 1905, *CAPD*, House, Vol. 49 (1905), cc. 6308-13.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 6349.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 6353.

spring of 1906, under the condition that immigration would be subject to a separate agreement, the Colonial Office thought this unduly optimistic. 'I have considerable doubt whether Australia is wise in raising this question', one official noted. 'It is true that the Jap. Gov't. have let the question sleep for some years: but they may not be disposed to let it sleep any longer, if Australia asks them for concessions.'<sup>90</sup> Indeed, when Macdonald raised the matter in Tokyo, he found that the Japanese government was likely to ask for wider rights of entry than Deakin's government would accept.<sup>91</sup>

*'A wheat-consuming people': 'Pacific Canada' and Japanese trade*

Australia's convulsive response contrasted markedly with that of Canada, which instead embraced a liberal, commercial vision of engagement with the 'new Japan'. Initially more 'strangers than neighbours', by the turn of the twentieth century Canada was beginning to explore the prospects of deepening its commercial ties with Asia, appointing its first commercial agent to Japan in 1897. Tentative at first, the interest in trans-Pacific trade grew markedly after a Canadian delegation to a commercial exhibition in Osaka in March 1903 met with unexpected success.<sup>92</sup> The popularity of Canadian produce (particularly baked goods) led the minister of agriculture, Sydney Fisher, to conclude that 'a most magnificent trade' awaited Canada in Japan. It did not take long for the 'myth of the Japan market' to infect the upper echelons of the Liberal government. The prime minister, Wilfrid Laurier, was converted, as was Lord Grey, the governor-general appointed in 1904, who kept an extensive file of newspaper cuttings and trade statistics on the potential of Canadian trade with East Asia.<sup>93</sup> Ottawa made an increasingly concerted effort to promote its produce in Japan, sending \$25,000 worth of Manitoba flour (helpfully stamped 'Product of Canada') as food relief after the failure of the Japanese rice crop in 1906.<sup>94</sup> Grey explained to King Edward VII, who received one of the sacks, that he was 'continually pressing' on Canadian businessmen the need 'to secure a future demand' for Canadian products. To that end, Grey even proposed establishing a government-sponsored chain of Canadian bakeries in all Japanese cities, attached to which 'there should be tea rooms where Canadian bread, butter and cheese, jams and jellies can be served.'<sup>95</sup> In more ways than one, such bread-boasting formed a dietary counterpart to the 'civilising' rhetoric that reached its crescendo during the Russo-Japanese War. Like the missionaries waiting for its imminent embrace of Christianity, Canadian ministers expected Japan to abandon its rice-eating habits (associated with

---

<sup>90</sup> Minute by Dales, 5 Jul 1906, in Northcote to Elgin, 7 May 1906, TNA, CO 418/44/20802.

<sup>91</sup> Macdonald to Grey, 9 Oct 1906, TNA, FO 371/87/39636.

<sup>92</sup> Robert Gowen, "Canada and the Myth of the Japan Market, 1896-1911," *Pacific Historical Review* 39, no. 1 (February 1970): 63-83.

<sup>93</sup> It remains with his personal papers. See Durham University Library, Grey Papers, 172/11.

<sup>94</sup> Lord Grey to Sir Edward Grey, 1 March 1906, LAC, Grey Papers, reel C-1358, ff. 1742-45.

<sup>95</sup> Grey to Edward VII, 13 July 1906, LAC, Grey Papers, reel C-1361, ff. 4679-83.

bent backs and poor nutrition) in favour of supposedly healthier, more vigorous Western foodstuffs. Grey did not lack for confidence. ‘The substitution of bread for rice & fish as the regular National Diet of Japan,’ he told Lord Lansdowne, ‘is only a question of time.’<sup>96</sup>

These predictions found fertile soil among an elite riding the crest of an economic and demographic boom. Driven by the take-off of the western prairies, and supercharged through fervent efforts to recruit new immigrants, Canada’s population grew from just over five million in 1900 to nearly eight million in 1914. Wheat exports between 1904 and 1913 increased more than seven-fold.<sup>97</sup> The Japanese market offered a tantalising vision of prosperity for the rapidly developing west, as wheat from the prairies would be shipped out from Vancouver to millions of eager customers on the other side of the Pacific<sup>98</sup> Trade with Asia would anchor the Canadian economy in both the Pacific and the Atlantic, and transform the Dominion into what the *Toronto Globe* described as ‘the highway between two worlds, the granary for the East and the West’.<sup>99</sup> This was a heady combination of boosterism and geopolitics, spurred on further by the ‘Open Door’ rhetoric that accompanied the Russo-Japanese War. According to George Parkin, a leading voice among Canadian imperialists, the war had given ‘added significance’ to Canada’s position on the Pacific, placing her ‘almost as closely in touch with Asia as with Europe’:

The ports of Canada on the Pacific coast are only ten days’ steaming distance from those of Japan. Across her prairies and through her ports the Far West merges for the Englishman into the Far East, and by a shorter route than the East has hitherto been reached.<sup>100</sup>

If Canada were to embrace its ‘Pacific future’, Parkin concluded, the possibilities for commercial expansion were boundless:

Should the Chinese and Japanese people ever become a wheat-consuming people instead of a rice-consuming people – and nothing is more likely with increasing prosperity – the prairies of Canada would have an Eastern market as important as that which Europe now offers.<sup>101</sup>

Like the British merchants on the China coast, Canadians were encouraged to imagine that a Japanese victory would usher in a future of free trade and commercial transformation. As Grey told a cheering audience in Toronto – the engine-room of Canada’s expansion across the prairies – through the joint efforts of Britain, Japan and the United States, ‘the peace of the Pacific is assured and there will be a free and undisturbed pathway for the commerce of Canada into the

---

<sup>96</sup> Grey to Lansdowne, 8 May 1905, BL, Lansdowne Papers, Add. MS 88906, 17/6.

<sup>97</sup> Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*, pp. 406-17.

<sup>98</sup> Gowen, ‘Myth of the Japan Market.’

<sup>99</sup> *Toronto Globe*, 22 February 1906, cited in Gowen, ‘Myth of the Japan Market,’ p. 70.

<sup>100</sup> George R. Parkin, ‘Canada and the Pacific,’ in C.S. Goldman (ed.), *The Empire and the Century*, (London, 1905), 409-419.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

ports of Asia'. The dominion would become 'a natural route between England and Japan', and its Pacific trade, Grey concluded, might soon eclipse that across the Atlantic.<sup>102</sup>

The great obstacle to this vision of a Pacific Canada was British Columbia. Since joining the Canadian confederation in 1871, the far western province had been something of an oddity. Separated from Canada's eastern heartlands by the Rocky Mountains and long stretches of thinly populated prairie, British Columbia remained physically and psychologically detached from the Dominion until well after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway. In the absence of an Anglo-French divide, its politics were notably out of step with those of eastern Canada. As J.F. Boshier has suggested, until the turn of the twentieth century, British Columbia is perhaps better understood as an outpost of a British Pacific rather than as Canada's westernmost extension.<sup>103</sup> In the 'Asiatic question', certainly, British Columbians took their cue from Australia and California rather than Ottawa.<sup>104</sup> The arrival of the first Chinese immigrants from the 1870s onward – recruited to fill labour shortages in the province's extractive industries, such as logging, salmon fishing, and mining – spurred the growth of British Columbia's labour movement, which vocally campaigned to restrict Asian immigration. In 1886, the federal government agreed to levy a head tax on Chinese immigrants, which it raised in increments to a supposedly prohibitive \$500 in 1903. An interconnected set of racial, economic, and moral objections drove the anti-Chinese impulse as they did elsewhere in the British world. As a Royal Commission on immigration appointed in 1902 expressed it, Chinese immigrants 'are not and will not ever become citizens in any sense of the term as we understand it. They are so nearly allied to a servile class that they are obnoxious to a free community and dangerous to the state.'<sup>105</sup>

As in Australia, the issue of Japanese immigration, which began to make its mark in the early 1890s, raised additional complications. Growing restrictions on Chinese labour favoured the Japanese, and by the turn of the century, Japanese workers were a regular feature in the provincial economy, particularly in the fishing and canning industries. White opinion objected to Japanese immigration much as it had to the earlier influx from China: the same Royal Commission considered the Japanese 'quite as serious a menace as the Chinese'. If anything, they were 'keener competitors against the working man, and as they have more energy, push and independence, more dangerous in this regard than the Chinese'.<sup>106</sup> Yet Japan's status also made restricting immigration a thornier issue: to require Japanese immigrants to pay the head tax, as British Columbia's representatives in the federal parliament demanded, was sure to provoke opposition from Tokyo as well as London. By 1899, Laurier had put his foot down, and declared

---

<sup>102</sup> 'Lord Grey's Speech at Toronto,' *The Times*, 27 April 1905.

<sup>103</sup> J.F. Boshier, "Vancouver Island in the Empire," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 33, no. 3 (September 2005): 349–368.

<sup>104</sup> The key works are Ward, *White Canada Forever*; and Roy, *White Man's Province*.

<sup>105</sup> 'Report of the Royal Commission on Japanese and Chinese Immigration,' *Sessional Papers* (Ottawa, 1902), No. 54, p. 278.

<sup>106</sup> Cited in Roy, *White Man's Province*, p.117.

that his government would exercise a federal veto against any provincial law that explicitly discriminated against the Japanese. Nor would it implement a version of the 'Natal act' that Chamberlain had recommended, choosing instead to rely on the assurances of the Japanese government that it would voluntarily restrict emigration to Canada – a policy subsequently endorsed by the Royal Commission.<sup>107</sup>

Laurier's refusal to accept any restriction on Japanese immigration reflected both his own liberal proclivities, and the marginal influence British Columbia was able to exercise on Canada's central politics: the province delivered only seven MPs (out of a total of 214) in the 1904 election. By then, Canada's 'discovery' of the Japanese market had taken root, and Ottawa was becoming progressively less tolerant of British Columbian objections. When in April 1905 the provincial assembly at Victoria passed another restriction law modelled on the 'Natal Act', Laurier overruled it immediately. As he later wrote to the leader of British Columbia's Liberal party, the province would have to adjust its 'violent language' towards Japan, and begin to treat it with the respect due a civilised power: 'I will ask you to remember that Japan is now the ally of Great Britain and that we cannot treat her people as we used to treat them formerly and as we still treat the Chinese.'<sup>108</sup> Lord Grey, for his part, was openly contemptuous of the exclusionary impulse. Finding himself 'so annoyed with B.C. for wishing to give a black eye to Japan', he cancelled his scheduled tour of the province.<sup>109</sup> When he did visit British Columbia the following year, the governor-general used his tour to promote 'the future possibilities *qua* Oriental trade', and warned British Columbians to abstain 'from any action which might strengthen the argument of the party in Japan which favours the closing of the open door'.<sup>110</sup> As he wrote to a prominent Toronto financier, eventually the benefits of Japanese trade would produce 'a growing political force in favour of importing labour, thus securing us from future international difficulties in the Orient'.<sup>111</sup> It was left to Lord Elgin, the colonial secretary, to point out that Asian migrant labour in British Columbia remained a 'very thorny question', and that Grey might be too sanguine in his belief that the benefits of trade might overcome local racialism.<sup>112</sup>

Such warnings went unheeded: as Laurier's government pursued its vision of a Pacific Canada, it brushed British Columbian objections aside. In December 1905, Ottawa made a formal request to adhere to the Anglo-Japanese commercial treaty. Ottawa had previously considered adhesion in 1903, but abandoned the idea after Japan had made it clear that it would not accept an explicit reservation on immigration. In 1905, with Japan's prestige at an all-time high, and the Japanese market more tantalising than ever, these hesitations mattered less. Sydney

---

<sup>107</sup> Robert Joseph Gowen, "Canada's Relations with Japan, 1895-1922: Problems of Immigration and Trade", PhD Thesis (University of Chicago, 1966), p. 60.

<sup>108</sup> Laurier to Macpherson, 5 August 1907, LAC, Laurier Papers, Reel C-850, ff. 127063-65.

<sup>109</sup> Grey to Elgin, 8 October 1906, LAC, Elgin Papers [digital].

<sup>110</sup> Grey to Laurier, 4 October 1906, LAC, Laurier Papers, Reel C-1161, ff. 203923-33.

<sup>111</sup> Grey to Walker, 27 October 1906, LAC, Grey Papers, Vol. 28, ff. 7132-37.

<sup>112</sup> Elgin to Grey, 7 January 1907, Elgin Papers (private collection).

Fisher, who had headed the delegation to the Osaka exhibition, assured Laurier that there was now 'less danger of Japanese immigration into Canada than for many years past', as Japan had acquired new outlets in Korea, Manchuria, and Sakhalin, and insisted it would be 'very bad policy' to allow the issue to stand in the way of closer trading relations.<sup>113</sup> In addition, adherence to the treaty would allow the government to automatically overrule any other anti-Japanese laws that the British Columbian legislature might dream up, absolving Laurier from the responsibility of disallowance, an overbearing use of federal power he considered 'repugnant'.<sup>114</sup> As Fisher pointed out, the treaty would 'put an end to the necessity on our part of disallowing British Columbia provincial laws... and I am sure the public generally in this country would support us completely in admitting the Japanese to all the rights of civilized nations.'<sup>115</sup> As for the question of immigration, the Japanese consul-general, Nossé Tatsumoro, reassured Laurier that Tokyo would continue to voluntarily restrict emigration to Canada. Publicly, Canada would adhere to the treaty unconditionally. Neither the governor-general nor the Colonial Office was made aware of the corollary on immigration.<sup>116</sup>

In its own way, Canada's dash for the Japanese market was as striking a response to Japan's post-war expansion as the racialist spasm it triggered among many Australians. Both dominions incorporated the reality of a rising Japan into their own visions of the future. Yet whereas in Australia, Japan appeared to many as a latent menace, Canada's bread-boosters were unable to resist the vision of a 'Pacific Canada', feeding the hungry millions of Asia and spurring the dominion to a golden future of prosperity. British Columbia's objections were impatiently waved aside. In the process, Ottawa fully embraced the 'civilising' view of Japan's rise, and Laurier's parliamentary speech on the new commercial treaty provided one of the most striking recognitions of Japan's new status articulated anywhere in the British world. Challenged by one Conservative MP that the treaty's provisions for free movement would allow Japan to 'pour her surplus population into British Columbia', Laurier acknowledged that there was 'quite an aversion to any kind of Asiatic labour' in British Columbia, as any other English-speaking community. Yet he insisted Japan was a special case:

Japan has undergone a revolution, it is no longer a country of Asiatic tendencies or Asiatic civilization, it is fast becoming a European country and we have a growing trade with Japan, a trade which must be improved, and which will assume ... in the near future, very large proportions. We cannot afford to treat the Japanese population with anything like contempt.<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> Fisher to Laurier, 30 Sept 1905, LAC, Laurier Papers, Reel C-826, ff. 101519-21.

<sup>114</sup> Roy, *White Man's Province*, p. 128.

<sup>115</sup> Fisher to R.W. Scott, LAC, Lemieux Papers, Vol. 1, ff. 65-67.

<sup>116</sup> When Deakin made his own application, he was informed that since Canada had not raised the issue of immigration, Australia could not do so either. Northcote to Elgin, 7 May 1906, NA, CO 418/44/20802.

<sup>117</sup> W. Laurier, 15 Jan 1907, CPD, House, 10<sup>th</sup> Parl., 3<sup>rd</sup> Session, Vol. 1, c. 1547-1552.



### *Conclusion*

In the months following the Russo-Japanese War, Britain and its Pacific dominions were forced to come to terms with what the American admiral A.T. Mahan once described as Japan's 'somewhat sudden nearness'.<sup>118</sup> The rise of Japan was widely expected to have a transformative effect on the regional order, but its precise effects were still uncertain. Would Japanese dynamism be a stabilising factor in East Asia, paving the way for the triumph of commerce and 'civilisation'? Or did its emergence portend a new geo-racial struggle in the Pacific, that would see local whites, as Charles Pearson had predicted, 'elbowed and hustled, and perhaps even thrust aside'?<sup>119</sup> The one thing that was beyond dispute, to those parts of the British world that looked out to the Pacific, was that Japan would play an important, and possibly a decisive role, in the future of their societies – and that its claim to international equality needed to be taken seriously, whether for reasons of fear or profit. This was already evident in the British government's decision to extend the Anglo-Japanese alliance, a move conceived, at least in part, as a demonstration that London recognised Japan's claim to be included among the great powers.

This proved a thornier question in the dominions, where the issue of Japan's international standing was inextricably tied up with the continued exclusion of Japanese immigrants. Neither the Canadian nor the Australian government were inclined to abandon their commitment to racial exclusivity. But it was clear the diplomatic, commercial, and possibly the strategic costs of exclusion were rising. Both governments attempted to offset this in new attempts to recognise Japan's elevated status in the form, if not the substance, of their immigration policies – although such efforts were pursued much further, and with greater determination, in Canada. In the months after the war then, there seemed scope for optimism, shared to different degrees in Melbourne, Ottawa, and London, that even the vexed issue of immigration might be managed, its toxicity removed. As Balfour put it to his cabinet colleagues, immigration was a difficulty best ignored, 'in the hope that, during the currency of the Treaty, it may not arise in an acute form'.<sup>120</sup>

Yet Japan's racial status continued to be an obstacle in this 'equalising' process. Many of the objections levied against the Indian extension of the Anglo-Japanese alliance grew out of the concern that Japan's victories had eroded European, including British, prestige in Asia, and even advocates of the Indian extension shirked from the prospect of calling on Japanese troops in a 'white man's war'. More troublingly, the war opened up new veins of racialist discourse in the British Pacific, as many now argued that the Japan's rise demanded the reinforcement, not the reduction, of the 'Great White Walls'. Deakin's half-hearted attempts at reconciliation did not

---

<sup>118</sup> A.T. Mahan, *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future* (London, 1897), p. 162.

<sup>119</sup> Pearson, *National Life and Character*, p. 90.

<sup>120</sup> Memorandum by Balfour, 31 May 1905, TNA, CAB 1/5/27.

obscure the extent to which many Australians – including Deakin himself – had heralded Japan's victory as the beginning of a new phase of strategic, and even racial rivalry. Much the same was true of British Columbia, although Ottawa's overtures to Japan momentarily marginalised the objections of its westernmost province. In the buoyant post-war mood, it was possible to regard this as an irritation of little political consequence. The following years would show just how premature that conclusion was.

### THREE

## ‘The merry game of dollar-grinding’: China, 1905-1911

On Monday, 18 December 1905, rioting broke out in the International Settlement of Shanghai, the largest of the foreign ‘concessions’ on the China coast. The immediate cause was a jurisdictional dispute on policing between the Municipal Council, which governed the Settlement, and the Chinese authorities: following the forcible removal of a Chinese woman to a newly built western gaol, a cluster of Chinese merchants’ associations had called for a general strike. Crowds of rioters proceeded to attack shops that had dared to open on Monday morning. The mob, now numbering in the thousands, went on to set fire to the Western police station. Marines from a visiting British naval squadron were called in to restore order.<sup>1</sup> When the day was over, fifteen Chinese had lost their lives in the largest incident of mass violence since the creation of the International Settlement. To shocked foreign residents, the riots were a symptom of the growing assertiveness of Chinese nationalist politics since the Russo-Japanese War. ‘The temper of the Chinese is very different from what it was a year or two ago,’ Ernest Satow, the British minister at Beijing, had warned a few days before the riot. ‘The example of Japan has shown them what an Eastern nation may achieve in the way of resisting European encroachments.’<sup>2</sup> J.O.P. Bland, forced to resign from his position as secretary to the Municipal Council, pointed to the ‘moral effect caused throughout the country by the defeat of the great Western Power by Japan’.<sup>3</sup> More worryingly, there were rumours of direct involvement: two days after the events in Shanghai, Bland complained to the Japanese consul of ‘well-substantiated cases’ where Japanese nationals had participated in the rioting. *The Times* also called on the Japanese government to ‘control its subjects’.<sup>4</sup>

The Shanghai riots were an early sign that the regional order in East Asia was shifting. The Russo-Japanese War terminated the ‘China question’ as it had preoccupied the European powers since 1895: with Russia chastened and Japan standing guard, there was now little prospect of a Chinese ‘scramble’ directed from Europe.<sup>5</sup> Yet where the chancelleries of Europe might look elsewhere, there was little sign that the region’s politics were stabilising. Instead, the ‘China question’ now came to hinge on two new previously unknown factors in the international equation: the expanding influence of Japan, and the growing dynamism of Chinese nationalism. For British settlers in the treaty-ports, it marked the beginning of a new period of political

---

<sup>1</sup> Captain Tufnell of the HMS *Bonaventure* remarked that ‘the rioters were not *very* sagacious in choosing 10 AM on *Monday* when we were all at general drill with every officer & man on board & ready to land.’ Tufnell to Noel, 22 December 1905, Noel Papers, NMM, 4/A/3.

<sup>2</sup> Satow to Grey, 14 Dec 1905, TNA, Grey Papers, FO 800/44.

<sup>3</sup> ‘A New Spirit in China,’ *The Times*, 12 Dec 1905.

<sup>4</sup> Bland to Eitaki, 20 Dec 1905, FRBL/JOPB, 4; Editorial, *The Times*, 19 Dec 1905.

<sup>5</sup> Otte, *China Question*, pp. 336.

uncertainty.<sup>6</sup> One upshot of this was a stark reconsideration of local views of Japan and its place in the regional order: ‘Anglo-China’ had been a staunchly pro-Japanese constituency during the Russo-Japanese War; now it became a source of some of its fiercest critiques. Many of Japan’s erstwhile supporters, including Bland and G.E. Morrison, the two *Times* correspondents in China, came to denounce its actions on the Asian continent. These views exercised an osmotic effect on British opinion: by 1911, few commentators could still maintain that the Anglo-Japanese alliance benefited British trade in China, or that Japan was a progressive ‘Britain of the East’. Already by January 1908, Bland believed the Japanese alliance was now fundamentally at odds with British interests – political, economic, and racial – in East Asia: ‘I cannot believe that we white men will be able to keep up much longer the farce of an alliance with these fiercely Asiatic Asiatics.’<sup>7</sup>

*Brushing shoulders: Japan and Britain in the treaty-port system*

Japan had been a member of China’s ‘treaty-port system’ since 1895, when the Treaty of Shimonoseki formally placed it on par with the Western powers as a most-favoured-nation.<sup>8</sup> Yet with its trade relatively small, its investment negligible, and its political attention focused on Korea, Japan remained in many respects a second-tier member of the foreign cabal. That changed with the Russo-Japanese War, which prompted a sharp expansion of its footprint on the Asian mainland. In the decade that followed, the value of Sino-Japanese trade doubled, from ¥74m in 1897-1906 to ¥159m in 1907-1916, while Japan’s share of China’s total imports grew from 9% in 1902-6 to 17% in 1907-11, and finally mushrooming to 28% in 1912-16, as the outbreak of the First World War interrupted European trade.<sup>9</sup> Its commercial ties to the Chinese economy, moreover, were formed on a more intimate level than those of the Europeans, and tended to involve smaller enterprises selling directly to Chinese customers. Beatrice Webb, who visited Hong Kong in 1911, reflected on the ‘deliberative purposefulness’ of the Japanese trading houses, many of which had dispensed with the services of local middlemen and insisted that their personnel, ‘from the Manager himself down to the youngest clerk’, learn Chinese. By 1914, over 1,200 Japanese firms operated in China, making up just under half of all foreign companies.<sup>10</sup>

By extension, Sino-Japanese trade also involved far larger numbers of people. This was most evident in Manchuria, which by 1909 was home to over 65,000 Japanese, by far the largest foreign community enjoying extra-territorial rights in China.<sup>11</sup> Yet its expansion was also felt

---

<sup>6</sup> Robert Bickers, “Shanghaianders: the Formation and Identity of the British Settler Community in Shanghai, 1843-1937,” *Past and Present* 159, no. 1 (1998): 161–211

<sup>7</sup> Bland to Straight, 11 Jan 1908, CL/WDS, Reel 2.

<sup>8</sup> W.G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism, 1894-1945*, (Oxford, 1985), pp. 64-6.

<sup>9</sup> Mizoguchi Toshiyuki, “The Changing Pattern of Sino-Japanese Trade, 1884-1937,” in Duus et al. (eds.), *The Japanese Informal Empire*, 10–30.

<sup>10</sup> Feuerwerker, “The Foreign Presence in China,” p. 148.

<sup>11</sup> Matsusaka, *Japanese Manchuria*, p. 414. This number does not include the Korean nationals over whom Japan also claimed consular jurisdiction.

further south: in 1905, the Japanese population of Shanghai stood at 4,400, already outnumbering the British; a decade later, it had grown to 11,700 people.<sup>12</sup> Substantial Japanese communities also settled in Xiamen, Tianjin, and Hankou, where Japan acquired a separate concession in 1907. In the same year, the Japanese foreign ministry bolstered its oversight of the Japanese expatriate communities by establishing formal residents' associations in the larger treaty-ports.<sup>13</sup> E.G. Hillier, HSBC's agent in Beijing, recounted the rapid spread of the Japanese presence even in the Yangzi valley, Britain's own commercial preserve:

Of the forces which are working to shape the future of Hankow and of the upper Yang-tsze at the present moment none is more conspicuous or more striking than the growing influence of the Japanese... their flag is to be seen everywhere on the river... They have great ambitions in the Yang-tzse valley, there can be no manner of doubt, and their object seems to be to conquer much by a process of absorption by numbers as by the ordinary competition of trade.<sup>14</sup>

In other ways too, Japan came to participate more fully in the treaty-port system. Its gunboats joined in anti-piracy operations on the Yangzi. The Imperial Maritime Customs, whose recruitment practices scrupulously reflected the cosmopolitan nature of the treaty-port regime, employed its first Japanese official in 1899, and took on forty-two Japanese nationals in 1907 alone, to staff its resumed operations in the Manchurian ports.<sup>15</sup> Although the number of Japanese Buddhist missionaries in China was negligible (a mere thirty-five in 1908), the Japanese government sought access to potential converts on the same terms as Christian missions.

The effect of Japan's growing presence in continental Asia was amplified by its perceived influence on China's politics. Following its humiliation during the Boxer war, the Qing court had tentatively embarked on a programme of reforms to the central administration, the army, and the education system.<sup>16</sup> This was mirrored by the emergence of an outward-facing nationalist consciousness among provincial elites, particularly in the larger treaty-ports. The Russo-Japanese War catalysed these developments, as humiliation over the impotence of its own neutrality, inspiration by the Japanese model, and anxiety over Japanese encroachment spurred the Court

---

<sup>12</sup> See Bickers, "Shanghaianders," and Christian Henriot, "'Little Japan' in Shanghai: an Insulated Community, 1875-1945," in *New Frontiers: Imperialism's New Communities in East Asia, 1842-1953*, ed. Robert Bickers and Christian Henriot, (Manchester, 2000), 146-69.

<sup>13</sup> Mark R. Peattie, "Japanese Treaty-port Settlements in China, 1895-1937," in Duus et al. (eds.) *The Japanese Informal Empire*, 166-209.

<sup>14</sup> Hillier to Townsend, 12 July 1907, in Jordan to Grey, 25 July 1907, NA, FO 371/228/30124.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Bickers, "Anglo-Japanese Relations in Treaty-port China: the Case of the Chinese Maritime Customs Service," in *The International History of East Asia, 1900-1986*, ed. Antony Best, (Abingdon, 2010), 35-56.

<sup>16</sup> The late Qing reforms received overdue recognition in a series of articles in *Modern Asian Studies*. See, in particular, Roger Thompson, "The Lessons of Defeat: Transforming the Qing State After the Boxer War," *Modern Asian Studies* 37, no. 4 (October 2003): 769-73; Richard Horowitz, "Breaking the Bonds of Precedent: the 1905-6 Government Reform Commission and the Remaking of the Qing Central State," *Modern Asian Studies* 37, no. 4 (October 2003): 775-97; Julia Strauss, "Creating 'Virtuous and Talented' Officials for the Twentieth Century: Discourse and Practice in Xinzheng China," *Modern Asian Studies* 37, no. 4 (October 2003): 831-50.

into accelerating the pace of reform.<sup>17</sup> In September 1905, China abolished the centuries-old Confucian examination system in favour of a Western-oriented curriculum. That same month, a commission of enquiry left Beijing to study administrative practice and constitutional arrangements in Europe, the United States, and Japan – a conscious imitation of Japan’s own Iwakura embassy of 1871. It also forged ahead with military reform, particularly in the Beiyang army under Yuan Shikai, the governor of Zhili. Satow, who attended its autumn manoeuvres in October 1905, was impressed: Yuan’s new force was ‘able-bodied, well-trained, perfectly disciplined; no disorder of any kind’.<sup>18</sup> The most dramatic example of Beijing’s reforming spirit came in November 1906, when the Chinese government announced a ban on the domestic production of opium.<sup>19</sup> Returning to China in December 1905, George Morrison found the country transformed. ‘That there is a development going on in China of a national spirit almost as strong as that which took place in Japan in the years following 1860, seems certain... I think the spirit should be encouraged.’<sup>20</sup> Not all foreign observers were as sanguine, and others noted that the new nationalism was already asserting itself against the Western presence. Starting in Shanghai in the summer of 1905, Chinese merchants of Shanghai began a boycott of American goods, in protest against the exclusion of Chinese from the United States. It subsequently spread to several other treaty-ports.<sup>21</sup> The Shanghai riots added further to the atmosphere of uncertainty. ‘China is as India was in 1857,’ one agitated Shanghai resident telegraphed to the Foreign Office.<sup>22</sup>

The Japanese element in China’s reforming turn was evident. To the Chinese, Japan offered a model of resisting foreign pressure through modernising reform within the framework of constitutional government. Many took advantage of the opportunity of studying its methods up close: the number of Chinese students leaving for Japan ballooned from 1,300 in 1904, to 8,000 in 1905, and may have reached a total as high as twenty thousand in 1906.<sup>23</sup> The new emphasis on non-traditional learning for official preferment – which goes some way to explaining the exodus of students to Japan – also produced an immediate demand for Japanese teachers in China itself.<sup>24</sup> Chinese cadets – including the young Chiang Kai-shek – enrolled in Japanese military academies, while Japanese military advisers were engaged in the Beiyang army. As Satow reported to Grey, the Japanese had ‘enormously increased their influence’ over the course of the Russo-Japanese War:

---

<sup>17</sup> Harold Z. Schiffrin, “The Impact of the War on China,” in Kowner (ed.), *Impact*, pp. 169-82.

<sup>18</sup> Satow to Lansdowne, 2 Nov 1905, TNA, Satow Papers, PRO 30/33/14/16.

<sup>19</sup> R.K. Newman, “India and the Anglo-Chinese Opium Agreements, 1907-14,” *Modern Asian Studies* 23, no. 3 (1989): 525–60.

<sup>20</sup> Morrison to Gundry, 29 December 1905, CGEM, p. 355.

<sup>21</sup> Guangha Wang, *In Search of Justice: the 1905-1906 Chinese Anti-American Boycott*, (Cambridge, MA, 2001).

<sup>22</sup> W.V. Drummond to FO, 19 Jan 1906, FO 371/25/2374.

<sup>23</sup> Marius Jansen, “Japan and the Chinese Revolution of 1911,” in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 11: Late Ch’ing, 1800-1911*, ed. Kwang-Ching Liu and John K Fairbank, (Cambridge, 1980), 339–74.

<sup>24</sup> Strauss, “Creating ‘Virtuous and Talented’ Officials.”

They have become the teachers of the military and all other arts to the Chinese... They have thrown open their military colleges and other educational establishments to Chinese students, who have flocked to Japan in thousands. There young Chinese have seen with their own eyes what an Oriental nation can do to thrust back the advancing tide of European influence, and strengthen themselves against all forms of aggression, and the lesson has not been thrown away upon them.<sup>25</sup>

For Britain, Russia's defeat and the apparent revival of China's political fortunes offered grounds for cautious optimism. Even Satow, whose service in China had been shaped by the aftermath of the Boxer crisis, and who had once thought the Qing 'thoroughly rotten', now took a more sanguine view.<sup>26</sup> With the prospect of a territorial scramble vanishing beyond the political horizon, Satow argued there was no longer a need to fence in British commercial and financial interests with political safeguards, as had been the practice during the scramble years. Nor was it necessary to maintain a cordon of British owned-railways around Britain's commercial preserve in the Yangzi valley. '[T]he policies of "pacific penetration," "partition," "spheres of influence," and "spheres of interest" are dead,' he concluded. Any further railway projects would have to be 'as purely commercial undertakings, without any *political* character, and be assisted accordingly'.<sup>27</sup> Such a policy would reduce the scope for friction with other powers, strengthen the authority of the central government, and put Britain on the right side of China's budding nationalist movement. On his return to London, Satow privately met with Sir Edward Grey, the new foreign secretary, to make the case for abandoning the 'big stick', and return to a policy of 'trade, not territory'. Ultimately, Satow argued, it was in Britain's best interests to accommodate China's self-strengthening aspirations: 'I contrasted the treatment we had meted out to Japan & China during the last 30 years, and the relatively satisfactory state of our relations with the former.'<sup>28</sup> Grey was receptive, and instructed Satow's successor, Sir John Jordan, hitherto minister in Seoul, that British policy would have to adapt 'to the new departure which China is apparently anxious to make'.<sup>29</sup>

Effectively, Britain would return to the familiar ground of the Open Door, and abandon its flirtation with a protectorate in the Yangzi. This turn was given practical form by the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), the Foreign Office's unofficial financial partner in China, which happily seized on the chance to disassociate the Bank from unprofitable 'political' railways. Its new London manager, Charles Addis favoured swimming with the nationalist tide. 'It has all along been China's weakness, not her strength, that has been the root of her troubles and ours,' he wrote in his diary. 'And now China is moving at last. I feel more

---

<sup>25</sup> Satow to Grey, 31 March 1905, TNA, Grey Papers, FO 800/44.

<sup>26</sup> Satow to Grey, 4 Dec 1905, TNA, Grey Papers, FO 800/44.

<sup>27</sup> Satow to Grey, 16 Apr 1906, FO 371/35/18909.

<sup>28</sup> Satow Diary, 19 July 1906, in Ian Ruxton (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Ernest Satow, British Envoy in Peking (1900-06), Vol. II*, (Morrisville, NC, 2006), pp. 306-8.

<sup>29</sup> Grey to Jordan, 31 Aug 1906, FO 371/35/29351.

hopeful of her future than ever.<sup>30</sup> Led by Addis, the Bank recognised that allowing new railways to be built under Chinese, rather than foreign, ownership made them politically less contentious and commercially more viable. Financing the lines jointly by the Western powers would further reduce scope for political friction. The formation of an international banking consortium, which came to include British, French, German, and American banking groups, ensured that railway lines would no longer be controlled by any single power. By 1910, the railway had been effectively disarmed as a tool of quasi-colonial conquest, and the frenzied territorialism of the scramble years had given way to a cosmopolitan bankers' diplomacy.<sup>31</sup> The Foreign Office looked on approvingly. 'From the point of view of British commerce and of the British trading communities in China it makes little difference who constructs the railways so long as they are built,' noted Jordan. 'With the awaking spirit amongst the Chinese it is very unlikely that railways will in the future be utilized as instruments of conquest by any Power.'<sup>32</sup>

South of the Great Wall, therefore, the treaty-port regime emerged from the Russo-Japanese War with its cosmopolitan character considerably strengthened. The problem was Manchuria, where Qing authority was weaker, the scope for a 'colonial' refashioning greater, and the challengers to the Open Door more formidable. Although it was never the empty frontier of the Western imagination, China's three eastern provinces constituted a borderland where the limits of Beijing's authority were less clearly defined than in the south. In an effort to preserve the dynasty's nomadic traditions, the Qing had long treated their ancestral homeland as a separate administrative entity: its officials was drawn from the ranks of the Manchu bannermen, and as late as the 1860s, Beijing imposed strict controls on the entry of Han settlers. By the turn of the twentieth century, Manchuria, China's 'wild north', still resembled a frontier environment: communications were limited outside the settled area around Mukden, the regional capital, and the exercise of central control often relied on the cooperation of local tribal leaders. Crucially, the region lacked the sophisticated local commercial networks that could channel – and constrain – foreign trade in central China; instead, it was the Russian and later Japanese railway companies that came to provide the logistic, commercial and financial services required to develop their Manchurian spheres.<sup>33</sup>

After it took over Russia's concessions in southern Manchuria, strategic and economic logic drove Japan further down the tracks of its predecessor. At the outset of the Russo-Japanese War, Tokyo had shown little interest in acquiring a sphere in Manchuria, and as late as October 1905, it had actively considered an American proposal buy out the Russian railway lines on China's behalf.<sup>34</sup> Yet by the end of the year, the threat of Russian revanchism had set Tokyo on

---

<sup>30</sup> Addis Diary, 22 Jan 1906, SOAS, Addis Papers, PP MS 14/167.

<sup>31</sup> See Edwards, *Diplomacy and Finance in China*.

<sup>32</sup> Jordan to Grey, 7 Oct 1909, NA, Grey Papers, FO 800/44.

<sup>33</sup> Matsusaka, *Japanese Manchuria*, pp. 80-91.

<sup>34</sup> Richard T. Chang, "The Failure of the Katsura-Harriman Agreement," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 21, no. 1 (November 1, 1961): 65-76.



an increasingly forward policy. The core problem was that Manchuria was simply too valuable to surrender: it provided a reserve of strategic resources; shielded Korea from external pressures; and formed a forward base from which Japan could strike at Harbin and cut the Russian railways in the event of another war. Once China had formally signed over the Russian concession to Japan in December 1905, this logic pointed inexorably to the region's conversion into a tightly integrated Japanese preserve. The task of developing it was given to the South Manchurian Railway Company (SMR), formed as a joint stock company in July 1906. Like its Russian predecessor, the SMR acted as a semi-official arm of the Japanese government: it operated operating the railway, it built hotels, schools, and canteens, ran the territory's main commercial harbour, and provided access to credit, building materials, and fuel.<sup>35</sup> Yet the combined strategic and economic demands heaped on the Japanese sphere also made it expensive to run: by 1914, Manchuria accounted for only 20 per cent of Japan's exports to China, but soaked up 70 per cent of its investment.<sup>36</sup>

To British merchants, this new departure came as an unpleasant surprise. The 'Open Door' rhetoric touted during the Russo-Japanese War had caused commercial hopes for Manchuria to run high. 'In England they were confidently expecting a big commercial development and the end of all obstruction as the result of the Japanese victories,' reflected Bland. 'The City would not hear of any doubts on the subject.'<sup>37</sup> To their dismay, they now found that Japan's pledges did not translate into unhindered access to the areas under its control, and complaints of wilful obstruction by the Japanese military authorities went on to fill several hefty volumes in the Foreign Office archives.<sup>38</sup> Japan was alleged to be stalling the re-establishment of the Chinese customs; it manipulated railway rates in favour of Japanese firms; it refused to allow foreign ships to anchor or offload their goods; and buildings commandeered by the army were occupied by Japanese settlers (reported to include large numbers of prostitutes) rather than returned to their original owners. Although a mission of enquiry from the Shanghai chapter of the China Association failed to find clear evidence of wrongdoing, it was nonetheless convinced that Japan was using its military occupation to secure commercial benefits. 'The Japanese are far too clever to allow definite cases to arise in which clear evidence can be quoted against them,' its chairman concluded.<sup>39</sup> Japan's profession that it would, in due course, open all of Manchuria to foreign commerce did little to allay British suspicions. As an anonymous 'Merchant' opined in the *North China Herald*:

---

<sup>35</sup> Matsusaka, *The Making of Japanese Manchuria*, 90-1; its role is explored in more detail in Y.T. Matsusaka, "Japanese Imperialism and the South Manchuria Railway Company," PhD Thesis, (Harvard University, 1993).

<sup>36</sup> Mizoguchi, "Sino-Japanese Trade, 1884-1937," p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> Bland to Campbell, 4 Dec 1905, Fisher Library, Bland Papers, 4.

<sup>38</sup> Satow to Grey, 18 December 1905, FO 371/180/ No. 6685.

<sup>39</sup> Anderson to Grenville Alabaster, 27 February 1908, China Association, SOAS, CHAS/A/5.

True, the door of Newchwang is open, as the wily Japanese will smilingly point out to you... But how much further can we get than the threshold of this open door? ... How long will the British merchants and the British government allow themselves to be so deceived and treated at the hands of their Allies, whose sailors they are banqueting with so much zest in England to-day?<sup>40</sup>

Complaints over Japan's renegeing on its wartime promises continued after the end of military occupation. Foreign visitors frequently noted that far from restoring free trade, Japan appeared set on turning its Manchurian sphere into an exclusive economic preserve. 'Manchuria is more Japanese now than ever it was Russian', noted Morrison.<sup>41</sup> Equally worrying, Japan's policies closely resembled those it pursued in its Korean protectorate. Following a tour of Manchuria, Alexander Hosie, the British commercial attaché in Beijing, concluded that Japan was playing 'the game which has proved so successful in Korea... her object being to establish paramount interests and influence in these three provinces'.<sup>42</sup> Jordan came to the same conclusion: 'I am afraid the shadow of Korea is spreading over Manchuria, and there is certainly a striking resemblance in the methods employed.'<sup>43</sup>

*'Hated with a fervour you can hardly imagine: Japan in the 'Shanghai Mind'*

As far as the British position in China was concerned, therefore, the Russo-Japanese War left a mixed legacy. On the one hand, it had appeared to settle the 'China question' in Britain's favour, as railway competition lost its territorial edge, and the continental challenge that had seemed so threatening after 1895 fizzled out. The financial partnership that emerged in its place proved a remarkably durable tool for managing international competition: even the collapse of the Qing in the revolution of 1911 did not trigger another quasi-territorial 'railway scramble' in central China. Yet this was only half the story: at the same time, the British communities in the treaty-ports felt increasingly under pressure from a more assertive Chinese nationalism that demanded the recovery of its legal rights; and from a Japan whose strategic and commercial interests on the Asian mainland appeared to be diverging from those of its British ally. Their worries were not eased by the Foreign Office's political withdrawal, which Bland denounced as little-Englander 'parish-pump politics'.<sup>44</sup> His antipathy was heartily reciprocated. To Satow, emancipating the legation from the influence of the 'Shanghai crowd' – 'whose sole idea is to wave the British flag in the faces of other nations' – had been a key reason for pushing for a policy of disengagement in the first place.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> 'Trade Prospects in Manchuria', *NCH*, 8 June 1906.

<sup>41</sup> Morrison to Ethel Bell, 25 Jan 1908, *CGEM*, p. 440.

<sup>42</sup> Hosie to Jordan (n.d.) in Jordan to Grey, 11 January 1908, FO 371/415/No. 1036.

<sup>43</sup> Jordan to Alston, 24 January 1911, Jordan Papers, FO 350/7.

<sup>44</sup> Bland to French, 24 April 1910, FRBL/JOPB, 7.

<sup>45</sup> Satow to Campbell, 11 Aug 1904, TNA, Satow Papers, PRO 30/33/14/14.

The withdrawal of official support added to an atmosphere of political uncertainty, which in turn bled into a sharp change in attitudes towards Japan. Before the Russo-Japanese War, noted Francis Lindley, a junior diplomat with the Tokyo embassy, opinion in the treaty-ports had been divided broadly on national lines, with continental Europeans favouring Russia, and the British and Americans backing Japan. By 1908, that had changed: ‘At the present moment the latter are, if possible, more anti-Japanese than the former.’<sup>46</sup> Other observers also noted the sharp anti-Japanese turn in the ports. Arnold Robertson, a young diplomat freshly arrived at the Beijing legation, was surprised to find ‘how much our pigmy allies are hated & feared out here in the East by natives & Europeans alike’.<sup>47</sup> The Liberal MP Malcolm Kincaid-Smith, who visited East Asia in 1908, could not help but notice ‘the intense antagonism displayed by Europeans and Americans, almost without exception, towards Japan and all things Japanese, noticeable at Singapore and Penang, and gradually increasing in strength as one gets nearer to Japan’.<sup>48</sup> William Mackenzie King, a Canadian official who made his way up the China coast in the spring of 1909 to attend the international opium conference in Shanghai, also noted the ubiquity of anti-Japanese sentiment: since leaving England, he had not met ‘a single person who has spoken well of the Japanese’.<sup>49</sup> Anti-Japanese views gained currency among local journalists, missionaries, British officials in the Chinese customs, and made inroads among the staff of the British legation. Claude Macdonald grew concerned that the anti-Japanese mood was even beginning to infect the officers of the China squadron at Hong Kong, whose outlook had become ‘highly coloured by those of their commercial friends’.<sup>50</sup> At Weihaiwei too, Morrison noted, ‘All our naval men distrust the Japanese’.<sup>51</sup>

Some chalked up the hostility to resentment of Japanese competition; ‘they are one too many for them at the merry game of dollar grinding,’ as Macdonald put it.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, resentment at supposedly unfair Japanese competition, both in Manchuria and central China, topped the litany of grievances. ‘Everyone I meet tells me the same story of Japanese crookedness and conceit,’ Morrison wrote to Chirol. ‘No Japanese can exist as a trader alongside a Chinese unless he have recourse to force and fraud. That seems to be the general impression.’<sup>53</sup> Robertson considered the Japanese ‘entirely unscrupulous,’ even by the admittedly low standard of commercial integrity that prevailed among the China traders.<sup>54</sup> Tokyo’s backsliding on its Open Door pledges, and its perceived obstruction of British trade in Manchuria, were quickly slotted

---

<sup>46</sup> In Macdonald to Grey, 11 May 1908, TNA, FO 371/475/19636.

<sup>47</sup> Robertson to Mother, 13 July 1906, Robertson Papers, CCAC, RBTN 2.

<sup>48</sup> M. Kincaid-Smith, ‘England, America and Japan: Some Facts and Impressions Gained During a Recent Visit to the Far East,’ *Empire Review*, Vol. 15, pp. 191-200.

<sup>49</sup> King Diary, 20 March 1909, LAC, King Papers, MG-26/J-13, Microfiche 114.

<sup>50</sup> Macdonald to Grey, Tokio, 23 Jan 1909, TNA, FO 881/9417.

<sup>51</sup> Morrison Diary, 8 July 1907, ML, Morrison Papers, 312/15, Microfilm CY 236.

<sup>52</sup> Macdonald to Lugard, 1 June 1908, TNA, Alston Papers, FO 800/248.

<sup>53</sup> Morrison to Chirol, 4 April 1907, *CGEM*, pp. 399-403.

<sup>54</sup> Robertson to Mother, 5 September 1906, Robertson Papers, RBTN 2.

into well-established stereotypes of the supposed dishonesty of Japanese traders.<sup>55</sup> 'In Manchuria the Japanese are hated with a fervour you can hardly imagine,' Morrison wrote to Chirol, 'our merchants have the most undisguised disgust of the Japanese intentions.'<sup>56</sup> Bland, too, believed that Britain risked being elbowed out by Japan's sharp trading practices. 'It will be difficult,' he noted, 'in the present fetich [*sic*] worship of Bushido at home, to persuade the sheep crowd that Japan is also human... but the thing has got to be done somehow.'<sup>57</sup>

Yet while some dismissed this as commercial jealousy, the anti-Japanese turn drew on deeper founts of political and racial insecurity. Even in their own concessions, Europeans constituted a tiny minority: after the 1880s, British nationals never made up more than one per cent of the population of Shanghai's International Settlement. The communal identity of 'Anglo-China', as such, came to revolve to a significant degree around upholding the solidarity of white Britishness, and maintaining the integrity of the local colour line.<sup>58</sup> Japan muddied the waters: as a treaty-port power, it formally enjoyed the same status as Britain, although in practice, it proved impossible for most British settlers to fully except the Japanese as equals. Lindley observed this while touring the ports:

[It] must be remembered that the Japanese now claim absolute equality with the European and the American, both nationally and individually; these claims are admitted readily enough in theory, but when it comes to dealing with individual Japanese on such a basis, the average Englishman or American is physically incapable of accepting the situation, and, quite unintentionally, he resents in a Japanese many things he would tolerate in a European. Every Englishman in China prefers a Chinese to a Japanese, but one cannot help wondering how long this preference would last if the Chinese were in a position to claim absolute equality with the European.<sup>59</sup>

The aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War had transformed the China coast into a zone of contact, where the Japanese challenge to notions of racial hierarchy became explicit, and often personal. British travellers found the Japanese they encountered unwilling to perform the ritual obsequiousness they considered, as Macdonald put it, 'the inalienable right of the white man in the Far East'.<sup>60</sup> As the expected deference was not forthcoming, the result was surprise, irritation, and sometimes revulsion. Robertson thought the Japanese he encountered in Korea 'officious, insolent and tiresome in every way'.<sup>61</sup> Frederick McKenzie, the East Asia correspondent for the *Daily Mail*, scoffed that 'the very coolie goes out with the air of a

---

<sup>55</sup> Even sympathetic commentators believed Japan's 'commercial honesty' left something to be desired. See George Nathaniel Curzon, *Problems of the Far East: Japan-Korea-China*, (London, 1894), p. 50; Valentine Chirol, *The Far Eastern Question*, (London, 1896), pp. 146-7.

<sup>56</sup> Morrison to Chirol, 31 July 1906, *CGEM*, pp. 369-71.

<sup>57</sup> Bland to Stewart, 17 Dec 1905, *FRBL/JOPB*, 4.

<sup>58</sup> Bickers, *Britain in China*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>59</sup> Report by F.O. Lindley, in Macdonald to Grey, 11 May 1908, NA, FO 371/475/No. 19636.

<sup>60</sup> Macdonald to Grey, 11 May 1908, TNA, FO 371/475/No. 19636.

<sup>61</sup> Robertson to Mother, 2 March 1907, *RBTN* 2.

conqueror... blustering, grasping and arrogant.<sup>62</sup> During her visit to China in 1911, Beatrice Webb recorded how Mrs Willis, the wife of the local British consul in Mukden – ‘a pleasant but commonplace woman’ – complained of the rudeness of a Japanese clerk at a local hotel: ‘to sum up her objection, the Japanese did not know their place as an inferior race.’ ‘The success of the Japanese comes as an unpleasant shock to the dignity, or the self-conceit of the Englishman,’ she concluded.<sup>63</sup>

Some compromises were struck. In Shanghai, under new regulations proclaimed in 1908, Japanese residents were now allowed to use the municipal park, from which Chinese were banned, provided they wore either European clothing or the garb of the Japanese upper class.<sup>64</sup> The directive reflected the subtleties of status, race and class to which treaty-port society, which imported many of its social cues from British India, was so expertly attuned. Yet the bulk of the Japanese community, composed of small merchants and their families, fell short of this exacting standard.<sup>65</sup> Due to its early origins – women outnumbered men until 1890 – the Japanese quarter in Shanghai retained a reputation for vice and crime, and the expansion of the Japanese presence in the city after 1905 brought little change: ‘the Japanese resident in China did not generally participate in the social life of the European’, as one study has noted.<sup>66</sup> Even at the very top, acceptance, if it was given at all, only came grudgingly. The *Saturday Review* reported that Japanese officials ‘of exceptional ability, culture, and good manners,’ were still refused membership of the Shanghai Club, the social pinnacle of treaty-port society.<sup>67</sup> Even by the early 1930s, when the Japanese community in the city exceeded 25,000, the Club counted only two Japanese members, one of whom was the Japanese consul.

If Anglo-China turned up its collective nose at the Japanese in the treaty-ports, visitors to the Japanese sphere in Manchuria displayed an even greater capacity for snobbery. The Japanese settlers consisted, according to Morrison, of ‘gamblers, swindling peddlers, roughs and braves and prostitutes’ – the latter numbering, according to the commercial attaché in Beijing, no fewer than 20,000.<sup>68</sup> While this number was almost certainly inflated, the prevalence of Japanese prostitutes became a well-established trope, sparking comments veering between vulgarity and moral indignation. Morrison believed there were over a thousand ‘female goods’ in Mukden alone: ‘Manchuria swarms with Japanese prostitutes who are found even over the Mongolian border.’<sup>69</sup> Bland denounced the Japanese sphere as a ‘gigantic brothel’, quipping that ‘in fact

---

<sup>62</sup> Frederick Arthur McKenzie, *The Unveiled East*, (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1907).

<sup>63</sup> Webb Diary, 28 Oct and 1 Nov 1911, LSE, Passfield Papers, 1.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Bickers and Jeffrey Wasserstrom, “Shanghai’s ‘Dogs and Chinese Not Admitted’ Sign: Legend, History and Contemporary Symbol,” *China Quarterly* 142, no. 2 (1995): 444–66.

<sup>65</sup> For the social makeup of the Japanese community in Shanghai, see Henriot, “‘Little Japan’ in Shanghai: an Insulated Community, 1875-1945.”

<sup>66</sup> Peattie, “Japanese Treaty-port Settlements in China, 1895-1937.”

<sup>67</sup> ‘Black and White,’ *Saturday Review*, 3 Nov 1906, pp. 536-7.

<sup>68</sup> Morrison to Chirol, 31 July 1906, *CGEM*, pp. 369-71; Jordan to Grey, 11 January 1908, FO 371/415/No. 1036. Jordan quoted the total number of Japanese residents in Manchuria at 34,000. FO 371/475/No. 10962.

<sup>69</sup> Morrison to Chirol, 31 July 1906, *CGEM*, pp. 369-71.

Womanchuria might be a good name for the province – the joke is copyright, but no doubt they will infringe my rights.<sup>70</sup> British missionaries were particularly ruffled by the prevalence of prostitution, gambling, and opium in the settlements along the Japanese railway. Lindley noted that whereas most missionaries had supported Japan during the war, ‘the subsequent enormous influx of Japanese prostitutes’ had ‘completely alienated their sympathies’.<sup>71</sup> Charles Scott, the bishop of North China, whose diocese covered the missions in Manchuria, cited the ‘overwhelming flood of evil characters, especially Japanese women’ as his chief grievance against Japan.<sup>72</sup>

In the hands of hostile commentators, the sex trade and opium traffic became metaphors for the Japanese presence in China: seductive, corrosive, and driven by material self-interest. One account scathingly denounced prostitution as the rotten core of the Japanese colonisation project, a form of ‘propaganda’ analogous to the efforts of Western missionaries.<sup>73</sup> Bland similarly believed prostitution illustrated Japan’s campaign to undercut Britain’s commercial position: ‘the tariff, for Chinese, in the low class places is 40 cents – how can the West compete with these people?’<sup>74</sup> Even the staunchly pro-Japanese Chirol felt the need to write to Count Komura on the need to clamp down on ‘houses of ill-repute, gambling shops and opium dens’ in the Japanese settlements.<sup>75</sup> Underlying these charges was the conviction that such vices disproved Japan’s claim to moral equality with the West, or even with the Chinese and Koreans on whom it was supposed to be exercising a civilising influence. As the *Daily Mail* correspondent F.A. McKenzie paraphrased the ‘respectable Chinese’ he encountered in Manchuria: ‘What are we to think of a nation that will shamelessly sell its daughters to other people?’ ... The Japanese profess to come to teach us reform and a higher civilisation. And then they bring us that!<sup>76</sup>

As Akira Iriye has noted, the anti-Japanese rhetoric of the treaty-ports paralleled that which emanated from the white settler societies across the Pacific: both blended older prejudices with new fears of Japanese power, and both fed, to different degrees, on a sense of racial vulnerability. In China, such anxieties were compounded by a wider atmosphere of political uncertainty. Some British residents remained sanguine about China’s capacity for reform and self-improvement, yet while the memory of the Boxers remained fresh, most harboured an instinctive distrust of anything that resembled Chinese nationalism. Such fears increased as the Qing appeared to be losing control of the reform movement. The deaths, within one day of each other, of both the emperor and the dowager empress in November 1908, followed by the

---

<sup>70</sup> Bland to Morrison, 27 May 1907, *CGEM*, pp. 413-4.

<sup>71</sup> Report by F.O. Lindley, in Macdonald to Grey, 11 May 1908, FO 371/475/No. 19636.

<sup>72</sup> Scott to Montgomery, 31 August 1906, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, BLO, SPG: CLR/81

<sup>73</sup> Charles Watney, ‘The Future of Manchuria’, *Contemporary Review*, 95: Jan 1909.

<sup>74</sup> Bland to Morrison, 27 May 1907, *CGEM*, pp. 413-4.

<sup>75</sup> Chirol to Komura, undated, likely written in July 1909, *CGEM*, pp. 497-501.

<sup>76</sup> McKenzie, *The Unveiled East*, p. 94.

dismissal of Yuan Shihkai, the dynasty's military strongman the following January, left a vacuum at the centre.<sup>77</sup> Instead, Chinese politics seemed increasingly beholden to a volatile political undercurrent in the provinces, where local 'rights recovery' movements churned out a steady stream of anti-foreign and anti-Qing demonstrations.<sup>78</sup>

Such volatility, the China coasters feared, would inevitably favour Japan. 'There is an economical, financial and political crisis ahead of us in this country', Bland believed, 'and our Jap friends [*sic*] are well aware of it. Only the ostrich Anglo-Saxon, who has most to lose by it, blinks the fact.'<sup>79</sup> Several others saw Tokyo's hand in the growing militancy of the nationalist movement. Morrison noted as early as 1906 that many of the most virulently anti-foreign Chinese papers were run by Japanese proprietors, while Bland privately accused Japanese nationals of instigating the Shanghai riots. The Ningpo-born journalist 'Putnam Weale' [Betram Lennox-Simpson] also suspected Japan of 'promoting an anti-foreign propaganda', to further its own commercial and political interests.<sup>80</sup> 'There is a feeling among many that Japan is fermenting this trouble for her own ends,' E.S. Little, a local missionary, reported to the Foreign Office in 1910. 'A strong united China would in time mean the extinction of Japan, and to prevent this being accomplished is the object of Japanese statesmen.'<sup>81</sup>

*'Kicked out through the Open Door': Railway diplomacy, 1907-1911*

The consequences of the anti-Japanese turn on the China coast were twofold. First, it contributed to the decline of Japan's standing from the heights it had enjoyed during the Russo-Japanese War, as the poison from the treaty-ports fed into the bloodstream of British public opinion. Second, this was not simply a process of osmosis, as some among the British communities actively tried to steer public opinion against Japan, or twist London's arm into taking a firmer stance on its ally's activities. These strands converged on the pivotal issue of railways. The tone for an Anglo-Japanese confrontation was set in May 1907, when a contract for a prospective railway in the Yangzi valley fell through, amid Japanese demands to be included as partners. Bland, who had led the negotiations on behalf of the British and Chinese Corporation (established in 1898 as a joint venture of Jardine Matheson and HSBC), was deeply rankled, and accused the Japanese government of sabotaging the deal. 'As the allies of Japan,' he noted to Addis, 'we might expect to be able to combine with them for the advancement of our mutual

---

<sup>77</sup> Chirol to Morrison, 15 March 1909, NI, TT/FOR/VC/1.

<sup>78</sup> See Edward Rhoads, *China's Republic Revolution: The Case of Kwantung, 1895-1913*, (Harvard, MA, 1975); Mary B. Rankin, "Nationalistic Contestation and Mobilization Politics: Practice and Rhetoric of Railway-Rights Recovery at the End of the Qing," *Modern China* 28, no. 3 (2002): 315–61.

<sup>79</sup> Bland to Straight, 17 December 1907, Straight MSS (Microfilm) Reel 2, Segment 1.

<sup>80</sup> B L Putnam Weale, *The Truce in the East and Its Aftermath*, (London, 1907).

<sup>81</sup> 'Memorandum by Mr Little on the Political Situation in China', in Brunner, Mond & Co. to Grey, 2 March 1910, FO 371/863/No. 7425.

interest. Actually... we find them blocking our path.<sup>82</sup> As things stood, 'every day confirms in me the certainty that we are going to pay a big price for the alliance and that the Japs' [*sic*] ambitions in China are practically unlimited.'<sup>83</sup>

By way of retaliation, Bland conspired to probe Japan's own Manchurian sphere. In September 1907, he travelled north to meet with the newly appointed Chinese viceroy, Tang Shaoyi, a modernising reformer determined to loosen Japan's hold on the region. Working with Pauling & Co., a British railway firm keen to stake out new business in China, Bland secured a contract to extend the Chinese Northern Railway – the only line wholly owned and operated by China – fifty miles north into Manchuria. The project was deliberately kept to modest dimensions: as Bland noted to Chirol, Tokyo could hardly block the scheme 'without admitting the open door is a myth'.<sup>84</sup> This was a smokescreen: the contract contained a secret clause for further extension, eventually connecting the railway to the Russian lines in northern Manchuria.<sup>85</sup> Once completed, this line would allow uninterrupted travel from Beijing to St Petersburg, bypassing the Japanese lines entirely. Willard Straight, the American consul in Mukden, who helped broker the deal, candidly acknowledged the new railway's potential to hem in the Japanese sphere:

The Hsinmintun-Fakumen line... will very seriously compete with the South Manchurian Railway, will not only tap a rich and rapidly developing country... but will almost certainly attract all the through European traffic as well as secure all the mails. More than that even, it will threaten the Japanese strategic position and place a splendid line of communication along the Japanese flank and within easy reach of the Russians...<sup>86</sup>

If Tokyo vetoed the line, on the other hand, it would effectively claim Manchuria as its exclusive commercial preserve, in open contradiction of its earlier pledges to uphold the Open Door. In that event, Tang and Bland hoped the Foreign Office would back up the interests of a British firm. Encouraging noises came from the Legation, where Jordan had grown increasingly suspicious of Japan's motives in the north. 'All this boasted talk about the open door is meaningless if it is to be closed against us in railway construction,' he wrote to London. 'The Japanese do not respect our Yangtze preserve so scrupulously as to justify an exclusive claim to the industrial exploitation of Manchuria.'<sup>87</sup>

The controversy broke in December 1907, when Japan duly objected to the contract. Tokyo pointed out that when China had signed over the Russian leases at the end of the Russo-Japanese War, it had also pledged not to construct any new railway lines in their vicinity. None

---

<sup>82</sup> Bland to Addis, 23 Sept 1907, FRBL/JOPB, 23.

<sup>83</sup> Bland to Addis, 17 Oct 1907, FRBL/JOPB, 23.

<sup>84</sup> Bland to Straight, 27 Dec 1907, CL/WDS, Reel 2.

<sup>85</sup> Straight Diary, 5 Nov 1907, CL/WDS, Reel 11.

<sup>86</sup> Straight to Wilson, 31 Jan 1908, CL/WDS, Reel 2.

<sup>87</sup> Jordan to Campbell, 31 Oct 1907, TNA, Jordan Papers, FO 350/5.



other than Tang Shaoyi had signed the agreement on China's behalf.<sup>88</sup> When Pauling's appealed to London, the Foreign Office upheld Japan's objections, concluding that it would be needlessly provocative to push a British concession into its ally's Manchurian backyard.<sup>89</sup> Bland was confirmed in his suspicions. Clearly, Japan intended to preserve southern Manchuria as an exclusive sphere, hold it against all comers, and browbeat the Chinese into accepting its primacy. Bland recognised – indeed, admired – the ruthlessness of its logic. London's response, however, struck him as abdicating its position in northern China to the 'Bandar-log' – Bland's private insult for the Japanese.<sup>90</sup> For both political and racial reasons, such a policy spelled disaster. '[The] whole value of the alliance,' Bland wrote to Chirol, 'depends on our behaving towards our Asiatic ally with dignity and by our showing energy and intelligence in some degree approximating theirs. If they learn to despise us, the alliance is doomed.'<sup>91</sup>

On the China coast, the railway controversy lit a fire under the power keg of anti-Japanese resentment, as Bland and his allies conducted a frenzied campaign against Tokyo's actions in Manchuria, and London's 'invertebrate interpretation' the Anglo-Japanese alliance.<sup>92</sup> He leaned on the China Association 'to protest volubly' against Japan's backsliding on the Open Door, while the directors of Pauling's and Jardine Matheson lodged their own complaints with the Foreign Office.<sup>93</sup> When the *North China Herald* published a defence of the Japanese position, Bland complained with its editor of the 'evil wrought to the Raj by the dissemination of Japanese 'news' through the columns of the leading British paper in the Far East,' and demanded the paper's Japanese correspondent be fired.<sup>94</sup> Together with Morrison, he petitioned Chirol to steer the *The Times* away from its 'uncompromising adulation' of Japan.<sup>95</sup> Such agitation, in turn, exercised an effect on British opinion. When Macdonald went home for leave in the fall of 1907, he already noted the contrast between the 'immense' popularity of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in Japan, British attitudes towards its ally were notably cooler.<sup>96</sup> Chirol similarly worried that the accusations of the China merchants were 'creating a strong feeling in business circles in this country which may ultimately impair the stability of the Anglo-Japanese alliance'.<sup>97</sup>

The internal dynamics of *The Times* exemplified this wider trend. For some time now, Chirol and his China correspondents had been falling out over the paper's editorial line on East Asia. Both Bland and Morrison argued for a more critical stance on Japan's actions, which, they insisted, were both detrimental to British interests, and incompatible with the spirit of the

---

<sup>88</sup> Nor did he inform his British partners. Bland to Straight, 1 Feb 1908, CL/WDS, Reel 2.

<sup>89</sup> Minute by Grey, 28 Dec 1907, FO 371/229/42361.

<sup>90</sup> Bland to Straight, 1 February 1908, CL/WDS, Reel 2 (1907-09).

<sup>91</sup> Bland to Chirol, 1 March 1908, FRBL/JOPB, 24.

<sup>92</sup> Bland to Addis, 23 Feb 1908, FRBL/JOPB, 23.

<sup>93</sup> Bland to Straight, 9 Feb 1908, Straight Papers; China Association to FO, 25 April 1908, NA, FO 371/410/14478; BCC to Foreign Office, 20 Feb 1908, TNA, FO 371/410/5951.

<sup>94</sup> Bland to Montague Bell, 20 Jan 1909.

<sup>95</sup> Bland to Chirol, 11 Feb 1908, FRBL/JOPB, 24.

<sup>96</sup> Macdonald to Grey, 19 Feb 1908, TNA, Grey Papers, FO 800/68.

<sup>97</sup> Chirol to Northcliffe, 4 April 1909, BL, Northcliffe Papers, MS 62251.

alliance. Chirol saw matters differently. To him, the Japanese alliance remained a vital component in Britain's global strategy, which kept the peace in East Asia while allowing Britain to concentrate on Germany. These benefits more than balanced out Japanese transgressions in Manchuria, for which 'the great British public does not care a hang'.<sup>98</sup> To view the alliance only in relation to Britain's position in China, he wrote to Morrison, was to risk losing a sense of perspective:

Now in the opinion, I believe, of all responsible people in this country, our alliance with Japan is and will be for many more years to come as important for British world-policy as it ever has been in the past, and to jeopardize its maintenance for the sake of some obscure questions in Manchuria would be the height of madness.<sup>99</sup>

*The Times*, in other words, would stick with the Japanese, despite the objections of its local correspondents. Bland continued to plead with Chirol, while Morrison – always the more highly strung – terminated his personal correspondence with his editor nearly altogether, privately seething against the 'craven policy' of 'this damned Jew' Chirol.<sup>100</sup>

In an attempt to heal the rift with his most famous foreign correspondent, Chirol travelled to Japan in the spring of 1909, where he arranged for Morrison to join him for discussions with the Japanese government.<sup>101</sup> As he noted to Lord Northcliffe, *The Times*'s new proprietor, a personal intervention might do something to 'stem the rot' of the public's perception of the alliance.<sup>102</sup> The two journalists received an elaborate reception in Tokyo, including several meetings at the foreign ministry and an audience with the Meiji emperor, an unprecedented honour of for a British citizen of no official standing.<sup>103</sup> It was to little avail. Morrison was neither impressed by the explanations of the Japanese officials, nor mollified by their hospitality. 'Damned dull,' he recorded in his diary, 'I have learned nothing and gave myself nausea by drinking saki [*saké*].'<sup>104</sup> After returning to China, he quickly resumed his tirades against Japan.

Chirol's editorial *Realpolitik* was mirrored in the exchanges between the Foreign Office and the legation in Beijing. By 1908, the Foreign Office was well aware that Japan was entrenching its position in southern Manchuria. Yet despite Jordan's pleadings, London saw little reason for concern. With Russia confined to the very north, and French ambitions effectively checked through financial partnership – extended to Germany in May 1909 – it seemed unlikely

---

<sup>98</sup> Chirol to Bland, 1 June 1907, FRBL/JOPB, 17.

<sup>99</sup> Chirol to Morrison, 21 Jan 1908, *CGEM*, Vol. 1, pp. 437-40.

<sup>100</sup> Morrison Diary 23 Jan, 31 March, 27 March 1908, ML, Morrison Papers, 312/16, Microfilm CY 237. Chirol was not Jewish. He had, however, been born in France and educated in Germany, and some continued to regard his continental background with suspicion, particularly as his father, Rev. Alexander Chirol, had followed the Oxford Movement into the Roman Catholic Church.

<sup>101</sup> Chirol to Morrison, 7 April 1909, *CGEM* pp. 486-7.

<sup>102</sup> Chirol to Northcliffe, 4 April 1909, BL, Northcliffe Papers, MS 62251.

<sup>103</sup> Rumbold to Hardinge, 31 May 1909, TNA, Grey Papers, FO 800/68.

<sup>104</sup> Morrison Diary, 25 May 1909, ML, Morrison Papers, 312/17, Microfilm CY 238.

that Japan's actions would spark a wider territorial division. Nor was London much inclined to credit the China merchants' fear of Japan's intentions, which, according to the head of the Far Eastern department, showed 'a high degree of vague mistrust & fear'.<sup>105</sup> Bland in particular was *persona non grata*, with Macdonald regarding him as 'a Jingo of the very worst type'.<sup>106</sup> Nor did the prospect of an anti-Japanese crusade appeal to HSBC, where Addis took a dim view of Bland's schemes: his was precisely the kind of speculative, 'political' railway line the Bank had disavowed after 1905.<sup>107</sup> After a year of fruitless lobbying, Bland conceded defeat: 'I don't expect to build any more railways'.<sup>108</sup>

Yet a new railway challenge was already in the making: in September 1908, Beijing granted Pauling & Co. a new contract to survey an alternative route. The intended line was further west from the SMR, and thus less susceptible to Japanese objections. Yet once again, the contract contained a clause to eventually extend the line to the Russian border. Having tried, and failed, to gain backing from London, Pauling's now turned to the third member of the erstwhile Open Door coalition: the United States. Willard Straight, Bland's former co-conspirator, and now a leader of the growing anti-Japanese cabal in the State department, arranged financial support from a consortium of prominent Wall Street firms.<sup>109</sup> '[The] Chinese Gov't is merely playing Fakumen over again,' observed Bland, 'with America in place of England, and America has no alliance to prevent her claiming the open door as interpreted by themselves.'<sup>110</sup>

The American intervention turned the Manchurian question into a major international controversy. Japan, with the tacit backing of Russia, duly objected to the new railway, again citing China's promise not to build railways that threatened the commercial viability of the SMR. Yet Washington refused to back down, and insisted instead that Japan was acting in violation of its pledges under the Treaty of Portsmouth, in which it had promised to uphold the Open Door. London now risked being caught in the middle: while it had tacitly acknowledged Japan's primacy in Manchuria, it could not openly rebuff the United States. As Jordan wrote to Grey, 'the slightest move on my part here would, I fear, antagonize either the Americans or the Japanese with both of whom it seems desirable to maintain good relations in China.'<sup>111</sup> The Foreign Office initially attempted to defuse the question by offering an international partnership, a tactic it had worked with success in central China: Britain would participate in the line's financing, on condition that Japan was also invited. While the Foreign Office was perfectly willing to work

---

<sup>105</sup> Minute by Campbell, 27 April 1908, TNA, FO 371/410/14478.

<sup>106</sup> Macdonald to Satow, 15 Jan 1906, NA, Satow Papers, 30/33/9/15.

<sup>107</sup> For Addis' dispute with Bland, see Dayer, *Finance and Empire*, pp. 59-61.

<sup>108</sup> Bland to Straight, 19 Feb 1909, CL/WDS, Reel 2.

<sup>109</sup> E.W. Edwards, "Great Britain and the Manchurian Railways Question, 1909-1910," *English Historical Review* 81, no. 321 (1966): 740-69.

<sup>110</sup> Bland to Chirol, 25 Oct 1909, FRBL/JOPB, 24.

<sup>111</sup> Jordan to Grey, 29 Nov 1909, TNA, Jordan Papers, FO 350/6.

with the Americans in financing new railways in Manchuria, it would not allow itself to be enlisted in an attempt to outflank the Japanese.<sup>112</sup>

Any hopes for a British-brokered compromise were dashed in November 1909, when the United States doubled down on its challenge to Japan. Washington now proposed to terminate railway competition in Manchuria entirely, by allowing China to purchase all foreign-owned railways through a loan jointly offered by the powers. In London, the American scheme went down like a lead balloon.<sup>113</sup> Internationalisation had worked in central China, yet the interests involved had been financial and commercial; the Manchurian lines, by contrast, formed the foundation of a territorial sphere, and were built into Japanese military planning. Tokyo made it instantly clear that it was not prepared to internationalise 'our own property, acquired by us at the cost of much treasure and many lives'.<sup>114</sup> Russia, which had retained its railways in northern Manchuria, was similarly alarmed, and the immediate result of the American sortie, therefore, was to draw the two powers closer together, 'an effect which the State Department apparently neither foresaw nor intended'.<sup>115</sup> In June 1910, Russia and Japan announced a new convention on Manchuria, and resolved to jointly resist any further challenges to the status quo. The 'fiction' of the Open Door, the *North China Herald* remarked, had been 'tacitly dropped'.<sup>116</sup>

Japan emerged from the railway disputes with its position enhanced. It had seen off the American challenge, and secured a partnership with Russia against any new attempt to water down their respective Manchurian spheres. London had made it understood, moreover, that it did not share the rigid interpretation of the Open Door that was now preached from Washington. As Chirol summed up Whitehall's views to Morrison, 'no British interest can be served by attempting to maintain a pedantic adherence to treaties in the face of hard facts'.<sup>117</sup> Nevertheless, acquiescence of Japanese dominance in Manchuria had several worrying implications. Predictably, it met with outrage among the British communities in China, who again saw their local interests sacrificed on the altar of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. 'The British Government's conception of policy in China seems to be to stand as flunkey while its subjects are kicked out through the open door,' fumed Lord ffrench, Pauling's local agent.<sup>118</sup> Bland concurred that Britain simply appeared to accept 'any political felony that our allies choose to commit'.<sup>119</sup> The danger, as Jordan pointed out, was that continued deference to Japan would further undermine Britain's own standing in China. Already, he noted, 'we are more identified with the Japanese than is altogether comfortable'.<sup>120</sup> Indeed, as the conservative *Morning Post* now

---

<sup>112</sup> Grey to Bryce, 26 Oct 1909, TNA, FO 371/636/39464.

<sup>113</sup> Jordan to Campbell, 1 Jan 1910, TNA, Jordan Papers, FO 350/6.

<sup>114</sup> Macdonald to Grey, 20 December 1909, TNA, FO 371/636/No. 46243.

<sup>115</sup> Rumbold Diary, 24 Jan 1910, BLO, Rumbold Papers, 4.

<sup>116</sup> 'The Russo-Japanese Agreement,' *NCH*, 15 July 1910

<sup>117</sup> Chirol to Morrison, 17 Dec 1909, *CGEM*, pp. 536-7.

<sup>118</sup> ffrench to Bland, 3 March 1910, FRBL/JOPB, 18.

<sup>119</sup> Bland to Rockhill, 4 Aug 1910, HLH, Rockhill Papers, f. 247a.

<sup>120</sup> Jordan to Campbell, 11 Nov 1909, TNA, Jordan Papers, FO 350/6.

argued, if the alliance led Britain to abdicate its responsibilities in East Asia, perhaps it would be better off without it.<sup>121</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Following a tour of the Yangzi valley in the autumn of 1910, Morrison wrote one of his last long letters to Chirol, in which he recorded a conversation with Everard Fraser, the consul-general in Hankou, who ‘was as pessimist as a man can be’ about China’s political outlook. Fraser predicted that the Qing’s latest ‘constitutional experiment’ – the recent opening of a parliament in Beijing – was unlikely to satisfy the reformers, and would further weaken the court’s control over the provinces: ‘the result is almost certain to be revolution that will make China reel.’ If that should happen, it was clear who stood to gain most:

Japan alert, ambitious, unscrupulous, was on the spot and waiting for an opportunity. By bullying and cajolery, by corruption and fraud she was establishing “interests” in every part of China... Their only object can be to provide themselves with a plausible excuse for intervention when the smash comes... The dynasty would be saved from its merited fate by Japanese assistance, and the Japanese Minister in Peking would become a kind of Resident-General.<sup>122</sup>

Fraser’s pessimism was borne out. In October 1911, a botched bomb plot in Wuchang, adjacent to his posting in Hankou, sparked a general uprising that swept the Qing from power within months. The collapse of central authority in China, and the subsequent withdrawal of European power after the outbreak of the First World War, created a power vacuum that stirred the imagination of Japan’s expansionists. Fraser anticipated several of the so-called Twenty-One Demands that Tokyo attempted to foist on China in 1915 – and which Morrison helped to expose.<sup>123</sup>

Already in the years after the Russo-Japanese War, British sentiment on the China coast had grown increasingly resentful of Japan’s presence. Several tributaries fed into this. After a decade of crisis, the China merchants had welcomed Japan’s defeat of Russia in an almost messianic spirit, as China, they hoped, would follow the guiding light of Japan’s influence and abandon its anti-foreign obstructionism. A commercial renaissance was sure to follow, particularly in the open Manchurian frontier that Japan had now liberated from Russian domination. The reality had proved disappointing. As Tokyo tenaciously defended its own sphere against foreign intrusion, its earlier championship of the Open Door was quietly side-lined. In China proper, the war had failed to yield the expected benefits; instead of asserting British

---

<sup>121</sup> ‘The Railway Struggle in China,’ *Morning Post*, 12 March 1910

<sup>122</sup> Morrison to Chirol, 29 Oct 1910, NI, TT/FOR/VC/1.

<sup>123</sup> Antony Best, “G. E. Morrison (1862-1920),” in Hugh Cortazzi (ed.) *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits, Vol. VIII* (Leiden: 2013), pp. 469-480.

interests more aggressively, as the China coasters had hoped, the Foreign Office and its financial partners chose to wind down the railway scramble altogether. 'One of the most notable facts about British foreign policy to-day,' Bland grumbled, 'is the failure of the Government... to organise and direct the use of British capital as a weapon of offence and defence.'<sup>124</sup>

In this atmosphere of disappointment and frustration, many of the Shanghailanders' anxieties clustered around Japan, whose push into China seemed to embody the concentrated ruthlessness they looked for in Britain's own policies. This was one of the reasons that many experienced Japanese competition as keenly as they did. Race was another. The growth of the Japanese presence was thought to pose a threat not merely to British commerce, but also prompted more nebulous anxieties over the decline of the prestige of the 'white man' in China, particularly in light of the continued political agitation among the Chinese. As F.O. Lindley of the Tokyo embassy concluded, it was 'probably an excellent thing for the friendship of the two countries that they are so far apart'.<sup>125</sup> In turn, the conversion of the 'Shanghai mind' exercised a corrosive effect on the general tenor Anglo-Japanese relations. It clearly worried Japan's supporters in Britain: hence Chirol's strenuous efforts 'to stem the rot', and stop the bile of his China correspondents from seeping into British public opinion. During the First World War, the pro-Japanese commentator E.B. Mitford similarly complained that the China coast had become a 'hot-bed of anti-Japanese intrigue' and the 'chief seat and provenance of Yellow Perilism'.<sup>126</sup> Some treaty-port residents went beyond complaining, and engaged in anti-Japanese crusades of their own. Although his role has often been overlooked, J.O.P. Bland was able to exercise a particularly destructive influence as one of the originators of the Manchurian railway controversy: the American intervention after 1909, on which historians have focused, took up the reins of his earlier attempts to crack open the Japanese sphere.

Still, the significance of all this should be placed into context. The developments in China certainly helped to blunt the Japanese euphoria that had dominated British headlines in the wake of the Russo-Japanese War. Clearly, it was no longer possible to present the Japanese alliance as a liberal partnership in defence of China's territorial integrity or the Open Door. Yet its direct political influence was small. To Whitehall, it seemed unclear what interest, if any, would be served by supporting British concessionaires in their assault on the Japanese sphere. Instead, for the Foreign Office as well as Japan's supporters in the offices of *The Times*, the cost of Japan's sphere-building in Manchuria – which seemed minimal as long as the Chinese state was united and reasonably resilient – now had to be balanced against the wider benefits of the alliance. Its naval role in particular loomed large. This policy was underpinned by the tacit recognition that Japan, as a rising power, had a legitimate need for its own zone of commercial

---

<sup>124</sup> Bland, *Recent Events*, p. 286.

<sup>125</sup> Report by F.O. Lindley, in Macdonald to Grey, 11 May 1908, NA, FO 371/475/No. 19636.

<sup>126</sup> E.B. Mitford, 'Action and Reaction in the Far East,' *Fortnightly Review* (Jan 1916), and 'Japan and the Great War,' *Fortnightly Review* (April 1918); see also Antony Best, 'Britain, Japan, and the Crisis over China, 1915-16,' in Oliviero Frattolillo and Antony Best (eds.), *Japan and the Great War* (Basingstoke, 2016), 52-70.

and demographic expansion. Manchuria was the obvious place for it. The alternatives, in any case, as the rising controversy over Japanese emigration made clear, were likely to prove far more damaging to Anglo-Japanese cordiality.

## FOUR

### ‘A well-nigh impassable gulf’: The Immigration Crisis, 1907-8

The growing disillusionment with Japan on the China coast was mirrored across the Pacific. Among the white communities on the western coast of North America, anxieties over the power Japan had demonstrated at Tsushima clustered around older fears surrounding Japanese immigration. In the post-war years, this fed an atmosphere of panic that spread along the length of the Pacific coast. ‘[T]he people of the whole western coast from Mexico to Alaska are feeling a common concern in this problem,’ one Canadian observer noted.<sup>1</sup> From October 1906, an attempt by the local authorities in San Francisco to segregate Japanese from municipal schools gave rise to an international controversy that quickly soured relations between Japan and the United States. During the autumn of 1907, the combination of racial panic and international tension combusted into violence on several occasions, and culminated in an anti-Japanese race riot that struck Vancouver in September. Taken together, these events gave the impression of a general crisis that brought immigration, and by extension the thorny question of global race relations, to the forefront of international politics.

#### *‘Wickedness and folly’: the immigration dispute in California*

On 23 February 1905, three days after the start of the battle of Mukden, the *San Francisco Chronicle* launched the opening volley of a campaign against what it declared ‘the problem of the hour’: Japanese immigration. In a ‘conservative’ estimate, the paper asserted that 100,000 ‘of the little brown men’ already lived in California; once the war with Russia had ended, and Japan turned its sights across the Pacific, the numbers were sure to increase, and ‘the brown stream of Japanese immigration will become a raging torrent.’<sup>2</sup> The exclusionist crusade struck a wider chord in public opinion. A month later, the Californian legislature in Sacramento called on Congress to impose new restrictions on Japanese immigration. On 14 May – two weeks before Tsushima – delegates of sixty-seven civil organisations and local labour unions assembled in San Francisco to found the ‘Japanese and Korean Exclusion League’. Exclusionist agitation gathered pace, and accelerated further after the earthquake that struck San Francisco in April 1906. Violent attacks on Japanese began to occur. Dr Ōmori Fusakichi, a renowned seismologist, found himself pelted with rubble on several occasions as he investigated the damage of the quake.<sup>3</sup> The Exclusion League called for a boycott of Japanese-owned businesses. Finally, in October, matters came to a head. Following a string of newspaper reports – which a subsequent

---

<sup>1</sup> Mackenzie King to Jebb, 30 Dec 1907, ICS, Jebb Papers, A.

<sup>2</sup> Daniels, *Politics of Prejudice*, pp. 33-4; Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, pp. 172-74.

<sup>3</sup> Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice*, pp. 26-7.



federal commission found to be wildly exaggerated – that large numbers of Japanese, including adults, had enrolled in San Francisco schools, the municipal authorities issued a segregation order: henceforth Japanese and Korean pupils were to go to a special ‘Oriental’ school, as the Chinese students had been forced to do since 1885.<sup>4</sup>

The racial panic in California – which soon spread to the other Pacific states – in part reflected the growth and proximity of the Japanese presence. Immigration was increasing, though not to the degree that the alarmists feared. The Russo-Japanese War had mobilised Japanese society, and after the war, many stayed mobile: in 1906 alone, 30,000 passports were issued to Japanese migrants bound for the sugar plantations of Hawaii.<sup>5</sup> From here, many moved – or were moved – to the continental United States: 10,331 Japanese entered California in 1905, 13,835 in 1906, and 30,226 in 1907.<sup>6</sup> By 1907, over 60,000 overseas Japanese resided in the continental United States. As access to California was restricted, British Columbia experienced its own smaller surge: 5,571 Japanese entered British Columbia in the first six months of 1907. The concentration of Japanese communities in urban centres, notably San Francisco, Seattle, and Vancouver, and their sudden arrival, often in specially chartered ships, amplified their numbers in the public eye: a single vessel, the *S.S. Kumeric*, landed a total of 2,367 Japanese immigrants in two consecutive journeys from Honolulu to Vancouver in July 1907.<sup>7</sup> Yet the increase in numbers alone does not explain the sheer hostility with which the white populations of the Pacific coast responded to these new arrivals. Japanese migration to California had been growing for several years before the state legislature took up the call for exclusion. Likewise, a Chinese influx into British Columbia between 1899 and 1904, when an average of four thousand migrants per year entered the province, provoked a tightening of legislation, but nothing like the violent outburst that shook the province in 1907.<sup>8</sup>

It was the events of the Russo-Japanese War that darkened the ideological lenses, and established new associations between immigration and Japan’s capacity and imperial ambitions. Increasingly, Pacific coast whites perceived the Japanese influx as a deliberate ploy to establish a demographic bridgehead in North America. Thus for the American historian Archibald Cary Coolidge, the Japanese community in California formed ‘the vanguard of an army of hundreds of millions who, far from retreating before the white man, thrive and multiply in competition with him’.<sup>9</sup> The Vancouver correspondent for *The Times* agreed: ‘At the bottom of the feeling towards Japan is the belief... that the whites are in the presence of a civilisation more efficient than their

---

<sup>4</sup> Masuda Hajimu, “Rumors of War: Immigration Disputes and the Social Construction of American–Japanese Relations, 1905–1913,” *Diplomatic History* 33, no. 1 (2009): 1–37.

<sup>5</sup> Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement*, pp. 132–3.

<sup>6</sup> Masuda, “Rumors of War,” p. 9n.

<sup>7</sup> Roy, *White Man’s Province*, pp. 186–8.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 270.

<sup>9</sup> Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement*, pp. 153–54.

own.<sup>10</sup> Such anxieties were reinforced by pre-existing stereotypes, as notions of Japanese 'efficiency' and 'clannishness' took on more menacing forms. One particularly stubborn belief was that Japanese immigrants had received military training and remained in close touch with the military authorities in Tokyo: one concerned militia officer reported from Vancouver that the 'great majority' of Japanese possessed secret stocks of arms and ammunition, and that in the event of a Japanese-American war, it was 'understood' that 'these men were prepared to concentrate on the frontier and raid U.S.A. territory'.<sup>11</sup>

The 'Japanese question' on the Pacific coast constituted one vector in a broader realignment of Japanese-American relations. Before the Russo-Japanese War, these had been broadly cordial. As the country of Commodore Perry, the United States could claim a special role in initiating Japan's modernisation. A sizeable portion of the Meiji elite, including the foreign minister, Komura Jutarō, had studied in the United States. Japan's opposition to Russian expansion, which it was careful to frame as a commitment to the Open Door, resonated with American as well as British audiences: when Valentine Chirol visited New York in December 1904, he noted that public support for Japan was 'greater even than I had expected'.<sup>12</sup> It was a Jewish-American banker, Jacob Schiff, outraged by Russian anti-semitism, who mediated the first Japanese war loan; by the end of the war, Japan had done nearly half its foreign borrowing in New York.<sup>13</sup> It was at Japan's instigation, furthermore, that Theodore Roosevelt put himself forward as a mediator. Roosevelt himself professed to admire Japan, and praised the Battle of Tsushima to Baron Kaneko - Japanese envoy in Washington and an old Harvard classmate - as the 'greatest phenomenon the world has ever seen... I grew so excited that I myself became almost like a Japanese'.<sup>14</sup>

Yet already by the spring of 1905, such cordiality began to erode, amid rising concerns that the growth of Japanese power would prove an obstacle the United States' own position in the Pacific.<sup>15</sup> The Philippines and Hawaii, the colonial stepping-stones it had acquired in 1898, were home to substantial Japanese populations, and appeared vulnerable to Japanese naval power. The expansion of the Japanese presence in China, which many had deemed ripe for American commercial expansion, provoked similar anxiety.<sup>16</sup> 'The possibility of Japanese predominance in the Pacific is viewed with incredulous irritation', observed Lord Bryce, who became ambassador to Washington in 1906.<sup>17</sup> The suspicion that Japan harboured designs on the western coast of North America could be fitted into a broader pattern of real and imagined rivalry. Such ideas extended all the way to the president himself: in January 1905, the British

---

<sup>10</sup> 'The Racial Question on the Pacific Coast,' *The Times*, 30 November 1907.

<sup>11</sup> Memorandum by Col. W. Gwatkin, 10 Aug 1908, LAC, RG-24 (Defence), File 828, Mf. C-5055.

<sup>12</sup> Chirol to Satow, 31 Dec 1904, *CGEM*, pp. 282-5.

<sup>13</sup> Miller, "Japan's Other Victory," pp. 471-74.

<sup>14</sup> Cited in Donald Keene, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and his World, 1852-1912* (New York, 2002), p. 617.

<sup>15</sup> Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement*, Ch. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Straight to Philips, 8 Sept 1907, CL/WDS.

<sup>17</sup> Bryce to Grey, 26 September 1907, TNA, FO 371/274/32090.

ambassador in Washington, reported that Roosevelt ‘wanted Japan to beat Russia, but not too decisively... Otherwise he feared that Japan might get too strong, and perhaps become dangerous... she might turn us out of the Philippines’.<sup>18</sup> Roosevelt was even more candid with his friend Cecil Spring-Rice, to whom he confided that while he admired Japan, the racial implications of the war made him uneasy: ‘I wish I were certain that the Japanese down at bottom did not lump Russians, English, Americans, Germans, all of us, simply as white devils inferior to themselves.’<sup>19</sup>

Racial assumptions complicated the crisis now unfolding in California. On the one hand, Washington understood the sensitivity of the issue, and was sympathetic to Japan’s objection that the segregation of its nationals was a smear on its international status. When Japan objected to the order, Roosevelt struck a conciliatory note, while fuming privately at the ‘idiots’ in California who continued to agitate for an exclusion law. In his annual message to Congress, he lectured the state on the need to show cordial respect to a friendly power: Japan’s victories against Russia, he insisted, stood out as a ‘marvel to mankind’, while the segregation of its nationals was nothing less than ‘wickedness and folly’.<sup>20</sup> In a letter to his old acquaintance John St Loe Strachey, Roosevelt confided that he would deploy the full force of the federal government ‘to protect the Japanese if they were molested in their persons and property’.<sup>21</sup> This stance drew a predictable response: the *San Francisco Chronicle* attacked the president for siding ‘with the Japanese coolies against his countrymen’.<sup>22</sup> Public bravado notwithstanding, Roosevelt broadly shared the racial beliefs that were voiced more explicitly on the Pacific coast. ‘[The] great fact of difference of race’, he believed, made the Japanese inassimilable in American society, and the presence of a substantial Japanese community would inevitably lead to conflict. As he noted to Strachey, ‘if [the Japanese] began to come by the hundred thousand it would be a very, very bad thing indeed’.<sup>23</sup> Japan would be treated with the respect befitting its international standing, but large-scale Japanese migration would have to stop:

If I can get an agreement by which Japanese business and professional men, travellers, students, and the like, can come in and be treated precisely like Europeans, while on the other hand American workmen are kept out of the Japanese possessions and the Japanese kept out of American possessions, it will remove what is a growing, and otherwise a permanent, cause of irritation.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Durand to Lansdowne, 26 Jan 1905, TNA, Lansdowne Papers, FO 800/116.

<sup>19</sup> Roosevelt to Spring-Rice, 27 December 1904, *LTR*, pp. 1082-88.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Patrick Cullinane, “The ‘Gentlemen’s’ Agreement – Exclusion by Class,” *Immigrants & Minorities* 32, no. 2 (May 12, 2014): 139–61.

<sup>21</sup> Roosevelt to Strachey, 21 Dec 1906, PA, Strachey Papers, STR/28/2

<sup>22</sup> Durand to Grey, 13 Dec 1906, TNA, FO 371/87/43049.

<sup>23</sup> Roosevelt to Strachey, 21 Dec 1906, PA, Strachey Papers, STR/28/2.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

These musings would form the basis of the ‘Gentlemen’s Agreement’ that the United States negotiated with Japan between December 1906 and February 1907. Following the same logic that Australia had pursued a few months before, Roosevelt hoped that Japan would be willing to voluntarily restrict emigration, provided that no racial bar would be put in place. Selected groups of Japanese immigrants – students, tourists, merchants, and previous residents – would be allowed to enter freely, while labourers would be prevented from leaving Japan in the first place. This proved easier said than done. From the outset, Washington suspected that the Japanese authorities applied these new restrictions with insufficient rigour, as arrangement failed to reduce the number of immigrants to the extent that would have satisfied California: in June 1907, 1,134 Japanese were admitted to the continental United States, nearly all with certified passports.<sup>25</sup> This number, moreover, did not include the Japanese entering illegally via Mexico or Canada, where porous borders made the system easy to circumvent.<sup>26</sup> As tempers rose on both sides of the Pacific, Japanese-American relations continued their downward spiral. By the summer of 1907, the crisis had descended into a full-blown war scare.<sup>27</sup> On 14 June, Roosevelt himself ordered the navy to draw up plans for a Japanese-American war: ‘War Plan Orange’ joined the series of colour-coded war plans two weeks later. Jittery intelligence reports described Japanese communities living in suspicious proximity to railways, bridges and other strategic sites. Japan was supposedly scouting out landing sites along the Pacific coast. It was colluding with Mexico. Some even speculated that Japan might solicit the support of Southern blacks in an all-out war on white Anglo-Saxondom.<sup>28</sup>

Across the Atlantic, Britain watched the unfolding rupture with concern. Up to the Russo-Japanese War, Britain, the United States, and Japan had enjoyed a loose partnership in defence of common interests in East Asia. Their falling-out raised awkward questions about how this new trans-Pacific rivalry would sit with the Anglo-Japanese alliance. In February 1907, the American ambassador in St Petersburg called on his British counterpart to ask whether, in the event of a Japanese-American war, the alliance would force Britain to side with Japan.<sup>29</sup> In the same month, a series of articles in the *New York Sun* called on Britain not to side with an ‘alien Power against her Daughter state’.<sup>30</sup> Equally emotive language came from the other side, as the Japanese papers dubbed the segregation order a ‘national insult’. It was a matter of grave concern, one paper noted, when the ‘accident of complexion’ was held to be ‘a mark of our racial inferiority’.<sup>31</sup> J.H. Gubbins, the long-serving secretary and interpreter at the Tokyo embassy,

---

<sup>25</sup> Raymond Esthus, *Theodore Roosevelt and Japan*, (Seattle, 1966), p. 197.

<sup>26</sup> See Chang, “Enforcing Transnational White Solidarity”; and Eiichiro Azuma, “Japanese Immigrant Settler Colonialism in the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands and the U.S. Racial-Imperialist Politics of the Hemispheric ‘Yellow Peril’,” *Pacific Historical Review* 83, no. 2 (May 2014): 255–76.

<sup>27</sup> Masuda, “Rumors of War,” pp. 10-18.

<sup>28</sup> Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement*, pp. 157-165.

<sup>29</sup> Nicholson to Grey, 19 Jan 1907, TNA, FO 371/270/3755.

<sup>30</sup> Sanderson to Hardinge, 8 Jan 1907, TNA, FO 371/270/1920.

<sup>31</sup> Cited in Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, p. 174.

reported that issue had become one of ‘race feeling’: although it had suffered similar slights in the past, Japan could no longer ‘tamely acquiesce’ now that it had joined the great powers. As diplomatic euphemism expressed it, ‘circumstances are no longer co-operating to establish good feeling between the two countries... They have now arrived at the parting of the ways.’<sup>32</sup>

The California crisis also established a greater consciousness of racial confrontation in the British press. *The Times* leaped to Japan’s defence. That the rise of Japan had provoked concern, it noted, was not surprising: after all, it had established a dynamic new force in what heretofore had been ‘the practical reserve of the white races’.<sup>33</sup> Yet this was all the more reason to treat it with the respect due a great power, and not allow Japan to be alienated by the ‘rabble of San Francisco... educated in lawlessness and in hatred of the Japanese for some years’.<sup>34</sup> For Chirol, the issue was a pivotal one. ‘You may think I am crazy,’ he wrote to his correspondent in Vienna, ‘but I believe at the present moment the exclusion of a few Japanese children from school at San Francisco is a potentially much bigger event than would be the death of your Emperor-King!’<sup>35</sup> A number of other papers, however, came out in support for California’s exclusionists. The *Spectator* noted that the desire to remain ‘white man’s countries’ was shared as much in Britain’s own overseas dominions as in the United States. The ‘ideal of a white Anglo-Saxon self-governing State,’ it argued, was fundamentally incompatible with Japanese migration, which would create ‘a community of mixed European and Asiatic blood, founded on a mixture of the social, religious, and moral ideals of two continents’. It was one thing to acknowledge Japan’s equality in the international sphere, but on the question of race, ‘our duty in the last resort is to our own flesh and blood’.<sup>36</sup> Theodore Roosevelt read Strachey’s editorial with approval: ‘You said exactly what I think ought to have been said.’<sup>37</sup> Garvin’s *Observer*, meanwhile put it more bluntly: ‘The question is a racial one; the cause is a white man’s cause.’<sup>38</sup>

*Ignorant detestation of alien people’: The Vancouver riot*

The wider resonance of the issue was demonstrated over the course of 1907, when the crisis spilled over into Canada. Since Canada’s accession to the Anglo-Japanese commercial treaty in January 1906, Japanese nationals, in theory, enjoyed freedom of movement; in practice, Laurier had accepted the treaty only on the understanding that the number of immigrants would be severely restricted. In January 1907, the Japanese consul in Ottawa had reiterated this promise, assuring Laurier that Tokyo would ‘issue no passport under any pretext whatever’ to Japanese

---

<sup>32</sup> Memorandum by Gubbins, 24 Dec 1906, TNA, FO 371/269/2330.

<sup>33</sup> Editorial, *The Times*, 15 Jan 1907.

<sup>34</sup> Editorial, *The Times*, 27 May 1907.

<sup>35</sup> Fritzinger, *Diplomat without Portfolio*, p. 294.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Japan, America, and the Anglo-Saxon World,’ *Spectator*, 13 July 1907.

<sup>37</sup> Roosevelt to Strachey, 8 Sept 1907, PA, Strachey Papers, STR/28/3.

<sup>38</sup> ‘America and Japan,’ *Observer*, 14 July 1907.

labourers.<sup>39</sup> Just as the Americans had found, however, effective control over immigration proved far more difficult to enforce than anticipated. Mounting restrictions on Japanese entry into the United States redirected a portion of the movement to Canada, where a lively trade in cross-border smuggling sprang up.<sup>40</sup> This problem was exacerbated when, in March 1907, Roosevelt issued an executive order that barred any immigrant attempting to enter the continental United States via an American insular possession, effectively preventing Japanese immigrants from using Hawaii as a staging post for California. In response, a number of labour contracting companies rerouted to British Columbia. The effects were dramatic: over 8,000 Japanese immigrants arrived in Vancouver in the first ten months of 1907, more than doubling the city's Japanese population. 'It was an alarm at numbers,' as a subsequent report noted, 'and the cry of a white Canada was raised.'<sup>41</sup>

The sudden influx brought out old anxieties and created new ones. The British Columbian press unanimously decried the Japanese influx, warning of the 'disastrous economic condition a large proportion of non-assimilable, semi-servile Asiatics will bring about in a white man's country'.<sup>42</sup> In July 1907, representatives of the Vancouver trade and labour unions founded an 'Asiatic Exclusion League' modelled on those already operating in San Francisco and Seattle. Some of the arguments deployed by the anti-Japanese movement were familiar: 'unfair' competition in the labour market; fear that the Japanese were monopolising certain industries, such as salmon fishing; and the notion that 'Orientals' were fundamentally unsuited to a democratic Anglo-Saxon society. Yet anti-Japanese sentiment also drew on fear of Japan's growing power, and just as it had done in California, the influx seized British Columbia with fears of a wider racial conflagration. The immigration crisis, according to the *Victoria Colonist*, was 'a struggle as history cannot parallel'; just as the Roman Empire had gone down 'like grass before the scythe', so too might Anglo-Saxon civilisation fall to the 'advance of the Orient'.<sup>43</sup> Robert Macpherson, the provincial Liberal leader, had more immediate concerns. 'I would like very much to keep this country White and I would also like to keep it Liberal,' he wrote to Laurier, 'but it is impossible to keep either one or of the two unless the Japs [*sic*] are peremptorily told that they must carry out their understanding with your Government.'<sup>44</sup>

Laurier was faced with the same problem that had faced Roosevelt the previous year: the rise of a racial backlash that threatened to intrude on the relationship with Japan that he had spent the last few years cultivating. Initially, Laurier was inclined to downplay the scale of the problem. As he replied to Macpherson, 'the Jap [*sic*]... comes with no women and with the fixed

---

<sup>39</sup> Nossé to Laurier, 18 Jan 1907, LAC, Laurier Papers, C-842, ff. 118371-73.

<sup>40</sup> Kornel Chang, 'Enforcing Transnational White Solidarity: Asian Migration and the Formation of the U.S.-Canadian Boundary,' *American Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 671-96.

<sup>41</sup> W.L. Mackenzie King, 'Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Methods by Which Oriental Labourers have been induced to come to Canada,' *Sessional Papers* (Ottawa, 1908), p. 21.

<sup>42</sup> Cited in Roy, *White Man's Province*, p. 187.

<sup>43</sup> *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 13 September 1907.

<sup>44</sup> Macpherson to Laurier, 20 August 1907, LAC, Laurier Papers, Reel C-851, ff. 127979-80.

intention of going back to his native country'. Therefore 'the spectacle of an Asiatic British Columbia' was a chimera.<sup>45</sup> More importantly, Laurier was determined that this new controversy would not interfere with the development of Canada's Pacific interests. Trade with Japan continued to be a paramount concern. 'Vancouver, and British Columbia behind Vancouver, want to have their harbours developed and large cities springing on the shores of the Pacific Ocean,' he replied to one correspondent. 'They cannot however realise these hopes unless they open and keep commercial intercourse with their neighbours, the peoples of the Orient.'<sup>46</sup> The choice was clear: British Columbia could either embrace its Pacific destiny and deal with Japan as a 'civilised nation', or withdraw into isolationism and economic stagnation. Exclusion based on racial differentiation, was in any event, no longer feasible:

The Japanese has adopted European civilisation, has shown that he can whip European soldiers, has a navy equal man for man to the best afloat, and will not submit to be kicked and treated with contempt, as his brother from China still meekly submits to.<sup>47</sup>

Lord Grey echoed this line to London. 'The British Columbians are most unreasonable on the Japanese question,' he reported to Elgin. 'By shutting the door against the Japanese they are shutting out the door against their chance of prosperity.'<sup>48</sup> Once British Columbia came to enjoy the fruits of Asian trade, the 'engineered apprehension' towards Japanese immigration would surely fade away.

Such a diagnosis, however, deeply underestimated the extent of the anti-Asian agitation, and its capacity for violence. On 5 September, a white mob of between four and five hundred men hounded the local South Asian community out of Bellingham, Washington, a town just across the Canadian border. Two days later, the violence spread to Vancouver. On the night of 7 September 1907, a mass meeting of the Asiatic Exclusion League at city hall drew over 20,000 people. After the meeting, a breakaway crowd marched into the Chinese and Japanese quarters of the city, breaking windows and smashing up storefronts. When the mob reached Vancouver's 'little Tokyo', fights broke out when Japanese residents, armed with knives and rifles, foiled an attempt to set fire to the local school. It was not until the morning of 10 September that the police managed to restore order.<sup>49</sup>

The Vancouver riots were the first instance of mass violence against Asians in Canada, and the first such outbreak anywhere in the British Empire that had primarily targeted Japanese. It provoked universal condemnation. Newspapers in British Columbia, 'out East', and in Britain unanimously denounced the violence, and even the Asiatic Exclusion League itself was quick to

---

<sup>45</sup> Laurier to Macpherson, 27 August 1907, LAC, Laurier Papers, Reel C-851, ff. 127981-82

<sup>46</sup> Laurier to F.J. Deane, 11 September 1907, LAC, Laurier Papers, Reel C-851, ff. 128728-29.

<sup>47</sup> Laurier to Macpherson, 27 August 1907, LAC, Laurier Papers, Reel C-851, ff. 127981-82.

<sup>48</sup> Grey to Elgin, 9 September 1907, LAC, Elgin Papers.

<sup>49</sup> Gowen, 'Canada's Relations with Japan,' p. 130.

distance itself the rioters. Grey congratulated Laurier on the ‘most satisfactory’ attitude of the Canadian press.<sup>50</sup> Yet beyond the initial censure, the riot concentrated minds on the scale of the problem. Clearly, Pacific coast whites would not subordinate the racial purity of their ‘white man’s country’ to the liberal realignment with Japan that Ottawa had pursued. Racial confrontation, rather than trade, now became the dominant issue. Speaking at Winnipeg a few days after the riot, Hamar Greenwood, the Canadian-born MP for York, warned of further conflict, proclaiming that the Pacific coast of North America had become the ‘the danger zone of the world’.<sup>51</sup> Asian migration, he declared in Parliament on his return to London, ‘threatened to swarm on the Pacific edge of both Americas, from Alaska to Patagonia’. As a result, the demand for racial exclusion had become one of ‘the strongest instincts of those white men who lived on the frontiers of the Empire’.<sup>52</sup> Upon hearing of the Vancouver riot, Theodore Roosevelt made the same observation to Strachey: ‘the English-speaking commonwealths of the seacoasts on the Pacific will not submit to the unchecked immigration of Asiatics,’ and ‘ought not be asked to submit to it’.<sup>53</sup> For Strachey too, the riot vindicated the need for exclusion. As he noted in the *Spectator*’s editorial on the riots: ‘East is East and West is West, and both will retain their distinctive characteristics... it is mere common sense for the future to keep the races apart’.<sup>54</sup>

It remained an open question how such demands for racial exclusivity could be reconciled with the Japanese claim to equal treatment. As the conservative *Saturday Review* warned, migration was now becoming a key marker of Japan’s international standing:

As Japan grows in strength... her attitude in such matters will become more and more stiff, and she will learn to regard herself more and more clearly entitled to take rank on an absolute equality with other civilised nations.<sup>55</sup>

The Vancouver riot drew these issues in sharper contours, and presented London with an intricate set of competing interests and obligations. There were no immediate signs that it had damaged the Anglo-Japanese relationship, as Tokyo seemed satisfied with the apologies issued through the Canadian high commissioner in London. Yet in a wider sense, the riot had been highly disturbing. A mutual recognition of equality was essential to cordial relations with Japan, and Whitehall had thus far assumed that the racial predilections of the dominions could be kept safely cordoned off from the Anglo-Japanese alliance. Now, however, such cordiality stood out in increasingly shrill contrast to the events on the Pacific coast. ‘Diplomacy will regret, apologise or explain away, and our relations with Japan will continue to be as cordial as ever,’ noted E.J.

---

<sup>50</sup> Grey to Laurier, 11 Sept 1907, LAC, Laurier Papers, Reel C-1162, ff. 204479-88.

<sup>51</sup> Hamar Greenwood, ‘British Diplomacy and Canadian Responsibilities,’ in J. Castell Hopkins (ed.), *Empire Club Speeches, Being Addresses Delivered Before the Empire Club of Canada During Its Session of 1907-1908*, (Toronto, 1910), pp. 15-20.

<sup>52</sup> H. Greenwood, 28 July 1908, *Hansard*, HC, 4th Series, Vol. 193, c. 1308.

<sup>53</sup> Roosevelt to Strachey, 8 Sept 1907, PA, Strachey Papers, STR/28/3.

<sup>54</sup> ‘The Collision of the Colours,’ *Spectator*, 14 Sept 1907.

<sup>55</sup> ‘The Curse of Colour,’ *Saturday Review*, 14 Sept 1907



Dillon, the foreign affairs commentator for the *Contemporary Review*. 'But below the surface the fire of race hatred will continue to glimmer and glow until one day it bursts into devouring flame.'<sup>56</sup> Worse, the scope for an immediate remedy was limited: London understood full well that to try and coerce a self-governing colony on racial questions was an act that defied both constitutional protocol and political sense. To dictate an 'imperial' policy on immigration, the Colonial Office had already noted in 1906, would be impossible, 'and to urge what we know they will refuse will cause friction and do no good.'<sup>57</sup>

The issue, moreover, could not be confined to Japan alone, as questions of race and migration also bore directly on the status of the empire's non-white subjects. Significantly, the Vancouver riots had coincided with the emergence of another racial imbroglio in South Africa, where Gandhi's campaign against the discriminatory pass laws was beginning to hit its stride.<sup>58</sup> The two issues had already become intertwined in Canada: less than a week after the riot, the arrival in Vancouver of the SS *Monteagle*, carrying a further 900 South Asian passengers, raised the possibility of another riot, this time directed against British subjects. 'My Prime Minister fears that an *émeute* against Hindoos would extend to the Japanese, who would defend themselves,' Lord Grey reported back to the Colonial Office, 'and that as the contending forces might prove stronger than the police much bloodshed would ensue.'<sup>59</sup> Here was an issue, in other words, that presented a racial fault line that ran right through both the Anglo-Japanese alliance and the empire itself. For the left-leaning *Nation*, it exposed 'a hidden reef in the ocean of imperialism,' between the settler colonies and the empire's non-white majority.<sup>60</sup>

Even within a single newspaper, *The Times*, these divisions provoked a debate over whether exclusion and empire could coexist. Chirol, who had little time for 'Socialistic' agitation against Asian immigration, set the tone, praising the 'admirable moderation and self-restraint' of the Japanese, while placing the blame for the riot on squarely white labour leaders, 'as narrow-minded as they are selfish'. Colonial labour movements opposed Asian immigration out of 'conscious self-interest as much as ignorant detestation of alien people', and were 'absolutely insensible of the complexity of the empire to which they belong'.<sup>61</sup> Yet others took issue with the paper's stern line, arguing that it insufficiently recognised the breadth of support for exclusion in colonial society. Leo Amery protested, as did A.W. Jose, *The Times's* correspondent in Sydney, who bristled at the implied criticism of White Australia.<sup>62</sup> As Jose wrote to Chirol, exclusion represented the democratic wish of practically all Australians, not merely the labour movement, and if imperial unity implied a recognition of racial equality, than this was to insist on 'an

---

<sup>56</sup> E.J. Dillon 'Yellow and White: The Coming War of Races', *Contemporary Review*, Oct 1907.

<sup>57</sup> Minute by Cox, India Office to Colonial Office, 16 May 1906, NA, CO 418/50/17500.

<sup>58</sup> Robert A. Huttenback, *Gandhi in South Africa: British Imperialism and the Indian Question, 1860-1914*, (Cornell, 1971).

<sup>59</sup> Grey to Elgin, 11 Nov 1907, NA, CO 42/914/39809.

<sup>60</sup> 'The Hatred of the Asiatic,' *Nation*, 14 Sept 1907.

<sup>61</sup> 'The Vancouver Outrages,' *The Times*, 11 Sept 1907.

<sup>62</sup> Jose to Deakin, 6 Dec 1907, NLA, Deakin Papers, 15/1/5.

impossible Empire'.<sup>63</sup> Chirol was unmoved. Racial exclusion, he wrote to Jose, was 'certainly an anti-Imperial policy, in Australia as in other Colonies,' he wrote, 'for it violates the principles upon which our rule over India is justified... You cannot expect us to endorse such a policy with approval.'<sup>64</sup>

*'To brand their own race as inferior in the eyes of the world': Canada's immigration crisis*

In Canada, these questions framed the larger context within which Laurier was forced to confront the immigration issue: the sensitivity of racial equality for Japan; the implications for India; and the clamour for exclusion rising up across the white Pacific. The domestic political climate was no less complicated. The mood in British Columbia remained restive. Immigrants continued to arrive; and after a brief cessation, the Asiatic Exclusion League resumed its activities. According to T.R.E. McInnes, a local politician acting as an agent for the federal government, the League was planning another mass rally in December, and also debated whether to field its own candidates in the upcoming city council election. If it were to organise further rallies to campaign for exclusion, McInnes warned, civil disturbances were practically inevitable.<sup>65</sup> When the provincial assembly began its new legislative session in January 1908, its first order of business was to introduce another exclusion law. Meanwhile, in Ottawa, the Conservative opposition had a field day criticising Laurier's immigration policies, and presenting itself as the true champion of 'White Canada'. Speaking at Vancouver a few weeks after the riot, the Conservative leader Robert Borden committed himself to exclusion, declaring that the issue at stake was 'whether or no this great Pacific Province shall be dominated by a Canadian race or by men of Oriental descent'. In anticipation of the upcoming election, Borden had his speeches reprinted as a pamphlet for general distribution.<sup>66</sup> Laurier even faced rebellion within his own party, as William Templeman – MP for Victoria and the British Columbian representative in the cabinet – publicly called for an exclusion law: 'I want to see Canada a homogenous race,' he declared, 'and now in our formative period it is of the first importance that only such races as will become good Canadians should be encouraged to live and abide with us.'<sup>67</sup> Lord Grey offered his sympathies to Laurier for having 'so silly & mischievous a colleague'.<sup>68</sup>

Laurier was privately dismayed that the 'abominable outbreak' in Vancouver was causing his Pacific policy to unravel. He remained sceptical that the outbreak had been warranted by the circumstances, writing to Grey that the prime culprits were the local politicians who had

---

<sup>63</sup> Jose to Chirol, 8 March 1907, ML, Jose Papers.

<sup>64</sup> Chirol to Jose, 31 Oct 1907, ML, Jose Papers.

<sup>65</sup> McInnes to Laurier, 20 Dec 1907, LAC, Laurier Papers, Reel C-856, ff. 134026-30.

<sup>66</sup> Robert Laird Borden, *The Question of Oriental Immigration: Speeches (in Part) Delivered by R.L. Borden, M.P. in 1907 and 1908*, (Ottawa, 1908).

<sup>67</sup> *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 19 September 1907.

<sup>68</sup> Grey to Laurier, 17 Sept 1907, LAC, Laurier Papers, Reel C-1162, ff. 204489-98.

encouraged the 'absurd' notion 'that this present influx from Japan is a deep strategic movement planned and organised by the Japanese Government'.<sup>69</sup> Grey agreed that the notion of 'an Asiatic Flood which will yellow the white population of B.C.' was a figment of popular imagination, stirred up by populists and American agitators.<sup>70</sup> Responding to his critics in British Columbia, Laurier fell back on his familiar set of arguments: British Columbia's economic future depended on its commercial relations with Japan, which in turn hinged on the question of treating its nationals with dignity. As he wrote to the editor of the *Vancouver World*, who threatened to withdraw support from the Liberal party: 'Do you believe you can increase your trade with them if you treat these Oriental nations with contempt and kick their people whenever they come to our shores?' The government would not pander to demands that Canada should withdraw from the Anglo-Japanese commercial treaty: 'I shall not be stampeded.'<sup>71</sup>

Behind this show of defiance, however, Laurier was forced to admit that his Japanese policy was failing. While not a dogmatic exclusionist, Laurier shared the view that East Asians were incapable of assimilation into Canadian society, and had 'little hope of any good coming to this country from Asiatic immigration of any kind'.<sup>72</sup> He was privately dismayed that despite the repeated assurances by the consul-general, Japanese immigration had risen sharply over the course of 1907. If the number of immigrants did not fall soon, the pressure to denounce the treaty and introduce an exclusion law would become irresistible. Even the survival of his government might be in jeopardy. 'If it were a question tomorrow between treaty and restriction of immigration,' observed William Mackenzie King, one of Laurier's confidants, 'it would become impossible for a government in this country to retain office and advocate the maintenance of the treaty.'<sup>73</sup> Meanwhile, there was a real danger of further violence. Another riot briefly appeared in the offing in January 1908, after a scuffle in the Japanese quarter in which several white firemen were injured.<sup>74</sup> McInnes's reports painted a grim picture of inter-communal tensions:

The Japanese are many of them trained soldiers, and they have recently assumed an offensively aggressive attitude towards the whites. Their Consul has very little control over them, and it was with the greatest difficulty that he persuaded them not to hold a counter parade after the recent riot. If further riots occur, and a number of whites are killed by these Japanese, the danger will be extreme that incendiarism and massacre will occur on both sides.

Laurier took several steps to defuse the powder keg. The first was to appeal directly to Tokyo for an immediate reduction of Japanese emigration to Canada. Rodolphe Lemieux, the postmaster-

---

<sup>69</sup> Laurier to Grey, 10 Sept 1907, LAC, Grey Papers, Reel C-1357, ff. 482-85.

<sup>70</sup> Lord Grey to Sir Edward Grey, 1 Oct 1907, DUL/AG, 211/5.

<sup>71</sup> Laurier to Taylor, 13 Oct 1907, LAC, Laurier Papers, Reel C-853, ff. 130448-52.

<sup>72</sup> Roy, *A White Man's Province*, p. 128.

<sup>73</sup> King to Jebb, 30 Dec 1907, ICS, Jebb Papers (A).

<sup>74</sup> McInnes to Laurier, 9 Jan 1908, LAC, Laurier Papers, Reel C-857, ff. 134909-14.

general, was charged with negotiating the agreement. A second commission under Mackenzie King, the senior civil servant at the Department of Labour, was to compensate the Japanese for damages, and to conduct an inquiry into the causes of the riot.

King had initially believed, like many in Ottawa, that the riot had been triggered by a militant minority of labour leaders and American agitators. Yet his stay in Vancouver quickly convinced him that feeling against the Japanese was part of a far broader 'race agitation'. As he reported to Laurier, virtually all of his interlocutors feared that further Japanese immigration would make 'the proportion of those people to the white population... preponderatingly great', and endanger the future of the province as a white man's country.<sup>75</sup> Forwarding the report to London, Lord Grey commented that there was 'a genuine feeling of *fear* which is apparently seizing the whole community'.<sup>76</sup> Significantly, King's investigations also threw doubt on the claim that the Japanese influx had been beyond the control of the Japanese government, and had mainly consisted of labourers departing from Hawaii. Among the papers of the Nippon Supply Company, a labour procurement firm with ties to the Japanese consulate, King discovered that a substantial section of the influx had come directly from Japan on certified passports.<sup>77</sup> Either the Japanese government was unable to enforce its own restrictions on emigration to Canada or it had wilfully encouraged the recent influx:

There is a good deal, I think, to indicate that Japan is desirous of becoming a great power on the Pacific, and it is only natural in the working out of this policy, her statesmen should have an eye upon the western coast of this continent.<sup>78</sup>

This view echoed a fear of Japanese expansionism that was now spreading eastward from the Pacific coast. Even Lord Grey, who had been one of the keenest advocates of Canada's accession to the Anglo-Japanese commercial treaty, was now warning of a 'a Jap invasion' of the uninhabited islands off the coast of British Columbia.<sup>79</sup> As he wrote to Laurier, Canada could no longer depend on 'the good faith and pacific disposition of the Japs [*sic*]... The inevitable tussle between the White and Yellow races may come before *we* are ready for it!<sup>80</sup>

This darkening mood lay heavy on the Canadian mission, which arrived in Yokohama on 14 November. It marked a new departure: not before had a British dominion engaged with the Japanese authorities on immigration, and in the case of Australia, London had actively discouraged direct contact.<sup>81</sup> Lemieux's first point of call, therefore, was the British embassy. Macdonald professed himself 'much impressed' with the merits of the Canadian case, but he also

---

<sup>75</sup> King to Laurier, 9 Nov 1907, LAC, King Papers, J-1, Reel C-1906, ff. 6189-91.

<sup>76</sup> Grey to Elgin, 14 Nov 1907, LAC, Elgin Papers.

<sup>77</sup> King to Lemieux, 24 Nov 1907, LAC, King Papers, J-1, Reel C-1906, ff. 6224-31; also King, 'Report of the Royal Commission,' pp. 25-48.

<sup>78</sup> King to Jebb, 30 Dec 1907, ICS, Jebb Papers (A).

<sup>79</sup> Grey to Lemieux, 23 Oct 1907, DUL/AG, 173/3.

<sup>80</sup> Grey to Laurier, 20 Dec 1907, LAC, Grey Papers, Mf. Reel 1357, ff. 646-7.

<sup>81</sup> FO to CO, 10 Oct 1903, TNA, CO 418/29.

pointed to the difficulties. Migration was a delicate subject, particularly since the Japanese government had come in for sharp criticism over its handling of the California question. It was now under great public pressure not to agree to any further curtailments of Japanese treaty rights. As he warned Grey, it was possible that a settlement with Canada might require 'considerable pressure' from London.<sup>82</sup> Fortunately, Lemieux was sympathetic to the Japanese concerns: as he noted to his father-in-law, the lieutenant-governor of Quebec, at its heart the question revolved around the principle of racial equality. 'Les hommes d'état japonais ne veulent pas que leurs nationaux soient considérés les inférieurs des autres peuples; c'est là toute la question.'<sup>83</sup>

This sensitivity was plainly in evidence during Lemieux's first meeting with the Japanese foreign minister, Viscount Hayashi, on 25 November. Setting out his case, Lemieux reiterated that notwithstanding the events in Vancouver, Canada still held 'feelings of warm admiration' for Japan. Ottawa would continue to disallow any anti-Japanese statute the British Columbian legislature might introduce. Yet such a policy was not sustainable in the long run: if another violent outbreak was to be prevented, Japanese immigration would have to be reduced 'to a number which can be absorbed without duly disturbing the proportion of races in that Province'. He hoped, therefore, that Tokyo would honour the pledges given by the Japanese consul, both before and after the conclusion of the commercial treaty, not to award any further passports to Japanese labourers, and to deliver that commitment in writing.<sup>84</sup> Hayashi retorted that the consul had exceeded his brief. Japan could never agree to a modification of the treaty, or bind itself by a convention that invalidated 'her status of a civilized nation amongst the great powers, a status she had vainly tried to secure during the last half century'.<sup>85</sup> Here lay the crux: while Japan was willing to restrict emigration to Canada in practice, Hayashi stressed that it would not allow its subjects to be subject to a binding restriction. 'Nothing is clearer,' concluded Pope, 'than that the Jap. Gov't will not allow us to restrict the immigration of their people into Canada.'<sup>86</sup>

The negotiations had nonetheless shown the possibility of a compromise, which was refined at a further meeting on 3 December, as Hayashi outlined a proposal that broadly followed the lines of Japan's previous 'gentlemen's agreement' with the United States. Japan would only grant passports to specific categories of emigrants. No restrictions would be placed on previous residents of British Columbia, students, and tourists. Exemption would also be given to those hired as agricultural labourers on Japanese farms or as domestic servants. Unskilled labourers would not be allowed to depart unless it was under contract explicitly sanctioned by the Canadian government. In turn, the treaty would be upheld, and Canada would not place any formal restrictions on the entry of Japanese immigrants. Lemieux was pleasantly surprised at the

---

<sup>82</sup> Macdonald to Grey, 15 November 1907, NA, FO 371/274/37718.

<sup>83</sup> Lemieux to Jetté, 16 November 1907, LAC, Lemieux Papers, Vol. 4, ff. 171-72.

<sup>84</sup> Included in Lemieux to Laurier, 25 Nov 1907, LAC, Laurier Papers, Reel C-855,

<sup>85</sup> Lemieux to Grey, 13 Dec 1907, LAC, Lemieux Papers, Vol. 5, ff. 516-22.

<sup>86</sup> Pope Diary, 6 Dec 1907, LAC, Pope Papers, Vol. 48. Emphasis in original.

range of concessions, as he reported to Laurier: 'I do not think it possible to get better terms than these.'<sup>87</sup>

Yet this arrangement failed to satisfy Laurier. Rankled at finding that Tokyo disowned the pledges given by the consul in Ottawa, he now demanded something firmer than another set of informal pledges. Local opinion in British Columbia, he noted to Grey, remained preoccupied with the 'the idea that this province is to be, as a result of a deep plot and design, taken possession of by a quiet, persistent and systematic Japanese invasion'.<sup>88</sup> Something would have to be done to reassure it. Laurier doubted, in any case, whether Japan's assurances could be taken on faith.<sup>89</sup> W.D. Scott, the superintendent of immigration, warned that Canada risked being 'duped'.<sup>90</sup> Grey added his voice to the chorus: 'You cannot run any risk of allowing the Province of B.C. to acquire too yellow a complexion.'<sup>91</sup> In his reply to Lemieux, Laurier insisted that the total number of Japanese immigrants would have to be subject to a binding quota of no more than 300 per year. Yet as Lemieux had realised from his conversations with Hayashi, it was unlikely that Japan would accept a measure that singled out its nationals so blatantly. 'Les japonais n'admettront jamais *par écrit* qu'ils sont inférieur, *comme race*, aux blancs.'<sup>92</sup>

The negotiations had arrived at an impasse. For the next three weeks, Lemieux vainly struggled to bridge the divide between Canada's demands for firmer controls and Japan's insistence on non-discrimination. After several further talks with Hayashi, Lemieux extracted a private assurance that the total number of passports issued to agricultural or domestic labourers would not exceed 400 a year, on condition that this pledge would not be published. In a lengthy appeal to Laurier, Lemieux urged him to accept the compromise. The agreement gave Canada all the assurances it had asked for, and Japan could not reasonably be asked 'to brand their own race as an inferior one, in the eyes of the world'.<sup>93</sup> The British government, meanwhile, watched the deadlock with growing anxiety: if Ottawa's talk of 'yellow provinces' and 'systematic invasions' ever became known in Tokyo, Macdonald noted, Japanese-Canadian relations would be 'the reverse of happy'.<sup>94</sup> Privately, Lemieux was frustrated at his own inability to convince Laurier from across the Pacific: 'Cinq minutes de conversation avec Sir Wilfrid régleraient la situation'.<sup>95</sup>

Once Lemieux returned to Ottawa, and had his five minutes with Laurier, the latter agreed to the new 'gentlemen's agreement' with Japan. The conclusion of the Lemieux agreement was greeted with a sigh of relief in Whitehall, while *The Times* praised Canada for its 'sense of dignity', and suggested that the agreement might serve as a model for solving the Indian crisis in

---

<sup>87</sup> Lemieux to Laurier, 4 Dec 1907, LAC, Lemieux Papers, Vol. 5, f. 411.

<sup>88</sup> Laurier to Grey, 5 Dec 1907, LAC, Grey Papers, Reel C-1357, ff. 628-30

<sup>89</sup> Laurier to Lemieux, 12 Dec 1907, LAC, Laurier Papers, Reel C-856, ff. 13358

<sup>90</sup> Laurier to Grey, 12 Dec 1907, LAC, Grey Papers, Reel 1357, ff. 636-37.

<sup>91</sup> Grey to Laurier, 27 Dec 1907, LAC, Grey Papers, Reel C-1357, ff. 665-67.

<sup>92</sup> Lemieux to Jetté, 10 Dec 1907, LAC, Lemieux Papers, Vol. 5, ff. 456-58. Emphasis in original.

<sup>93</sup> Lemieux to Laurier, 23 Dec 1907, LAC, Lemieux Papers, Vol. 6, ff. 679-91.

<sup>94</sup> Macdonald to Grey, 24 Dec 1907, TNA, FO 371/471/2108.

<sup>95</sup> Lemieux to Jetté, 16 Nov 1907, Vol. 4, ff. 171-72.

the Transvaal.<sup>96</sup> Yet Lemieux's tortuous negotiations also illustrated the difficulty of the new migration diplomacy; even in the hands of a sympathetic negotiator, it had proved difficult to reconcile effective exclusion with nominal equality. By making a distinction between 'civilised' Japanese students, merchants, and tourists, who would be allowed to travel through Canada freely, and labourers, to whom a quota would be applied, the Lemieux agreement had fudged the issue by making class, rather than race, the determining factor. In effect, however, the racial implications of the new arrangement were crystal-clear, as Lemieux acknowledged when presenting the terms to parliament. 'These Orientals belong to a civilization developed through the centuries, along lines totally and radically different from ours,' he declared. 'There is a well nigh impassable gulf between the two.'<sup>97</sup>

*'All the white races should stand together': the Japanese question and the United States*

During the autumn and winter of 1907-08, the fallout from the Vancouver riots formed only one element in a wider migration crisis that embraced North America and stretched across the Pacific to Australia and New Zealand. The American connection was particularly close: the Asiatic Exclusion League's rally on 7 September, which had precipitated the riot, had featured several American speakers, including the secretary of its sister organisation in Seattle. The Canadian government was quick to point fingers at the nefarious role played by American interlopers: Grey believed an investigation would show that it had not been a 'spontaneous' outbreak, but rather 'the work of Seattle & other American organisers'.<sup>98</sup> From Washington, Lord Bryce reported that the riots had been 'greatly aggravated by American agency'.<sup>99</sup> This remained a common theme: throughout the crisis, Ottawa was wary that hard-line American exclusionists might attempt to foment further trouble in British Columbia in an attempt to spoil the Anglo-Japanese relationship. 'Nothing would please these fellows more than to spoke Lemieux's wheel at Tokyo by another anti-Jap outbreak in B.C.,' Grey observed to Bryce.<sup>100</sup> This transnational aspect of the anti-Japanese movement posed a persistent complication. Canada recognised that it shared an interest with the United States in preventing further violence on the Pacific coast. Both had pursued similar 'gentlemen's agreements' with Japan, and Washington repeatedly intimated that it wished to work out a common approach on the migration issue. Yet Canada also recognised the risks of being identified too closely with its southern neighbour, which had struck a rather more bellicose tone with Japan. During his mission to Tokyo, Rodolphe Lemieux made considerable effort to avoid being buttonholed by the American ambassador. 'J'ai toutes les peines du monde à fuir le *Star Spangled Banner*,' he reported back to his

---

<sup>96</sup> 'Canada and Japan', 23 Jan 1908; 'The Asiatic Question in Canada and the Transvaal', 17 Jan 1908, *The Times*.

<sup>97</sup> R. Lemieux, 12 Jan 1908, *CPD*, HC, Vol. 1 (1908), c. 1596.

<sup>98</sup> Grey to Laurier, 13 September 1907, LAC, Laurier Papers, Reel C-1162, ff. 204479-88.

<sup>99</sup> Bryce to Grey, 26 September 1907, NA, FO 371/274/32090.

<sup>100</sup> Grey to Bryce, 21 Nov 1907, LAC, Grey Papers, Reel C-1358, ff. 2050-52.

father-in-law, 'qui veut à tout prix s'enlacer avec *l'Union Jack*'.<sup>101</sup> His deputy Joseph Pope put it rather more bluntly: 'we could not more effectively ruin our chances of success than by [associating] ourselves with the Americans, whom the Japs [*sic*] hate.'<sup>102</sup>

The transnational solidarities evoked by the Asian immigration question have attracted considerable attention from historians. As Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds have put it in their recent assessment, exclusion was 'an issue capable of mobilising whole communities and creating new transnational ones, of changing voting behaviour and political allegiance'.<sup>103</sup> Certainly, the Canadian authorities were concerned about the American entanglements of the anti-Japanese agitation. In Vancouver, McInnes kept a suspicious eye on the 'dangerous fellows' from Seattle and San Francisco, 'filling the minds of the people with the fear of an Asiatic invasion.'<sup>104</sup> Unless their influence was curtailed, he warned,

[T]he Americans, to their own obvious advantage, may egg on and secretly increase the anti-Japanese feeling now becoming rampant in the Province till that feeling reaches a stage where the British Columbians forget that they are British, and look upon their highest interests as identical with those of California, Oregon, and Washington.<sup>105</sup>

He was not alone in warning that white solidarity might prove a stronger focus of political loyalties than national borders. Mackenzie King also feared that in the event of a Japanese-American war, British Columbians would cross the border to volunteer for the Americans. 'If England endeavoured to help Japan, I am not sure that there might not be a movement started for the separation of British Columbia from the British Empire.'<sup>106</sup>

In the event, these concerns proved exaggerated. It did not take much for McInnes, who was well-connected in British Columbia's political circles – his father had been lieutenant-governor – to isolate the 'disloyal,' pro-American elements within the League. In January 1908, he reported that the Asiatic Exclusion League of Canada would not attend a joint conference with its American sister organisations at Seattle; the entire Canadian delegation would consist of dissenting members from the Vancouver chapter.<sup>107</sup> The organisers had hoped to present the conference as a show of solidarity, tried to gloss over the disappointing Canadian participation by giving S.J. Gothard, one of the Vancouver delegates, a prominent place on the dais. In the keynote address, the president of the San Francisco League harped on the theme of transnational solidarity, declaring that 'Western America must act as a unit' to counteract the Japanese

---

<sup>101</sup> Lemieux to Jetté, 27 November 1907, LAC, Lemieux Papers, Vol. 4, ff. 330-31.

<sup>102</sup> Pope Diary, 18 November 1907, LAC, Pope Papers, Vol. 48.

<sup>103</sup> Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, p. 184.

<sup>104</sup> Grey to Minto, 20 November 1907, DUL/AG, 204/1.

<sup>105</sup> McInnes to Oliver, 2 October 1907, in Grey to Elgin, 15 November 1907, NA, CO 886/1.

<sup>106</sup> King Diary, 28 January 1908, LAC, Mackenzie King Papers, J-13, Microfiche 92.

<sup>107</sup> McInnes to Laurier, 31 Jan, LAC, Laurier Papers, C-858, ff. 135794-95.



menace.<sup>108</sup> Yet Gothard's subsequent promise that the Vancouver League could 'deliver a riot' backfired spectacularly; his membership was suspended, and the Vancouver League officially repudiated its association with the Americans. While the League continued to operate, by March McInnes could report that it had been purged of its disreputable elements: 'it now stands for law and order and strictly constitutional methods of agitation.'<sup>109</sup>

While Canada strained to keep the Americans at arms' length, the United States continued to try and to hug the dominion closer. Washington had received the news of the Vancouver riot with barely disguised relief, since it demonstrated that opposition to Japanese immigration was not an exclusively American prerogative. As the prominent senator Henry Cabot Lodge noted to Roosevelt, it would 'make England a little less inclined to preach in a patronizing way about San Francisco'.<sup>110</sup> Whitelaw Reid, the ambassador in London, similarly hoped that Britain would now come round to the American view on exclusion: 'they are rubbing their eyes in a dazed sort of way, and discovering that they are themselves a good deal deeper in the mire than we are.'<sup>111</sup> For Roosevelt, who remained dissatisfied with the informal nature of his 'gentlemen's agreement' with Tokyo, and was angling for a more permanent resolution of the immigration issue, it opened up the possibility for securing the support of Canada and the rest of the British Empire.<sup>112</sup> Writing to Reid in March 1908, the president stressed his intention to 'ensure unity of action between the Republic and the Empire with a view to securing the exclusion of all Japanese laborers... from North America and Australia'.<sup>113</sup>

In early 1908, Roosevelt launched a number of feelers to Britain and Canada. On 25 January, he invited William Mackenzie King – with whom he shared an acquaintance – to lunch at the White House, to discuss the latter's investigations in Vancouver. King had angled for a place on the Canadian mission to Tokyo and regarded his Vancouver inquiry as something of a consolation prize; he now seized on the chance to play the diplomat.<sup>114</sup> Over the course of a long meeting, Roosevelt did some 'pretty plain speaking' on the common challenges facing to American and Canadian governments: both desired to maintain friendly relations with Japan, but were forced to appease their exclusionist hardliners. Roosevelt was adamant that the issue carried far-reaching consequences, as few things seemed more capable of mobilising opinion on the Pacific coast:

I believe that if the people east of the Rockies in the United States were indifferent to the situation and the British were indifferent to the feelings of the people of British

---

<sup>108</sup> McInnes to Oliver, 13 February 1908, in Grey to Elgin, 20 February 1908, NA, CO 42/918/7611.

<sup>109</sup> McInnes to Oliver, 14 March 1908, in Grey to Elgin, 25 March 1908, NA, CO 42/918/12219.

<sup>110</sup> Cited Esthus, *Theodore Roosevelt and Japan*, p. 201.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Donald C. Gordon, "Roosevelt's "Smart Yankee Trick";" *Pacific Historical Review* 30, no. 4 (1961): 351–58

<sup>113</sup> Roosevelt to Reid, 30 March 1908, *LTR*, p. 985.

<sup>114</sup> King Diary, 19 Sept 1907, LAC, King Papers, Diary [digital].

Columbia, there would be a new republic between the mountains and the Pacific, that the two peoples of the two countries felt their common interest in this so strongly.<sup>115</sup>

That same common interest, Roosevelt insisted, should lead the United States and the British Empire to take a joint position on Japanese population pressure: ‘the Japanese must learn that they will have to keep their people in their own country... England’s interests and ours are one in this matter.’ Canada should make this clear to London, possibly by sending an envoy familiar with the situation on the Pacific coast – the obvious candidate being Mackenzie King himself. In turn, a diplomatic nudge from Britain, ‘spoken in a friendly way,’ might cause Tokyo to climb down and agree to restrict immigration by treaty, as the Americans wanted.<sup>116</sup> In any event, Roosevelt concluded, it was imperative that Washington, Ottawa, and London put up a joint front against Japanese immigration. King subsequently accompanied Roosevelt to the president’s annual speech to the Washington press corps at the Gridiron club, where he did some more plain speaking. As King recorded, ‘the President took up the position with characteristic vehemence, that the brown and the white races cannot assimilate, that they must keep to their respective areas, and that this is a question on which all the white races should stand together.’<sup>117</sup> The intensity of the president’s remarks made a profound impression on King: ‘I see this whole country on the very verge of war.’<sup>118</sup>

Roosevelt’s overtures caused considerable stir in Ottawa and London. Lord Grey regarded the president’s belligerent rhetoric as ‘the act of a madman’, and wondered whether he had not already decided on war, ‘on the ground that the tussle between the Orient and the Occident is inevitable’.<sup>119</sup> When King repeated Roosevelt’s remarks to Laurier, he noted that ‘the Premier’s face visibly changed’.<sup>120</sup> Addressing parliament that same afternoon, Laurier distanced himself as far as politely possible from Roosevelt’s bellicose line. Laurier emphasised that it had been Canada’s policy to conciliate Japan through diplomacy, rather than threatening it with exclusion laws, as the United States had done: ‘We do not wish... to submit Japan to the humiliation of restricting her people from coming to our shores unless we are absolutely forced to do so.’<sup>121</sup> Grey added his own assessment. Canada’s migration diplomacy had been difficult, but ultimately, Japan had proved a willing partner. ‘We have obtained all that we hoped for, and more than we wanted by the adoption of conciliatory methods. Roosevelt’s hostile methods are not likely, I fear, to be equally successful.’<sup>122</sup> Mackenzie King similarly believed the speech was designed to ‘spike the guns of the Americans’. Laurier, he thought, was lacked interest in

---

<sup>115</sup> King Diary [digital], 25 January 1908, ff. 2174-83.

<sup>116</sup> Kirk Niergarth, “‘This Continent Must Belong to the White Races’: William Lyon Mackenzie King, Canadian Diplomacy and Immigration Law, 1908,” *The International History Review* 32, no. 4 (December 2010): 599–617.

<sup>117</sup> Grey to Elgin, 5 February 1908, NA, CO 42/918/5844.

<sup>118</sup> King Diary [digital], 25 January 1908, ff. 2174-83.

<sup>119</sup> Lord Grey to Bryce, 31 January 1908, LAC, Grey Papers, Reel C-1358, ff. 2131-34;

<sup>120</sup> Niergarth, “‘This Continent Must Belong to the White Races,’” p. 599.

<sup>121</sup> W. Laurier, 28 Jan 1908, *CPD*, Vol. 2 (1908), c. 2109.

<sup>122</sup> Lord Grey to Bryce, 31 January 1908, LAC, Grey Papers, Reel C-1358, ff. 2131-34.

Roosevelt's appeals to Anglo-Saxon solidarity: 'I find in my talks with him that he is very suspicious of the Americans, that he regards them as selfish, self-seeking and as caring only for Canada in so far as it may serve their own purpose.'<sup>123</sup>

In their study of the transnational construction of 'whiteness', Lake and Reynolds place considerable stress on Roosevelt's overtures, which they interpret as a prime example of the power of the immigration question to reorient political loyalties. The Canadian sources tell a very different story: rather than tempting Ottawa into a united front, the American initiative only served to affirm the wisdom of Canada's own approach – and by extension, of the necessity of the imperial diplomatic umbrella under which Lemieux had conducted his negotiations. It was not that Roosevelt's 'Yellow Perilist' warnings failed to resonate: many Canadians shared his assessment that the immigration question was essentially a georacial one, and that the exclusion of Japanese was a matter of bitter necessity. Yet it was clear that the kind of amorphous 'white man's alliance' that Roosevelt was proposing carried grave risks. It would have scuppered the Lemieux agreement, still in a fragile state. It would also have created a severe embarrassment for London, which had welcomed Ottawa's conciliatory moves. With a calculated display of loyalty – his parliamentary speech was peppered with references to the British connection and the Anglo-Japanese alliance – Laurier wasted little time in pouring cold water on the American approach. Since the president's request could not be dismissed outright, Laurier played for time, sending Mackenzie King on a return visit to Washington in order to ask Roosevelt to clarify his proposals. King, who was rather enamoured of his own role as an envoy, was growing frustrated with Laurier's prevaricating tactics: 'I felt as if Sir Wilfrid even yet hardly grasped the full significance of the situation. I know that any fear that he has at the moment of the so-called Yellow Peril is a matter of the last few months.'<sup>124</sup>

King returned to Washington the following week to deliver Laurier's reply, only to find the president even more adamant. Roosevelt reiterated his fear that the immigration controversy might lead to a 'new republic west of the Rocky Mountains' if Britain remained insufficiently alive to the critical state the issue.<sup>125</sup> He also repeated his suggestion that King might travel to London to impress the British authorities with the seriousness of the situation: 'Japan must stop forever sending her labourers into this country – this must stop absolutely and entirely.'<sup>126</sup> He then handed the startled Canadian a stack of letters of introduction to his British correspondents, including Arthur Balfour. It was left to Lord Bryce, the ambassador, to point out that it was rather 'an unusual and irregular proceeding' for the president of the United States to use a Canadian official as 'a sort of Secret envoy' to contact the leader of the British opposition.<sup>127</sup> Roosevelt was undeterred, confiding to King that Bryce was a 'good old boy', but failed to see

---

<sup>123</sup> King Diary, 28 Jan 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 92.

<sup>124</sup> King Diary, 24 Feb 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 94.

<sup>125</sup> King Diary, 31 Jan 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 92.

<sup>126</sup> King Diary, 31 Jan 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 94.

<sup>127</sup> Bryce to Grey, 6 February 1908, Grey Papers, FO 800/81.

the urgency of the racial question. The Foreign Office needed to hear from someone actually familiar with the conditions on the Pacific coast. As King found when he conveyed this latest round of indiscretions to Ottawa, Laurier was now slowly coming around to the idea of despatching a commissioner to London. He still, however, equivocated on the question of cooperating with Washington on the Japanese question. Replying to Roosevelt, Laurier agreed 'that whenever on this continent... labourers of Asiatic races come into competition with labourers of the Caucasian races, serious troubles immediately arise'. Yet he also stressed the need for good relations with Japan, and reminded Roosevelt that the question of immigration also touched on the status of 'fellow British subjects in India'. All of this required more intimate consultation with London before anything could be decided.<sup>128</sup> King himself saw Laurier's reply in rather more expansive terms: 'It is, in fact, a virtual endorsement of the Monroe doctrine on the part of Canada, so far as a silent invasion of the Oriental peoples is concerned.'<sup>129</sup>

In London, meanwhile, Roosevelt's appeal to Anglo-Saxon solidarity met with puzzled concern. Bryce, who had developed a certain immunity to Roosevelt's rhetoric, simply noted that 'the President now and then talks in private in a way which frightens people'.<sup>130</sup> With the election looming, Roosevelt's bellicose language was undoubtedly meant to bolster up the candidacy of his preferred successor, William Howard Taft, in the Pacific states.<sup>131</sup> There was something strangely farcical, Bryce noted, in this scare over a war that neither side seemed to want: 'I don't, I can't believe, that the Japanese would be such fools... as to provoke serious troubles with the U.S.'<sup>132</sup> The Foreign Office was similarly sceptical, and rejected Roosevelt's appeal for a joint approach out of hand. As Grey noted, the Lemieux agreement had addressed the problem as Canada was concerned; to demand further guarantees, in the form of an immigration treaty, would be construed as an insult. Since its initial protest to White Australia in 1901, moreover, Japan had kept the immigration problem separated from the alliance – an arrangement that suited the Foreign Office well enough. As one official minuted: 'In any circumstances it is extremely doubtful whether a friendly commun[ication] of the nature suggested... would be well received by our sensitive Allies, but the present moment would appear particularly inopportune.'<sup>133</sup>

*'One of the largest questions concerning the Empire': The immigration debate in Britain*

Yet as much as the Foreign Office might have preferred otherwise, the controversy over Japanese immigration had become increasingly difficult to ignore. The rioting on the Pacific coast, the Japanese-American war scare, Washington's less than subtle hints at a joint approach

---

<sup>128</sup> Laurier to Roosevelt, 20 Feb 1908, LAC, Laurier Papers, Reel C-858, ff. 135847-39.

<sup>129</sup> King Diary, 22 Feb 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 96.

<sup>130</sup> Bryce to Sir Edward Grey, 28 January 1908, NA, Edward Grey Papers, FO 800/82.

<sup>131</sup> Bryce to Grey, 16 Sept 1907, NA, FO 371/360/32092.

<sup>132</sup> Bryce to Sir Edward Grey, 2 February 1908, NA, Edward Grey Papers, FO 800/81.

<sup>133</sup> Minutes by Grey and Alston, on Bryce to Grey, 2 Feb 1908, NA, FO 371/473/3830.

to Tokyo, and the arc of anti-Japanese rhetoric now stretching from Melbourne to Vancouver all contributed to a growing consciousness of racial confrontation. As Lord Morley, the secretary of state for India, described it, the migration issue was fast becoming,

one of the largest questions concerning the Empire as a whole, and indeed not only the Empire, but all white governments against all yellow, brown, and black immigrants. It is, and will grow to be more and more, a World Question if there ever was one... the Japanese introduce an element that is both new... and extremely formidable.<sup>134</sup>

Its complexity lay in the fact that it touched on a wide range of strategic, diplomatic, and imperial issues. The first was the Anglo-Japanese alliance: a relationship that rested implicitly on the denial of racial hierarchies in the international system. It was highly embarrassing to find white settlers in the British Empire and the United States now calling for the exclusion of the Japanese, and framing the migration question as a struggle over the racial destiny of their ‘white man’s countries’. The changing strategic dimensions of the Anglo-Japanese alliance made this all the more significant: to meet the German naval build-up in the North Sea, the defence of British interests in the Pacific now fell ever more heavily on Japan – a development which the Pacific dominions (as noted below) bitterly resisted. Nor could the problem be divorced from the question of Asian migration within the empire, as Gandhi’s campaign for Indian rights in the Transvaal continued to gather momentum. In effect, the compromise that Chamberlain had brokered with the dominions in 1897 – to allow exclusion, but only on ostensibly non-racial grounds – was breaking down.

This confronted Britain with a set of unpleasant dilemmas. The Colonial Office had already concluded in 1906 that it would not attempt to mitigate the immigration policies of the dominions through ‘Imperial Legislation’: this was sure to be decried as heavy-handed intervention, and risked pushing the dominions into adopting even more stringent policies.<sup>135</sup> Yet neither could it ignore the political implications of settler racialism: if left unchecked, London would risk forfeiting the sympathies of Japan, and hand a weapon to anti-colonial nationalists in India. In effect, noted Sir Charles Lucas, head of the dominions desk at the Colonial Office, the British government was steering between a white Scylla and an Asian Charybdis:

The danger of it is obvious. We may conceivably have to choose between our self-governing Dominions and the Japanese alliance; we may conceivably have to choose at some future date between India and the self-governing Dominions; and the matter is now, and will always be, one which may give cause or pretext for complaints against us

---

<sup>134</sup> Morley to Minto, 3 Jan 1908, BL, Morley Papers, MSS Eur/D573/3, f. 1.

<sup>135</sup> IO to CO, 16 May 1906, NA, CO 418/50/17500. See also Ronald Hyam, “The Colonial Office Mind 1900–1914,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 8, no. 1 (1979): 30–55.

by the United States, and for attempts at interference on the part of the United States in our relations with the Dominions.<sup>136</sup>

Thus extrapolated, the question posed a conflict between several competing visions of Britain's imperial future. Some believed exclusion and empire to be compatible, even mutually reinforcing, as barring non-white migrants preserved the 'bonds of race' that kept the dominions tied to Britain. For the young Leo Amery, for instance, the key was to arrive at a 'practical' policy to regulate immigration throughout the empire, one that recognised the exclusion was a vital precondition for the survival of the settler colonies. 'When you want to grow a certain kind of flower in a garden bed you clear out the weeds,' he had written to the colonial secretary in 1904. 'If you want a white population... you must keep out Asiatics.'<sup>137</sup> If British policy continued to be governed by liberal scruples – relics of the 'the Exeter Hall, all-men-are-equal days' – racial loyalties might then prove a powerful centrifugal force.<sup>138</sup> As he noted to Alfred Deakin, 'I believe that if Australia felt that their economic and racial position was secure and was recognised by the Imperial Government then there would be much less of that hatred which finds expression... in the Sydney *Bulletin*.'<sup>139</sup>

The relationship between race, nation and empire was most searchingly explored by the writer Richard Jebb, who delivered a lecture on the 'Imperial problem of Oriental immigration' to the Royal Society in March 1908. Britain ought to recognise, Jebb argued, that the desire for exclusion was a foundational component of the 'indigenous nationalism' of the settler colonies – and not, as liberal sceptics claimed, a purely economic policy that only enjoyed the support of organised labour. In the 'Pacific Zone', in which Jebb included Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific coast of North America, white communities had recognised that 'building up an indigenous democracy of the British type' required the exclusion of all non-white immigration. The alternatives were either intermarriage, which Jebb believed would produce a 'racial and social type inferior to the Anglo-Saxon', or segregation, leading to a permanent Asian 'helot class' – 'for which no place can be found in a pure democracy'.<sup>140</sup> The establishment of a community that was both racially Anglo-Saxon and operated on 'British' institutions, therefore, demanded that Asian migrants be excluded entirely. Deakin, to whom Jebb forwarded a copy of the lecture, replied that it was the best thing he had read on the issue since Charles Pearson's *National Life and Character*, the foundational text of White Australia.<sup>141</sup>

---

<sup>136</sup> 'The Self-Governing Dominions and Coloured Immigration,' Memorandum by C.P. Lucas, July 1908, CO 532/9/34812.

<sup>137</sup> Amery to Lyttelton, 30 Aug 1904, CCAC, Amery Papers, 2/5/3.

<sup>138</sup> Amery to Jose, 23 Oct 1905, NLA, Deakin Papers, 15/1/3, f. 479.

<sup>139</sup> Amery to Deakin, 2 May 1908, CCAC, Amery Papers, AMEL 2/3/1.

<sup>140</sup> Richard Jebb, 'The Imperial Problem of Oriental Immigration,' *Journal of the Royal Society for the Arts*, 56, (April 1908), 585-603. The lecture was delivered on 7 April.

<sup>141</sup> Deakin to Jebb, 4 June 1908, ICS, Jebb Papers (A).

Such a view reflected a reading of Britain's imperial future that explicitly privileged the racial tie to the dominions over the empire's non-white majority. For the likes of Amery and Jebb, the key danger was that colonial nationalists might identify a conflict between the imperial connection and their pursuit of a democratic, racially pure society. White racialism might come to compete with Britishness, or even form the kernel of alternative tie of loyalty to the United States. For Alfred Milner, speaking to the Colonial Institute in April 1908, it was imperative, therefore, that Britain should not be shirk from defining the imperial connection itself in more explicitly racial terms, even at the cost of impairing relations with what he described as the 'other empire', in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. If forced to choose between an imperial federation between Britain and the dominions, or the retention of India, Milner declared he would unequivocally pick 'the distant communities of our own blood and language'.<sup>142</sup> Similar argument could be heard from a number of *soi-disant* 'imperialist' newspapers, including Fabian Ware's *Morning Post*, Strachey's *Spectator*, and Garvin's *Observer*: 'the true strength of the empire,' the latter declared in an editorial on the 'Asiatic question', 'resides in its white forces, and in them alone'.<sup>143</sup>

At the same time, the racial question also seemed to offer opportunities for further integration, and a number of commentators hoped that the rise of Japan would force the dominions to realise how deeply their external security – and by extension their 'whiteness' – depended on the British connection. 'Outside the Empire,' noted Lionel Curtis, a leading member of Milner's South African 'Kindergarten', 'Australia & South Africa are sheep for the shearer... so long as Germany & Japan remain great Naval Powers.'<sup>144</sup> The Canadian government, for its part, was profoundly aware that it could not have concluded its own concordat with Japan without the imperial umbrella. Even in South Africa, noted its governor, Lord Selborne, 'Boers as well as British... are already asking themselves what answer, other than the influence and strength of the Empire, they could oppose to Japan if Japan demanded unrestricted rights of ingress for Japanese into S.A.'<sup>145</sup>

Similar discussions were taking place within Whitehall. In the Colonial Office, Lucas was particularly preoccupied with the immigration issue; as he later told Mackenzie King, it was the 'largest question which has yet loomed on the horizon, and that its importance could not be exaggerated'.<sup>146</sup> Setting out his views in two long memoranda, Lucas noted that the British government, labouring under the misapprehension that racial sentiment sprang from the political 'immaturity' of colonial societies, had long adopted a policy of non-intervention in the hope that the exclusionist impulse would mellow with time. Yet if anything, the opposite had been true: 'Contrary to what might have been hoped and expected, the growth of democracy and science

---

<sup>142</sup> Alfred Milner, 'The Two Empires,' [April 1908], *The Nation and the Empire*, pp. 289-299.

<sup>143</sup> 'The Silent Armageddon,' *Observer*, 5 Jan 1908; see also 'Japan, America, and the Anglo-Saxon World,' *Spectator*, 13 July 1907.

<sup>144</sup> Curtis to Selborne, 18 Oct 1907, BLO, Selborne Papers, MS Selborne 71, f. 127.

<sup>145</sup> Selborne to Chamberlain, 24 Feb 1908, in Boyce (ed.), *Crisis of British Power*, pp. 343-50.

<sup>146</sup> King Diary, 13 April 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 102.

and education has not diminished but rather increased antipathies of race and colour.’ Yet if the racist impulse had grown, so had Asian resistance to it, particularly since the Russo-Japanese War. ‘The rise of Japan,’ Lucas noted, ‘has given the Eastern races a new status which has been won by force and not conceded as a matter of grace.’ The implications were clear: if left to fester, these two opposing forces would produce a vicious cycle of racial antagonism that would tear away at the fissures of the British Empire.<sup>147</sup> Something had to be done. It was useless, Lucas argued, for London to hope to hold back, or modify, the exclusion policies of its settler colonies; indeed, he held that exclusion was ultimately ‘conducive to the interests of the Empire’ since it maintained ‘the purity of the race’.<sup>148</sup> Instead, Britain should play a mediating role, by trying to reduce the international tensions bound up in the problem. An arrangement like the Lemieux agreement between Canada and Japan could, for instance, be extended into a general system for regulating migration within the empire, giving the appearance of reciprocity.<sup>149</sup>

There was as yet little enthusiasm for a more activist policy. Immigration, noted one of Lucas’s colleagues, was a ‘thorny question’, and probably ‘of all subjects, the least fortunate’ on which to initiate a pan-imperial discussion.<sup>150</sup> More to the point, dragging the immigration question into the public eye, and subjecting it to ‘the oratory of Mr Deakin’ – the Colonial Office’s particular *bête noire* – only risked further aggravation:

The views of Colonial Govts, which simply regard the Asiatic as a nuisance, differ, and always must differ, fundamentally from that of H.M.G. who are the rulers of the greatest Asiatic Empire in the world and in touch with all the Asiatic states great and small.<sup>151</sup>

The Foreign Office responded in much the same spirit to Roosevelt’s calls for an Anglo-American partnership on the Japanese question. As Sir Edward Grey and his leading officials saw it, the rumours of georacial conflict had been greatly exaggerated: Japan could be relied upon to see that a confrontation on the immigration question would be suicidal. It was the American domestic gallery, and Roosevelt’s tendency to run away with his own rhetoric while playing to it, that was the real problem. As Hardinge commented in March 1908, ‘the President is playing a very dangerous game, and it is fortunate that he has such cool-headed people as the Japanese to deal with’.<sup>152</sup> The best course for London was not to encourage him.

The drift towards a racial realignment, moreover, was held in check by other forces just as formidable as the instinctive conservatism of British officialdom. Those whose imperial careers had been shaped by India rather than the dominions remained deeply sceptical of any

---

<sup>147</sup> ‘The Self-Governing Dominions and Coloured Immigration,’ Memorandum by C.P. Lucas, July 1908, CO 532/9/34812.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>149</sup> ‘Suggestions as to Coloured Immigration into the Self-Governing Dominions,’ Memorandum by C.P. Lucas, July 1908, CO 886/1/2.

<sup>150</sup> Minute by G. Johnson, 1 Oct 1908, CO 532/9/34812.

<sup>151</sup> Minute by Lambert, 11 Feb 1908, CO 532/7/4970.

<sup>152</sup> Minute by Hardinge, 28 March, FO 371/475/10554.



policy that seemed to unduly privilege the position of the white colonies. If Britain really did possess, as Milner insisted, 'two empires', then it had a duty not to widen the racial fault line between them. During the immigration crisis, such a stance was reiterated by a number of prominent commentators, including Lord Curzon – who as viceroy had been critical of the treatment of Indians in the colonies – and Lord Amptill, a former governor of Madras who now chaired the South African British Indian committee. It was also articulated through Chirol's editorials in *The Times*, which called on the British government to educate its colonial kin on their responsibilities towards the non-white subjects and allies of the empire, and not allow 'the prejudices of a small local population' to dictate policy.<sup>153</sup> In an editorial that could not have made for comfortable reading in the dominions, *The Times* even wondered whether the white nationalist project was viable at all: 'With expanding Eastern races, and white races not showing an equally swift rate of progress but claiming a larger part of the globe, can this exclusion, even if it were advisable, be maintained indefinitely?'<sup>154</sup>

Arranging global politics along the 'colour line', meanwhile, also raised troubling geopolitical implications. As one anonymous contributor to the *Fortnightly Review* pointed out, if the white settler states persisted in tarring all Asian migrants, including the 'civilised' Japanese, with the same brush, it would risk uniting nationalist sentiment across Asia against them. The 'white man's world' risked creating its own demon in a pan-Asia: 'let Japan be invoked by China as a leader and by India as a liberator: and let the black races feel that the white man is like to be swept back at last: and then indeed the strangest dreams of the eclipse and extinction of Western civilisation might come true.'<sup>155</sup> This was a warning that echoed those sounded during Russo-Japanese War: the surest way to realise the 'Yellow Peril' was to alienate Japan by raising new racial barriers. It was a vision that also haunted Mackenzie King, who read the article in the *Fortnightly* shortly before departing to Britain:

I was thinking... of the future when Japan would help to awaken China from her long slumber and remind her of the insults which other peoples had been heaping upon her, and of the day when Japan would do all she could to further discontent in India by reminding the East Indians of the manner in which the door had been slammed in their face as they attempted to enter British territory on this part of the globe.<sup>156</sup>

Yet even among those who worried about the political effects of exclusion, few were prepared to argue against it altogether. Arguments about the unassimilability of Asian immigrants, and the necessity of exclusion for the national development of colonial societies, proved difficult to answer. Few believed a multi-racial society could be either harmonious or democratic: according to Jebb, unrestricted immigration would turn the British Pacific, where 'no

---

<sup>153</sup> 'The Asiatic Difficulty,' *The Times*, 2 Jan 1908.

<sup>154</sup> 'Oriental Immigration,' *The Times*, 28 Dec 1907

<sup>155</sup> 'Viator', 'Asia Contra Mundum,' *Fortnightly Review*, 83 (Feb 1908), pp. 185-200.

<sup>156</sup> King Diary, 4 Feb 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG-26, J-13, Microfiche 94.

inherent obstacle to the development of a pure democracy' existed, into a version of the American South, sharply divided along lines of race and class. This would be 'criminal folly'.<sup>157</sup> 'Viator' likewise argued that Britain could not force the dominions 'to commit social suicide in the name of justice to Asia,' and even *The Times* conceded that 'unrestrained immigration of Asiatics may be fatal to our civilization and even our race'.<sup>158</sup> The key question, therefore, both among advocates and critics of exclusion, was how the immigration question could be managed, and the racial hysteria contained, without exacerbating the fault lines running through the international system and the empire itself. Yet in the spring of 1908, amid the widening racial sores on the Pacific coast and in South Africa, it was an open question whether the centre would hold. As Morley concluded to the viceroy, Lord Minto: 'If you challenge me to say what I would do, I can only say that I don't know. No more does anybody else.'<sup>159</sup>

*'Great Britain would certainly stand behind the white peoples': Mackenzie King in London*

This then, was the state of the debate when William Mackenzie King arrived in London in March 1908 to discuss Canada's immigration troubles with the British authorities. The purpose of King's 'mission' (his term) was twofold. Publicly, he was to sound the British government on an arrangement to restrict Indian immigration, similar to that agreed with Japan. Privately, he was to take London's temperature on the Japanese question, and its policy in the event of a Japanese-American war, the prospect of which still made Ottawa jittery. The key question was the same as Jebb and Amery had identified: did Britain recognise Canada's right to maintain itself as a 'white man's country', and would it support the dominion if Japan should object? During his month-long stay in London, King met with Grey, Elgin and Morley, as well as with the leading officials from their respective offices; he also recorded the views of a sizeable portion of Britain's 'upper ten thousand' at numerous lunches and society dinners. He kept a meticulous record, which has not been kept with his general diaries, and as such, has tended to escape the attention of historians.<sup>160</sup> While it is not an unproblematic source – King had a flair for exaggeration, and his interlocutors presumably told him what he wanted to hear – the diary constitutes a remarkable compendium of the views of the British elite on the empire's racial troubles.

It is significant, therefore, that the vast majority of the views King recorded supported the dominions' right to 'determine the complexion of their country', as Alfred Milner put it. Conservative opinion was practically unanimous. Arthur Balfour was 'quite emphatic' on the subject, and Austen Chamberlain 'expressed himself in the most positive way... that the peoples

---

<sup>157</sup> Jebb, 'Imperial Problem,' p. 588.

<sup>158</sup> 'Viator,' 'Asia Contra Mundum,' p. 198; 'Oriental Immigration,' *The Times*, 28 Dec 1907.

<sup>159</sup> Morley to Minto, 26 March 1908, BL, Morley Papers, MSS Eur/D573/3.

<sup>160</sup> On the diary's archival history, see Niergarth, "'This Continent Must Belong to the White Races'".

of the Orient should be prevented from coming in large numbers to the outlying Dominions.<sup>161</sup> The Canadian-born Andrew Bonar Law was ‘much interested’ in King’s account of his investigations in British Columbia, ‘and of the danger of allowing the United States to assume a kind of protectorate of the British peoples on the Pacific as against Orientals’.<sup>162</sup> Several conservative newspaper editors, including H.A. Gwynne of the *Standard* and Fabian Ware of the *Morning Post*, ‘agreed entirely’ with Canada’s exclusion policy.<sup>163</sup> Exclusion was also endorsed by a number of conservatives who nonetheless expressed their continued support for the Anglo-Japanese alliance, including the former War Secretary, H.O. Arnold-Forster, and Leo Maxse, the editor of the *National Review*. King noted that the latter struck him as ‘strongly pro-Japanese’ and that Maxse was ‘very strong on the Japanese being good allies and necessary for Great Britain for her protection of India’. Yet in spite of this, Maxse also agreed ‘that England would stand with the North American continent’ in the event of a confrontation on immigration.<sup>164</sup> Even Lord Cromer, whose Egyptian experience precluded a narrowly racial definition of British imperial interests, thought the Anglo-Japanese alliance a ‘doubtful affair’, and told King that in the event of ‘differences between the Orientals and the white races... Great Britain would certainly stand behind the white peoples’.<sup>165</sup>

Several prominent Liberals were even more forthright. The MP David Erskine told King that Campbell-Bannerman himself had been ‘very doubtful’ about the Japanese alliance when it was concluded, and had repeated this remark after becoming prime minister.<sup>166</sup> He found the parliamentary undersecretary at the Colonial Office, Winston Churchill, especially candid:

[Churchill] was very frank... being in entire sympathy with Canada in the matter of keeping out Orientals and said that should there ever be any difficulty between Japan and the United States, Great Britain would certainly let the alliance go to the winds. He hated the Japanese, had never liked them, thought they were designing and crafty. He could not bear them.<sup>167</sup>

Even Morley, who as secretary of state for India might be expected to strike a more critical tone on exclusion, fell in with his colleagues. He told King that had he himself lived British Columbia, he would certainly have joined the Asiatic Exclusion League. He also reassured him that in the event of a Japanese-American war, the alliance would not be invoked: ‘England would not allow

---

<sup>161</sup> For Balfour’s views see King Diary, 7 April 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 102. For Chamberlain, see King Diary, 5 April 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 101.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.* 25 March 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 99.

<sup>163</sup> For Gwynne, see King Diary, 4 April 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 101. For Jebb, see *ibid.*, 26 March.

<sup>164</sup> For Arnold-Forster, see King Diary, 24 March 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 99; for Maxse, see *ibid.* 27 March.

<sup>165</sup> King Diary, 18 March 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 98.

<sup>166</sup> King Diary, 29 March 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 100.

<sup>167</sup> King Diary, 28 March 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 100.

it.<sup>168</sup> Indeed, as he subsequently summed them up to Minto in India, Morley's views betrayed an instinctive hostility to Japan:

[The Canadians] don't much mind the Chinese. The Jap [*sic*] is the enemy – unscrupulous, perfidious, violent. Thank heaven, I never was a Jap, and I always hated Lansdowne's treaty. No wonder that an exclusionist policy prevails; and I much suspect that if you and I were not 'Indians' for the moment, we should be Exclusionists.<sup>169</sup>

It is tempting to conclude that in Britain too, the immigration crisis had provoked a growing sense of racial antagonism. On the other hand, King's conversations at the Foreign Office showed a more complex reality. During his first meeting with Grey on 18 March, King recounted his investigations in Vancouver, and his subsequent conversations with Roosevelt, only to find the foreign secretary frankly sceptical. 'Where I think the President is mistaken,' he told the Canadian, 'is in believing that the Japanese have any desire to get their peoples on to the American continent, or have any desire to be involved in any struggle with the United States.'<sup>170</sup> Japan preferred its migrants to go to Korea and Manchuria, and resented exclusion from North America purely on symbolic grounds. Grey subsequently reminded King that the Japanese had been 'most satisfactory Allies,' and had not attempted to 'strain' the alliance by attempting to use it as leverage on immigration.<sup>171</sup> King's reports did, however, force Grey to admit he had failed to realise just how frenzied the anti-Japanese agitation had become. As he noted to Bryce, feeling on the Pacific coast was in a state of 'high fever', and was aggravated further by a sense of neglect: 'what I fear is that a suspicion may arise among the people there that, when the pinch comes, we shall not support them in resisting Japanese immigration.'<sup>172</sup> Grey was careful to reassure King that Britain sympathised with Canada's desire to exclude Japanese labourers, and would throw its weight behind exclusion if necessary:

England could never stand for a struggle of the yellow races as against the white, that these things could not be held by treaty or anything, if there was a race struggle, that the sympathy would be with the white people if there was anything in the way of aggression from Japan.<sup>173</sup>

This satisfied King. As he noted in his subsequent report, Canada could be sure that Britain would not interpose the alliance as an objection if it needed to take further measures to restrict Japanese migration – in other words, to introduce an exclusion law if the Lemieux agreement should prove unworkable.<sup>174</sup> While Grey seems to have intended this as a constitutional

---

<sup>168</sup> King Diary, 20 March 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 98.

<sup>169</sup> Morley to Minto, 26 March 1908, BL, Morley Papers, MSS Eur D573/3.

<sup>170</sup> King Diary, 18 March 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 98.

<sup>171</sup> Memorandum by Grey, 2 April 1908, NA, FO 371/475/11249.

<sup>172</sup> Grey to Bryce, 30 March 1908, NA, Grey Papers, FO 800/82.

<sup>173</sup> King Diary, 18 March 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche M.98.

<sup>174</sup> Memorandum by King, 2 May 1908, DUL/AG, 193/10.

clarification, King chose to interpret it as an assurance that Britain recognised the racial security of the dominions as a vital imperial interest. 'That Canada should desire to restrict immigration from the Orient is regarded as natural, that Canada should remain a white man's country is believed to be not only desirable for economic and social reasons, but highly necessary on political and national grounds.'<sup>175</sup> A number of exclusionists who had awaited a commitment to 'whiteness' from the Liberal government shared this conclusion: Amery forwarded copies of King's report to Lionel Curtis in South Africa and Alfred Deakin in Australia. Even 'with the present people in power,' he wrote to the latter, the British government had 'definitely recognised not only the right but the reasonableness of a British colony wishing to remain a white man's country'.<sup>176</sup>

At the same, time King also acknowledged that such a right came with reciprocal responsibilities: Canada's had a responsibility to exercise the power of exclusion with 'forbearance and restraint,' and with 'due regard to the obligations which citizenship within the empire entails'.<sup>177</sup> Ottawa understood that the immigration question was an issue of great sensitivity in Japan and India, and that it had an obligation to harmonise its policies with the larger diplomatic and imperial concerns that still fell under London's remit. The logic was clear: since its membership of the imperial system had allowed Canada to strike its bargain with Japan in the first place, it had a duty to uphold that system— particularly if the alternative was the cloying embrace of the United States. King understood this well: 'The Oriental question shows us our position of dependence on the strong arm of Great Britain. We will have to recognise this and act accordingly. Heretofore, however, I do not think any obligation of the kind has been apparent.'<sup>178</sup> In practice, this meant maintaining its compromise with Japan, resisting Columbian calls for exclusive legislation, and keeping Theodore Roosevelt's advances at bay. In 1914, with the Liberals out of power, King was still able to congratulate Laurier for his diplomatic handling of the immigration crisis, through which Canada had fulfilled its 'imperial obligation' in a way 'more important than [the] construction of Dreadnoughts, as it has in it all the elements that make for friction and dismemberment from within'.<sup>179</sup>

### *Conclusion*

By the time King returned to Ottawa, the crisis was already winding down. After a hesitant start, Canada's agreement with Japan operated smoothly from the summer of 1908.

---

<sup>175</sup> W.L. Mackenzie King, 'Report on Mission to England to Confer with the British Authorities on the Subject of Immigration to Canada from the Orient and Immigration from India in Particular,' *Sessional Papers* (Ottawa, 1908), no. 36a, p. 7.

<sup>176</sup> Amery to Deakin, 2 May 1908, CCAC, Amery Papers, AMEL 2/3/1. See also Curtis to Amery, 20 July 1908, CCAC, Amery Papers, AMEL 2/5/7.

<sup>177</sup> W.L. Mackenzie King, 'Report on Mission to England', p. 7.

<sup>178</sup> King Diary, 18 March 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 98.

<sup>179</sup> King to Laurier, 23 Jan 1914, LAC, Laurier Papers, C-908, ff. 190590-1.

From the monthly emigration statistics that Tokyo now supplied to the British embassy, it was clear that the total number of Japanese would not exceed the quota of 400: between May and November 1908, only thirty-six labourers left for Canada. Even the *Spectator* conceded that the Japanese government had adopted 'a sane and far-seeing view' of the issue, and noted that the alliance had helped to solve the immigration dispute in 'an admirable spirit of conciliation'.<sup>180</sup> The Canadian government was satisfied that the agreement was working. R.L. Drury, the official tasked with reporting on emigration from Japan, remarked on the eve of his departure in July 1908 that he had 'the strongest possible conviction that the Japanese Government will faithfully observe their part of the agreement.'<sup>181</sup> In British Columbia, the Asiatic Exclusion League quietly faded from the public view.<sup>182</sup> Under these conditions, even the dream of a Canadian Pacific could experience another flickering; from Japan, Drury argued that the Japanese demand for Canadian exports, including wheat, lead, and pulpwood, might still offer the dominion a prosperous future in 'the great expansion of Oriental trade, and the growing commerce of the Pacific'.<sup>183</sup> This was mirrored by a gradual Japanese-American rapprochement: in February 1908, Washington and Tokyo adopted a more stringent 'gentlemen's agreement', under which Japan pledged not to issue any further passports to labourers, and to suspend emigration to Hawaii.<sup>184</sup>

This easing of tensions was reinforced by a shift in Japan's policy, which now came to place greater emphasis on the need for emigration to its sphere in continental Asia. Setting out the government's foreign policy in the Diet in February 1909, Komura, who had returned as foreign minister in October 1908, announced that Japanese migrants, instead of 'scattering themselves at random in distant foreign lands,' would instead receive the government's assistance to settle in Manchuria and Korea.<sup>185</sup> While British residents in East Asia tended to dislike the influx of Japanese settlers, most other commentators regarded Japan's continental turn as the inevitable consequence of exclusion, and as such, a trend that ought to be tolerated or even encouraged. According to Robert Clive, third secretary at the Tokyo embassy, the creation of a 'Greater Japan' on the continent was surely preferable to attempting to secure entry for its nationals in North America or Australasia, where their presence was 'barely tolerated'.<sup>186</sup> The Foreign Office agreed: 'The inevitable result of checking emigration to the Pacific Slope is to increase it to other countries.'<sup>187</sup> When Lemieux visited London in November 1908, Grey similarly told him that he believed Japan no longer had any intention to send its migrants east

---

<sup>180</sup> 'Japanese Retrenchment,' *Spectator*, 5 Sept 1908.

<sup>181</sup> Drury to Templeman, 21 July 1908, LAC, Laurier Papers, Mf. C-865, ff. 143402-7.

<sup>182</sup> Roy, *A White Man's Province*, pp. 229-63.

<sup>183</sup> Drury to Templeman, 21 July 1908, LAC, Laurier Papers, Mf. C-865, ff. 143402-7.

<sup>184</sup> Neu, *Uncertain Friendship*, pp. 178-180.

<sup>185</sup> Macdonald to Grey, 5 April 1909, NA, FO 371/684/18286.

<sup>186</sup> See enclosure in Macdonald to Grey, 19 Sept 1908, TNA, FO 371/474/32546.

<sup>187</sup> Minute by F.O. Lindley, 15 May 1909, in Macdonald to Grey, 5 April 1909, TNA, FO 371/684/18286.

across the Pacific: ‘They wished very much to keep them nearer home, in order to strengthen their position in Korea and their trade in Manchuria.’<sup>188</sup>

Nevertheless, the events on the Pacific coast during the autumn of 1907 left a troubling legacy. The immigration crisis dealt a severe blow to the optimistic belief that Japan’s accession to the ‘comity of civilisation’ into the international system would overcome, or at least demote, the problem of race. The violence in California and British Columbia had forced Washington, Ottawa, and London to balance recognising Japan international status against new demands for racial exclusion. The compromise that emerged took the form of the ‘gentlemen’s agreements’: an immigration regime that claimed to recognise Japan’s sovereign equality, but which effectively excluded its nationals from North America. Judging this preferable to a blanket exclusion law, Japan complied with these arrangements voluntarily. Yet as Hayashi pointed out to Lemieux in Tokyo, Japan still resented the imposition of new obstacles to its participation in international society. Since Perry’s landing in 1853, the West had spent the last half-century preaching the virtues of openness to Japan, ‘telling them that the only way by which they could achieve a place among the nations was welcoming all races to their shores’.<sup>189</sup> The hypocrisy clearly left a sour taste.

Nor could the spectre of racial conflict, once it had been let loose on the Pacific coast, be detached from Japan’s wider relationship with either the United States or the British Empire. The crisis had offered a window on a new kind of global politics, organised along racial fault lines rather than national borders, and many continued to speculate about the possibility, or even the inevitability, of a ‘conflict of colour’. In March 1909, Lord Grey – now wholly converted to the gospel of the white Pacific – warned the new Colonial Secretary, Lord Crewe, that despite the Lemieux agreement, the situation in British Columbia remained dangerously unsettled: ‘The position on the Pacific Slope is certain, in my opinion, to drift us into eventual war with the Orient.’<sup>190</sup> In a similar vein, Lord Morley told Mackenzie King, who returned to London in December 1908, that he still regarded the Yellow Peril as ‘the greatest of all questions’.<sup>191</sup> According to King, Morley thought the Japanese a ‘menace’, and believed ‘that the coming struggle is for the mastery of the Pacific on the part of the Japanese.’<sup>192</sup>

Insofar as the immigration crisis suggested the possibility of a racial realignment, this chapter arrives at a similar conclusion to that suggested by Lake and Reynolds. Yet it makes two distinctions they do not. First, and most obvious, conducting policy across the ‘colour line’ was a prospect from which all responsible parties recoiled. Despite, or because of, the warnings that Grey and Mackenzie King articulated, Canada took care to resolve its immigration dispute with Japan in a diplomatic spirit, brokering a direct compromise with Tokyo and refusing to align its

---

<sup>188</sup> Grey to Macdonald, 14 Nov 1908, TNA, Grey Papers, FO 800/68.

<sup>189</sup> Lemieux to Laurier, 25 Nov 1907, LAC, Laurier Papers, C-855, ff. 132101-10.

<sup>190</sup> Grey to Crewe, 11 March 1909, LAC, Grey Papers, Mf. C-1360, ff. 4139-43.

<sup>191</sup> King Diary, 25 Dec 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG-26/J-13, Mf. 106.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

policy with the more bellicose rhetoric of the United States. Second, the British world, rather the Anglo-Saxon front touted by Roosevelt, was the crucial context in which this process took place. Although it conducted its approach to Japan as an autonomous mission, with little direct interference from London, the Canadians had been profoundly aware they were able to do so only because of the insulation provided by the imperial security umbrella and the Anglo-Japanese alliance. In turn, the events of 1907-8 also added a new rationale to the alliance itself: it now served as an instrument to manage and defuse the tensions that had flared up in Vancouver.



## FIVE

### The Pacific Problem, 1906-09

On the morning of 9 May 1906, the new Japan came to Australia, as the training squadron of the Japanese navy, on its first visit to a British colony since the war, steamed into Melbourne's Port Philip Bay. During a week's worth of festivities, Melbourne residents had a rare chance to rub shoulders with their Japanese visitors, 'the victors of Tsushima, and the valued allies of Great Britain'.<sup>1</sup> The city was an obliging host, and presented its guests with a full programme of entertainments. At the Princess Theatre, a mixed audience of Japanese officers and local notables were treated to a 'fine athletic display', featuring demonstrations of judo, boxing, and 'Japanese fencing', and even a novelty contest that pitted a local singlestick fencer against a Japanese officer armed with his ceremonial sword. The result was amusing, if one-sided: had this been a 'real encounter,' the Melbourne *Age* commented, the Australian would 'have been quartered in seconds'.<sup>2</sup> The high point of the visit was a joint parade held on 14 May, in which 600 Japanese sailors, together with detachments from the Royal Navy and the colonial militia, marched from the port to the town hall, past a cheering crowd of over 50,000 people. Afterwards, the Japanese were taken to visit the zoo.<sup>3</sup> In Melbourne and Sydney, the squadron's next port of call, the press oozed with praise. The *Age* commented on the 'alert, keenly intelligent, and progressive' spirit of the Japanese. The *Sydney Mail* found them 'clean limbed and nattily dressed,' and thought they 'created an openly and warmly expressed feeling of admiration in the minds of many'. The *Sydney Morning Herald* noted that Australians welcomed the Japanese with 'almost brotherly feeling', while the *Evening News* could only lament the 'lack of consistency' of the crowds who cheered the Japanese sailors, but otherwise insisted on the exclusion of Japanese immigrants.<sup>4</sup> To Alfred Deakin, writing as the anonymous 'Australian correspondent' of the *Morning Post*, the visit offered an opportunity to present a different side of Australia's stance towards Japan:

While the "White Australia" ideal is now accepted everywhere by a huge majority of the people of the Commonwealth, our Japanese allies have been fêted with unaffected enthusiasm wherever they have landed, have been cheered in the streets, their sailors patted in every public place, and their officers overwhelmed with courtesies.<sup>5</sup>

Yet the celebrations could not entirely obscure the note of racial anxiety that Australian commentators, Deakin prominently among them, had sounded since the Russo-Japanese War.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'A Contrast,' *Evening News*, 21 May 1906.

<sup>2</sup> 'Japanese Athletics,' *Age*, 17 May 1906.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Japanese Squadron,' *Age*, 14 May 1906.

<sup>4</sup> Walker, *Anxious Nation*, pp. 85-93.

<sup>5</sup> [Alfred Deakin], 'The Ideal of Racial Purity,' *Morning Post*, 17 July 1906.

The populist press whipped itself into a fit of moral panic as it contemplated sailors ‘from the land of the Geisha’ mingling socially with Australian women; the *Bulletin* even accused the Japanese of distributing pornographic postcards.<sup>6</sup> One Queensland Labour senator pointedly refused to attend the dinner given in honour of Admiral Shimamura, the squadron’s commanding officer, declaring it ‘pure hypocrisy on my part to greet you with a smile, give you a friendly handshake... while at the same time... I do not trust you’.<sup>7</sup> Richard Arthur, of the president of the Australian Immigration League, similarly rebuked his fellow Sydneyites for ‘fussing over the very people who are going to supplant them in this country in days to come, and are even now spying out the land’.<sup>8</sup>

This chapter examines what contemporaries referred to as the ‘Pacific problem’: how to contain Japan’s growing presence in an ocean where Britain’s own resources were stretched thin. In Australia and New Zealand, the Russo-Japanese War had been a rude awakening, and subsequent years provoked an anxious ‘search for security’ against the rising power to the north.<sup>9</sup> Here, just as it had done on the China coast or in Canada, Japanese expansion – material or imagined – gave rise to local fears of imminent loss and displacement, and prompted new ways of thinking about the nature and purpose of the imperial connection. Concerns over external defence had featured in the politics of the Pacific colonies – isolated from Europe and vulnerable to attack from the sea – since their foundation: Sydney built its first coastal fortress during the Crimean War, and New Zealand experienced its own Russian scare in the 1880s.<sup>10</sup> The colonial carve-up of the South Pacific, which began in earnest in the late 1870s, had already caused colonial leaders to complain of London’s neglect of their safety. Yet on several counts, the strategic crisis that followed Tsushima was of a different order. Japan was a far more credible danger than any European power, and although Australian historians have debated the extent to which anti-Japanese fears were merited, there is little doubt that the events of 1905 united Australia’s political elite (and with a delayed reaction, New Zealand’s too) behind the idea that Japanese naval power constituted a dire threat to their security – if not today, then certainly twenty years from now.<sup>11</sup>

Crucially, the Japanese threat combined concerns over strategic exposure with older racial fears. For residents of the ‘white Pacific’, the recent upheaval in their oceanic neighbourhood – the Russo-Japanese War, the immigration crisis, and the rise of American-Japanese antagonism – fitted into a broader story of racial confrontation. The ‘Pacific problem’, one resident of Vancouver declared to the Royal Colonial Society, was one of ‘race destiny’: ‘the

---

<sup>6</sup> Walker, *Anxious Nation*, p. 87.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Interview with Admiral Shimamura,’ *Evening News*, 21 May 1906.

<sup>8</sup> Walker, *Anxious Nation*, p. 116.

<sup>9</sup> Meaney, *Search for Security*, remains the key work.

<sup>10</sup> Ward, “Security,” pp. 232-35; McGibbon, *Path to Gallipoli*, pp. 27-49.

<sup>11</sup> For this dispute, see Henry Frei, *Japan’s Southward Advance and Australia: From the Sixteenth Century to World War II*, (Honolulu, 1991); Matthew Barton, “An Analysis of the Perceived Strategic Threat of Japan to Australian Sovereignty: 1894–1910,” *Japanese Studies* 12, no. 2 (September 1992): 80–93.

struggle between the white and yellow peoples for world supremacy'.<sup>12</sup> The implications of this were clear: the coming century would be shaped by the strategic and demographic competition between Asians and Anglo-Saxons over the last remaining 'white man's lands' in the Pacific basin. Thus Sir Joseph Ward, the New Zealand premier, declared it his greatest aim 'to conserve these islands for the white race,' in anticipation of a 'competitive war between the Eastern and the white races'.<sup>13</sup> One entry in the diary of Joseph Cook, later Australian prime minister, captures his fear of a looming racial *Götterdämmerung*:

Real problem of world is racial... Relation of white with yellow & black is urgent all round the globe. India, Africa, China, Japan & Russia, Jap & America... Will Asiatics allow us permanently in Asia, if we refuse them admittance? ... Japanese have proved beyond all doubt the immense potentialities of the Asiatic renaissance for war, industry, colonization, sea power & thought... Japan leading India & China wd. be a menace to the world.<sup>14</sup>

This anti-Japanese paranoia, rooted in a racial reading of history and geopolitics, was diametrically at odds with the tenor of British defence policy after 1905, which was becoming increasingly obsessed with the growth of German naval power. Although scholars have disputed whether Germany was the primary driver of the naval redistribution that London initiated in late 1904, it is clear that after 1906 at the latest, the Anglo-German race sustained a steady concentration of British naval strength in the North Sea.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, technological innovation, above all the shift to armoured 'all-big-gun' battleships of the *Dreadnought* type, drove the cost of the naval race relentlessly upwards. Strategically stretched and weighed down by fiscal strain, the British government was forced to rely on the Anglo-Japanese alliance to guard its possessions in distant waters. Instead of a robust imperial presence in the Pacific, the Australasian dominions found, to their profound dissatisfaction, that their security had been effectively entrusted to the power they feared most. J.T. Hornsby, a New Zealand MP, voiced these concerns with devastating frankness:

We have been handed over to the Japs [*sic*]. The Pacific is deserted by the British fleet. We have a few tin cans floating in the Pacific which we call war-ships. There is not one of the first-class battleships of Japan that could not blow the whole lot of them out of the water in twenty minutes. You know perfectly well that is true, and I want to be prepared for the day, which for us will be the day of Armageddon.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> F.B. Vrooman, 'British Columbia and Her Imperial Outlook,' *British Columbia Magazine* 8:4 (April 1912), pp. 315-21.

<sup>13</sup> 'A White New Zealand: Prime Minister's Advice,' *NZH*, 28 Oct 1908.

<sup>14</sup> Cook Diary, 1908, NAA, Cook Papers, M3580/3, ff. 24-26.

<sup>15</sup> Christopher M Bell, "Sentiment vs Strategy: British Naval Policy, Imperial Defence, and the Development of Dominion Navies, 1911-14," *The International History Review* 37, no. 2 (February 5, 2014): 262-81.

<sup>16</sup> J.T. Hornsby, 17 July 1908, *NZPD*, HR, Vol. 143 (1908), cc. 589-91.

This sense of racial and strategic exposure fed two distinct impulses. The first, on which historians have tended to concentrate, was a tendency to hedge their dependence on the British fleet, through the development of autonomous defence forces. Nationalist rhetoric featured prominently in this: no nation worthy of the name, still less a ‘British nation’, could be satisfied with leaving its security in the hands of Japan. A tendency to connect nationhood to civic militarism, growing since the 1890s, was catalysed it into an unstoppable political force.<sup>17</sup> Others looked to the United States, a fellow bastion of white Anglo-Saxondom, to offset Britain’s withdrawal from the Pacific.<sup>18</sup> Yet at the same time, the Australasian dominions also made new demands of the imperial system: London, in their view, needed to recognise that the future of the ‘British race’ was bound up with the defence of the settler colonies, and act accordingly. Empire was explicitly tied to racial solidarity: ‘white Britishers against the world,’ noted *The Times*’ Sydney correspondent, was how most Australians defined the imperial tie.<sup>19</sup> By examining several key episodes in the years that followed the Russo-Japanese War – including the 1908 Pacific tour of the ‘Great White Fleet’, the 1909 dreadnought scare, and the imperial conference on defence – this chapter analyses how the ‘Pacific problem’ structured ideas of nationhood and empire, and in turn shaped both colonial and metropolitan views of the Anglo-Japanese relationship.

#### *Britannic nationalism and the Japanese threat*

Australia and New Zealand watched the eruption of the immigration crisis in North America with a sense of foreboding. Japan’s protests against the treatment of its nationals in California left few doubts over its growing power, and its willingness to use its new clout in pursuit of racial justice. ‘We are face to face with this fact,’ one Australian senator remarked, ‘that the Japanese can dictate to eighty-five million Americans that their children shall be treated on terms of equality in American schools.’<sup>20</sup> Calls for a more liberal interpretation of White Australia, voiced in the immediate aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War, now petered out: to anxious Australasians, the California crisis proved that permitting even a small number of Japanese immigrants was a recipe for social disorder, and would open the way for intervention from Tokyo. George Pearce pointedly warned his parliamentary colleagues to remember the fate of the Transvaal before allowing ‘a colony of Japanese *uitlanders*’ to establish itself in northern Australia.<sup>21</sup> The populist press, meanwhile, readily embraced the invasion narrative that had been taken up in North America: ‘The Japs [*sic*] grow every day more insolent’, the Sydney tabloid *Truth* commented after the Vancouver riots. ‘They marched from the ship from which they

---

<sup>17</sup> See Mitcham, *Race and Imperial Defence*.

<sup>18</sup> Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, pp. 190-209; Robert Chase, ‘Imagining an Anglo Ocean: the Great White Fleet in the Pacific,’ PhD Thesis, (University of California, Irvine, 2012).

<sup>19</sup> Jose to Grigg, 5 July 1910, ML, Jose Papers.

<sup>20</sup> C. Cameron, 20 Feb 1907, *CAPD*, Senate, Vol. 8 (1907), c.15.

<sup>21</sup> G.F. Pearce, 27 Sept 1905, *CAPD*, Senate, Vol. 39 (1905), c. 2812.

landed as if they were an invading army.<sup>22</sup> The implication was clear: there would be no compromises on 'White Australia,' and no attempt to replicate the Canadian 'gentlemen's agreement' with Tokyo.

That this claim to racial exclusivity would continue to generate friction with Japan was obvious. 'We are not making [the Japanese] our friends,' noted James Allen, the chief opposition spokesman on defence in the New Zealand parliament. 'We are doing everything we can to make them enemies by shutting out their men from our shores, and pointing to them as an inferior race with which we do not want our superior race to mix.'<sup>23</sup> W.M. Hughes similarly declared that Australians were living in a 'fool's paradise' if they failed to recognise that 'White Australia' was 'a policy certainly irritating... to some nations, no longer to be despised or spoken of as barbarian'. Sooner or later, Japan would challenge it, and Hughes insisted that during the California controversy only the sheer size and power of the United States had prevented Japan from demanding an end to racial discrimination outright. Australia, with a white population of less than five million, and 'within a few days' steaming distance of countries inhabited by nearly one billion of coloured people,' might not be so lucky.<sup>24</sup> Such fears fixated on the perceived vulnerabilities of the Australasian national projects: their position as white outposts close to the 'teeming millions' of Asia; their own small populations; and the exposure of their long coastlines to attack from the sea. In Australia, the greatest concern of all was the tropical north, the exposed strategic and racial flank of 'White Australia', where white Australians were desperately thin on the ground. Debates on whether the 'piebald' north could ever be turned into a true 'white man's country', or whether it would need to be developed as a plantation-style economy using Asian or Pacific Islander labour, persisted well into the 1930s.<sup>25</sup>

In turn, this sense of exposure reinforced a sense of dependence on the British connection: the 'crimson thread' of investment, white migrants, and external security. 'There is little that makes Northern Australia ours but the British fleet in close proximity to our shores,' declared Joseph Cook.<sup>26</sup> The *Sydney Morning Herald* similarly acknowledged that the Royal Navy was Australia's 'fist line of defence... a great barrier against the envy of the nations, and [a] wall against Asiatic pressure.'<sup>27</sup> There was some comfort in this. Yet there were several obvious reasons why sheltering under the imperial 'umbrella' now appeared a much less attractive answer to Australia's security problems than it had in the past. First, the staged withdrawal of British battleships to home waters after 1905 left the Royal Navy with a much-reduced regional presence. In practical terms, British sea power in the Pacific now leaned heavily on the Japanese

---

<sup>22</sup> 'Japanese Jingoism', *New Zealand Truth*, 5 Oct 1907

<sup>23</sup> J. Allen, 30 Sept 1908, *NZPD*, HR, Vol. 145 (1908), cc. 691-712.

<sup>24</sup> W.M. Hughes, 1 Aug 1907, *CAPD*, HR, Vol. 31 (1907), c. 1283.

<sup>25</sup> Walker, *Anxious Nation*, Ch. 9; Alison Bashford, "'Is White Australia Possible?' Race, Colonialism and Tropical Medicine," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23, no. 2 (2000): 248-71; Russell McGregor, "Drawing the Local Colour Line: White Australia and the Tropical North," *The Journal of Pacific History* 47, no. 3 (September 1, 2012): 329-46.

<sup>26</sup> J. Cook, 4 July 1907, *CAPD*, HR, Vol. 27 (1907), c.98.

<sup>27</sup> 'Australian Defence,' *SMH*, 14 Jan 1908.

alliance, an arrangement that seemed ‘almost perverse’ to many Australian eyes.<sup>28</sup> Second, doubts persisted about Britain’s capacity to understand or sympathise with the Australian predicament, particularly in regard to ‘White Australia’. Exclusion had been the subject of tense exchanges between Whitehall and the Australian colonies in the past, and many believed London still accepted the policy only grudgingly. The new Liberal government, which blew the imperial trumpet less loudly than its Unionist predecessor, was particularly suspect. ‘Every intelligent Englishman I’ve met out here who has given the matter any thought agrees with us,’ the Australian journalist Frank Fox reported to Deakin from London, ‘but the rest of the British people without a doubt look upon Asiatic Exclusion as a “labor fad” & are vexedly intolerant of it being allowed to interfere with Jap. alliances & so on.’<sup>29</sup>

This certainly summed up the view of *The Times* in London, which continued to lecture the dominions on the disruptive effects of exclusion. In January 1908, with the crises in British Columbia and the Transvaal still unresolved, Chirol again exhorted the ‘Sister States of the Empire’ to remember their ‘immense responsibilities’ to the rest of the empire, and not to decide policy purely on the basis of ‘the prejudices of a small local population.’ *The Times* also added the unobtrusive reminder that exclusion would be untenable were it not for the strategic umbrella provided by the British fleet. ‘The Colonies that most proudly proclaim their determination to be white man’s countries depend absolutely on the power of the Mother Country to remain white.’<sup>30</sup> In Sydney, a seething Arthur Jose regarded the article as nothing less than a ‘threat’, hinting ‘that the British navy may not be available to help us in a White Australia quarrel’.<sup>31</sup> The implications of all this were troubling. With Japan supreme in the northern Pacific, the survival of ‘White Australia’ – at least in its current, totalistic form – might well hinge on the lukewarm support of British officialdom. Australia’s own ‘manifest destiny’ in the Pacific, or even within its own continent, might well be permanently circumscribed. Such a future offered only a stunted version of the national project begun in the 1890s, and it was abhorrent to many in a society that had enshrined self-reliance alongside racial purity in the national pantheon.

These strands of racial and strategic anxiety had deep roots in Australian nationalism, yet as Neville Meaney has noted, it was the growth of Japanese power that brought them together ‘into a systemic analysis’ of Australia’s strategic position.<sup>32</sup> Strategic exposure, and dependence on the British connection – ‘colonial’ in the pejorative sense – meant that the national project would have to be accelerated. This development was made up of several vectors. One was demographic: a renewed emphasis on population growth, centred on concerns over Australia’s supposedly low birth rate and its failure to attract sufficient numbers of white

---

28 Stuart Ward, “Security: Defending Australia's Empire,” in *Australia's Empire*, ed. Deryck Schreuder, (Oxford, 2010), pp. 232–58.

29 Fox to Deakin, 1907 [content suggests after 13 Dec], NLA, Deakin Papers, 1/16, f. 1840.

30 ‘The Asiatic Difficulty,’ *The Times*, 2 Jan 1908.

31 Jose to Deakin, 13 Jan 1908, NLA, Deakin Papers, 15/5/48, f. 3620.

32 Meaney, *Search for Security*, p. 121.

migrants. ‘Population we must have,’ Sir Walter James, a former premier of South Australia, wrote to Deakin, ‘and unless we get it white and quickly we shall have it yellow and surely.’ Five million whites, as James pointed out, could hardly claim an entire continent for their exclusive use. ‘If I were an Englishman and looked into Australia,’ he noted, ‘I should I fear be inclined to think that the Commonwealth would be a more valuable part of the world if handed over to Japan and China.’<sup>33</sup> A single, national immigration strategy, like that recently implemented in Canada, would have to supplant that of the individual Australian states. Hughes similarly argued that if ‘the White Australia policy is to be a permanence in this country, there must be behind it a sufficient force of white Australians’.<sup>34</sup> Again, it was the ‘empty’ north that proved the greatest cause for concern: Richard Arthur, the president of the immigration league, called for a ‘Northern Australia Commission’ to develop the territory, if need be by recruiting southern European or even Jewish settlers.<sup>35</sup>

If Australia needed more people, it also needed them fitter and stronger. Proposals to establish universal military training for young Australian men had been mooted since the 1890s, but gathered new momentum after 1905.<sup>36</sup> Deakin’s Protectionists favoured it, as did a growing share of the Labour party, which officially included universal military training in its electoral platform in 1908. The connection with Australia’s racial security was made explicit: ‘the man who voted for a White Australia,’ as one Labour delegate put it, ‘should be prepared to carry his rifle in support of that principle’.<sup>37</sup> Pearce similarly insisted that ‘Our White Australia legislation is so much waste paper unless we have rifles behind it, and are prepared to back it up by force if necessary’.<sup>38</sup> Civic militarism, in other words, was meant to serve a dual purpose: it would help secure Australia, while simultaneously instilling the nation with an ethos of civic pride, martial vigour, and self-sufficiency. For Hughes, who cited the ancient Greeks and modern Swiss as inspiration, universal training would teach Australians to rely ‘on ourselves alone’ as their first line of defence.<sup>39</sup>

This renewed emphasis on self-reliance was also evident in the naval sphere. Australia paid an annual subsidy towards the upkeep of the Royal Navy, set in 1903 at £ 200,000 per year. Per capita, this represented a small fraction (about one-fifteenth) of the navy’s costs to the British taxpayer. Nevertheless, the subsidy proved increasingly controversial, less because of its cost and more since, as a ‘passive’ form of defence, it was held to be incompatible with cultivating a sense

---

<sup>33</sup> James to Deakin, 16 Oct 1906, NLA, Deakin Papers, 1/13, f. 1546.

<sup>34</sup> W.M. Hughes, 7 Oct 1908, *CAPD*, HR, Vol. 41 (1908), cc. 877-78.

<sup>35</sup> Walker, *Anxious Nation*, p. 116-17. Arthur’s willingness to compromise on White Australia prompted the formation of a rival British Immigration League dedicated to an ‘Anglo-Saxon first’ policy.

<sup>36</sup> Craig A.J. Stockings, *The Torch and the Sword: a History of the Army Cadet Movement in Australia*, (Sydney, 2007), Ch. 2; Mitcham, *Race and Imperial Defence*, Ch. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Mark Hearn, ‘Bound with the Empire: Narratives of Race, Nation, and Empire in the Australian Labor Party’s Defence Policy, 1901–21,’ *War and Society* 32, no. 2 (August 2013): 95–115.

<sup>38</sup> John Connor, *Anzac and Empire: George Foster Pearce and the Foundations of Australian Defence* (Melbourne, 2011), p. 17.

<sup>39</sup> W.M. Hughes, 1 Aug 1907, *CAPD*, HR, Vol. 31 (1907), cc. 1282-89.

of Australian self-sufficiency. In January 1906, therefore, Deakin's government petitioned the Colonial Office to allow Australia to designate a portion of its subsidy for a local flotilla for coastal defence – an embryonic Australian navy. Writing in the *Morning Post*, Deakin argued that the proposal sprang from the 'sentiment of the duty of self-defence' in Australia. This was a feeling, moreover, that 'growing stronger the more we realise our strategically perilous position south of the Asian peoples'.<sup>40</sup> In London's view, however, the scheme was positively regressive: in an age of global naval competition, local 'tin-pot navies' of the sort Deakin was proposing were held to be a strategic irrelevance. According to Winston Churchill, the under-secretary at the Colonial Office, the arrangement would 'never provide any ships of any serious value'. Worse, if Melbourne was allowed to run its own flotilla in the Pacific, it might lead Britain into all sorts of 'nasty diplomatic situations'.<sup>41</sup> Nor did London share Deakin's assessment of Australia's strategic requirements. A CID report on Australian defence, published in April 1906 – doubtlessly hoping to set Antipodean minds at ease – concluded that as long as the Royal Navy remained supreme in European waters, the Commonwealth was not at risk of invasion, and at most needed to fortify its harbours in anticipation of a small raid. 'The Imperial Navy must for many years be your main defence,' Sir George Clarke wrote to Deakin in an accompanying letter. 'Its guardianship will lose nothing of reality or of power if fewer of H.M. ships remain in your waters... In present naval conditions, all idea of the invasion of Australia can be dismissed.'<sup>42</sup>

Deakin was undeterred. In December 1907, he presented a new defence programme to parliament, which made provision for universal military training and for the diversion of the naval subsidy to a fleet unit under Australian control. Without explicitly naming Japan, Deakin argued that Australia could no longer remain complacent in its isolation from Europe: every passing year brought it in closer touch with the 'the subjects of other peoples planted in our neighbourhood, and with the interests of other peoples more or less antagonistic to our own.' Australia now needed to preserve its 'national life and ideals'; White Australia first among them.<sup>43</sup> George Pearce offered his personal congratulations on the new policy, 'so long, and I confess *on my part* so impatiently waited for'. He considered the announcements especially timely in view of the bellicose noises recently made by Count Ōkuma, a former Japanese prime minister, on the California dispute. 'Above all, we must watch to the North... As an Australian who wants to keep Australia for the white race I say "well done."<sup>44</sup>

Sheer distance meant that the Japanese threat was trotted out less frequently in New Zealand – one MP predicted that a Japanese invasion would remain unlikely for 'hundreds of

---

<sup>40</sup> Deakin to the *Morning Post*, 20 Aug 1906, in J.A. La Nauze (ed.), *Federated Australia: Selections from Letters to the Morning Post, 1900-1910*, (Melbourne, 1968), pp. 190-92.

<sup>41</sup> Cited in Meaney, *Search for Security*, p. 155.

<sup>42</sup> Clarke to Deakin, 14 Feb 1906, NLA, Deakin Papers, 15/5/48, f. 3565.

<sup>43</sup> A. Deakin, 13 Dec 1907, *CAPD*, HR, Vol. 50 (1907), cc. 7509-18.

<sup>44</sup> Pearce to Deakin, Dec 1907 [content suggests after 13 Dec], NLA, Deakin Papers, 15/5/48, f. 3618.



years<sup>45</sup> – but here too, an Asian spectre was invoked to justify new initiatives in the pursuit of nation-building. Joseph Ward, who had succeeded to the premiership after Richard Seddon's death in 1906, was initially sceptical of Australia's march down the path of local navalism: the real guarantee of New Zealand's security, was 'the great and binding tie of the interests of common race' joining it to Great Britain and the protection of the British fleet.<sup>46</sup> Others were not so certain. Speaking during a debate on defence policy, William Massey, the leader of the opposition, urged his colleagues to remember 'the developments in the East in the last fifteen years'. British protection might no longer suffice: New Zealand needed to prepare itself for 'any possibilities that might occur'.<sup>47</sup> The sentiment was echoed across the house: Thomas Mackenzie, who would succeed Ward as prime minister in 1912, similarly noted 'the great development that is taking place in the East at the present time... the Japanese demonstrated to the world that the white races were not invulnerable... and they are now developing at a rate unprecedented in the history of the world.' New Zealand owed its present security to 'the sheltering arms of the Mother-country', yet without that protection, 'our helplessness would become absolutely pitiable'.<sup>48</sup> Allen, too, insisted, that New Zealand was not doing 'our duty as men with a noble country to defend', and should follow the Australians in seeking to develop its own naval presence: 'If the Chinese and the Japanese are to have "Dreadnoughts"... then some day we must have them also.'<sup>49</sup>

This emphasis on nation-building and emancipation from a passive 'colonial' mentality clearly harked back to a tradition of isolationism, and has led some historians to interpret Australasia's embrace of civic militarism as a sign of growing ambivalence about the British connection. Yet the point should not be exaggerated: in rhetoric and in practice, Australasian nationalism continued to vocally identify itself with the British world. The exponents of civic militarism held instilling patriotism and martial pride to be central to the development of the Pacific dominions into 'British nations'.<sup>50</sup> Thus Allen declared that, 'as a New Zealander and a Britisher,' he hoped New Zealand would do more to shoulder the burdens of its own defence, and join the Australians in doing its 'duty [to] police the Pacific ocean'.<sup>51</sup> Deakin expressed a similar sentiment to the officers of the visiting American fleet in 1908: 'Those who say that we should sit still are not British, and are not worthy of the name of Briton. You cannot be content to expect defence at any other hands than your own.'<sup>52</sup> There were also firm practical reasons why national *Bildung* accorded a central role to the imperial connection. For one, dominion politicians remained profoundly aware that their territorial and racial security was tied up with

---

<sup>45</sup> A. Malcolm, 30 Sept 1908, *NZPD*, HR, Vol. 145 (1908), cc. 691-712.

<sup>46</sup> J. Ward, *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> W.F. Massey, *ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> T. Mackenzie, *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> J. Allen, *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> See Mitcham, *Race and Imperial Defence*.

<sup>51</sup> J. Allen, 14 June 1909, *NZPD*, HR, Vol. 146 (1909), cc. 179-83.

<sup>52</sup> 'Speech at the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria,' 1 Sept 1908, NLA, Deakin Papers, 15/5/48, f. 3878.

British sea power. Deakin never intended for his autonomous naval unit to be the sole guarantor of Australian security: if anything, the modest flotilla that Melbourne was proposing, composed of nine submarines and six torpedo boats, presupposed that it would be acting in support of a larger British force. Deakin's Britannic rhetoric placed his fleet scheme squarely within a larger, pan-imperial purpose: as Australia came of age as a 'British nation', it would play an ever-larger share in maintaining British supremacy in its own oceanic neighbourhood. After all, as he declared to parliament, the 'national instinct of the sea... lives in our section of the race as much as in any other'.<sup>53</sup> Nation, race, and empire would march in step.

This claim placed Australasia's concerns over its racial security at the rhetorical centre of the British world. The logic was clear: nation-building would transform the southern dominions into local bastions of British power, helping in turn to preserve the global supremacy of the 'British race' in the coming century. There was nothing disloyal, therefore, about seeking to divert their contributions to imperial defence into national forces. By extension, preserving Australasia as a 'white man's country', and shielding it from external aggression, were *imperial* as well as national interests, and needed to be recognised as such. The young Australian journalist C.E.W. Bean put it trenchantly in a letter to the *Spectator*:

Need you ask: How will the existence of a great British sea nation in the Antipodes, with British ideas and interests, and a big navy, affect that other forty millions of Britons in the North Sea? Remember, this is the last land open to the white man – the only one that can be purely British.<sup>54</sup>

This was a claim, moreover, to which a portion of British opinion proved highly receptive. As Richard Jebb's *Morning Post* noted, the establishment of Australia and New Zealand as autonomous naval powers would a momentous development, that would in turn release the empire 'from dependence upon other allies in that quarter of the globe'.<sup>55</sup> Even *The Times* acknowledged that colonial opinion, in its stolid defence of whiteness, 'is fighting in its own belief for a vital principle of Imperial power'.<sup>56</sup> This Britannic gloss did not, in and of itself, guarantee political harmony. There was little appetite for the schemes of imperial reform that the Australasians were touting: as far as Whitehall was concerned, the Anglo-Japanese alliance remained the best guarantee of British security east of Singapore, and dominion navies were unlikely to be a credible alternative anytime soon. Moreover, the racial exclusivity through which Deakin and others framed their appeals for imperial cooperation struck many in London as dangerously reductionist. 'I laugh when I think of a man who blows the imperial trumpet louder

---

<sup>53</sup> A. Deakin, 13 Dec 1907, *CAPD*, HR, Vol. 50 (1907), c. 7511.

<sup>54</sup> C.E.W. Bean, 'The Real Significance of the White Australia Question,' *Spectator*, 13 July 1907.

<sup>55</sup> *Morning Post*, 16 Oct 1908, cited in Mitcham, *Race and Imperial Defence*, p. 138.

<sup>56</sup> 'Australian Ideals,' *The Times*, 5 Sept 1908.

than other people,' wrote Morley of Deakin, 'and yet would banish India, which is the most stupendous part of the Empire... into the imperial back-kitchen.'<sup>57</sup>

*'Stars and Stripes, if you please, protect us from the Japanese'*

These tensions between Australasia's aspirations and London's reality surfaced during the summer of 1908, when the American Atlantic fleet visited Australia and New Zealand as part of its Pacific tour. The journey had been announced in July 1907 as a training exercise, but few doubted that its true purpose was, as the British naval attaché in Washington reported, 'the final settlement of the Japanese immigration question'.<sup>58</sup> Concerned that American efforts towards a formal immigration treaty (to replace the informal 'gentlemen's agreement') were making little headway in Tokyo, Roosevelt decided to turn up the pressure by tilting America's naval power to the Pacific; it was no use speaking softly, after all, while the big stick drifted on the wrong side of the continent. Roosevelt reiterated the point during his discussions with Mackenzie King. Without a credible military presence in the Pacific, Japan had been 'taking advantage': 'I decided to send the fleet into the Pacific, it may help them to understand that we want a definite arrangement'.<sup>59</sup> Such bellicose language caused concern in London: the Foreign Office doubted that Roosevelt was in earnest, yet the introduction of the fleet into the volatile politics of the immigration crisis was nonetheless troubling.

Initially, British anxieties concentrated on Canada: during his talks with King, Roosevelt had offered to send the fleet to visit Vancouver, and Laurier had received several petitions from prominent British Columbians to formally invite it. According to one Vancouver city councillor, a fleet visit 'would be an object lesson to Asiatics and would show them that the Anglo-Saxons were united'.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, given the implicit anti-Japanese motives for the tour, there is no question that such a move would have been highly provocative; it might even spark another wave of racial violence. McInnes, Ottawa's agent in Vancouver, warned Laurier that the local Asiatic Exclusion League would have to be purged of its American elements before the fleet's arrival, or another riot might be in the offing.<sup>61</sup> He also urged Lord Grey to come out west, as the presence of the governor-general might help steady 'the Imperial spirit of our people', and keep 'our young fellows from being too much impressed with the might of Washington and the glory of the Stars & Stripes'.<sup>62</sup> Laurier needed little encouragement for caution: keeping the Americans at arms'

---

<sup>57</sup> Morley to Minto, 2 May 1907, BL, Morley Papers, MSS Eur/D573/2.

<sup>58</sup> 'Report Respecting the Naval Situation in the Pacific,' in Howard to Grey, 19 Feb 1908, FO 371/473/7195.

<sup>59</sup> King Diary, 25 Jan 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG-26/J-13 [digital], ff. 2177-83.

<sup>60</sup> Cited in David C. Atkinson, "The Burdens of Whiteness: Asian Immigration Restriction and White Supremacy in the British Empire and the United States, 1897-1924," PhD Thesis, (Boston University, 2010), p. 281.

<sup>61</sup> McInnes to Laurier, 7 Nov 1907, LAC, Laurier Papers, Mf. C-854, ff. 131593-600.

<sup>62</sup> McInnes to Grey, 13 Feb 1908, in Grey to Elgin, 20 Feb 1908, TNA, CO 42/918/7611.

length had been a guiding principle of his approach throughout the immigration crisis. The fleet would not be going to Vancouver.

It came as an unpleasant surprise, therefore, when Deakin circumvented the Colonial Office to issue an invitation of his own. After taking soundings from the American consul in Sydney, Deakin made a personal appeal to Whitelaw Reid, the U.S. ambassador in London, in January 1908: Australia was 'deeply interested' in the voyage of the fleet, and would greatly welcome an opportunity to receive its American 'kinsmen' during 'their timely demonstration of naval power'.<sup>63</sup> This broke protocol – the dominions were expected not to communicate directly with the representatives of foreign powers – but since word of the invitation had already made its way to Washington, Deakin had effectively backed London into a corner. 'I do not see how we could possibly refuse,' concluded Sir Charles Hardinge, the permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office.<sup>64</sup> Roosevelt was only too delighted to accept. Mackenzie King, who returned to Washington a few days after the inclusion of Australia in the fleet's itinerary had been announced, found the president relishing the idea of turning the tour into a demonstration of Anglo-Saxon solidarity. '[Deakin] is very anxious to have the fleet visit his waters,' he told King. 'It is all for the same object, to impress these other peoples [e.g. the Japanese] with the common interest.'<sup>65</sup> The United States took a keen interest in the preservation of the Australian continent for 'white civilization': 'If the population of that country is not increasing and strengthening, how can it defend itself against the blackbird or the yellow-skin?'<sup>66</sup> On another occasion, Roosevelt told a group of visiting Canadian MPs 'very vehemently' that the demonstration of American naval power was 'in the interest of the whole Pacific Coast, the interest of British Columbia as well as those of California, and it is in the interests of Australia as well.' Asked whether he held the Monroe Doctrine to apply to British Columbia, Roosevelt replied: 'Yes, and to Australia as well - if it is doesn't I'll make it apply!' When word of this exchange reached London, the Foreign Office could only consider it 'a mercy' that this latest round of presidential indiscretion had not made its way into the press: 'This is taller talk on the part of the President than anything we have had yet.'<sup>67</sup>

There was little doubt in Whitehall that the sight of American warships in Australian ports was intended as 'a demonstration for the delectation of Japan', and Deakin's meddling in imperial foreign policy led to a great deal of official grumbling.<sup>68</sup> When Australia subsequently contacted the Colonial Office with a view to inviting Roosevelt to visit Australia personally after the end of his presidency, one official thought the request 'unworthy' even by Australian standards: 'To play off U.S. against us is not only foolish (for U.S. will not fight Japan for Aust'),

---

<sup>63</sup> Deakin to Whitelaw Reid, 7 Jan 1908, in Northcote to Elgin, 4 March 1908, CO 418/60/11989.

<sup>64</sup> Hardinge to Bryce, 21 Feb 1908, BLO, Bryce Papers, Mf 83.

<sup>65</sup> King Diary, 24 Feb 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG-26, J-13, Microfiche 96.

<sup>66</sup> King Diary, 31 Jan 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG-26, J-13, Microfiche 92.

<sup>67</sup> Bryce to Grey, 20 Feb 1908, FO 371/473/7715. Minute by Campbell.

<sup>68</sup> Minute by Hopwood, 12 February 1908, CO 418/60/5138.

but is intended to be used to induce us to break our Japanese alliance.’<sup>69</sup> Deakin was hardly troubled by official displeasure, again brushing over petty objections by appealing to a higher imperial cause. As he noted to Leo Amery, the minutiae of official protocol surely paled in comparison to the significance of the occasion. If the visit would help ‘to bring the great English-speaking peoples together,’ then surely that would be ‘a very good day for the Empire’?<sup>70</sup>

Yet this remained a vision of empire that was framed overtly in racial terms. The Colonial Office guessed Deakin’s motives correctly: the fleet’s visit to Australia was meant to showcase the bonds between the United States and the British world, and demonstrate their common determination to preserve their societies as ‘white man’s countries. Writing, anonymously, in the *Morning Post*, Deakin noted that most Australians associated the visit ‘with the racial disputes which recently became acute’ on the Pacific coast of North America, and keenly sympathised with their fellow Anglo-Saxons. ‘Nowhere in the Empire,’ he noted, ‘and perhaps nowhere outside the Southern States of the Union is the import of the colour question more keenly realised than in the Commonwealth.’<sup>71</sup> Deakin was even more candid with his friend Richard Jebb:

The visit of the U.S. fleet is universally popular here not so much because of our blood affection for the Americans, though that is sincere, but because of our distrust of the Yellow races in the North Pacific & our recognition of the ‘entente cordiale’ spreading among all white races who realise the Yellow Peril to Caucasian civilisation, creeds, & politics.<sup>72</sup>

The visit’s popularity was indeed overwhelming. When it arrived in New Zealand on 9 August 1908, a crowd of 100,000 people (one in every ten New Zealanders) watched the fleet steam into the harbour of Auckland.<sup>73</sup> Its entries into Sydney and Melbourne drew crowds of over half a million. The sheer scale of the festivities, the largest public spectacle since federation, undoubtedly accounted for much of the celebratory mood. Yet it was also clear that the visit offered the southern dominions an opportunity to voice their racial and geopolitical concerns: many explicitly welcomed the Americans as allies in the expected struggle between ‘white civilisation’ and an expanding Asia. One Australian legislator believed that ‘the entire population of Australia regard the arrival of the Fleet as the presage of a future distinct understanding with the United States of America, respecting the yellow peril to the white races in Australia’.<sup>74</sup> One of his counterparts in New Zealand similarly declared that he was ‘pleased America had invaded the Pacific’, since it would help to preserve New Zealand against the danger of ‘Asiatic aggression’. The United States might not owe allegiance to the crown, but ‘in every other sense’ it was ‘a

---

<sup>69</sup> Minutes on Dudley to Crewe, 18 Sept 1908, CO 418/61/34152.

<sup>70</sup> Deakin to Amery, 3 Aug 1908, CCAC, Amery Papers, AMEL 2/5/7.

<sup>71</sup> *Morning Post*, 14 Apr 1908, cited in La Nauze, *Federated Australia*, p. 229.

<sup>72</sup> Deakin to Jebb, 4 June 1908, ICS, Jebb Papers (A).

<sup>73</sup> See Taylor, ‘New Zealand and the 1908 Visit of the American Fleet’; Meaney, *Search for Security* p. 167.

<sup>74</sup> H. Sinclair, 3 Nov 1908, *CAPD*, HR, Vol. 45 (1908), c. 1854.

British Power... united with our Empire by ties of commercial, racial, and sentimental interests'.<sup>75</sup> Such feelings were widely echoed in the press. William Lane, the editor of the *New Zealand Herald*, waxed lyrically over the 'thunder of guns, and the cheering of white-faced crews'. Blood was thicker than water: 'British and American will be found shoulder to when the West clinches in death-grip with the East.'<sup>76</sup> Or, as some mercifully brief doggerel in the *Wellington Post* had it: 'Stars and Stripes, if you please/Protect us from the Japanese.'<sup>77</sup> Indeed, the torrent of racial rhetoric somewhat embarrassed the fleet's commanding officer, Admiral Charles Sperry, who noted to his wife that he had to be careful not to encourage it further, 'as the Asiatic question causes great excitement here.'<sup>78</sup>

This roaring reception signified how far Australasia's perspective on global politics, and on Japan in particular, was shifting away from official policy in London. As the fleet left Sydney, the American correspondent for the *Morning Post* remarked that although Australia was bound to Japan by the alliance, there was nowhere else in the world 'where the Japanese are more bitterly disliked than on the island continent'.<sup>79</sup> Indeed, it was impossible not to read the fleet celebrations as an implicit criticism of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. As a subsequent report from the British embassy in Tokyo attested, this was threatening to become a serious irritant in the relationship:

the constant reiteration in the press and on the platform of the old theme of a white Australia and a white New Zealand which is to be upheld at all cost, and in the last resort with the assistance of the American fleet, cannot but be galling to a proud nation like the Japanese, who have recently so far lowered their pride as to consent to restriction being placed on the free entry of their nationals into the continent of North America.<sup>80</sup>

Chirol, still a leading voice in a dwindling Japanophile chorus, privately fumed that Australia had rewarded Tokyo's reasonable attitude in the immigration question by issuing a 'demonstrative invitation to the American fleet' as a none-too-subtle 'warning'.<sup>81</sup>

The Australasian flirtation with American naval power was no less disconcerting to self-declared imperialists. Lucas at the Colonial Office warned that if Britain failed to reassure its colonists that the empire would guarantee their racial security, there was a 'constant and serious danger' that 'the United States may stand out... as the leaders of the English-speaking peoples in the Pacific against the coloured races. This is not my view alone.'<sup>82</sup> Amery similarly cautioned Deakin that the fleet visit had given 'impressionable people' the idea that 'the USA might be

---

<sup>75</sup> J.A. Hanan, 16 July 1908, NZPD, HR, Vol. 143 (1908), c. 555.

<sup>76</sup> 'Tohunga' [William Lane], 'Lords of the Pacific' NZH, 4 April 1908.

<sup>77</sup> Lisle A. Rose, *Power at Sea: the Age of Navalism, 1890-1918*, (Columbia, MO, 2007), p. 146.

<sup>78</sup> Cited in Walker, *Anxious Nation*, p. 96.

<sup>79</sup> Cited in Rose, *Power at Sea*, p. 145.

<sup>80</sup> 'Japanese Immigration,' report by Robert Clive, in Macdonald to Grey, 19 Sept 1908, TNA, FO 371/474/32546.

<sup>81</sup> Chirol to Morrison, 7 May 1908, CGEM, pp. 450-55.

<sup>82</sup> 'The Self-Governing Dominions and Coloured Immigration,' Memorandum by Lucas, CO 886/1/1, p. 54.

Australia's stand-by in case of trouble with Japan, which is tantamount to presupposing that the Imperial Gov't prefers the Japanese alliance to Australia.'<sup>83</sup> The suggestion that Australia was welcoming the Americans not merely as guests but as 'possible defenders' would in the long run do great harm to the cause of imperial unity. Even *The Times* acknowledged that the defence of the White Pacific would prove a powerful centrifugal force:

With New Zealand, British Columbia, and the United States, modern Australia believes herself the trustee of white civilisation in the Pacific amidst the awakening forces of the East. The welcome extended to the American battleships owes its spontaneity partly to this idea... Their welcome is the warmer that they have lately felt new doubts of England's sympathy and support.<sup>84</sup>

Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds have cited these tensions as evidence that the fleet offered Australasians the opportunity to imagine 'a transnational fraternity of white men,' that might act as an alternative to the 'hierarchical' British imperial system.<sup>85</sup> This overstates the case. Declarations of Anglo-Saxon solidarity did not necessarily indicate a desire to replace – or even supplement – the British connection with an amorphous attachment to the United States. The mere suggestion prompted several New Zealand legislators to warn that too fulsome praise for the Americans might cross over into disloyalty. The member for Dunedin North found himself 'unable to understand why we should prostrate ourselves in adulation' before the American fleet.<sup>86</sup> One opposition member similarly remarked that 'we were asked... to grovel before our visitors', as if 'John Bull is too old and feeble now to protect us'. This was surely nonsense: 'If the time does come when the white race has to fight the yellow one... the Union Jack will be there... on the front as usual'.<sup>87</sup> Deakin himself explicitly denied that his invitation to the fleet was intended as a sign of 'our looking for support to America instead of the Empire'. This was 'too silly for words'.<sup>88</sup> To emphasise the point, the Australian government requested a visit from a British fleet, 'as impressive as possible in size and quality,' a little over two weeks after the departure of the Americans.<sup>89</sup> Nonetheless, the fleet visit made clear that the southern dominions were becoming increasingly assertive – and creative – in foisting their own distinct outlook on empire on London.

---

<sup>83</sup> Amery to Deakin, 1 April 1908, CCAC, Amery Papers, AMEL 2/2/8.

<sup>84</sup> 'Australian Ideals: A White Australia and its Defence,' *The Times*, 5 Sept 1908.

<sup>85</sup> Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, p. 207; Lake, "British World or New World?" puts the argument more trenchantly.

<sup>86</sup> A. Barclay, 21 July 1908, NZPD, HR, Vol. 143 (1908), c. 199.

<sup>87</sup> W. Fraser, 21 July 1908, NZPD, HR, Vol. 143 (1908), c. 658.

<sup>88</sup> 'The American Fleet in Australasia,' *The Times*, 10 Aug 1908.

<sup>89</sup> Dudley to Crewe, 14 Sept 1908, CO 418/61/33647.

Thus far, London had paid little heed to the discontented noises rising up from the Pacific, but the sands were shifting. Asquith's elevation to the premiership in April 1908 laid the basis for an imperial turn in British policy, as Reginald McKenna, who replaced the ailing Lord Tweedmouth at the Admiralty, brought a more sympathetic view of colonial concerns to his new appointment. When Deakin, after learning of the new occupant at Admiralty House, made another bid to secure Britain's blessing for an Australian navy, McKenna proved more receptive than his predecessor.<sup>90</sup> The Second Sea Lord, William May, similarly argued that there was no reasonable prospect that Australia would continue writing cheques for a navy kept in the North Sea, whereas it would spend more generously on a force it could identify as distinctly Australian. As he noted to McKenna, London should look benevolently on 'a local defence force independently administered, but closely identified with the Imperial Navy'. Admiral May recognised that London had more to gain from co-opting Australia's national navalism than resisting it: 'It is desirable from an Imperial point of view that a country like Australia should foster a maritime spirit, and this ought not to be lost sight of.' Besides, the creation of a local force might also yield strategic benefits: 'Without some naval defence Mr Deakin's National Guards would be a very inadequate protection against a sudden determined attack from a Power such as Japan.'<sup>91</sup>

Strategic crisis gave these ideas force and direction. The growth of the German navy had loomed increasingly large in defence planning since 1905, but until now, the Admiralty had been confident it could retain the 'two-power standard', the traditional measure of naval supremacy, without overstraining Britain's domestic resources. That assumption was dramatically overturned in December 1908, when reports reached the cabinet that Germany was accelerating its naval programme. The revelation that British naval supremacy might be seriously under threat provoked a frenzied response from the Conservative opposition and the press, and soon acquired the character of a naval panic spanning across the entire British world.

The 'dreadnought scare' acquired a distinct complexion in the British Pacific, where it brought the conflicting demands of the imperial connection and local fears of Asia into clearer focus. As the naval scare was reported in the press, pressure immediately mounted on the dominion governments to come to the assistance of 'the Mother of our race', as one parliamentarian put it.<sup>92</sup> Little more than a week after McKenna had presented the new naval estimates to the Commons, the New Zealand government announced that it would bear the full cost of a dreadnought, and would fund another one if necessary. Not to be outdone, in Australia, the conservative press and the opposition called on the government to follow New Zealand's

---

<sup>90</sup> McKenna to Deakin, 22 June 1908, McKenna Papers, CCAC, MCKN 3/13.

<sup>91</sup> Minute by William May, 22 Oct 1908, McKenna Papers, CCAC, MCKN 3/13.

<sup>92</sup> G. Forbes, 11 June 1909, *NZPD*, HR, Vol. 146 (1909), c. 42.



example, and provide a battleship – or several – of its own. In an effort to stir the federal government into action, the state premiers of Victoria and New South Wales started ‘dreadnought funds’ to solicit private contributions. Britannic rhetoric lay heavy in the air. The *New Zealand Herald* pledged its ‘unqualified endorsement’ to the donation: ‘the unsolicited rallying of the Colonies round their Mother Country,’ it noted, would show Germany that Britannia still ruled the waves. ‘The sea is English and English it must remain.’<sup>93</sup> The *Sydney Morning Herald* loudly joined the call for a dreadnought donation, declaring that it was Australia ‘real and abiding duty’ to provide for ‘the maintenance of an impregnable British navy, ready to strike at once, and to strike for all’.<sup>94</sup> Joseph Cook, leader of the opposition, thought the dreadnought agitation a striking illustration of imperial unity, noting in his diary that the empire was ‘a coherent whole; not an aggregation of unrelated pieces to be jolted to pieces at the first jar’.<sup>95</sup>

Yet the call to rally around the Mother Country did not mean that the dormant Asian threat was suddenly forgotten. ‘Britannic’ sentiment drew forcefully on the argument that British naval supremacy remained the best guarantee of the security – and racial purity – of the Australasian dominions, since a defeat in the North Sea would leave the dominions at the mercy of the ‘teeming millions’ of Asia. In a speech a few days after the dreadnought offer, Ward reiterated that the dominion owed ‘the maintenance of a condition for the white race, superior probably to that of any other country in the world’ to the Royal Navy; its defeat ‘would sound to us our death knell’.<sup>96</sup> A week later, he reiterated that his decision had been motivated by a determination ‘to maintain unsullied... a country peopled by a white race proud to belong to the Old Land’.<sup>97</sup> The argument was made more explicitly when the gift was debated in the New Zealand parliament in June 1909. ‘Let the British navy be stricken in the North Sea by a German combination,’ proclaimed one member of Ward’s Liberal party, ‘and the vultures would soon be down on this country.’ It was clear which particular predator he had in mind:

Consider, also, that not three weeks sail from our shores is that puissant nation the Japanese, with a magnificent fleet, and which, were it not that the flag of England flies over this country, would probably at an early date be in possession of these Islands.<sup>98</sup>

In Australia, too, Japan loomed large over the dreadnought debates. Deakin, who had come out in favour of a donation, argued that Australia, with ‘her neighbours so close at hand’, would rely on British protection for decades to come.<sup>99</sup> If Britain were to lose its naval supremacy in the North Sea, it would be left defenceless. Similar fears motivated Cook: ‘British naval defeat means

---

<sup>93</sup> ‘New Zealand and the Fleet’, *NZH*, 23 March 1909

<sup>94</sup> *SMH*, 31 March 1909

<sup>95</sup> Cook Diary, 4 April 1909, NLA, Cook Papers, MS 2212/1.

<sup>96</sup> ‘The N.Z. Dreadnought’, *Evening Star*, 25 March 1909.

<sup>97</sup> ‘The Dreadnought: At the Call of Empire’, *NZH*, 3 April 1909.

<sup>98</sup> G.W. Russell, 12 June 1909, *NZPD*, HR, Vol. 146 (1909), cc. 108-11.

<sup>99</sup> ‘The Gympie Speech: Criticisms by Mr Deakin’, *SMH*, 8 April 1909

more for us than G.B.: It means for them white dominance – it means for us brown-coloured. The enemies of White Australia are those who will not offer [a] Dreadnought.<sup>100</sup>

Nevertheless, this identification of the dominions' security with the imperial connection proved bitterly divisive. Financing battleships to be stationed in the North Sea was at odds with the national navalism on which colonial opinion was increasingly coming to insist. Moreover, the Admiralty's increasingly myopic focus on Germany meant that naval supremacy in the Pacific would still be left, unpalatably, to Japan. Admiral W.R. Creswell, director of the Australian naval force and a long-standing advocate for an Australian navy, made the point in a letter to Jebb:

It is always the great Naval action in European waters that will decide Australia's fate – so we have always been told. Is there the same certainty now that the Jap [*sic*] has had the Pacific made over to him? How long will that alliance last?<sup>101</sup>

Australia's government, headed since November 1908 by Deakin's erstwhile coalition partners in the Labour party, thought along similar lines.<sup>102</sup> A week after New Zealand's gift had been announced, the new prime minister, Andrew Fisher, pledged that Australia would do its duty by the empire by accelerating its own defence programme, introducing universal military training, and establishing an Australian navy of twenty-three destroyers. Instead of simply donating to the Royal Navy, Australia would make itself the 'naval base for the Empire in the South Pacific'.<sup>103</sup> As Labour defended its policies against the charge of disloyalty, references to Japan again featured prominently. Fisher pointedly noted that naval competition might soon shift again from the North Sea to the 'Near East'.<sup>104</sup> Pearce similarly referred to the danger of a 'nation that was not Germany, but was darker skinned', and which he believed was spying out Australia's northern coastline.<sup>105</sup> Self-declared loyalists groaned with disappointment, yet found it difficult to dismiss these concerns about the vulnerability of Australia.

Even in New Zealand, where the imperial trumpet was blown loudest of all, Britannic loyalism was hedged by geo-racial anxiety. The attitude of the *New Zealand Herald* was typical: it supported the dreadnought, but insisted that the British fleet should not be considered the sole guarantor of the dominion, and that the government would have to accompany it with a drive to improve local defence, attract more immigrants, and introduce compulsory military training. Above all, it concluded, 'Every New Zealander ought to keep constantly present in his mind the shutting of our gates against Asia.'<sup>106</sup> In parliament Allen similarly argued that paying for a

---

<sup>100</sup> Cook Diary, 2 April 1909, NLA, Cook Papers, MS 2212/1.

<sup>101</sup> Creswell to Jebb, 2 Feb 1909. Cited in Sheila Dwyer, *Sir William Rooke Creswell and the Foundation of the Australian Navy*, (Newcastle, 2014), p. 151.

<sup>102</sup> Meaney, *Search for Security*, p. 179-181.

<sup>103</sup> 'Mr Fisher's Policy,' *SMH*, 31 March 1909

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* Fisher's geography was muddled, but he appears to have referred to the 'East' near to Australia, not the Balkans.

<sup>105</sup> 'Mr Fisher's Policy,' *SMH*, 2 April 1909.

<sup>106</sup> 'The Defence Question,' *NZH*, 24 March 1909

dreadnought would neither advance the national project nor lessen New Zealand's strategic exposure. Japan still controlled the Pacific 'absolutely', and if New Zealand was to hold its own when the alliance ended it needed to make an immediate start on a national defence. For Allen, this was both a strategic necessity and a central component of the nation-building project. 'I refuse to believe,' he declared, 'that the national spirit of a New Zealander will allow him to rest in peace relying on the protection of the United States or of Japan in the Pacific.'<sup>107</sup>

This emphasis on national growth and racial destiny ran as a common theme through the dreadnought debates. The *Sydney Morning Herald*, which supported a dreadnought offer, insisted that Australasia's 'manifest destiny' in the Pacific would have to be kept in view. In the long run, 'whether the German menace passes or not... it will be essential that the mastery of the Pacific shall be in the hands of the Anglo-Saxon race.'<sup>108</sup> Ultimately, the 'Pacific question' would only be resolved through the continued evolution of the dominions into strong, populous white states, capable of looking after their own defence. 'It is essential for our very existence,' noted the New Zealand correspondent of *The Times*, 'that we should commence to-day to lay the foundations of a power that will render us immune from any alien menace in the future.'<sup>109</sup> Yet although the naval crisis provoked intense controversy in Australia and New Zealand, yet it is important to stress that the defence debates were hemmed in by a set of common assumptions. The first was the latent threat of Japan to White Australasia, which both the advocates of a local navy and of an imperial contribution enlisted in their arguments. The second was that in the long term, the security of the southern dominions – and hence the future of the 'British race' in the Pacific – could only be secured through a continuous nation-building project at home. The third was that until that project was complete, the strategic and racial security of the Australasian dominions relied on the British fleet, and even afterwards, the future of the nation would be inextricably bound up with that of the British world-system as a whole. As Charles Lucas, whose tour of the two Australasian dominions had largely coincided with the local naval debates, reported to the Colonial Office: 'it seems to me that Australian Nationalism and Australian Imperialism are the two most compatible things in the world.'<sup>110</sup>

*'You might as well ask us to separate ourselves from the Empire': The 1909 Defence Conference*

Meanwhile in London, the naval scare and the heated debates that followed it in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada forced a rethink on several key issues of imperial defence. Asquith's government, battle-scarred from its own internal struggles over the fiscal burden of the

---

<sup>107</sup> J. Allen, 11 June 1909, *NZPD*, Vol. 146 (1909), cc. 56-8.

<sup>108</sup> 'An Australian Naval Base,' *SMH*, 13 May 1909

<sup>109</sup> 'New Zealand and the Navy,' *The Times*, 24 May 1909

<sup>110</sup> C.P. Lucas, 'Notes on a visit to Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji,' Oct 1909, NA, CO 881/11/17.

naval race, now recognised that it might be able to persuade the dominions to bear a greater share of the cost of imperial defence.<sup>111</sup> Yet doing so also meant revisiting wider issues of national control and naval strategy. Accordingly, Asquith announced that the British government would hold a consultation with the dominions in July 1909, with a view to developing a new naval arrangement. The Admiralty's challenge now was to strike a balance between politics and strategy: direct financial contributions were no longer politically viable, but the 'tin-pot' navies that Australia and Canada had mooted as an alternative seemed unlikely to make a substantive contribution to imperial defence.<sup>112</sup> In a wider sense, it was dawning on Whitehall that any new pan-imperial arrangement would have to reconcile the strategic demands of Britain with those of the dominions. As the ranking civil servant at the Admiralty subsequently remarked:

something had to be done to meet Australian and New Zealand nervousness who did not like being with no large armoured ships in the Far East... it is the dread of the Japanese which is at the bottom of the matter.<sup>113</sup>

The upshot was an ambitious proposal, cobbled together in the weeks before the conference, to re-establish a substantial British naval presence in the Pacific. It provided for a Pacific fleet, composed of a series of 'fleet units', stationed on Sydney, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Vancouver, operated as required by the Royal Navy or the individual dominions. Each unit would consist of a battlecruiser of the newest type plus the necessary support ships, allowing them to operate independently to deter raids, or join together to form a grand Pacific fleet, 'thus relieving the Imperial fleet of direct responsibility in distant seas'.<sup>114</sup> From the perspective of the traditional historiography on imperial defence, which has concentrated on Germany, this appears a curious aberration: even if the Sydney unit would be entirely run by the Australians, the Admiralty would still be committing itself to maintaining twenty-six vessels in Asian waters. The total expenditure amounted up to £ 5,500,000 over four years. This hardly squared with the Admiralty's dire warnings about the imminent loss of British naval supremacy in Europe not six months ago. The likeliest explanation appears to be that suggested by Nicholas Lambert: the Admiralty, and above all the First Sea Lord, Sir John Fisher, remained committed to maintaining British naval supremacy on a global scale, yet kept the German naval menace prominently in view as its first line of defence against a Liberal attack on its budget. The scheme for the Pacific fleet, where the Admiralty was able to move into a policy vacuum, showed the true nature of its ambitions.<sup>115</sup> Fisher, certainly, was ecstatic: 'It means *eventually* Canada, Australia, New Zealand,

---

<sup>111</sup> Philips Payson O'Brien, "The Titan Refreshed: Imperial Overstretch and the British Navy Before the First World War," *Past and Present* no. 172, no. 172 (2001): 146–69.

<sup>112</sup> Foxton to Deakin, 13 Aug 1909, NLA, Deakin Papers,

<sup>113</sup> Cited in Lambert, "Economy or Empire?", p. 61.

<sup>114</sup> Memorandum by the Admiralty, 13 July 1909, NA, CAB 38/15/18.

<sup>115</sup> In its breadth of vision, and its emphasis on technological innovation, the fleet unit scheme bore Fisher's fingerprints. See Lambert, "Economy or Empire?"; and *id.*, *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution*.

the Cape (South Africa), and India *running a complete Navy!* We manage the job in Europe. They'll manage it against the Yankees, Japs [*sic*], and Chinese, as occasion requires out there!<sup>116</sup>

It is possible that Asquith accepted the scheme, without realising its full fiscal implications, as a ready-made solution to forestall an embarrassing confrontation at the upcoming conference. In this respect, it certainly succeeded. Ward, who personally headed the New Zealand delegation, immediately agreed to bring his government's policies into line with the new scheme. So, after some wavering, did the Australians. Colonel Foxton, the Australian representative, agreed that the Admiralty's proposal fitted the Commonwealth's strategic needs in the Pacific, and proceeded to spell out what these were:

there is always present with us in Australia – and the same remark applies with equal force to New Zealand – the fact that we are in close proximity to the teeming millions of the two great Asiatic powers. The awakening of the East has very great significance for Australia and New Zealand... we have to look far into the future, and there might be possibilities in that connection which it is necessary for us to make provision for.<sup>117</sup>

This was a familiar analysis of the racial danger to Australia – albeit expressed in milder terms than customary in the Commonwealth. Ward endorsed this view: New Zealand looked with foreboding to the day 'when the Eastern races are a trouble to Australia and to my own country'.<sup>118</sup> The creation of a Pacific fleet, he thought, would offer a degree of protection, and eventually would relieve Britain of having to rely on the Japanese alliance. Although Ward referred to Japan in highly circumspect terms – 'a country happily attached to England... against which I am not saying a word' – he nonetheless made it clear that he could not indefinitely accept the alliance as a substitute for British naval power: 'We should have no doubt as to who are to be the controllers of the Pacific in the years to come. It should from every standpoint be the British Empire.'<sup>119</sup>

Racial sentiment shaped discussion at the conference in several ways. At one level, it expressed itself as a confident assertion that the unity of the 'British race' transcended the formalities of self-government. In one instance, the Colonial Secretary, Lord Crewe, noted that a formal obligation to assist the Mother Country in wartime would be unnecessary – the Canadians, in particular, rejected this as undemocratic – since he was confident that the dominions would offer their support 'in 999 cases out of a 1000'.<sup>120</sup> Yet tellingly, the one scenario that *did* provoke controversy was the one in which the dominions' racial loyalties might clash

---

<sup>116</sup> Fisher to Esher, 30 Sept 1909, in *Fear God and Dread Nought: The Correspondence of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher of Kilverstone*, A.J. Marder (ed.), (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956), pp. 264-6.

<sup>117</sup> 'Imperial Conference on the Subject of the Defence of the Empire,' Minutes, 5 Aug 1909, NA, CO 886/2/8, p. 46.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.* p. 50.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* p. 50.

<sup>120</sup> Cited in Mitcham, *Race and Imperial Defence*, p. 208.

with their attachment to the empire. John Merriman, the premier of the Cape Colony, put it frankly:

Supposing that by any misfortune or mischance your alliance with Japan was to bring you into collision with the United States... do you suppose that any colonist would for a single moment send an expeditionary force to help an Eastern Power? Never!<sup>121</sup>

Ward agreed that New Zealand could never 'send an expeditionary force to assist in helping the Eastern races, you might just as well ask us to separate ourselves from the British Empire. It would meet a refusal point blank.'<sup>122</sup>

The conference offered a potent illustration of how the dominions had come to define their Britannic loyalism through the prism of race. As 'British nations', they were prepared to shoulder an increasingly larger share of the burdens of imperial defence, and looked forward to the day when they – and not the Japanese – would uphold British supremacy in the Pacific. Yet as events since 1905 had made clear, this commitment did not imply an unqualified subordination to the strategic consensus that prevailed in Whitehall. There was a basic expectation of reciprocity: imperial cooperation on defence was meant to serve not merely the safety of the British Isles, but also the consolidation and expansion of the 'British race' demographic frontier in the settler colonies. Jan Smuts, representing the Transvaal, echoed the latter point: the South African colonies, he argued, contributed to imperial defence by preserving a strategic white foothold against their 'internal enemy'.<sup>123</sup> Racial parochialism was fitted into an expansive vision of the British Empire, as a polity maintained for and by a global family of 'British peoples'. It was an appealing image, which, for the moment at least, had appeared to yield real political results.

The defence settlement marked the culmination of the debate over Pacific security waged in the wake of Tsushima. As Joseph Cook, now defence minister in Deakin's new government, declared to parliament, it had been a 'family council', which had produced 'a hearty and cordial response... by all overseas members of the family'.<sup>124</sup> The new naval scheme appeared to combine the best of both worlds: it promised the development of a national navy within a wider British commitment to the Pacific – the combination between nationalism and racial solidarity that Deakin had sought. 'It is an arrangement by which the younger nations of the Empire – those that are now dependencies – so to speak – will become partners', as Massey in New Zealand endorsed it.<sup>125</sup> The promise to re-establish a significant British naval presence east of Singapore – thirty-nine vessels, including three battlecruisers – seemed to signal that the British government had taken colonial anxieties about Japan to heart. In turn, the dominions

---

<sup>121</sup> 'Imperial Conference on the Subject of the Defence of the Empire,' Minutes, 29 July 1909, NA, CO 886/2/8, p. 24.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.* p. 25.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* p. 30.

<sup>124</sup> J. Cook, 21 Sept 1909, *CAPD*, HR, Vol. 38 (1909), c. 3616.

<sup>125</sup> V. Massey, 9 Oct 1909, *NZPD*, HR, Vol. 147 (1909), cc. 72-78.

would help offset Britain's dependence on the Japanese alliance: as Cook told parliament, it was Australia's 'duty as an integral portion of the Empire' to be the bulwark of British power in the Pacific, 'now as important from a naval point of view as are the waters of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic'.<sup>126</sup> In military terms too, the aftermath of the conference marked a shift towards the consolidation of civic militarism: in what the *Round Table* described as 'a striking testimony to the determination of the Australasian people to preserve their countries for the white races,' both Australia and New Zealand introduced universal military training by the end of 1909.<sup>127</sup> During the Pacific tour of the American fleet, it briefly appeared as though the Australasians' Asian paranoia might become a growing source of inter-imperial friction. Instead, the naval crisis and its aftermath reaffirmed, in bold rhetorical strokes, the nexus between race and Britishness.

No doubt encouraged by the formation of the new naval arrangement, Deakin launched a further *ballon d'essai*, aimed at shoring up the international order in the Pacific. The initiative came from Dr Richard Arthur, the head of the Immigration League, who had long shared Deakin's anxieties about the exposure of Australia's tropical north to Japanese power: 'The question of the future of Australia is becoming almost an obsession with me.'<sup>128</sup> Although the new naval arrangement was a step in the right direction, the state of the Pacific remained unsettled, and dependent on the precarious balance in Europe. Arthur's proposal, therefore, was a general pact, involving Britain, the United States, and possibly France and the Netherlands, to freeze the territorial status quo, and establish 'an international fleet of Dreadnoughts' for that purpose: 'such an agreement would have a wonderfully sedative effect in the Pacific'.<sup>129</sup> 'International' meaning, in this case, anyone but the Japanese. Arthur made the same case in an article circulated to several Australian newspapers.<sup>130</sup> The scheme spoke to Deakin's imagination: he himself, after all, had speculated about a Pacific "entente cordiale" between all white races' little over a year before. A few days after receiving Arthur's letter, he repeated the proposal to the colonial secretary, Lord Crewe, as a 'proposition of the highest international proportions'. The British government, Deakin suggested might consider initiating what he described as an 'extension of the Monroe Doctrine to all the countries around the Pacific Ocean,' supported 'by the guarantees of the British Empire, Holland, France, and China added to that of the United States'. Such an agreement, he noted, would be 'of inestimable service to the empire'. Pointedly, Deakin's scheme excluded Japan and Germany, the two powers against it was rather transparently directed.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>126</sup> J. Cook, 21 Sept 1909, *CAPD*, HR, Vol. 38 (1909), c. 3615.

<sup>127</sup> [Philip Kerr], 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance,' *Round Table*, May 1911.

<sup>128</sup> Arthur to Deakin, 22 Sept 1909, NLA, Deakin Papers, 15/5/48, f. 3678. Neville Meaney dedicated an article to the scheme but failed to spot that the initiative came from Arthur. See Meaney, "'A Proposition of the Highest International Importance': Alfred Deakin's Pacific Agreement Proposal and Its Significance for Australian-Imperial Relations," *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 5, no. 3 (November 1967): 200–213.

<sup>129</sup> Arthur to Deakin, 22 Sept 1909, NLA, Deakin Papers, 15/5/48, f. 3678.

<sup>130</sup> Richard Arthur, 'The Pacific: A Drama of the Future,' *The Advertiser* [Adelaide], 11 Oct 1909.

<sup>131</sup> Deakin to Crewe, 27 Sept 1909, CUL, Crewe Papers, C/13.

The 'Monroe doctrine' proposal represented Deakin's latest attempt to readjust British diplomacy to suit his own racial convictions. Once again, the Colonial Office was unimpressed. Lucas, recently returned from Australia, thought it was 'a most interesting letter' – a backhanded compliment at the best of times – but pointed out that it was but riddled with legal and diplomatic difficulties. Deakin had interpreted the Monroe Doctrine as a broad principle of territorial inviolability, where in fact, Lucas argued, it was 'really is no principle at all; it is – not to put too fine a point on it – domination by one overwhelmingly strong American power.'<sup>132</sup> The sweeping rhetoric that accompanied the tour of the Great White Fleet had been troubling enough; talk of a 'Pacific Monroe Doctrine' would only further the impression that British power in the Pacific was giving way before the Americans. The chief problem, however, as J.E.B. Seely, the parliamentary undersecretary, pointed out, was that Britain could hardly countenance an arrangement that so blatantly excluded Japan:

The proposal is in effect a defiance of Japanese ambitions. The day may come for such an attitude with or without American help, but at present Japan is, as I understand, our only ally, and therefore in theory our closest friend. A conference such as Mr Deakin suggests would be fraught with danger, premature and useless.<sup>133</sup>

It again proved difficult to square Australian geo-racialism with the more complex reality in which London was forced to operate. As Lord Crewe concluded, with a note of resignation, 'I rather dread a concrete discussion between Australia & ourselves on these subjects.'<sup>134</sup>

### *Conclusion*

In *Studies in Colonial Nationalism*, the result of his travels to the dominions during the South African war, the journalist Richard Jebb attempted to address an issue that dogged contemporary observers of empire: could the imperial system be able to accommodate the evolution a 'national consciousness' in the settler colonies, without losing its capacity for concerted action? As a supporter of Joseph Chamberlain's campaign for tariff reform, Jebb was contemptuous of the 'pathetic futility of that conservative English imperialism' that took colonial loyalties for granted. 'Practical imperialism', he insisted, was to recognise that the dominions were developing into self-contained political communities, mindful of their own interests. If the empire were to persist, therefore, it would be because the colonists would continue to recognise the 'solid national advantages accruing from the imperial connection'. Nowhere was this more evident than in Australia, where the 'spectacle of an armed Japan, flush with victory over a white Power' had aroused the 'liveliest apprehensions'. At the heart of the matter, Jebb concluded, the

---

<sup>132</sup> Minute by Lucas, 1 Nov 1909, CUL, Crewe Papers, C/13.

<sup>133</sup> Minute by Seely, 1 Nov 1909, CUL, Crewe Papers, C/13.

<sup>134</sup> Crewe to Grey, 3 Nov 1909, TNA, Grey Papers, FO 800/91.



best guarantee of Australia's imperial attachment might well be this: 'Australian patriots are predisposed to imperialism so long as it connotes the defensive co-operation of white nations rather than the exploitation of Australia by the coloured races.'<sup>135</sup>

The truth of that statement was tested in the years after the Russo-Japanese War, as racial anxieties prompted new calls to reinforce the national project. Britain's ability to protect White Australia was repeatedly questioned. The foundations for a national navy were laid. In August 1908, the American fleet was welcomed almost as an alternative protector. Yet even a cursory glance at the period reveals that colonial elites continued to recognise that their external security, as well as their racial purity, was bound up with their membership of the British world-system. British sea power was the strategic glue that held the British world together. Its disappearance – because of, say, a German naval victory in the North Sea – would have left Australia and New Zealand to face Japan's displeasure by themselves alone. This was the Britannic logic of Australasian defence, much in evidence during the dreadnought debates, which would again form a central argument for Australia and New Zealand's whole-hog participation in First World War.

For all their talk of self-reliance and national destiny, none of the 'nationalists' in the defence debates – including Deakin, Allen, Fisher, and Hughes – seriously questioned the centrality of British power. Indeed, they argued that by accelerating the consolidation of Australia and New Zealand as 'national societies', they could expand their own contribution to it. 'I look forward to a day when Australia will take its place as a part of the British Empire,' Allen declared, 'and do its duty... to help to police the Pacific Ocean.'<sup>136</sup> In light of this, and contrary to recent claims, Deakin's often frictious interaction with the Colonial Office – over naval defence, the American fleet, and his 'Monroe Doctrine' scheme – looks not so much as a nationalist straining under an overbearing bureaucracy, and rather more as an over-imaginative thinker pitching imperial schemes to London.<sup>137</sup>

This, then, was the real problem that underlay the discussions on empire, race, and defence in the Pacific: if Japan concentrated Australasian minds on the importance of the imperial connection, it also engendered a greater demand for reciprocity. The dominions, in other words, would do more for imperial defence, but they also expected their interests to be acknowledged, and their own justification for empire – as one of racial solidarity against the danger of an expanding Asia – to be understood and reciprocated. The conspicuously loyalist rhetoric of Joseph Ward, in this regard, shared a basic goal with Deakin's national navalism: both

---

<sup>135</sup> Richard Jebb, *Studies in Colonial Nationalism*, (London, 1905), pp. 81-85.

<sup>136</sup> J. Allen, 30 Sept 1908, *NZPD*, HR, Vol. 145 (1908), cc. 691-712

<sup>137</sup> No wonder then, that the Australian was briefly hailed as the darling of British tariff reformers: when he met Deakin during the 1907 imperial conference, Amery only half-jokingly noted that he would like to retain him as leader of the British conservative party – Balfour could be shipped back to Australia in his place. See Amery to Jose, 3 May 1907, ML, Jose Papers.

were strategies to carve out new handholds on imperial policy, and use these to drag it towards the Pacific. These strands had converged on the 1909 defence conference, which worked out an imaginative scheme for collective naval defence in the Pacific that appeared to satisfy Australasia's concerns about Japan, and its aspiration to address these through deeper imperial cooperation. For the moment, at least, the circle had been squared.

## Rethinking the Japanese Alliance, 1910-11

In the years following the Russo-Japanese War, Japan's exchanges with the British world had deepened, widened, and multiplied across a vast arc ranging from Singapore to Vancouver. The scope for imagined interaction was wider still: although the physical presence of Japanese remained negligible in Australia (outside the tropical north) and New Zealand, political debate in both dominions became increasingly preoccupied with the rising power to the north. The result was to introduce a wide array of new controversies into the Anglo-Japanese relationship, over immigration, trade, political activity in China – and in a wider sense, over the challenge that Japan appeared to pose to the ascendancy of the 'Anglo-Saxon race' in the Pacific. Although the core of the relationship – the alliance itself – remained formally unchanged since its latest revision in 1905, it too was forced to perform a new set of functions, mitigating and managing the various points of tension that had sprung up in the Pacific and continental Asia.

Meanwhile, the geopolitical circumstances under which the alliance operated were similarly evolving. The 1902 treaty had been aimed at checking Russia's advance into East Asia, its 1905 successor at forestalling a revanchist war. The Russian threat, however, had been eased – though not removed entirely – through the 1907 convention that delineated the Russian and British spheres in central Asia.<sup>1</sup> Tokyo concluded its own settlement with St Petersburg, by which the latter recognised Japanese primacy in southern Manchuria, in the same year. Instead, the rationale for the alliance was increasingly dominated by the naval race with Germany. 'It is the naval question which underlies the whole of our European foreign policy,' as Grey argued to the representatives of the dominions in 1911.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it underlay more than that: through the pressure of the naval race on Britain's public finances, the naval issue tied up domestic politics as well.<sup>3</sup> From this perspective, the alliance with Japan came to serve a dual purpose. By relieving Britain of the need to maintain a naval presence in East Asia or the Pacific, it underpinned the strategic logic of concentration in European waters, keeping the cost of the naval race within manageable limits. Equally crucially, it prevented Japan from seeking an alternative partnership with Russia or Germany at Britain's expense.

The consensus in Whitehall, therefore, was that the strategic benefits of the alliance outweighed whatever objections might be raised to Japan's actions in Manchuria and elsewhere. If the alliance were allowed to expire in 1915, noted Hardinge at the Foreign Office, Britain would 'find the Japanese fleet arrayed against us in the Pacific or allied with that of another Power.' Such a change was 'unpleasant to contemplate, and I believe that in 1914 it will still be

---

<sup>1</sup> On the convention and its discontents, see Neilson, *Last Tsar*, pp. 267-88; and Siegel, *Endgame*, pp. 21-50.

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Lowe, *Great Britain and Japan*, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Naval expenditure stood at over £ 40 m in 1911, up by a quarter since the 1909 naval scare. Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, p. 113.

our policy to be in alliance with Japan'.<sup>4</sup> Grey agreed that it would be 'disastrous' to lose the alliance.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, many who took an otherwise critical view of Japan, such as Charles Bowra, a British official employed by the Chinese customs in Manchuria, recognised the force of the argument:

The sad thing about is that, owing to the German fleet, we hang round [Japan's] neck in Eastern waters and can only help her advance. Had the German Emperor not embarked on this insane fleet policy we might, in conjunction with Germany and America, have been in a position to hinder the advance of Japan into China. As it is, all our energies must be reserved for the coming European struggle, and our military position here depends on Japan. It is all very sad.

All the same, this strategic calculus was far from universally accepted. There were several reasons for this. A wide range of dissenters, from colonial politicians to dejected China traders, insisted that Japan represented an equal, if not a greater threat to British world-supremacy than Germany. One did not have to take a 'Yellow Perilist' view, moreover, to recognise that the single-minded pursuit of the naval race in the North Sea would leave British security in Asia increasingly – and perhaps dangerously – dependent on Japan. Thus Sir John Colomb, the *éminence grise* of British naval thought, argued that London's view of imperial defence remained 'fragmentary', myopic, and particularly inattentive to the concerns of the dominions: 'We have got hysterics at home of the spectres of German *Dreadnoughts* at the one side of the North Sea - but for the *Dreadnoughts* of Powers in the North Pacific we have no regard.'<sup>6</sup> Such views broadly resonated, as noted above, in the Australasian dominions. The Japanese alliance, noted the Wellington *Evening Post*, might be 'a delightfully cheap way of policing the sea, but it is as precarious as it is cheap'.<sup>7</sup>

Even within the corridors of Whitehall, concerns were raised over whether Britain relied too much on Japanese support. The first real signs of disquiet surfaced in April 1909, when Hedworth Lambton, the commander of the China station, submitted an emotive report on the defence of Hong Kong, which he thought 'entirely futile and insufficient'. The defence of Hong Kong, and Britain's other outlying bases in Asia, Lambton argued, remained predicated on the assumption of British naval supremacy. Yet since 1905, command of the sea had effectively rested with Japan. 'This superiority there is no reasonable prospect of England being able ever again to challenge.'<sup>8</sup> When the Admiralty retorted that the China station could be reinforced, if necessary, at 'very short notice', even in the 'almost unthinkable event of Japan prematurely denouncing her alliance in order to join Germany in attacking us', several members of the CID

---

<sup>4</sup> Minute by Hardinge on Macdonald to Grey, 13 June 1910, TNA, FO 371/918/24689.

<sup>5</sup> Minute by Grey on Ottley to Nicolson, 15 Jan 1911, TNA, FO 371/1140/1827.

<sup>6</sup> Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, p. 116; J.C. Colomb, 'The New Zealand Message', *United Services Magazine*, June 1909.

<sup>7</sup> 'Mastery of the Pacific,' *Evening Post*, 27 May 1911.

<sup>8</sup> Lambton to Lugard, 25 Nov 1908; in 'Standard of Defences at British defended Ports in distant Seas', Memorandum by the Colonial Defence Committee, 23 April 1909, NA, CAB 38/15/6;

protested against this all-too-breezy dismissal of Lambton's concerns. Sir William Nicholson, the Chief of the General Staff, argued out that without a permanent naval presence in the Far East, Japan might overwhelm Hong Kong – and subsequently Singapore – before reinforcements could arrive. The assault on Port Arthur had, after all, demonstrated what the Japanese army was capable of. Any British relief force would then be in the unenviable position of the Russian Baltic Fleet in the run-up to Tsushima: operating in hostile waters out of range of a friendly base. In addition, as Lord Crewe, the Colonial Secretary, pointed out, the political foundation of the alliance might not be as solid as the Admiralty assumed it to be: 'It was possible that, in her dealings with China, Japan might behave in such a manner as to cause us to refuse to identify ourselves further with her as an ally.'<sup>9</sup>

A further objection was that the Anglo-Japanese alliance precluded relationships rooted in greater ideological, cultural, and racial convergence, either with the white dominions or the United States. 'I am one of those who as you know mistrust & dislike the Japanese Alliance,' the young Lord Stanhope, who upon entering the House of Lords became a leading critic of Japan's actions in Asia, wrote to Mackenzie King. Stanhope's preferred alternative was a 'closer drawing together of the great English speaking peoples of the world'.<sup>10</sup> The possibility of an American-Japanese confrontation, either over immigration or China, continued to be source of anxiety. According to the writer Archibald Colquhoun, the immigration dispute in the Pacific remained 'the Damocles' sword of the international situation'. If it fell, it would spark a general racial conflagration: 'It is not merely Japan versus the United States, or Japan versus Canada and Australia, but Asia versus Europe, North America, and South Africa – East versus West.'<sup>11</sup> The *Round Table*, a new imperial review founded in 1910, similarly insisted 'that a real quarrel over immigration would make a continuance of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance impossible', and might even 'range Japan in definite hostility to the Empire'.<sup>12</sup> Again, such considerations were not limited to pundits alone. *The Valor of Ignorance*, an American work that purported to analyse a Japanese attack on the American Pacific coast, was submitted for consideration in the CID by Lord Esher, who considered its conclusions highly pertinent to British defence planning:

The racial quarrel which looms over the heads of these two nations has a very direct interest for us, inasmuch as we are bound on the one hand by Treaty to Japan... we are hampered on the other hand by the prejudices of our Colonial fellow-countrymen in Australia and Canada against men of colour.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> CID Minutes, 102<sup>nd</sup> Meeting, 29 June 1909, CAB 38/15/12.

<sup>10</sup> Stanhope to King, 16 April 1911, LAC, King Papers, C-1916, ff. 17032-37.

<sup>11</sup> Archibald Colquhoun, 'Sea Power in the Pacific,' *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute*, April 1911.

<sup>12</sup> [Philip Kerr], 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance,' *Round Table*, March 1911.

<sup>13</sup> 'The Functions of Sub-Committees of the Committee of Imperial Defence,' Memorandum by Esher, 21 Jan 1910, TNA, CAB 38/16/1.

These growing doubts about the strategic implications of the alliance ran in parallel with the decline of Japan's public image.<sup>14</sup> According to Horace Rumbold, who joined the Tokyo embassy as Macdonald's deputy in 1909, there was 'no doubt that the popularity of the Alliance has waned and that the Japanese are becoming increasingly unpopular'.<sup>15</sup> The Japanese government, which received regular despatches from its London embassy on the tone of the press, similarly worried that the tide of public opinion was moving against it.<sup>16</sup> Partly, this shift grew out the various nodes of tension that emerged out of Japan's expansion; partly, it reflected the fact that much of the positive, pro-Japanese imagery built up during the war had either waned or collapsed in collision with reality. As Macdonald observed, where British society had once marvelled 'at a military and naval organization and efficiency of the very highest order, coupled with a patriotism and dauntless bravery in battle', it had discovered that the Japanese were 'ordinary human beings', with 'a commercial morality of not very high character'. No wonder then, that 'severe disappointment' had set in.<sup>17</sup>

The erosion of British goodwill became increasingly evident in a series of commercial disputes. The growing sense of commercial rivalry between British and Japanese merchants operating in the Yangzi valley and Manchuria has been noted in the chapter three. In the latter half of 1910, they were compounded by another, more serious controversy over the revision of the Japanese tariff. To ease the passage of the Anglo-Japanese commercial convention of 1894 – the treaty that had abolished most of the 'unequal' constraints on Japanese sovereignty – Japan had agreed to retain a wide measure of foreign access to its internal market, and not to raise tariffs for the duration of the treaty. In July 1910, a year before the treaty was due to lapse, Tokyo duly informed London that it desired a new commercial agreement that would allow for the introduction of a series of new statutory tariffs, particularly on textiles. The British press, perhaps expecting special consideration from its ally, bristled with indignation as it learned the details of the Japanese proposals, and during the fall of 1910, the Foreign Office found itself beset by dozens of petitions and delegations from resentful manufacturing firms and chambers of commerce. The China Association declared that the new tariff would 'pave the way to that Japanese hegemony of the Far East'.<sup>18</sup> *The Economist*, the standard-bearer of free trade (and never keen on the alliance) denounced Japan's protectionist stance as a return to the 'anti-foreign policy' of the *sakoku* edicts, and predicted it would 'soon reduce the popularity of the Anglo-Japanese alliance to vanishing point'.<sup>19</sup> Writing in the *Manchester Guardian*, Sir Edward Holden, secretary to the London Chamber of Commerce and head of the Midland Bank (Britain's largest)

---

<sup>14</sup> This has been noted by Nish, *Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, pp. 363-4; and Lowe, *Great Britain and Japan*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>15</sup> Rumbold Diary, 25 June 1910, BLO, Rumbold Papers, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Nish, *Alliance in Decline*, p. 48.

<sup>17</sup> Macdonald to Grey, 19 February 1908, TNA, FO 881/9128.

<sup>18</sup> Lowe, *Great Britain and Japan*, p. 21.

<sup>19</sup> 'Japan's Fiscal and Financial Policy,' *The Economist*, 30 July 1910. For a protectionist perspective, see 'Japan's Anti-British Tariff,' *Saturday Review*, 28 May 1910.

interpreted the new treaty as a deliberate slight: 'Japan's greatness is largely due to the generosity of the moneyed classes of this country... We have supplied them with capital to establish themselves on a sure footing, and now our exports are to be made almost impossible.' Unless the tariff was adjusted, Holden declared that he would not be buying into in any more loans floated by the Japanese government: 'our pockets will remain closed against them'.<sup>20</sup>

The deluge of public acrimony over the tariff question stirred the Foreign Office into action.<sup>21</sup> Calling on the Japanese prime minister in October, Macdonald pointed out that the new tariff was generating a 'very unfavourable feeling' that threatened to further undermine public support for the alliance: 'I was sorry to have to tell [Katsura] that the feeling of the British people towards their allies was very far from being as cordial as it used to be.'<sup>22</sup> Such feelings, he warned, would have to be taken into consideration when the alliance came up for renewal: the British government could not altogether ignore public opinion. Although Grey instructed Macdonald not to draw an explicit connection between the tariff and the alliance, he repeated the warning in more guarded terms to the Japanese ambassador the following month. While Grey reiterated that the British government was 'most anxious to maintain and strengthen our alliance,' he also noted the 'very strong' feeling against the new tariff: the support of the British public, he noted, 'must always be a factor' on which the alliance depended.<sup>23</sup> The Japanese government took the hint, and after some deliberation, it offered new concessions, including the exemption of a wide range of British goods from the new statutory tariffs.

*The Times*, meanwhile, continued to fight a rear-guard action against the decline of Japan's popularity. Its leaders defended Japan's Manchurian policies, its annexation of Korea – 'the only sound solution' for its internal problems – and the new Japanese tariff.<sup>24</sup> It also regularly admonished the Australian press for its 'reckless and often indefensible' criticism of Japan, and urged the dominions to reflect on fact that the Anglo-Japanese alliance constituted the 'real basis of their white policy'.<sup>25</sup> It produced a weighty supplement – 'much too large to be read by any ordinary mortal' was the verdict of W.T. Stead – to accompany the opening of the Japan-British Exhibition in White City in July 1910, in which it once again laid out the Japanese case on Manchuria and other controversies.<sup>26</sup> Chirol, still the guiding spirit of the paper's pro-Japanese line, was unapologetic. While he acknowledged that the paper's praise for Japan might be a little too fulsome at times, the strategic importance of the alliance, especially in view of the German

---

<sup>20</sup> 'The Japanese Tariff,' *Manchester Guardian*, 31 Dec 1910.

<sup>21</sup> Christina L. Davis, 'Linkage Diplomacy: Economic and Security Bargaining in the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-23,' *International Security* 33, no. 3 (December 1, 2008): 143-79.

<sup>22</sup> Macdonald to Grey, 9 Oct 1910, TNA, FO 371/922/39117.

<sup>23</sup> Grey to Macdonald, 25 Nov 1910, TNA, FO 371/920/43682.

<sup>24</sup> 'The Manchurian Railways', 15 Jan 1910; 'The Annexation of Korea,' 25 Aug 1910; 'The New Japanese Tariff,' 25 Jul 1910.

<sup>25</sup> 'Opinion and the Anglo-Japanese Treaty', *The Times*, 18 Jul 1911

<sup>26</sup> For Stead's comments, see 'Various Views on Japan,' *Review of Reviews*, Aug 1910. On the exhibition, see Ayako Lister, 'The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910: Its Diplomatic, Economic and Educational Aspects', PhD Thesis, (LSE, 2008).

naval challenge, more than justified this editorial line. Particularly given Japan's waning popularity, *The Times* had a public duty to put the case for the defence: 'I confess that the importance for us of preserving the A.J. alliance in the present position of world politics would incline me to assent to a much weaker case than Japan is able to make out for herself.'<sup>27</sup>

Such a stance was arguably 'more suited to a foreign ministry than a newspaper', and *The Times* was increasingly criticised for it.<sup>28</sup> Ian Hamilton, who had fallen out with all things Japanese following the controversy over the publication of his account of the Russo-Japanese War, protested to Leo Amery that the paper's coverage of Japan was 'biased' and 'misleading': 'it is truly appalling that kowtowing to Japan should be carried to such lengths'.<sup>29</sup> From Beijing, Jordan similarly complained that 'owing to the attitude of *The Times*... we are more identified with the Japanese than is altogether comfortable'.<sup>30</sup> When the young Lord Stanhope, following his tour of East Asia, announced his intention to raise the issue of Brinkley's biased coverage in the Lords, Chirol was forced into a humiliating defence of his Tokyo correspondent's credentials.<sup>31</sup> More damaging still was the rumour that the paper's recent Japanese supplement had been paid for by Tokyo.<sup>32</sup> Amid the turbulence that followed the paper's acquisition by Lord Northcliffe, Chirol found himself increasingly isolated in his defence of Japan's policies: as Lady Lugard (a former Africa correspondent) told Morrison, he was 'the only man on *The Times* who still cherished the Japanese illusion'.<sup>33</sup> Sensing an opening, Morrison made a bid to steer the paper away from its pro-Japanese line when on leave in Britain in January 1911. As he informed the paper's managing editor, he would only return as Beijing correspondent on the condition that control over East Asian editorial policy would be delegated to him.<sup>34</sup> A week later, he followed up with an all-out assault on the paper's 'unbalanced praise' of Tokyo's actions, so out of step with the 'feeling of distrust of Japan, growing so quickly in this country'.<sup>35</sup> Although Morrison eventually relented, the episode marked the dissolution of a journalistic partnership that had shaped British attitudes towards East Asia for over fifteen years.<sup>36</sup> Morrison and Chirol both left *The Times* the following year.<sup>37</sup>

By the time of the alliance's second revision in 1911, therefore, British attitudes towards Japan were becoming more guarded and transactional. Much of the earlier warmth was gone. While Whitehall remained committed to the alliance, and regarded it as a vital element in its

---

<sup>27</sup> Chirol to Morrison, 7 Sept 1909, in *CGEM*, pp. 490-6.

<sup>28</sup> Antony Best, "Alliance in Parallel: the Rise and Fall of *The Times's* Love Affair with Japan, 1895-1922," presented at the British International History Group Annual Conference, Liverpool, September 2007.

<sup>29</sup> Hamilton to Amery, 20 July 1909, LHC, Hamilton Papers, 4/1/8.

<sup>30</sup> Jordan to Campbell, 11 Nov 1909, TNA, Jordan Papers, FO 350/6.

<sup>31</sup> Chirol to Northcliffe, 16 Feb 1910, NI, Chirol Papers, TT/FOR/VC/1.

<sup>32</sup> See Fritzing, *Diplomat without Portfolio*, p. 408.

<sup>33</sup> Morrison Diary, 23 Jan 1908, ML, Morrison Papers, 312/16, Microfilm CY 237.

<sup>34</sup> Morrison to Moberley Bell, 18 Jan 1911, in *CGEM*, pp. 562-4.

<sup>35</sup> Morrison to Moberley Bell, 25 Jan 1911, in *CGEM*, pp. 566-8.

<sup>36</sup> Morrison to Moberley Bell, 1 Feb 1911, in *CGEM*. 573-4.

<sup>37</sup> Fritzing, *Diplomat without Portfolio*, pp. 410-47.



containment of Germany, it was under no illusion that using Japan as the empire's bulwark in East Asia and the Pacific came at a price. Most obviously, if left Britain with little choice but to acquiesce in its ally's efforts to tighten its hold over its sphere in continental Asia. London did not object to Tokyo's annexation of Korea in August 1910, requesting only that Japan did not immediately extend its new tariffs to the country. It also refused to back the attempts by American and British railway concessionaires to water down the Japanese railway monopoly in Manchuria, even if it meant that the United States continued to view British China policy, as Jordan put it, 'with unreasonable suspicion'.<sup>38</sup> There other reasons to allow Tokyo a relatively free hand in northeast Asia: given that Japanese migrants were excluded from the white settler states around the Pacific, many accepted that Japan required an outlet for its expanding population. 'With Korea to develop, and possibly Manchuria, I do not think that she will be very keen on acquiring a part of our empty North,' noted Arthur Atlee Hunt, the long-serving head of Australia's department of External Affairs<sup>39</sup> Writing from Canada, Lord Grey took a similar view: 'to relieve the Pacific Coast, Philippines, Australia &c. of Japanese pressure,' Britain should allow Japan 'to spread herself in Manchuria'.<sup>40</sup> Grey even made several suggestions to London that this *quid pro quo* might be formalised in a general agreement 'between the white and Asiatic Powers... which would restrict each colour to its own zone'.<sup>41</sup>

Yet there were limits to British indulgence. Despite repeated overtures from Japan, London was reluctant to develop the alliance into a more wide-ranging partnership in China, as it feared this would effectively tie British policy to Tokyo's apron strings. Already in December 1907, Itō Hirobumi, now resident-general in Korea, had sounded the British embassy about whether, given the 'dangerous and revolutionary nature' of the Chinese reform movement, the two allies might cooperate to guarantee the survival of the Qing. Itō noted that in the event of revolutionary unrest, Japan would 'strike quickly and hard in repressing trouble,' but it would prefer to do so with 'the approval and consent of her ally'.<sup>42</sup> This was troubling talk. Itō was well-liked in London – according to Francis Campbell, he was 'perhaps the one Japanese it is more or less safe to trust' – yet the Foreign Office was reluctant to issue Japan with a blank cheque to intervene in Chinese politics under the cover of the alliance. As one official put it: 'In the case of trouble in China, it would no doubt be a great advantage to be working in concert with Japan – if we could completely trust her'.<sup>43</sup> A similar proposal for a joint Anglo-Japanese agreement on China was again touted in the spring of 1911, and London's response was much the same. Campbell declared himself 'strongly opposed' to 'endeavouring to formulate a policy in

---

<sup>38</sup> Jordan to Grey, 2 Jan 1911, TNA, FO 371/1084/2212.

<sup>39</sup> Hunt to Gwynne, 3 Sept 1910, NLA, Hunt Papers, MS 52/7, f. 2203.

<sup>40</sup> Lord Grey to Sir Edward Grey, 14 Oct 1910, DUL/AG, 211/5.

<sup>41</sup> Lord Grey to Milner, 4 Dec 1908, DUL/AG, 184/8.

<sup>42</sup> Macdonald to Grey, 22 Dec 1907, NA, FO 371/472/2103.

<sup>43</sup> Minutes by Campbell and Lampson on Macdonald to Grey, 22 Dec 1907, NA, FO 371/472/2103.

conjunction with Japan', noting that this might prove 'embarrassing' and would simply be 'inviting trouble'.<sup>44</sup>

In fact, rather than agreeing to a coordinated policy, London increasingly came to view the alliance as a leash on its ally's activities in China. As Macdonald noted during the deliberations on whether to renew the alliance in the spring of 1911, it remained a 'useful lever' with which to check 'any unnecessarily forward policy' on the part of Tokyo.<sup>45</sup> Macdonald went so far as to suggest that renewal should be made explicitly conditional on Japan's good behaviour in Manchuria. Rumbold, his deputy, similarly thought the alliance should be allowed to run out its 'natural term' until 1915, after which 'we shall see more clearly what line our Japanese friends are taking or are going to take in Manchuria and elsewhere.' If it should prove that the alliance was proving ineffective as a restraint, 'we should then drop Japan'.<sup>46</sup> The notion that the alliance could be used to contain Japan was not, strictly speaking, new: during the immigration crisis, London had made a very similar argument to the dominions. When Mackenzie King returned to London in December 1908, and asked Grey outright 'if he did not think the Anglo-Japanese alliance had been a mistake in that it had taught the yellow man to regard themselves as the equal of the white,' the Foreign Secretary retorted that 'the Japanese had never pressed the alliance in a single particular'. Canada, he noted, had itself benefited from the alliance in its negotiations over immigration.<sup>47</sup>

### *Towards Renewal*

These views crystallised as the government wrestled with the question of whether to renew the Japanese alliance – and in what form – in early 1911. The question was initially raised in conjunction with the preparations for a new imperial conference, to coincide with the coronation of George V. The conference would offer an opportunity – the first since 1909 – for further coordination on imperial defence, yet as Sir Charles Ottley, the new secretary to the CID, pointed out, it would be difficult to engage in any substantive discussions on the subject while the future of the alliance remained uncertain. '[T]he whole defensive policy of Australia and New Zealand,' he noted, 'is at present assessed on the basis of the status quo being maintained.' Moreover, the conference would likely be the last opportunity to broach the subject with the dominions before the question of renewal would have to be formally confronted in 1914. Ottley, who had served on the Australia station in the 1880s, was well aware of the difficulties this might raise: 'Frankly, I dread any sort of *discussion* with our brethren in Australasia on these delicate and secret topics.' Yet setting out the case for the alliance now might forestall 'ignorant criticism'

---

<sup>44</sup> See minutes on Macdonald to Grey, 17 March 1911, TNA, FO 371/1089/14195.

<sup>45</sup> Macdonald to Grey, 5 April 1911, TNA, FO 371/1140/12605.

<sup>46</sup> Rumbold Diary, 18 March 1911, BLO, Rumbold Papers, 4.

<sup>47</sup> King Diary, 28 Dec 1908, LAC, King Papers, MG26/J13, Microfiche 106.

down the line: 'the last thing wanted is a howl from Australia or Canada, if and when the British Government decide to renew the Alliance.'<sup>48</sup> The Foreign Office was not yet convinced. Sir Arthur Nicolson, the permanent undersecretary, thought the question 'of such vital imperial interest' that it was a matter 'solely & exclusively' for the British government, without reference to the dominions.<sup>49</sup> Grey agreed, as did Asquith, who noted that he could not conceive 'of a more inopportune topic' to discuss at the imperial conference.<sup>50</sup>

This Olympian attitude soon yielded before the realisation that the future of the alliance was a much more pressing issue than London had initially thought. The immediate impetus was a sudden opportunity to mitigate what was, in the Foreign Office's view, the main downside of the alliance: the resentment it engendered in the United States. Since the autumn of 1910, Britain had conducted tentative negotiations with the Americans about subjecting all future bilateral disputes to international arbitration. By January 1911, these talks had produced a serious proposal for an Anglo-American arbitration treaty, leaving the Foreign Office to puzzle out how such an agreement might be reconciled with Britain's obligations under the alliance, which, as the older treaty, held pre-eminence. Grey's initial suggestion, to bring Japan into the arbitration regime either by including it as a third party in the Anglo-American treaty, or to encourage it to seek its own arbitration treaty with the United States, proved a non-starter: there was no chance that the Americans would agree to submit the immigration question, for one, to an international tribunal.<sup>51</sup> In the event, Tokyo resolved the impasse itself, by proposing an early revision of the alliance. As Ian Nish has observed, it did so at least partly on the understanding that the popularity of the alliance was waning, and that opposition from the dominions and the China coast might well complicate renewal in 1915. As much as some in Britain might fear a German-Japanese alliance, Tokyo was equally apprehensive at the prospect of being excluded from the Entente, as this might mean encirclement by an Anglo-American combination supported by France and Russia.<sup>52</sup> Under the new terms, approved by the cabinet on 30 March, the alliance would be extended for another ten years, with the new proviso that it could not be invoked against a country with which either party had an unlimited arbitration treaty. This confirmed what had previously been tacitly understood: Britain would not consider itself bound to support Japan in a conflict with the United States.

Considering the acceleration of renewal, London also recognised that it could not ignore the attitudes of the dominions. As Lord Crewe reminded the CID in January, his experience at the Colonial Office had taught him that 'in Australia public opinion was thoroughly hostile to the alliance' and that the other dominions were not far behind.<sup>53</sup> If the alliance was now to be

---

<sup>48</sup> Ottley to Nicholson, 15 Jan 1911, TNA, FO 371/1140/1827

<sup>49</sup> Nicholson to Ottley, 18 Jan 1911, TNA, FO 371/1140/1827.

<sup>50</sup> Minute by Asquith, 17 Jan 1911, TNA, FO 371/1140/1827.

<sup>51</sup> Grey to Macdonald, 20 Jan 1911, TNA, FO 371/1140/2791.

<sup>52</sup> Nish, *Alliance in Decline*, pp. 47-49

<sup>53</sup> CID Minutes, 108th Meeting, 26 Jan 1911, TNA, CAB 38/17.

renewed early, it might be necessary to present them with the strategic arguments – preferably in an environment that London could control. Lewis Harcourt, the new Colonial Secretary, was convinced that a heart-to-heart ‘might perhaps have a useful educative effect on Colonial opinion’.<sup>54</sup> Lord Grey made the same appeal from Ottawa: if the alliance was to be renewed, he wrote to his cousin at the Foreign Office, ‘the Dominions ought to be well schooled in time as to the reasons why. They cannot kick afterwards, if they abstain from putting in any protest when the opportunity is there before them.’<sup>55</sup> Sir Edward was swayed, and agreed that the conference would afford an opportunity to drive home the importance of the alliance:

Laurier, I have no doubt, understands the different aspects of it. But one or two others, and certainly the Australians, require a great deal of education... The logical conclusion of denouncing the Japanese Alliance would be that Australia and New Zealand should undertake the burden of naval supremacy in the China seas. This they are neither willing nor able to do.<sup>56</sup>

The cabinet settled on having a confidential discussion in the CID. There would be no formal agenda, and the dominions would not be asked to prepare their positions. This would be a ‘consultation’ in name only, skirting around the awkward fact that the cabinet had already approved the renewal: Grey could confidently inform the Japanese ambassador that the discussion with the dominions would ‘not hinder the discussions for revision’.<sup>57</sup> An informal joint committee of the Foreign, Colonial and India Offices, meanwhile, would prepare the government’s position on the immigration issue. Again, no formal resolution would be tabled, as this, one official noted, would merely ‘stir up the Premiers to a fight’.<sup>58</sup> Instead, the subject would be discussed at a closed session, where the Secretary of State for India would restate the essence of London’s policy. The discussion would also be limited to India. ‘In the case of the Japanese,’ noted A.B. Keith, ‘nothing really is needed to bring home to the various Dominions the seriousness of the position.’<sup>59</sup>

Compared with this low-key approach, preparations on imperial defence were considerably more extensive. Here too, the alliance featured prominently; yet where the Foreign Office had been concerned with securing a renewal, the British defence establishment was not above playing on colonial fears of Japan to spur the dominions to greater exertions. Hence Lord Esher, who chaired the committee to prepare the agenda on imperial defence ahead of the conference, proposed to treat the dominion leaders to an overview of the ‘existing strategic situation of the empire’, and remind them of the extent to which their external security currently

---

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Lord Grey to Edward Grey, 14 Oct 1910, DUL/AG, 211/5.

<sup>56</sup> Edward Grey to Lord Grey, 27 Jan 1911, TNA, Grey Papers, FO 800/107.

<sup>57</sup> Nish, *Alliance in Decline*, p. 60.

<sup>58</sup> See minutes by Lambert, Just, and Lucas, 27 Jan 1911, TNA, CO 532/28/931.

<sup>59</sup> Minute by Keith, *ibid.*

depended on the Japanese alliance.<sup>60</sup> This approach took shape as the conference drew closer. In December 1910, an assessment of Australian defence conducted by the Colonial Defence Committee had reiterated that British naval supremacy made it ‘highly improbable’ that Japan would risk a large-scale invasion of Australasia, even if the alliance were suddenly terminated.<sup>61</sup> An attack on British Columbia was similarly ruled out.<sup>62</sup> Yet this analysis came in for severe criticism when it was submitted to the CID. General Nicholson was particularly scathing, stressing the vulnerability of the empire in the Pacific while the British fleet remained tied up in the North Sea. Australia, he argued, would have to develop a substantial military force as a ‘second line of defence’ – a view echoed by Haldane, Churchill, and Crewe.<sup>63</sup> When the issue came up again in March, Nicholson reiterated his concern that the Admiralty’s blue-water ‘dogma’ was ‘hindering the satisfactory development of local defence forces’.<sup>64</sup> In its final form, the analysis was notably less reassuring. The CID reiterated that the Pacific dominions remained safe as long as the alliance existed. Yet if conceded that if and when it was terminated, Australia and New Zealand would be exposed to raiding on a considerable scale, particularly if the bulk of the British fleet was engaged elsewhere. To hammer the message home, the memorandum concluded with a number of far-reaching recommendations for the expansion of local military and naval forces. ‘The whole strategic situation in the Far East,’ the CID pointedly noted, ‘will depend largely upon the extent to which Australia and New Zealand find it possible to develop their respective contributions to the naval forces of the Empire.’<sup>65</sup>

Robert Gowen has rightly concluded that British military planners began to play on Australasian fears of Japan in an increasingly systemic way.<sup>66</sup> There is little evidence, however, to support his claim that they did so in a cynical effort to harness the dominions to an imperial war chariot that they already aimed to drive across the Channel against Germany. For one thing, this view credits British defence planning with a strategic coherence it did not possess. More to the point, those most keenly interested in developing a fighting role for the dominions, including Esher, Fisher, and Nicholson, saw them acting in an imperial capacity, stepping into the gaps that had opened up through the containment of Germany. All three were ambivalent over the extent to which the naval ‘pivot’ had left Britain dependent on Japan in Asia and the Pacific, and looked to the ‘Britannic alliance’ to rectify this. Fisher had been the driving force behind the naval settlement agreed in 1909, which laid the basis for an ‘empire fleet’ in the Pacific. Esher took a

---

<sup>60</sup> ‘Note by Esher, 10 Jan 1911, TNA, CAB 38/17/1; Report of a Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, assembled to formulate Questions connected with the Naval and Military Defence of the Empire to be discussed at the Imperial Conference, 1911,’ 11 March 1911, TNA, CAB 38/17/13.

<sup>61</sup> ‘Australia: Scale of Attack,’ 22 Dec 1910, TNA, CAB 38/17/2.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Canada: Scale of Attack on Pacific Coast,’ 12 Jan 1911, TNA, CAB 38/17/3.

<sup>63</sup> CID Minutes, 108<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 26 Jan 1911, TNA, CAB 2/2/108.

<sup>64</sup> CID Minutes, 109<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 24 March 1911, TNA, CAB 2/2/109.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Australia and New Zealand: Strategic Situation in the Event of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance being Determined,’ 3 May 1911, TNA, CAB 38/18/27.

<sup>66</sup> Robert Joseph Gowen, ‘British Legerdemain at the 1911 Imperial Conference: the Dominions, Defense Planning, and the Renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance,’ *The Journal of Modern History* 52, no. 3 (September 1980): 385–413.

similarly global view of imperial defence, and in preparation for the 1911 conference, he urged the Admiralty to consider how the dominions could assist in maintaining 'the command of the seas, not only in home waters, but in the Mediterranean and in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans'.<sup>67</sup> Nicholson, for his part, was a trenchant critic of the Admiralty's concentration in the North Sea, and seems to have aspired to corral the dominions into an imperial fire-fighting force, ready to reinforce Egypt, India, or other 'defended ports in Asiatic waters' if Britain was occupied in Europe.<sup>68</sup>

*'At the back of their brain is the fear of the Japanese': The dominions and the alliance*

Historians of the Anglo-Japanese alliance have traditionally tended to follow the views of British officialdom in regarding the dominions, and particularly Australia, as instinctively hostile to the alliance, and sorely in need of education in the finer aspects of foreign policy. Ian Nish, in his seminal work, maintained there existed 'a strong body of dominion opinion which called for the denunciation of the alliance.'<sup>69</sup> Peter Lowe, for his part, argued the dominion elites 'rarely discerned or were qualified to discern great imperial issues'.<sup>70</sup> This is altogether too crude. It was certainly true that opinion in the dominions was suspicious of Japanese power, and remained uniformly set against Japanese immigration. Vulgar racism also played a role. 'There has been this feeling in Australia,' as George Pearce subsequently admitted to the imperial conference, 'that to a certain extent it degraded the position of the Empire to go into a Treaty with an Asiatic country.'<sup>71</sup> Inevitably, such views did cause a section of the Australasian press to rail against continuing the Japanese treaty. The populist paper *Truth*, which published editions in several Australasian cities, declared the alliance a 'blunder', and a 'staggering blow to British prestige'.<sup>72</sup> Alone among the Australian papers, *Truth* condemned the renewal after it was announced, considering it 'a matter of regret that the imperial government should have chosen to continue its alliance with an inferior race'.<sup>73</sup>

At the same time, it was painfully obvious to the Australasian dominions that their external security remained, for the foreseeable future, tightly bound with British naval supremacy against its European rivals, and that this in turn hinged on the support of Japan. They also recognised that the alliance served local as well as imperial interests, insofar as it prevented Japan from pressing the immigration issue. Hence the *Sydney Morning Herald* warned that the

---

<sup>67</sup> Note by Esher, 10 Jan 1911, TNA, CAB 38/17/13.

<sup>68</sup> 'Report of a Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, assembled to formulate Questions connected with the Naval and Military Defence of the Empire to be discussed at the Imperial Conference, 1911,' 11 March 1911, TNA, CAB 38/17/13.

<sup>69</sup> Nish, *Alliance in Decline*, p. 51.

<sup>70</sup> Lowe, *Great Britain and Japan*, p. 277.

<sup>71</sup> CID Minutes, 111th Meeting, 26 May 1911, TNA, CAB 2/2/111, p. 23.

<sup>72</sup> 'The Turanian Terror,' *Truth*, 12 Feb 1911.

<sup>73</sup> 'Anglo-Japanese Alliance,' *Truth*, 23 July 1911.

termination of the alliance would surely be followed by a renewed protest against White Australia: ‘immunity from this danger is assured to us only so long as the Anglo-Japanese treaty lasts.’<sup>74</sup> In the meantime, or so the rationale went, it afforded the dominions time in which to grow their populations, organise a self-sufficient defence, and work out a system of imperial cooperation, so that the Japanese challenge, when it came, could be met with confidence. It gave each dominion ‘breathing time to set her house in order,’ as H.A. Gwynne, the editor of the *Standard*, argued to Andrew Fisher, while keeping Japan out of the arms of Germany – the combination which, from an Australian perspective, was the most threatening of all.<sup>75</sup>

This argument was also articulated by the imperial luminaries of the Round Table, the small but well-connected pressure group started by former members of Milner’s ‘Kindergarten’ in South Africa.<sup>76</sup> The group’s journal, launched in 1910, quickly established itself as a leading commentator on imperial affairs, and the leading article of its second issue was a fifty-page analysis of the Japanese alliance. Its author, Philip Kerr, who also acted as the *Round Table*’s editor, began by noting the extensive benefits Britain had received from its friendship with Japan: the alliance secured the Pacific; it guaranteed the frontiers of India; and allowed Britain to pursue the naval race with Germany free from distractions. Above all, it had kept Japan, ‘the only power which could bring effective force to bear in the East, a friendly ally instead of a suspicious rival.’<sup>77</sup> At the same time, it was no use pretending that cooperation had been entirely harmonious: on the issue of immigration, in particular, the alliance was difficult to reconcile with the dominions’ determination to guard their racial exclusivity. On the latter issue, Kerr, along with his colleagues, came down strongly on the colonial side: the only way the British Empire could retain its position of global primacy, he had previously argued to Arthur Balfour, was by retaining and filling up the last ‘still undeveloped white man’s lands’ in southern Africa and Australasia, and keeping them away from ‘covetous eyes’ of other powers. ‘Not until these countries are more thickly populated than they are to-day can their future as Anglo-Saxon States be assured, unless they are protected by a power invincible at sea.’<sup>78</sup> In this georacial view of global politics, the chief benefit of the alliance was that it bought time for a proper imperial system to be organised:

In the long run the project of a “White Empire” will only be accomplished if the Empire has the strength to resist the terrific expansive pressure of the teeming millions of Asia. And that strength it will be able to exert only if all its parts are absolutely at one on the policy they should pursue.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> ‘Australia and Japan,’ *SMH*, 11 Aug 1910.

<sup>75</sup> Gwynne to Fisher, 8 June 1910, NLA, Hunt Papers, MS 52/7, ff. 2210.

<sup>76</sup> The fullest treatment of this fascinating collective remains Alexander May, ‘The Round Table, 1910-66’, DPhil Thesis, (University of Oxford, 1995).

<sup>77</sup> [Philip Kerr], ‘The Anglo-Japanese Alliance’, *Round Table*, March 1911.

<sup>78</sup> Kerr to Balfour, 3 May 1909, BL, Balfour Papers, Add. MS 49797.

<sup>79</sup> [Kerr], ‘Anglo-Japanese Alliance’.

The argument was aimed at a dominion audience, and Kerr asked J.C. Watson, Australia's first Labour prime minister and a leading local Round Tabler, to distribute his article to the 'leading people in parliament,' noting that it was an issue of 'first class importance to Australia'.<sup>80</sup> Watson acknowledged that he found it 'extremely interesting': 'The moral of it all is that we must prosecute the development of our defence policy, and also devote ourselves to securing the basis of all defence - people.'<sup>81</sup>

Australasians might have chafed at seeing their white man's countries in 'a position of sufferance under an Eastern race,' as the *Sydney Morning Herald* put it, but they needed no instruction from British officialdom to recognise that there was no immediate alternative to the Japanese alliance. The establishment of the Pacific 'empire fleet' was still in its infancy – Churchill would smother it in 1913 – while the prospect of American assistance, *pave* the Great White Fleet, was ringed with uncertainties. Securing the southern dominions on the basis of their own resources alone, meanwhile, looked to be a task of Herculean proportions. Lord Kitchener, who performed an assessment of Australia's military needs in 1909, insisted that the Commonwealth would need a trained force of at least 80,000 men. Admiral Reginald Henderson, who did the same for the navy in 1910, set out a twenty-year scheme for the construction of an Australian navy composed of eighteen capital ships. Neither mentioned Japan by name, but both reports cited Australia's isolation, its large stretches of unoccupied coastline, and its proximity to possible enemies.<sup>82</sup> The Australian government could hardly fail to grasp the allusion to its own vulnerability. 'At the back of their brain is the fear of the Japanese', noted George King-Hall, the admiral in charge of the Australia station, 'they are hoping the Treaty will be renewed, but I tell them pointedly, this is very uncertain, & not to build upon its being done.'<sup>83</sup>

These strands converged during the imperial conference, which lasted from 23 May until 20 June. A special meeting on foreign policy was scheduled early on, in a closed session of the CID on 26 May. Asquith presided, although Grey commanded the meeting with an exposition of British foreign policy, taking in Britain's relations with every major power, and its priorities in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Its purpose was to reassure the dominions that the British government considered their defence of paramount importance, and that the strategic priorities of the United Kingdom and those of its settler colonies remained deeply intertwined. Grey stressed that the deeper involvement in European affairs over which he had presided had been driven by one overwhelming consideration: to prevent the emergence of a 'Napoleonic' power that might attempt to break the European balance, and subsequently overturn British naval supremacy. Yet Grey was quick to point out that the destruction of British sea power, would be equally catastrophic for the dominions: South Africa would be at risk of invasion from the

---

<sup>80</sup> Kerr to Watson, 27 Feb 1911, BLO, Round Table Papers, c. 797.

<sup>81</sup> Watson to Kerr, 19 April, BLO, Round Table Papers, c. 797.

<sup>82</sup> See 'Report on the Defence of Australia by Field Marshal Viscount Kitchener of Khartoum,' 7 July 1910, NAA, A463/1957/1059; 'Recommendations by Admiral Sir Reginald Henderson,' 14 Sept 1911, NAA, A1/1914/7089.

<sup>83</sup> King-Hall to McKenna, 27 March 1911, CCAC, McKenna Papers, MCKN 3/10.



nearby German colonies; the position of Australia and New Zealand would be equally precarious; while Canada would have to settle for an uncertain future of dependence on the United States. When viewed in these terms, the main purpose of alliance with Japan, which he moved on to discuss, was to preserve the global supremacy of the British navy – and by extension, the security of the empire. If it were terminated now, the effects were likely to be dire. Tokyo would look for another ally, and expand its own naval programme, forcing Britain, in turn, to balance the Japanese fleet in the Pacific. It would produce a ‘tremendous and undesirable change’ in the empire’s strategic condition.<sup>84</sup>

Grey acknowledged that the racial question was the only ‘possible objection’ that could be levied against renewal: London was well aware that the dominions were ‘very averse’ to Japanese immigrants, and ‘perfectly determined’ never to admit them in large numbers. Yet he was careful to reiterate that the alliance did not interfere with the dominions’ right to maintain their racial exclusivity. Nor had Japan ever used the alliance as leverage:

I think people may say: ‘Is it possible that you should continue an alliance with Japan, and that Japan should not sooner or later raise the question – what she would call her claim, I suppose – to have her people admitted into the territories of her ally?’ She has never raised that point yet. She has never mentioned it in connection with the alliance at all.

Indeed, Grey stressed that the Japanese government had only a sentimental interest in immigration: its policy was to ‘concentrate her people in Korea and Manchuria... she does not want to encourage them to go abroad, though she has some difficulty in preventing them’.<sup>85</sup> The arrangement with Canada illustrated that Tokyo was perfectly willing to impose effective restraints on emigration. Laurier, the only premier to have been forewarned that the alliance would be discussed, rose to his cue, declaring that the alliance had produced ‘the most happy results’ and had made the dominions ‘absolutely free from the fear of invasion’. Glossing over his own frustrations over the difficulty of committing Tokyo to a definite restriction, Laurier noted that as far as Canada was concerned, the immigration question had been ‘absolutely settled’ with Japan’s full cooperation. If Japanese were respected, and ‘treated like civilised people,’ concluded Laurier, there was no reason why the alliance ‘should not last for forty or fifty years more’.<sup>86</sup>

None of the other dominion leaders came close to Laurier’s full-throated endorsement, but all fell in with the conclusion that the alliance should be continued, on the understanding that it would not ‘in any way affect the question of the freedom of the Dominions to deal with the question of immigration’ – a point that Grey had already conceded.<sup>87</sup> Joseph Ward noted that opposition to the alliance in New Zealand mainly sprang from the fear that it ‘might entail our

---

<sup>84</sup> CID Minutes, 111th Meeting, 26 May 1911, TNA, CAB 2/2/111, p. 17.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

yielding, against the fixed policy of our people, to the introduction of Eastern races'; Grey's reassurance to the contrary was 'gratifying in the extreme'.<sup>88</sup> The Australians were more guarded. Fisher noted that renewal, on the condition that it would not affect exclusion, would be 'a great satisfaction' to the Commonwealth, 'because undoubtedly we are somewhat apprehensive of the immediate future'. Yet he dismissed any suggestion that Australia might modify its immigration policy to accommodate Japanese opinion, or that exclusion might be effected through a bilateral arrangement on the model of the Lemieux agreement. It was one thing for Canada to do so, since it enjoyed the protection of the United States: 'You have a 100,000,000 of white people there and are in quite close touch with Europe. Where are we?'<sup>89</sup> Australia would do its duty by the empire by eschewing legislation specifically aimed at Japan, but it also expected London to understand that White Australia was non-negotiable: 'we rely, of course, on [the British government] to safeguard our immigration powers absolutely, in the last extremity.' Pearce echoed the point: there would be an 'outcry' against the renewal of the treaty unless it was explicitly stated that Australia's exclusion policies would not be affected.<sup>90</sup>

Antipodean misgivings aside, the meeting had served its purpose, and that same afternoon, Grey informed the Japanese ambassador that the dominions – and Canada in particular – approved of the renewal of the alliance.<sup>91</sup> Yet the meeting had demonstrated that their blessing was not unconditional. Immigration remained a major stumbling block, and Grey managed to steer around it only by reassuring the dominions – wishfully, as it turned out – that it was unlikely to come up for the duration of the treaty, that Japan had no wish to raise it, and that even if it did so, Britain would maintain an iron wall between immigration and the alliance. It was an illustration of the extent to which the function of the treaty had changed. As Grey justified it, the alliance was above all an instrument to contain the expansion of Japan itself: it would prevent Tokyo from encouraging emigration, from expanding its fleet, or from allying itself with Germany. Even under these guarantees, the Australians alluded in barely veiled terms that they considered the continued reliance on Japanese power to be dangerous. As the meeting turned to defence, Pearce argued forcefully that the extension of the alliance would not mean the Commonwealth would abrogate or slow down its military preparations: as it was, ten years were barely enough to raise Australia's preparedness to a level where the alliance could be safely dispensed with. The British government was happy to indulge him. 'Undoubtedly if Australia is to develop a navy which is in any way competent to hold the Japanese navy in check in 1921,' noted McKenna, 'she would have to begin her work at once.'<sup>92</sup> The dominions' endorsement of the alliance should thus not be read as an uncritical deference to London in strategic questions – and still less as the result of being 'overwhelmed' at the privilege of being taken into the

---

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>91</sup> Grey to Rumbold, 26 May 1911, FO 471/1140/20654.

<sup>92</sup> CID Minutes, 111th Meeting, 26 May 1911, TNA, CAB 2/2/111, p. 30.

confidence of the Foreign Secretary, as Peter Lowe has suggested.<sup>93</sup> Australia and New Zealand accepted renewal on their own terms: as a guarantee for Japan's good behaviour, and on the understanding that their security could never be fully entrusted to an Asian power. 'Japan is developing very fast,' one of the South African delegates noted in a telling aside, 'and at any moment questions may arise which would bring the Far East into conflict with the West'.<sup>94</sup>

The enduring anxieties over Japan were again in evidence during the conference's plenary sessions. Much of these were absorbed with the proposals of Joseph Ward, who stepped into Deakin's shoes as the most prolific imperial centraliser.<sup>95</sup> Among others, Ward proposed an imperial council to deal with naval defence, the formal separation of the dominions from the Colonial Office, and permanent representation for the dominions on the CID. Although his proposals were unpolished – 'confused and confusing', according to Neville Meaney – they represented a logical culmination to his thinking on imperial defence.<sup>96</sup> For Ward, the 1909 naval crisis had sharply demonstrated that New Zealand's security could only be guaranteed by maintaining the global supremacy of the British fleet; local squadrons, Ward believed, swallowed up precious resources that would be more usefully placed at the disposal of a central executive. Yet this was a highly calculated loyalism, which sought to carve out a place for New Zealand's interests at the heart of imperial policy-making. As Ward argued in his accompanying speech, the maintenance of British interests in the Pacific was 'as important as the defence of the Atlantic Possessions or of the Motherland itself'.<sup>97</sup> For Ward, the empire remained first and foremost a racial entity, its future closely bound up with preserving the white British character of the dominions. Particular watchfulness had to be exercised on the 'Asiatic question', and particularly on the danger from 'one great Eastern nation' that Ward felt no further need to specify. Even if his centralising solutions made little headway, the analysis of New Zealand's strategic predicament was strikingly familiar.<sup>98</sup>

On immigration, discussed on the final day of the conference, Ward again drove the agenda, introducing a resolution proposing that 'each coloured race should be encouraged to remain domiciled within its own zone'.<sup>99</sup> Again, Ward displayed a striking tendency to address Australasian concerns through sweeping, if convoluted, schemes for imperial reform. Introducing the 'zonal' idea, the New Zealand premier launched a long speech on the merits of exclusion: hostility to Asian migration, according to Ward, did not stem from racial prejudice, but rather

---

<sup>93</sup> Lowe, *Great Britain and Japan*, p. 277.

<sup>94</sup> CID Minutes, 111th Meeting, 26 May 1911, TNA, CAB 2/2/111, p. 32.

<sup>95</sup> J.E. Kendle, "The Round Table Movement, New Zealand, and the Conference of 1911," *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 3, no. 2 (January 1965): 104–17.

<sup>96</sup> Meaney, *Search for Security*, p. 218.

<sup>97</sup> 'Minutes of the Imperial Conference,' 25 May 1911, TNA, CAB18/13A, pp. 40-44.

<sup>98</sup> 'Minutes of the Imperial Conference,' 1 June 1911, TNA, CAB18/13A, p. 51.

<sup>99</sup> 'Minutes of the Imperial Conference,' 19 June 1911, TNA, CAB18/13A, pp. 399-410. The scheme was similarly phrased to that which Lord Grey attempted to press on the British authorities from 1908 onwards. The obvious suspect for implanting Ward with the 'zonal' idea was Lionel Curtis, who met Grey on a visit to Canada in 1909 and played an instrumental role in shaping New Zealand's centralizing assault on the 1911 conference.

from economic considerations, as the competition with cheap Asian labour would drive down wages and living standards to the point of the 'destruction to a very large extent of very large sections of white British people in some of the overseas countries'.<sup>100</sup> Ward went on to argue that exclusion was equally necessary to preserve international peace. A settlement that recognised the races of the world as discreet units – different but equal – he believed, might reconcile Japan to exclusion. 'Pride of race' had, after all, become was a universal principle among civilised nations: 'It is of just as much importance to the Chinese to preserve their race as it is to the British people to preserve a white race, and to the Japanese to preserve their race.'<sup>101</sup>

Ward's was the latest in a string of proposals to suggest delineating international racial divisions through a formal understanding, based on the arguably naïve belief that global racial tensions could be managed once they were explicitly acknowledged as such. Once again, however, such a scheme disintegrated upon contact with practical objections, not the least of which was the racial diversity of the British Empire itself. Lord Crewe, who presided over the session, was careful to repeat Joseph Chamberlain's dictum that the British government had no intention interfering with the immigration policies of its dominions. Even the India Office now recognised that free movement for all British subjects was impracticable.<sup>102</sup> Yet Crewe devoted the rest of his address to a plea against overt racial discrimination, insisting that the dominions needed to take stock of the wider implications of their exclusion policies, which affected Britain's relations with East Asia, and in recent years had become 'a valuable asset' to those seeking to challenge the legitimacy of British rule in India. The racial question, Crewe insisted, was one 'which seemed to threaten not merely the well being, but the actual existence, of the Empire as an Empire.' As such, it was essential that the dominions kept the 'anti-colour prejudice' of some of their nationals in check. Crewe did not bother to hide his disdain for overt racism: pride in 'whiteness' for its own sake, he remarked, was the attitude of one who had little else to be proud of, and no man was more convinced of his own racial superiority 'than the mere bar-loafer whose mental horizon is habitually clouded by whisky'.<sup>103</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The third and final Anglo-Japanese alliance was signed in London on 13 July 1911. Of the three treaties, it would last the longest, running its full length until finally abrogated by the Washington treaties in 1923. It was also the only one that saw the two allies fight alongside each other, first during the First World War and later in the Allied intervention in Siberia. Yet the alliance never regained the popularity it had enjoyed during the halcyon days of the Russo-

---

<sup>100</sup> Minutes, 19 June, p. 401.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 404

<sup>102</sup> 'British Indians in the Dominions,' India Office Memorandum, 11 March 1911, BL, IOR L/P&J/5/462.

<sup>103</sup> Minutes, 19 June 1911, p. 396.

Japanese War. Already by 1911 it was increasingly redefined as an instrument to check and channel Japan's expansion into China; following the disintegration of Qing rule later that year, it was soon tested as such.<sup>104</sup> The logic of containment also extended to the Pacific: as Grey had made clear to the leaders of the dominions, the alliance served their interests not least because it gave Japan an incentive not to revive the immigration question. Once hailed as an instrument to integrate Japan into 'civilised' international society, the alliance, as Antony Best has noted, now also underpinned a racial order that excluded it.<sup>105</sup> This was an obvious paradox, which could only be sustained as long as Japan was prepared to let the racial question lie dormant, and as long as the dominions could be assured that Britain remained committed to their racial security.

It was on that basis that Ward, Pearce, and Fisher, whatever their personal feelings about Japan, accepted the case for renewing the alliance – just as Hughes and Massey would argue for its continuation in 1921. Indeed, the reception of the new alliance in Australasia spoke volumes about how closely this rationale was aligned with opinion throughout the British Pacific. In one editorial, the *Sydney Morning Herald* noted that it was glad to learn of the renewal, and indeed it hoped that the alliance would again be renewed in 1921, 'but that we will then be able to face the possibility of its denunciation with confidence'.<sup>106</sup> Hughes, serving as acting premier while Fisher was still in London, similarly welcomed the renewal on the grounds that it would give Australia 'breathing time' to bring its house in order. Implicit in all this was the assumption that the respite was only temporary: Australia would again have to confront its geopolitical exposure ten years later. Pearce, who had made the point explicitly during the conference, found his anxieties confirmed when he visited Japan on his return to Australia. 'Government ironworks, coalmines, wireless stations, docks and shipyards, fort barracks and naval stations,' he wrote 'all proclaim Japan's readiness for war and the deadly earnestness with which she makes that readiness.'<sup>107</sup> 'Yellow Peril-ism' remained alive and well, and the next few years would see these sentiments roaring to the fore once again.

---

<sup>104</sup> See Lowe, *Britain and Japan in China*, Chs. 3, 5.

<sup>105</sup> Best, "The Alliance and the International Politics of East Asia," p. 29.

<sup>106</sup> 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance,' *SMH*, 17 July 1911.

<sup>107</sup> 'Account of a journey from England to Australia,' 1911, AWM, Pearce Papers, 3DRL/2222/1/5.

## SEVEN

### ‘Must the bar of race be permanent?’:

### The British world and Japan, 1911-14

Writing in *The Times* in May 1913, just under a decade since the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, Valentine Chirol, reflected on Japan’s ‘standing among the nations’:

for the influence it must exercise on the future of the human race as a whole, no event which has happened within our own generation can compare with the rise of Japan... For within 50 years a nation, which is neither Occidental, nor White, nor Christian has for the first time taken its place... as one of the Great Powers of the world<sup>1</sup>

Japan had made monumental strides. Its industrial modernisation, military triumphs, and more recent turn towards representative government – ‘hitherto exclusively associated with the West’ – all meant that Japan was now, in a position to claim equal standing with the Western powers. In practice, however, its entry into the ‘comity of civilisation’ had not been the triumphal procession that Chirol and other pro-Japanese commentators had hoped for. Instead, its expansion had produced a set of powerful opposite reactions, as white settlers and dejected China traders responded to Japan’s arrival by raising new barriers of race. Immigration had proved particularly contentious, and following the crisis of 1907-8, Japan had accepted – not without reluctance – that it could not expect its nationals to be treated on the same terms as Europeans at the Canadian, American, or Australian border. Through the ‘gentlemen’s agreements’ with Canada and the United States, it had salvaged a semblance of notional equality, by agreeing to restrict the flow of emigration voluntarily, provided no formal discrimination would be enacted. In effect, Japan had been forced to resign itself to the practical exclusion of its nationals as the price of continued cordial relations with the English-speaking powers. Katō Takaaki, the Japanese ambassador, told Grey in 1913 that Tokyo ‘understood it to be inevitable that [the] British self-governing dominions should enforce measures to prevent increase of Japanese settlement in their territories’.<sup>2</sup>

Yet this remained a delicate balancing act. The Japanese government may have been willing to abdicate its treaty rights, yet the restrictions on Japanese immigration remained deeply unpopular, and commentators continued to press Tokyo to be more forceful in asserting its international status and defending the rights of overseas Japanese.<sup>3</sup> Among the white communities on the Pacific coast, meanwhile, many continued to demand firmer guarantees of their racial security than the ‘gentlemen’s agreements’ could offer. It took a generous measure of

---

<sup>1</sup> Japan Among the Nations: The Bar of Race,’ *The Times*, 19 May 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Grey to Rumbold, 3 Jan 1913, NA, FO 371/1663/971.

<sup>3</sup> Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement*, pp. 211-1.

political will on both sides, therefore, to keep the issue under control. Yet the immigration question could not be regarded as truly settled: in 1911, the dominion leaders had agreed to extend the Anglo-Japanese alliance largely on the assumption that it would prevent Japan from raising the immigration question for its duration. Meanwhile, a second arrangement had been cobbled together to ease Australasian fears of Japanese naval power. The 1909 naval agreement had promised, in theory, to combine Australia's desire for an autonomous naval force with a robust imperial presence in the Pacific, even if its practical implementation had not yet been carried through.

From the spring of 1913 onwards, however, both sets of compromises again threatened to come unstuck. A new crisis in California, centred on the question of Japanese land ownership, reignited the immigration controversy in a new and potentially more menacing form, as Japan now began to take a firmer stance on the issue of non-discrimination. The Canadian government, meanwhile, worried about contagion to British Columbia, faced mounting pressure to supplement its own 'gentlemen's agreement' with further safeguards. This in turn coincided with a naval scare in the Australasian dominions, who fretted (correctly) that the new regime at the Admiralty, now led by Winston Churchill, was preparing to jettison the Pacific agreement to concentrate fully on Germany. As war clouds gathered over Europe, it was Japan, and the prospect of racial conflict, that haunted inhabitants of the British Pacific. 'The Pacific region... is overshadowed with this menace of Oriental expansion,' noted Lancelot Lawton, the foreign editor of the *Academy*. 'As a provocation of racial discord no more sinister problem could be imagined. It is a problem that stirs the elemental passions and desires of man.'<sup>4</sup>

*'A vital principle': The California land crisis*

The Pacific scare of 1913-14, like previous the immigration crisis, began in California. Japanese immigration into the Golden State had slowed to a trickle after the finalisation of the 'gentlemen's agreement' in 1908; but the issue had refused to go away. It remained a deeply contested issue in local politics, and the state legislature at Sacramento typically began each new session with a flurry of anti-Japanese bills. Furthermore, Roosevelt's repeated chastisements during the San Francisco schools controversy had created a clear opening for his political opponents to campaign on an exclusionist programme. During the presidential election of 1912, the Democratic Party explicitly fitted an anti-Japanese plank to its platform, distributing mass-produced postcards that contrasted Woodrow Wilson's stance on Asian immigration – 'I stand for a national policy of exclusion' – with Roosevelt's proposal to naturalise the Japanese during his address to Congress in 1906. Wilson lost California, but only by a margin of 174 votes.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Lancelot Lawton, 'The Naval Crisis within the Empire,' *Academy*, 4 July 1914.

<sup>5</sup> Daniels, *Politics of Prejudice*, pp. 54-6. Out of a total caucus of nearly 700,000.

As the pace of immigration slowed down, the 'Japanese question' in California came to hinge on restricting the economic activities of Japanese already resident in the state, and particularly regarding the question of land ownership. Originally a mostly urban community, growing numbers of Japanese settlers had taken up jobs in agriculture, and many went on to own or lease their own land. By 1910, over half of all adult Japanese men in California were engaged in farming, and by 1913, Japanese settlers owned, leased, or worked over 281,000 acres of land across the state.<sup>6</sup> The effect on white farmers was predictable: anti-Japanese sentiment made inroads into rural areas, and smallholders' associations joined organised labour as a second prong in the exclusion movement. Starting in 1909, the state legislature made repeated attempts to bar Japanese from owning or leasing land, through the introduction of an 'alien land bill', that would forbid land ownership by 'aliens ineligible for citizenship'. Under the current naturalisation law, that meant all those who could not prove either European or African descent: East Asians were excluded *in toto*. Thus far, California's Republican governor, Hiram Johnson, had been responsive to the federal government's wish not to allow an overtly anti-Japanese bill to go through. Yet by 1913, with a Democrat in the White House and Johnson now outside the Republican Party – he had been Theodore Roosevelt's running mate on the Progressive ticket in 1912 – the political balance had shifted. In March 1913, amid a state-wide campaign that rehearsed the familiar arguments against the supposedly 'inassimilable' Japanese, both Democrats and Progressives threw their weight behind a new land bill. '[T]he tide must be checked,' Senator James Phelan, the doyen of the state Democratic party, wrote to Wilson, 'otherwise California will become a Japanese plantation.'<sup>7</sup> Wilson, a Southern Democrat who had run on a platform of states' rights, made only a half-hearted effort to tone down its language. On 19 May, the Alien Land Bill became law.

The revival of the racial question in California sent ripples across the Pacific, and according to the new British ambassador to Tokyo, Sir William Conyngham Greene, was provoking a 'storm of agitation' in Japan.<sup>8</sup> Mass demonstrations took place in Tokyo between 16 and 19 April. Protesters gathered around the American embassy. Some even called for the Japanese fleet to be sent to California.<sup>9</sup> The press was equally seething, and even papers aligned with the government abandoned their usual restraint; the *Kokumin Shimbun*, a liberal paper that had previously taken a moderate stance on the immigration question, now denounced the bill as 'immoral hypocrisy' and a 'national disgrace'.<sup>10</sup> In the restive atmosphere that had gripped Japanese politics since death of the Meiji emperor in July 1912, such public agitation mattered:

---

<sup>6</sup> The exact figure is disputed. Daniels cites a lower figure based on the US census, (see *Politics of Prejudice*, p. 9), while Yuji Ichioka uses Japanese statistics that include land worked by Japanese settlers under contract (see *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924* (New York, 1988) p. 150).

<sup>7</sup> Masuda, "Rumors of War".

<sup>8</sup> Greene to Grey, 7 June 1913, NA, FO 371/1667/28587.

<sup>9</sup> Masuda, "Rumors of War".

<sup>10</sup> Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, pp. 271-75.



the current government was the third in less than a year, and had been in office for less than two months when the land controversy broke. As Conyngham Greene cautioned London, Tokyo was now under substantial pressure to take a much stronger stance than it had during the schools controversy. Then, Japan had been willing to acquiesce in restrictions on immigration, but on the understanding that resident Japanese would not see their existing rights curtailed further; this was the implicit *quid pro quo* that underpinned the ‘gentlemen’s agreements’. The land bill did not merely violate this principle in actual practice – Greene thought it a transparent attempt to ‘drive [the Japanese] out of the country’ – but by basing itself on the racial bar in US naturalisation law, it explicitly targeted Japanese on the basis of their racial status.<sup>11</sup> As *The Times* observed, where the ‘gentlemen’s agreement’ had at least upheld Japan’s notional equality, the new bill carried ‘implications of racial inferiority’ that the Japanese public deeply resented.<sup>12</sup> As the bill made its way through the California legislature, the Japanese ambassador in Washington duly laid down a series of official protests: the new law was ‘mortifying’, as well as ‘deeply hurtful’ to Japan’s national sensibilities. Wilson continued to be evasive, again appealing to Hiram Johnson to remove the explicit racial provisions, but stopping well short of putting any real pressure on California.<sup>13</sup>

This was an issue, as Greene concluded, that went far beyond the status of Japanese in California. What was at stake was whether Japan could ever expect to be treated as a fully equal member of the international order, or whether it would continue to see its position circumscribed on account of its racial identity. The patience of the Japanese public, in particular, appeared to be running out. ‘People feel that the two successful wars which they have waged have not brought them all the reward they had hoped for, and that Japan, as one of the Great Powers, is still accepted more or less on sufferance.’<sup>14</sup> The government remained committed to a diplomatic solution, but domestic pressure allowed it little room for compromise. On the American side, moreover, Wilson appeared to be far less steadfast in reining in the rhetorical excesses of Californian exclusionists than Roosevelt had been. There was a danger that the controversy might alienate Japanese opinion from the West altogether, and encourage it to seek refuge in the siren song of pan-Asianism. As Greene noted, the public mood in Japan was showing a troubling tendency of ‘contrasting the white races of the world with the coloured peoples, and accusing the former of having robbed the latter of their birthright’ – a charge of which the British Empire was no less guilty than the United States.<sup>15</sup>

Framing the land question as an issue of international racial equality was, in turn, a red rag to white opinion on the Pacific coast. ‘I gather that this is a question as to which the

---

<sup>11</sup> Greene to Grey, 14 April 1913, NA, FO 371/1667/19969

<sup>12</sup> ‘California and the Japanese,’ *The Times*, 23 April 1913.

<sup>13</sup> P.E. Coletta, “‘The Most Thankless Task’: Bryan and the California Alien Land Legislation,” *Pacific Historical Review* 36, no. 2 (May 1, 1967): 163–87.

<sup>14</sup> Greene to Grey, 23 May 1913, NA, FO 371/1667/28167.

<sup>15</sup> Greene to Grey, 7 June 1913, NA, FO 371/1667/28587.

inhabitants of Western America will admit no doubt,' reported Cecil Spring-Rice, now British ambassador in Washington. California would never concede that the principle of racial equality gave Japan the right to challenge its immigration or naturalisation laws.<sup>16</sup> 'The US means to maintain peace,' he noted, 'but they cannot yield on the question of naturalisation or on that of land ownership': that would mean 'civil war'.<sup>17</sup> Although British diplomats remained sceptical that the issue might lead to a Japanese-American confrontation – Lord Bryce, then visiting Japan, thought the notion 'absurd' – Spring-Rice warned that the danger should not be underestimated. The foundations of American power in the Pacific were fragile: the Philippines and Hawaii were 'absolutely vulnerable', and the Japanese navy 'could occupy the islands tomorrow if they wished'.<sup>18</sup> Hardliners in Tokyo might be tempted to strike before the completion of the Panama Canal shifted the strategic balance to the United States. 'The example of the Russian war might well embolden the wilder spirits in Japan to take the risk.'<sup>19</sup>

Back in London, the Foreign Office watched the revival of the racial question with a sense of foreboding, which grew worse as the United States began to hint once again at the possibility of a united Anglo-American front against Japanese immigration. On 16 May, the William Jennings Bryan, Wilson's secretary of state, called at the British embassy to request whether Britain, 'in the interests of peace', would serve as an intermediary between the United States and Japan. '[It] appears as if it might become necessary to put in a word at Tokyo', Spring-Rice reported.<sup>20</sup> The Foreign Office spotted the danger: such an intervention meant using the alliance as leverage on the racial question, which both sides had studiously avoided over the past decade.<sup>21</sup> 'A word from us at Tokyo, which is what the U.S. really want, would be tantamount to inviting Japan to surrender a degree of the vital principle at stake.'<sup>22</sup> This would not only endanger the alliance itself, which, as one official noted, was 'of a peculiarly sensitive nature,' but also risked reviving the question of Japanese exclusion in the white dominions. As Francis Dyke Acland, the parliamentary undersecretary, argued, it was 'too delicate a matter for us to interfere in unless we are prepared to risk the whole Japanese alliance'.<sup>23</sup> Non-intervention cut both ways, and London also remained careful not to give Japan the impression that it would support its claims, as this might raise awkward complications for exclusion in the dominions: 'we do not want the Japanese Govt. to imagine that we are on their side now.'<sup>24</sup> Maintaining the balancing act between Japan and the white empire was as delicate as ever.

---

<sup>16</sup> Spring-Rice to Grey, 19 May 1913, NA, FO 371/1667/24126.

<sup>17</sup> Spring-Rice to Grey, 23 June 1913, NA, Grey Papers, FO 800/83.

<sup>18</sup> Spring-Rice to Grey, 7 July 1913, NA, Grey Papers, FO 800/83.

<sup>19</sup> Spring-Rice to Grey, 27 Jan 1914, NA, FO 371/2011/5211.

<sup>20</sup> Spring-Rice to Grey, 20 May 1913, Grey Papers, NA, FO 800/83.

<sup>21</sup> As Grey had previously noted to Borden, Japan had 'not shown the slightest of intending to mix up the alliance with any question of immigration'. CID Minutes, 118th Meeting, 11 July 1912, NA, CAB 38/21/27.

<sup>22</sup> Minutes by J.D. Gregory, 17 May 1913, NA, FO 371/1667/22526.

<sup>23</sup> Minute by F. Dyke Acland, *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Minute by Dyke Acland, 6 June 1913, NA, FO 371/1667/25794.

The California question, hinging as it did on the legitimacy of the colour bar, also sparked a wider debate on the role of race in the international system. Chirol, now retired from *The Times*, took to his former paper to warn of the dangers of letting racial prejudice stand in the way of Japan's integration into the 'comity of nations' – the same case he had made during the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>25</sup> Over the last fifty years, Chirol argued, Japan had 'made good her title to be treated on a footing of complete equality as one of the Great Powers of the world'. The real question at the core of the land bill controversy was whether those achievements would translate into full acceptance as a civilised power, or 'whether her Asiatic descent is permanently to disqualify her for the enjoyment of full rights freely accorded to one another by the great nations'. The traditional 'economic' defence for exclusion – that it would lower wages and living standards – had become unsustainable, Chirol argued, since the average Japanese migrant was superior to 'many at least of the ignorant and squalid masses' freely admitted into the United States every year. The California controversy revolved around race, and race alone, and Japan could not be expected to put up with such discrimination indefinitely. The issue would only grow worse, Chirol warned, as Japan's old guard gave way to the rise of popular government, 'for the more democratic Japan grows, the more strongly will she resent any slur upon her position'. Just as white democracy had built up the Great White Walls, so a democratic Japan would seek to tear them down.

Chirol understood that the revival of the racial question in such a form carried profound ramifications for the British Empire. To his friend Lord Hardinge, now viceroy of India, he noted that if the California crisis was to lead to real trouble – a contingency that could not be dismissed – Britain's predicament would be precarious in the extreme. London was still formally bound to Japan, but 'in the Dominions at any rate, the feeling in favour of the United States on such an issue will be universally and overwhelmingly strong'.<sup>26</sup> If it should come to war, the alliance could not be preserved; rather, the dominions would press Britain to actively side with the United States. Yet to do so would be to range imperial policy along the colour line, which might seriously embarrass it with the empire's non-white subjects. Indian radicals would have a pulpit from which 'to inflame Indian opinion against the white man, and to regard Japan as the champion of Asia against the West'.<sup>27</sup> It was a problem with which Hardinge, who spent much of his viceroyalty dealing with the discrimination against Indians in South Africa, was intimately familiar. 'These self-governing Colonies have the right to do absolutely as they like, and there is much to be said in favour of exclusion,' he noted to Lord Crewe, 'but it is difficult to reconcile these principles with the inclusion of India within the Empire.'<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> 'Japan Among the Nations: The Bar of Race,' *The Times*, 19 May 1913.

<sup>26</sup> Chirol to Hardinge, 23 May 1913, CUL, Hardinge Papers, 93.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Hardinge to Crewe, 3 June 1914, CUL, Hardinge Papers, 120.

Chirol's warnings in turn drew a response from the American admiral and naval historian A.T. Mahan. Writing in *The Times*, Mahan rejected Chirol's claim that Japan's transformation over the past half-century had made racial difference irrelevant. Japanese society retained 'strong racial marks', which prevented the assimilation of its nationals into the white democratic societies. The Japanese in the United States, therefore, would remain 'a solid homogenous body, essentially and unchangeably foreign'.<sup>29</sup> Other commentators also came out in defence of exclusion, noting that the racial sentiments of the Californians were widely shared by the white dominions, and that Britain had an obligation to heed the democratic sentiments of its colonists. Warnings that the empire might split along the colour line again made their appearance in the press: thus the naval writer Archibald Hurd warned that if left unchecked, the 'anti-Asiatic movement' would become 'the determinative factor of Imperial policy', stronger even than the 'sentiment of kinship' with Britain. Unless London reassured its colonists that it understood their position on the 'great racial problem', it would see 'the growth of a movement which may dismember the Empire'.<sup>30</sup> The naval correspondent of the *Observer* similarly noted that if the California controversy would drag Japan and the United States into war, 'the United States would be fighting the battle of the white man's civilisation', while Strachey's *Spectator* doubted 'whether the Empire could survive such an outrage to the feelings of a large and important part of its white population'.<sup>31</sup>

*'A red herring across the California trail'? Canada and Japanese Immigration*

The scenario that haunted British observers most was a repeat of 1907, when the California crisis had spilled over into Canada, and already there were troubling signs this might happen again. As Spring-Rice reported from Washington, opinion in British Columbia on the Japanese question was of a kind with California, and would certainly come out in support of the United States if Japan continued to oppose the land bill: 'The Pacific Slope will stand firm on this point and stand together.'<sup>32</sup> Similar alarms were raised in British Columbia itself: T.R.E. McInnes warned that American agitators would again attempt to stir up tensions north of the border in an attempt to step up the pressure on Japan. The Vancouver riot, had after all, 'at that time certainly served the diplomacy of the United States', and British Columbia might again be dragged 'as a red herring across the California trail'.<sup>33</sup> The Canadian prime minister asked the Washington embassy to be kept closely informed of developments in California, as he considered the question to be 'of the highest importance'.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>29</sup> 'Japan Among the Nations: Admiral Mahan's Views,' *The Times*, 23 June 1913.

<sup>30</sup> Archibald Hurd, 'The Racial War in the Pacific: An Imperial Peril,' *Fortnightly Review*, June 1913.

<sup>31</sup> 'United States and Japan,' *Observer*, 18 May 1913; 'The United States, Japan, and Britain,' *Spectator*, 24 May 1913.

<sup>32</sup> Spring-Rice to Grey, 7 Jul 1913, NA, Grey Papers, FO 800/83.

<sup>33</sup> McInnes to Borden, 7 Aug 1913, LAC, Borden Papers, C-4231, ff. 17120-22.

<sup>34</sup> Spring-Rice to Grey, 29 Jan 1914, NA, Grey Papers, FO 800/84.

That prime minister was no longer the urbane Wilfrid Laurier, but his successor, the Conservative leader Robert Borden. After towering over Canadian politics for fifteen years, Laurier was defeated in the election of October 1911, as divisions within his own party over the naval question and a reciprocity treaty with the United States sparked a Liberal collapse in Quebec and Ontario. Borden won by a landslide.<sup>35</sup> The election brought a change in Canadian attitudes towards Japan: Laurier had been a strong advocate for expanding economic ties with Asia, and although his pro-Japanese views cooled in the wake of the Vancouver riots, he had consistently pursued the resolution of the immigration problem through diplomatic engagement. Alone among the dominion premiers, he had endorsed the Anglo-Japanese alliance with real enthusiasm at the 1911 conference. Borden took a more detached view. After the Vancouver riots, he had openly flirted with turning his Conservatives into the party of ‘White Canada’: he had conducted a speaking tour of British Columbia, published a pamphlet containing his speeches against Japanese immigration, and fitted an exclusionist plank to the Conservative platform during the 1908 election.<sup>36</sup> Notably, and perhaps curiously for a politician often associated with the flag-waving Britannic nationalism of Ontario and the Maritimes, Borden also laid less stress on the ‘imperial’ connotations of the immigration question (i.e. the need to respect Indian and Japanese sensibilities) than Laurier. His empire, like that of Deakin and Ward, was a white, English-speaking one.

One immediate effect of the Conservative victory was to bring the exclusionist aspirations of British Columbia into the inner circle of government. Sir Richard McBride, the province’s long-serving premier, enjoyed direct access to Borden, and wasted no time in urging the abrogation of the Lemieux agreement and the introduction of an exclusion act. ‘Asiatics are still coming to the country in great numbers,’ he claimed, ‘and today are as much a menace against white settlement and white labour as ever before in the history of the Province.’<sup>37</sup> Borden made conciliatory noises, but was privately sceptical that the situation was as dire as McBride claimed: according to the monthly statistics of the British embassy in Tokyo, fewer Japanese were leaving for Canada than at any time since the Russo-Japanese War. As he noted during his visit to London in the summer of 1912, Japanese immigration was ‘almost within negligible limits,’ although British Columbia would raise ‘a little outcry now and then’.<sup>38</sup>

Even in the absence of a pressing case, the government made an effort to meet McBride’s concerns. In January 1912, Joseph Pope – the official who had accompanied Lemieux to Tokyo – drafted a memorandum for a new immigration policy, acknowledging that would acknowledge that British Columbians were determined to develop their province as a ‘White Man’s Country’ and viewed the presence of ‘alien races’ with ‘deep seated repugnance and

---

<sup>35</sup> Darwin, *Empire Project*, pp. 155-59.

<sup>36</sup> See Borden, *Oriental Immigration*.

<sup>37</sup> McBride to Borden, 16 Nov 1911, LAC, Borden Papers, C-4207, ff. 5251-67,

<sup>38</sup> CID Minutes, 118th Meeting, 11 July 1912, NA, CAB 38/21/27, p. 6.

alarm'.<sup>39</sup> If left unchecked, such immigration would 'by mere weight of numbers... threaten the supremacy of the white race' in Canada. Pope now argued that the Lemieux agreement, which controlled immigration remotely, in collaboration with Tokyo, lacked 'permanence and stability', and offered insufficient protection against such a danger. If the numbers should increase, this might compel the government to adopt 'more exclusive measures against the immigration of Asiatic races into Canada'. Better to do this soon, Pope argued, before another popular outcry in British Columbia forced Canada to adopt a policy truly offensive to Japan. Ottawa, in other words, should seek to erect an inner wall of domestic legislation on which it could fall back if the Lemieux agreement were to collapse.

The opportunity arose when Canada considered its adhesion to the new Anglo-Japanese commercial treaty in the opening months of 1913. In 1906, Laurier had adhered to the treaty unconditionally, yet now, as Borden argued in a cabinet memorandum, he could no longer simply accept the treaty's provisions for reciprocal free movement. There was a 'deep-seated feeling' in British Columbia, he noted, that a further Japanese influx 'would mark the beginning of an era during which the northern half of this continent would probably pass from the control of the white races which now possess and inhabit it'.<sup>40</sup> In February 1913, Borden duly informed the Japanese consul that Canada would only renew the treaty under the reservation that it would not interfere with the 1910 Immigration Act, which gave the government the power to impose a blanket ban on immigrants of 'any race deemed unsuited to the climate or conditions of Canada' – although he stressed that the act was unlikely to be invoked if Japan continued to restrict emigration 'within proper and reasonable limits'.<sup>41</sup>

Ottawa, then, had already become increasingly dissatisfied with the Lemieux agreement as the sole instrument for limiting Japanese immigration. During the summer of 1913, when the controversy rising up in California once again threatened to spread to British Columbia, it became a matter of some urgency. Conditions were particularly volatile in the collieries of Vancouver Island, then in the midst of a prolonged industrial standoff. Riots broke out in several mining towns in August, sparked at least in part by the employment of Japanese and Chinese miners as strike breakers; in the town of South Wellington, the militia was forced to intervene as strikers attacked Chinese miners and burned their houses.<sup>42</sup> There was a growing movement in British Columbia, *The Times* reported, to emulate the California land law.<sup>43</sup> Borden continued to be pressed by his British Columbian correspondents to take an even sterner line on exclusion. 'The Japs [sic] are still coming in,' wrote McBride, 'and their invasion into industrial circles

---

<sup>39</sup> Pope to Burrell, 22 Jan 1912, LAC, Dept. of External Affairs, RG-25/1118/66(C).

<sup>40</sup> Cited in Gowen, "Canada's Relations with Japan," p. 260.

<sup>41</sup> Borden to Nakamura, 7 Feb 1913, LAC, Borden Papers, C-4410, ff. 129892-95. See also Borden Diary, 1 Feb 1913, LAC, Borden Papers, Vol. 450.

<sup>42</sup> *Daily Colonist*, 16 Aug 1913; Roy, *A White Man's Province*, pp. 254-6.

<sup>43</sup> 'Japanese in Canada,' *The Times*, 12 August 1913

becomes more marked from year to year.<sup>44</sup> After the mining riots, McBride travelled to Ottawa to petition Borden for further restrictions.<sup>45</sup> In a sure sign of brewing trouble, T.R.E. McInnes again began to angle for employment as a special commissioner on immigration, urging Borden to enact domestic restrictions as a failsafe for the Lemieux agreement. Japan might object, but Canada would be able to count on the support of the United States instead:

The same wall raised against an Asiatic influx on the Canadian coast as on that of the United States *would insure to Canada the active support of the United States* in any future Asiatic complications in which Canada might become involved, wither diplomatic or worse. For such purposes *the American fleet on the Pacific would be ours.*<sup>46</sup>

Borden wasted little time preparing to pull up the drawbridge. Echoing McBride, he declared to Pope that the Japanese and their ‘manifold activities’ in British Columbia were posing a serious problem for the future of the province: ‘These energetic people are reaching in every direction... the white races cannot possibly compete with them.’<sup>47</sup> This was a familiar nexus of economics and race: the ‘efficiency’ of Japanese settlers, and their willingness to accept lower wages, threatened to drive down white living standards to the point where British Columbia would lose its appeal as a ‘white man’s country’. Nothing short of a near-total ban on immigration, and the imposition of further restrictions on the economic activities of Japanese settlers, would suffice. Already since April 1912, the British Columbian government refused to issue logging or fishing licenses to businesses employing East Asian labour.<sup>48</sup> Finally, in December 1913, following rumours that the winter might bring an additional influx of immigration from India, and citing the ‘very severe’ condition of the British Columbian labour market, the government issued an Order-in-Council – which it would continuously renew until March 1916 – barring all labourers attempting to enter Canada through its Pacific ports.

This measure brought Canada more fully in line with the turn to exclusion that had swept through the British world in the preceding decades. Indeed, the blanket ban on the entry of labourers set a new standard for severity: South Africa and New Zealand introduced laws modelled on the Canadian one in 1913 and 1920, respectively.<sup>49</sup> Yet it also brought Borden face to face with a familiar problem: how the effective exclusion of Japanese migrants could be reconciled with an at least nominal commitment to racial equality. The Order-in-Council provoked a strong protest from the Japanese consul, who was ‘very insistent in a courteous way’ (Borden noted in his diary) that it violated both the spirit and the letter of the Lemieux

---

<sup>44</sup> McBride to Borden, 24 June 1913, LAC, Borden Papers, Mf. C-4209, ff. 7472-78.

<sup>45</sup> Borden Diary, 17 Aug 1913, LAC, Borden Papers, Vol. 450.

<sup>46</sup> McInnes to Borden, 7 August 1913, LAC, Borden Papers, Mf. C-4231, ff. 17120-22; emphases in the original.

<sup>47</sup> Borden to McBride, 20 August 1913, LAC, Borden Papers, Mf. C-4231, f. 17134.

<sup>48</sup> See CO to FO, 16 Jan 1913, NA, FO 371/1663/2468.

<sup>49</sup> McKcown, *Melancholy Order*, pp. 206-10.

agreement.<sup>50</sup> Japan had earnestly restrained emigration to Canada precisely to avoid the necessity of this kind of measure, and the Japanese government was anxious 'keep this principle of the Lemieux understanding in its integrity and entirety'.<sup>51</sup> After a few days of tense haggling, Borden, despite his earlier reservations, effectively reaffirmed the agreement with Japan: Canada would not apply the Order-in-Council to exempted classes of Japanese, provided that Tokyo kept numbers to an absolute minimum.

Canada's engagement with Japan had now been well and truly shorn of the optimism that had marked it in the heady aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War; for Borden, the Pacific was to be a barrier, not a bridge. At the same time, he had been forced to tread cautiously: the California had shown where explicit discrimination might lead. The close relationship between Ottawa and British Columbia cut both ways, and it allowed Borden to mitigate the province's anti-Japanese attitude without recourse to the ritualistic grandstanding of the Laurier years. McBride was quietly instructed to drop an alien land bill modelled on California in the spring of 1914.<sup>52</sup> The Lemieux agreement had been shaken, but Borden had decided it was worth keeping. Despite the popular agitation sparked by the *Komagata Maru* incident, when a vessel conveying nearly four hundred Indian passengers was held up in Vancouver harbour for several months, there was no repeat of the 1907 riots, no attempt to re-establish a pan-American exclusion league.<sup>53</sup>

*'The only thing for which Australia would throw over the Empire': The Pacific crisis, 1911-1914*

The relative quiescence of British Columbia was not matched in the Australasian dominions, however, where the outbreak of the California crisis coincided with a deepening controversy about Britain's ability to keep its Pacific possessions secure. During the 1911 conference, the dominion premiers had discussed the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in an atmosphere of relative strategic calm. Soon afterwards, however, competition with Germany again broke the surface. With the Agadir crisis of July 1911, the announcement of a new German naval law in January 1912, and the subsequent breakdown of the negotiations over a 'naval holiday', the naval race entered a new phase of intensity. London was left scrambling to find the ships to match Germany's efforts in the North Sea and those of its allies, Italy and Austria-Hungary, in the Mediterranean. With this, crucially, came a change of personnel: in August 1911, the navy's inability to present a credible war plan forced McKenna's resignation. His replacement, Winston Churchill, would oversee another dramatic shift in naval strategy: in

---

<sup>50</sup> Borden Diary, 26 Dec 1913, LAC, Borden Papers, Vol. 450.

<sup>51</sup> Yada to Borden, 13 Dec 1913, Borden Papers, LAC, Mf. C-4231, f. 17237.

<sup>52</sup> Cited in Gowen, "Canada's Relations with Japan," p. 280.

<sup>53</sup> For the *Komagata Maru* crisis, see Ward, *White Canada Forever*, Ch 5. For its significance in the development of transnational Indian nationalism, see T.G. Fraser, "The Sikh Problem in Canada and Its Political Consequences, 1905-1921," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 7, no. 1 (1978): 35-55.



August 1912, most capital ships on the Mediterranean were moved to the North Sea. A committed follower of A.T. Mahan, Churchill believed that the preservation of British sea power required the concentration of overwhelming forces against its most likely challenger, even at the cost of a withdrawal from strategic theatres of secondary importance. ‘Mastery of the seas,’ he noted in one early memorandum, hinged not on the ‘simultaneous occupation of every sea,’ but rather ‘upon the ability to defeat the strongest battlefleet or combination wh. can be brought to bear... The sea is all one, and war is all one.’<sup>54</sup> The upshot was that Britain would lean more heavily on its allies – France in the Mediterranean and Japan in the Pacific – for the defence of its outer empire.

Churchill’s naval policies have been sometimes portrayed as the consummation of the shift towards concentration begun under Selborne and Fisher. In truth, they constituted a much more radical turn; the abandonment of the Mediterranean, certainly, marked a revolution in British grand strategy, and contemporaries perceived it as such.<sup>55</sup> As a strategic vision, concentrating the vast majority of British battleships in the North Sea could be justified as a necessary response to the naval race. Yet it required the ruthless subordination of competing claims on British power, and the Admiralty’s withdrawal from ‘subsidiary’ theatres was bitterly opposed, particularly by those who remembered Churchill’s membership of the ‘economist’ faction the 1909 naval scare and saw him as a ‘little Englander’ determined to run the defence of the empire on the cheap.<sup>56</sup> ‘We exist as an Empire to-day,’ wrote an anxious Leo Amery, ‘by the grace of the Americans and Japanese. No empire can live for long by foreign favour or foreign alliances.’<sup>57</sup> Churchill, for his part, was equally determined to bring the navy in line with the requirements of British strategy, and cut the habit of maintaining ships on distant stations for prestige reasons alone: ‘empty parades of foolish little ships “displaying the flag” in unfrequented seas,’ was his verdict.<sup>58</sup>

Mahanist strategy, combined with a scepticism towards dominion navalism that dated back to his time at the Colonial Office, made Churchill also inclined to revise the agreements for naval defence worked out with the dominions at the 1909 defence conference. In July 1910, while still Home Secretary, he had already protested against the Admiralty’s decision to send a newly completed battlecruiser to Hong Kong. If British naval supremacy had been so urgently at risk, as he and his fellow ‘economists’ had been led to believe in early 1909, then how could the Admiralty now have ships to spare for a strategic backwater? These views crystallised during his tenure as First Lord, as Churchill began an increasingly determined effort to scale down Britain’s commitments in the Pacific, and to direct imperial naval contributions to the North Sea. The HMS *New Zealand*, the battleship donated by Ward during the 1909 scare, and which the

---

<sup>54</sup> Cited in Christopher Bell, *Churchill and Sea Power* (Oxford, 2013), p. 18.

<sup>55</sup> Bell, “Sentiment vs Strategy.”

<sup>56</sup> Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, pp. 117-19.

<sup>57</sup> L.S. Amery, *Union and Strength: A Series of Papers on Imperial Questions* (London, 1912), p. 3.

<sup>58</sup> Bell, *Churchill and Sea Power*, p. 18.

Admiralty had earmarked as the new flagship of the China station, was ‘urgently required’ for the home fleet.<sup>59</sup> The naval agreement with Australia he thought ‘not very satisfactory’ for similar reasons: ‘every ship possible should be brought home from Australian waters’.<sup>60</sup> Nor were his efforts directed at the dominions alone: in the summer of 1913, he floated a proposal to offload the cost of the East Indies squadron – which he thought a form of ‘purely local Indian defence’ – onto the Indian exchequer.<sup>61</sup>

These centralising efforts received an early boon in the form of the prospect of a new naval settlement with Canada, following Borden’s elevation to the premiership. After decrying Laurier’s naval policies as overly cautious and unbecoming of Canada’s status – ‘silent and inactive’ was his verdict – Borden now saw his way clear to expand the dominion’s contribution to imperial defence.<sup>62</sup> During the premier’s visit to Britain in July 1912, Churchill, for his part, seized the opportunity to rewrite the rules of Anglo-dominion partnership. The new Canadian naval bill, finally laid before parliament in December, bore a distinct Churchillian stamp: Canada would fund the construction of three dreadnoughts, to be built in Britain and deployed in the North Sea. The announcement sent ripples of excitement through the imperialist press. *The Times*, under the influence of its Canadian correspondent, the Round Table John Willison, was ecstatic. The *Round Table* itself enthused that Canada had finally converted to the new gospel of empire: ‘It may well be that Mr. Borden’s declarations will mark the commencement of a new era in the Empire’s history.’<sup>63</sup> Indeed, Churchill was already looking for ways to goad the other dominions into following the Canadian example. As early as April 1912, he proposed to Asquith that Borden might be persuaded to call another defence conference, where the 1909 agreement – with its awkward commitments to the Pacific – could be suspended. Instead, Australia and New Zealand would make direct contributions to a grand imperial fleet, that would patrol the world’s oceans, with Britain ‘holding off the big dog’ in the North Sea.<sup>64</sup> Churchill expected that the realisation that their security ultimately rested with the primacy of the Royal Navy would bring the Pacific dominions, willy-nilly, into the fold.

As far as Japan was concerned, Churchill was effectively bringing British naval strategy in line with its foreign policy. Since the Russo-Japanese War, the Foreign Office had increasingly come to believe that the primary purpose of the Anglo-Japanese alliance was that it kept Britain’s hands free to concentrate on Germany. Thus far, however, that assumption had not fully trickled down into defence policy: since the adoption of the ‘fleet unit’ scheme in 1909, the Admiralty had committed to develop a substantial naval presence in the Pacific. At the 1911 imperial

---

<sup>59</sup> Churchill to Harcourt, 29 Jan 1912, in Martin Gilbert (ed.), *Winston S. Churchill: Companion Volume II, Part 3, 1911-1914* (London, 1969), pp. 1507-10.

<sup>60</sup> Cited in Lambert, ‘Economy or Empire’, p. 71.

<sup>61</sup> Churchill to Montagu, 8 Aug 1913, in Gilbert (ed.), *Winston S. Churchill*, Vol. II, Part 3, pp. 1755-56.

<sup>62</sup> Martin Thornton, *Churchill, Borden and Anglo-Canadian Naval Relations, 1911-14* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 47.

<sup>63</sup> [Edward Grigg], ‘Canada and the Navy,’ *Round Table* (Sept 1912).

<sup>64</sup> Churchill to Asquith, 12 April 1912, in Gilbert (ed.), *Winston S. Churchill*, Vol II, Part 3, pp. 1538-40.

conference, again, the dominions had been urged to accelerate their local defence measures as a counterweight to the growth of Japanese power. Now, Churchill struck a very different tone. The 1909 agreement would be abandoned. There would be no 'fleet units' on Hong Kong or Singapore to make up a 'Pacific fleet' in wartime. The *New Zealand* would be kept in the North Sea. And if his Canadian ploy was any indication, then Churchill – with the backing of the imperial centralisers clustered around *The Times* and the *Round Table* – now envisioned its 'partnership' with the dominions as a return to direct contributions to the home fleet. For Richard Jebb, always a keen observer of empire, such a policy amounted to a dangerous return to a 'hard-and-fast imperial federation' that rode roughshod over local nationalism.<sup>65</sup> It was certain to alienate the Pacific dominions, 'whose naval policy is the direct result of their instinctive perception that their White Australia principle is a standing provocation to Japan and China'.<sup>66</sup>

Naval historians have debated whether Churchill's abandonment of the 1909 agreement was a matter of sound strategic sense, or whether it needlessly aborted a sophisticated system of collective security.<sup>67</sup> Either way, as Jebb had predicted, it was deeply unpopular in Australia. Arthur Jose, the fiercely independent Sydney correspondent of *The Times*, engaged in a protracted correspondence with his colleagues in London over the Admiralty's decision to revise the naval arrangements for the Pacific without deigning to consult the Australians.<sup>68</sup> 'The whole basis of Australian self-defence,' he wrote to his editor, the Round Table Edward Grigg, 'is the firm belief that there must be eventually, and at no long interval, a concentration of Imperial naval power in the Pacific against Japan just as there is a concentration of it in the Atlantic against Germany.' Australia would 'do its share', but it expected its naval contribution to be part of a larger imperial effort: 'it could not, and it cannot, stand by itself'.<sup>69</sup> For Churchill to revise the Pacific agreement now unilaterally, without providing an alternative source of security against Japan, was 'simply indecent'.

Frederic Eggleston, a leading light in imperialist circles in Melbourne, drew up a similarly scathing critique. Concentration in the North Sea, he argued in the *Round Table*, left Australia isolated as 'a lonely outpost of European civilisation,' and acutely vulnerable to the 'Yellow Peril'.<sup>70</sup> London's assurances that the security of the Pacific could be comfortably left to the Japanese betrayed a fundamental ignorance of Australian feeling on the subject: without a credible local naval presence, the Anglo-Japanese alliance could only be regarded as a 'paper barrier'. Most worryingly of all, if Britain continued to neglect Australian fears of Japan, it would revive the old complaint that 'England is notoriously out of sympathy with, and does not

---

<sup>65</sup> Jebb to Allen, 31 Jan 1913, ICS, Jebb Papers, A. For Jebb's conflict with the Round Table, see S.J. Potter, "Richard Jebb, John S. Ewart and the Round Table, 1898-1926," *The English Historical Review* CXXII, no. 495 (February 1, 2007): 105–32.

<sup>66</sup> Jebb to Cahan, 3 April 1912, ICS, Jebb Papers, A.

<sup>67</sup> See Bell, "Sentiment vs Strategy"; and Lambert, "Economy or Empire?" respectively.

<sup>68</sup> Jose to Grigg, 30 Oct 1912, ML, Jose Papers.

<sup>69</sup> Jose to Grigg, [n.d., content suggests a response to a letter from Grigg dated 24 Oct 1913], ML, Jose Papers.

<sup>70</sup> [Frederic Eggleston], 'Australia: A Plea for a National Policy,' *Round Table* (Sept 1912)

understand, our exclusion policy.’ For Eggleston, the Australian predicament vindicated the policy of national navalism: only by building a credible national defence, establishing its own navy, and by inviting the cooperation of its fellow dominions, could Australia expect to have its own strategic views heard in London.

Such views had long been held in Australia, and following the election of Massey’s Reform party in August 1912, they were also nailed to the mast in New Zealand. James Allen, now minister of defence, was a leading advocate for an independent naval presence: the southern dominions, he had declared in 1909, should work together ‘to build up a fleet sufficiently strong... to repel any Japanese menace, and to keep them from attempting to come down to Australia and New Zealand’.<sup>71</sup> Now in government, Allen advocated ending New Zealand’s ‘tributary’ naval subsidy, and joining with the Australians in organising a joint naval policy for the South Pacific. This in turn required consultation with the Admiralty, and in February 1913, Allen arrived in London to press the dominion’s new defence agenda on the imperial government. For Churchill, this was an embarrassment: New Zealand had been the greatest supporter of a policy of direct contributions to the Royal Navy; now, it was heading down the Australian path of national navalism. Worse, Churchill rightly suspected that Allen would demand that the return of the *New Zealand* to Pacific waters.

Just how divided their strategic priorities were quickly became clear. Churchill, for his part, framed his arguments in a classic exposition of Mahanian strategy. At the present time, ‘the naval power and the alliances based on the naval power of Great Britain’ kept the Australasian colonies ‘perfectly safe’. ‘The only event which could expose them to any danger,’ Churchill went on, ‘would be the destruction of the British naval power in Home waters.’ In that event, the predicament of the dominions would be hopeless: the Australasians could not possibly hope to match the Japanese fleet by themselves alone.<sup>72</sup> Allen did not deny that the dominion’s security was tied up with British sea power; indeed he conceded that New Zealand would be ready to ‘forego her own desires’ if Britain was acutely threatened in the North Sea.<sup>73</sup> Yet relying exclusively on the British navy – let alone the Japanese alliance – would be a denial of New Zealand’s aspirations: ‘national sentiment and local patriotism’ demanded that New Zealand operated its own fleet. It was also risky: it was easy to imagine a scenario in which the naval situation in Europe would prevent Britain sending its main fleet east of Suez if and when Japan should turn hostile.<sup>74</sup> Churchill attempted a hasty compromise by proposing to reorganise all dominions ships into an ‘imperial’ fleet based at Gibraltar. From there, he argued, where they could reinforce any threatened area ‘in a shorter time than any European force of equal power

---

<sup>71</sup> See McGibbon, *Path to Gallipoli*, p. 214; J. Allen, 8 Dec 1909, *NZPD*, HR. Vol. 148 (1909), cc. 827-30.

<sup>72</sup> Churchill to Allen, 14 Feb 1913, NA, CAB 38/23/10.

<sup>73</sup> McGibbon, *Path to Gallipoli*, p. 219.

<sup>74</sup> Allen to Churchill, 18 March 1913, NA, CAB 38/23/10; CID Minutes, 123rd Meeting, 11 April 1913, NA, CAB 38/24/19.

could move'.<sup>75</sup> It failed to mollify Allen, who retorted that such a fleet would still be too far away for comfort: 'We do not fear a European force. That is the crux of the matter.'<sup>76</sup>

Churchill's exchanges with Allen were the most wide-ranging discussions of the 'Pacific problem' since the 1909 defence conference, and although the two men were able to arrive at a face-saving agreement on a number of technical questions, the core strategic problem – the British world-system's two-ocean dilemma – remained unresolved. Speaking at Vancouver on his return journey to New Zealand, Allen argued pointedly that London simply did not seem to grasp the urgency of the danger posed by the rise of Japan. What rankled him most of all was the British government's inability to grasp that the empire's future not only hinged on the defence of the home islands, but also on the consolidation of the white frontier in the Pacific: 'They did not see the need of keeping the race pure.' In the long run, Allen declared, a united empire would be strong enough to dispense with foreign alliances altogether.<sup>77</sup> Eggleston, who forwarded a copy of Allen's speech to his fellow Round Tablers in London, similarly fumed against 'the impossibility of getting Englishmen to appreciate the views of the Dominions in regard to the admission of Asiatics'.<sup>78</sup> Britain needed to understand that for the majority of Australasians, this was the *sine qua non* of imperial cooperation. 'If the Empire does not stand to protect the British race or nationality I do not know that it has any real justification for its existence as an Empire.' From London, Grigg hastened to reassure him that the Round Table, and British opinion at large, remained committed to exclusion: 'Everybody here believes in the white Australia policy and is determined to do the utmost to support it.'<sup>79</sup>

Allen's castigations of British indifference resonated within a wider atmosphere of racial anxiety, reinforced by the crisis in California. From Washington, Spring-Rice noted that Australian politicians showed 'strong sympathy' on the Californian issue, and if the United States were to go to war with Japan, they would 'probably have Canada and Australia fighting on their side'.<sup>80</sup> The Australasian press stressed its solidarity with white Californians. 'Wherever English is spoken around the Pacific there will be but one sentiment,' declared the *New Zealand Herald*. 'Ties of race and blood, community of interests, bonds of language and religion, leave no room for difference of opinion when American and Asiatic stand opposed to one another.'<sup>81</sup> London's apparent disregard for white cries of a 'Yellow Peril' also led some to revive the idea of partnership with the United States. Churchill himself had conceded that if British sea power should ever be broken on the North Sea, 'the only course open to the five million of white men

---

<sup>75</sup> W. Churchill, 26 March 1913, *Hansard*, HC, 5th Series, Vol. 50, cc. 1754-56.

<sup>76</sup> 'Empire's Naval Scheme,' *NZH*, 29 March 1913.

<sup>77</sup> 'New Zealand Defences,' *NZH*, 15 May 1913.

<sup>78</sup> Eggleston to Grigg, 21 July 1913, BLO, Round Table Papers, c. 798, ff. 141-42.

<sup>79</sup> Grigg to Eggleston, 12 Dec 1913, BLO, Round Table Papers, c. 798, ff. 39-46.

<sup>80</sup> Spring-Rice to Grey, 21 Jul 1913, NA, Grey Papers, FO 800/83; Spring-Rice to Tyrell, 27 Jan 1914, NA, Grey Papers, FO 800/84.

<sup>81</sup> 'Japan and America,' *NZH*, 6 June 1913.

in the Pacific would be to seek the protection of the United States'.<sup>82</sup> A few months earlier, King O'Malley, Australia's American-born minister for home affairs, had already argued along similar lines in a memorandum to Andrew Fisher. Mounting pressure in the North Sea was making it increasingly unlikely that Britain would be able to come to Australia's aid if its security was imperilled. 'In this connection,' he believed, 'thoughts naturally turn to the people speaking our own language already deeply interested in resisting foreign aggression in the Pacific—the people of the United States of America.' In the future, Australia might have 'to join with them as far as we may in keeping the Pacific for Anglo-Saxons'.<sup>83</sup> Nor was the United States the only alternative protector, as Arthur Jose pointedly reminded *The Times*' London office:

White Australia, to which she believes Japan hostile, is the one thing for which Australia would throw over the Empire – I believe sincerely that she would accept German domination if that were the only apparent way of keeping herself white.<sup>84</sup>

Such statements caused the naval writer Archibald Hurd, himself a committed Mahanist, to warn that the Admiralty's failure to reassure the dominions that it took their racial security seriously was ultimately self-defeating. 'This growing anxiety of the white peoples of the Pacific is undermining every sound principle of naval strategy.'<sup>85</sup>

The Admiralty remained largely oblivious to the panic its policies were provoking in Australasia. Churchill himself was merely irritated by the 'loose talk' in the dominions over his supposed abandonment of the dominions. He had no intention to lay imaginary fears to rest by sending real ships to the Pacific. 'It is high time,' Churchill grumbled to the ranking official at the Admiralty, 'that the Dominions had the true strategic conception on which the Empire is conducted impressed upon them.'<sup>86</sup> The Australian government was duly informed that the China squadron, as presently constituted, was more than capable of seeing off any likely enemy in those distant waters. Yet this assessment excluded Japan, which 'in view of the existing alliance' was not considered a likely enemy.<sup>87</sup> The First Lord reiterated the point during his Parliamentary speech on the naval estimates on 17 March. Supremacy in the North Sea was the keystone of the empire's global strategy. As long as Britain continued to hold a reasonable margin of superiority over the German fleet, the outer empire would be safe. By the same token, supremacy in the North Sea underpinned the Anglo-Japanese alliance, as Japan would continue depend on the British to keep the East Asian ring clear of European rivals. This was 'the strong continuing bond of interest' that kept the alliance intact, and in turn guaranteed the 'true and effective

---

<sup>82</sup> 'Imperial Naval Policy', Memorandum by Churchill, 11 April 1913, NA, CAB 38/24/20.

<sup>83</sup> O'Malley to Fisher, 4 Dec 1912, NLA, Fisher Papers, Series 6, f. 55.

<sup>84</sup> Jose to Braham, 30 Dec 1913, ML, Jose Papers.

<sup>85</sup> Archibald Hurd, 'The Racial War in the Pacific: An Imperial Peril,' *Fortnightly Review*, June 1913.

<sup>86</sup> Churchill to Greene, 14 Oct 1914, NA, ADM 1/8375/108.

<sup>87</sup> ADM to CO, 15 Oct 1913, NA, ADM 1/8375/108.

protection' of the southern dominions.<sup>88</sup> Clearly, Churchill's thinking had yielded little to Australasian objections: the sections of his speech dealing with the Pacific were copied verbatim from the memorandum prepared for Allen's instruction in the CID the previous year.<sup>89</sup>

In one fell swoop, Churchill all but dismissed the Australasian naval efforts over the past decade as an exercise in strategic futility; only New Zealand's dreadnought donation he praised as an act of 'profound wisdom'. This was bound to antagonise the dominion governments, always prickly towards metropolitan condescension. Even worse was Churchill's intimation that Australasia's security could be entrusted to the Japanese alliance. To Churchill, this might have appeared obvious. Yet it seriously ruffled the Australians, to whom the alliance had been sold in 1911 as a restraint on Japan, not as a contract for their protection. To now inform them otherwise was, as the journalist Henry Stead, who was visiting Australia, noted to the colonial secretary, 'simply gall and woodworm to the Australians on whom the Asiatic danger has been worked for all its worth for many years'.<sup>90</sup>

The effect was explosive. In New Zealand, Massey declared that he 'did not believe for one moment that the Anglo-Japanese alliance secured the safety of either Australia or New Zealand'.<sup>91</sup> In a lengthy response to Churchill's speech, Senator Millen, the Australian defence minister, railed against the fact that Australia was now being asked 'to rely upon the Japanese treaty alone for the peace of the Pacific'.<sup>92</sup> This was an interpretation of the alliance that the dominions had never agreed to, and it was fundamentally at odds with Australia's aspirations to run its own Pacific navy. George Pearce fully endorsed Millen's remarks. The Japanese alliance had its uses, he noted to the governor-general – it was certainly 'better for Australia than a German-Japanese alliance would be'. Yet it could not be allowed to postpone or derail the establishment of a robust Pacific defence:

We insist that there ought to be a British Fleet in the Pacific; without it British diplomacy is nullified in one of the great oceans of the world and we are compelled to allow our policy to be dictated by our ally.<sup>93</sup>

The Australasian press, meanwhile, pilloried Churchill as a traitor to the white empire: the Melbourne *Punch* denounced the First Lord as an 'arrant Little Englander' and an 'impetuous anti-imperialist'. The only true guarantee of a 'White Australia', it declared, 'would be a white man's fleet'.<sup>94</sup> From the opposite end of the political spectrum, the editor of the *Bulletin* similarly accused Churchill of bargaining away Australia's racial security. The moment that trouble should

---

<sup>88</sup> Speech by Churchill, 17 March 1914, *Hansard*, 5th Series, Vol. 59, cc. 1931-34.

<sup>89</sup> See 'Imperial Naval Policy', Memorandum by Churchill, 11 April 1913, NA, CAB 38/24/20.

<sup>90</sup> Stead to Harcourt, 22 April 1914, cited in Lambert, 'Economy or Empire', p. 75.

<sup>91</sup> 'Naval Defence,' *Dominion*, 21 March 1914.

<sup>92</sup> See 'Imperial Naval Policy', Memorandum by Churchill, 11 April 1913, NA, CAB 38/24/20.

<sup>93</sup> Pearce to Denman, 4 May 1914, NLA, Denman Papers, MS 769, ff. 84-91.

<sup>94</sup> 'The Admiralty Turns Against Australia,' *Punch*, 26 March 1914.

break out in Europe, Japan would hold Australia at its mercy, 'and we would have our northern shores immediately inundated with hordes of Japanese and Chinese immigrants'. Even German rule would be infinitely preferable to 'yellow domination'.<sup>95</sup>

Churchill's collision with the dominions illustrated, as the *Round Table* put it, the 'pre-Raphaelite' character of the Pacific problem, 'in which the values of foreground, middle distance and remoter distance are all the same'.<sup>96</sup> The two Australasian dominions had never disputed that their present security hinged on the Royal Navy's ability to see off the German threat; this was the calculus that underlay the dreadnought donations in 1909, and their acquiescence in the renewal of the alliance in 1911. Yet in the background, its contours clearly visible, stood Japan, and the looming danger of 'a Pacific Armageddon' that would decide Australasia's racial destiny.<sup>97</sup> Throughout the past decade, successive Australian and New Zealand governments had justified their defence policies as preparation for a distant, but inevitable confrontation with Asia. Imperial defence policy, by extension, was expected to serve the interests of the 'British race' in the Pacific as well as in the North Sea.

These diverging perspectives on the purpose of the British connection were again illustrated when General Ian Hamilton, who was visiting New Zealand in his capacity as inspector-general of Britain's overseas garrisons, waded into the controversy. Congratulating the New Zealanders on their military preparations in a speech in Auckland on 13 May, Hamilton alluded in barely veiled terms to the danger of racial war, in which 'it might be decided whether Asiatics or Europeans were going to guide the destinies of this planet'.<sup>98</sup> To prolonged applause, he declared that Australia and New Zealand were on the edge of the 'danger zone', and accordingly needed to guard themselves against 'people of low standards and low ideals,' able to subsist 'on a couple of meals of rice a day'. Hamilton's audience was undoubtedly thrilled to find its geo-racial fears endorsed by a senior army officer, and coverage of his speech in the Australasian press was glowing. Hamilton was sufficiently pleased to forward a copy of his speech to Richard McBride in British Columbia, with the request to publish it in Vancouver where, he added, 'it seems that the Asiatic is [also] knocking at your gates'.<sup>99</sup> Japan's antagonism to the West was primordial, and required constant watchfulness: hence the British needed to keep 'our race pure and our powder dry'; a truth, Hamilton believed, that its colonists grasped more firmly than metropolitan Britons. Such views would have resonated with the general's interlocutors in New Zealand, which perhaps encouraged him to air them in a public forum.

---

<sup>95</sup> 'Commonwealth and Dominion,' *Auckland Star*, 5 June 1914.

<sup>96</sup> [Edward Grigg], 'Naval Policy and the Pacific Question,' *Round Table* (June 1914).

<sup>97</sup> 'Mr Cook's Choice,' *Punch* 26 June 1913.

<sup>98</sup> 'Danger Zone,' *SMH*, 14 May 1914.

<sup>99</sup> Hamilton to McBride, 29 May 1914, LHC, Hamilton Papers, 5/1/91; since his time in Manchuria, Hamilton had taken on a deeply racist view of all things Japanese. See D.S. Ferguson, "'Splendid Allies" or "No More Deadly Enemies in the World?" General Sir Ian Hamilton, the British Military and Japan 1902-1914," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* no. 4, no. 4 (2010): 523-36.



Hamilton's speech, touching as it did on the 'sore subject of racial prejudice', sparked an outcry when it was reported in Japan, where Hamilton's name was still familiar due to his role as military observer during the Russo-Japanese War. A week after the Auckland speech, the British ambassador reported that both the foreign minister and prime minister had come to see him to express their regret over the general's indiscretions. This was part of a broader pattern: ever since the re-eruption of the California controversy, Japanese opinion had been acutely sensitive towards any sign of racial discrimination, and several newspapers had already come to the conclusion that Hamilton's remarks reflected a widespread belief in 'the irreconcilableness of the white and yellow races', taking hold in the dominions as well as Britain itself.<sup>100</sup> The *Japan Times* warned that if Japan was to be permanently kept in the outer circle of the international system, 'marked out by colour', then the sooner it could rid itself of the alliance, 'the better it will be both for ourselves and for our kindred races'.<sup>101</sup> Japan's 'feeling of pique' at being type-cast in the role of racial villain, the British embassy warned, ought to be taken seriously:

It is this note of racial distrust, a note which is not confined to Australia, but has been sounded in Canada as well, which has spoilt the harmony produced in this country by Mr. Churchill's recent remarks in defence of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.<sup>102</sup>

The Foreign Office shared Greene's concerns. As the head of the Far Eastern department noted sardonically, overt racial statements like Hamilton's were best avoided, 'considering that we have a rice-eating Asiatic for an ally'.<sup>103</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Taken together, the events detailed in this chapter – the California land crisis, the rumblings in British Columbia, and the controversy over naval security in the Pacific – constituted another moment during which the 'colour question' intruded forcefully on British diplomacy. Once again, it offered a disturbing window on an alternative form of global politics, structured along racial rather than national divisions. The vision projected by many in the white dominions was almost Manichean in its simplicity: the current tensions between Japan and the United States portended a greater contest to decide the racial fortunes of the Pacific. 'It is quite true that on account of the European situation as it exists to-day they have approved of the Alliance,' one commentator noted, 'but as far as their own needs are concerned they feel that the future holds for them a life and death struggle with Japan.'<sup>104</sup> In turn, the same anxiety offered a deceptively

---

<sup>100</sup> Greene to Grey, 22 May 1914, NA, FO 371/2011/25785.

<sup>101</sup> Cited in *ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> Greene to Grey, 22 May 1914, NA, FO 371/2011/25785.

<sup>103</sup> Minute by Langley, 9 June 1914, NA, FO 371/2011/25785.

<sup>104</sup> Lancelot Lawton, 'The Naval Crisis within the Empire,' *Academy*, 4 July 1914.

straightforward justification for the imperial connection. As Arthur Jose put it: 'Australia will do anything for the Empire if the Empire will assure her against Japan.'<sup>105</sup>

Yet grafting a practical edifice of diplomatic or imperial cooperation onto the ideal of racial solidarity – the core ambition of Australasian defence policies since Tsushima – had proved a tortuous exercise. The more imaginative schemes of Alfred Deakin and Joseph Ward, for cooperation with the Americans and a more centralised system of defence, had fallen flat. By the end of 1912, the Pacific naval agreement, which had promised a measure of collective imperial security, had proved stillborn: instead, the dominions were now informed that the Japanese alliance would guarantee their external security. Observers like Allen, Jose, and Eggleston found themselves increasingly frustrated with the apparent one-sidedness of Britannic solidarity. The Australasian dominions, they insisted, were doing their part to advance the interests of the 'British race', while London stubbornly clung to an out-dated notion that the dominions could be corralled like 'a docile school class'.<sup>106</sup> Yet this was hardly a narrowly nationalist argument; rather, it extrapolated particular aspects of Australian and New Zealand nationalism into a distinct vision of empire, animated by a similar spirit of racial egalitarianism that underpinned the national project within their own societies.

London's outlook was fundamentally different. The dominance of the naval race with Germany, which consumed practically all of the navy's resources between 1909 and 1914, left little space for distractions in the Pacific.<sup>107</sup> On the contrary: the German danger emphasised the continued importance of Japan's role as Britain's naval buttress. It could ill afford to alienate its ally by indulging the dominions – or Washington, for that matter – in their Japanese paranoia, particularly since the growing friction over China was already placing considerable strain on the relationship with Tokyo.<sup>108</sup> The wider point was that London was not indifferent to the racial dimensions of its alliance with Japan: it understood just how deeply the instinct of self-preservation ran on the Pacific fringe of the British world. Yet it sought to mitigate the racial issue, not exacerbate it. To that end, Britain had supported the conclusion of low-key diplomatic arrangements, such as the Canadian 'gentlemen's agreement', and tried to avoid giving the impression that it was colluding with the United States on the immigration issue. It was a delicate balancing act, but a necessary one. Indeed, to many, the evidence of global racial tensions seemed to reinforce, rather than detract from, the case for the Anglo-Japanese alliance. As the *Round Table* put it in its final issue before the war, the empire inhabited a world divided by the 'facts of race'. Yet as a global system that spanned right across the racial divide, its 'true purpose' was to manage those divisions, and 'ensure peace... between East and West'. The alliance with Japan, in this regard, still had a central role to play, not merely as a strategic partnership, but as an

---

<sup>105</sup> Jose to Braham, 30 Dec 1913, ML, Jose Papers.

<sup>106</sup> Jose to Grigg, 21 April 1914, ML, Jose Papers.

<sup>107</sup> O'Brien, *British and American Naval Power*, p. 93. In 1909-14, Britain laid down an average of six dreadnoughts a year, the maximum number it could fund and crew.

<sup>108</sup> On China, see Lowe, *Britain and Japan*, Chs. 3-5.

instrument that supported the empire's ability to act as a 'mediating and reconciling office between Eastern and Western ways of life'.<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>109</sup> [Edward Grigg], 'Naval Policy and the Pacific Question,' *Round Table* (June 1914), pp. 391-462.

## CONCLUSION

‘To a foreigner reading our press,’ Sir Thomas Sanderson, the permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office, observed in 1907, ‘the British Empire must appear in the light of some huge giant sprawling over the globe, with gouty fingers and toes stretching in every direction, which cannot be approached without eliciting a scream.’<sup>1</sup> Even if rumours of British decline or ‘overstretch’ tended to be much exaggerated even at the time, but it was clear nonetheless that the Edwardian empire operated in a more crowded international environment than its Victorian predecessor. Yet of all the external forces pressing on the extremities of the British imperial system – gouty or otherwise – the rise of Japan was in some respects the most easily contained. In objective economic and military terms, Japan was at best a middling power, jostling with Italy for seventh place in steel production, per capita industrialisation, and the size of its army.<sup>2</sup> Only in the naval sphere did it punch above its weight: here, it ranked fifth in warship tonnage in 1914, behind the United States and just ahead of Russia.<sup>3</sup> The scope for direct friction with British interests remained narrow: the trajectory of Japan’s territorial expansion after 1905, into Korea and southern Manchuria, touched on few British interests, despite J.O.P. Bland’s best efforts to insert one. Instead, Britain had been able to co-opt Japanese power, placing it in the scale against more formidable rivals – first Russia, then Germany – and allowing it to close off the East Asian arena from great power competition.

Yet the rise of Japan also presented the British system with a very different set of challenges, some of them entirely new. Already by 1905, it was clear that the emergence of a new power centre in East Asia would have important long-term repercussions for Britain’s own regional interests, which had developed in the relative absence of geopolitical competition. Settlers in the treaty-ports already sounded dire warnings about the exposure of Britain’s commercial salient in China to the vigour and ‘drive’ of Japanese competition. The same was true of the Pacific, where Japan’s emergence forced the inhabitants of the white dominions to consider the vulnerability of their unprotected coastlines. Racial perceptions, moreover, magnified the psychological impact of Japanese ‘pressure’ far beyond its material proportions: in the rhetoric that accompanied the Vancouver riots, the Japanese influx represented nothing less than an existential menace to the racial future of British Columbia. Almost overnight, Tsushima had brought them face to face with the brave new world of global politics.

For the British world, the implications were considerable: just when the more competitive international climate seemed to require closer imperial coordination, the parallel challenges of Germany and Japan prompted a set of structural disagreements over foreign policy

---

<sup>1</sup> Otte, *China Question*, p. 326.

<sup>2</sup> Kennedy, *Rise and Fall*, p. 200

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203

and defence. As H.G. Wells noted, by the mid-1900s the British Empire had ‘no common enemy to weld it together from without’: where Britain was increasingly concentrated on Germany, the Pacific dominions were consumed, instead, ‘by hate and fear of Japan’.<sup>4</sup> In a broader sense too, Japan became a focal point for searching questions on the future of the British system: what was the imperial connection *for*, Shanghailanders, Australians, and British Columbians asked, if not to protect the interests of the ‘British race’ against this new menace? During the Pacific crises of 1907-8 and 1913-14, these differences had often appeared stark; some commentators even warned that a real split on the Japanese problem – and the wider ‘colour question’ it formed part of – might do irreparable damage to the imperial system. Yet these differences also need to be placed in perspective: most of the debates on ‘Asiatic’ immigration, or imperial defence, took the continuity of the imperial system, as well as the unity of the ‘British race’, for granted. If anything, concerns about their local security inclined local politicians in the Pacific dominions to demand ‘more empire’, in the form of robust structures that would advance the British cause in their own oceanic neighbourhood, rather than less.

The outbreak of the First World War threw these arguments off balance once again. In the pre-war months, political debate in Australia and New Zealand had been dominated by an ill-tempered debate on the Admiralty’s failure to provide adequate defence in the Pacific. Almost overnight, the controversy was suspended in favour of conspicuous declarations of loyalty: Andrew Fisher’s assertion that Australia would fight ‘to the last man and the last shilling’ caught the public mood. Mass volunteering began immediately, and the first ANZAC troopships set sail from Western Australia on 1 November – a telling demonstration of the ‘global resonance of the British connection’.<sup>5</sup> Remarkably too, also present was a Japanese cruiser, the *Ibuki*, who, along with one British and two Australian vessels, would escort them across the Indian Ocean. Its commanding officer, Captain Katō Kanji, had already noted that the war seemed to have brought a turn in Australian attitudes to Japan: when passing Fremantle on his way to New Zealand, the city had thrown him a welcome of ‘ecstatic proportions’ and it appeared to him that ‘the former fear of Japan was swept away to be replaced with an obvious genuine trust’.<sup>6</sup>

It suited both the dominions and the British government not to allow the memory of past disagreements to spoil this picture of Britannic harmony. While the war lasted, the Pacific controversy remained subdued. Derogatory references to Japan were avoided: in Australia, the worst offender, official censorship clamped down firmly on anti-Japanese references in the press or in parliament.<sup>7</sup> Some hoped that the new spirit of enforced cordiality might lead to a more lasting reconciliation: Ronald Munro-Ferguson (Lord Novar), newly installed as the governor-

---

<sup>4</sup> H.G. Wells, *An Englishman Looks at the World*, (London, 1914), p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> Mitcham, *Race and Imperial Defence*, p. 217.

<sup>6</sup> Yoichi Hiramata, ‘Japanese Naval Assistance and its Effect on Australian-Japanese Relations,’ in O’Brien (ed.), *Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 140-158.

<sup>7</sup> Meaney, *Australia and the World Crisis*, pp. 222-23.

general, reported that it was beginning to dawn on the Australian mind ‘that the immense service rendered to the Empire in general and Australia in particular by Japan... will have to be recognised.’<sup>8</sup> Perhaps mistaking self-censorship for a shift in opinion, Munro-Ferguson was also happy to report that the ‘the anti-Japanese scurrilities... which have so long disgraced the Australian press’ had all but disappeared.<sup>9</sup> In Canada, too, Japanese paranoia would not be allowed to distract from the war effort. When Richard McBride, the premier of British Columbia, voiced disquiet over Japan’s entry into the war, he was told to keep his concerns to himself. ‘Japan enters war of her own free choice,’ as Churchill cabled to Borden. ‘She must be welcome as a comrade and an ally... Any declaration against entry of Japan into war would do harm... Please reassure [McBride] privately.’<sup>10</sup>

There were good reasons for discretion: despite the displays of wartime unity, the Anglo-Japanese alliance was already in a brittle state. The British government had been doubtful about inviting Japanese participation, and some officials – including Jordan in Beijing – favoured supporting an American proposal to declare the Pacific a neutral zone.<sup>11</sup> Such ambivalence reflected a sense that the growth of Japanese power was no longer working to Britain’s advantage. Since 1905, the Anglo-Japanese alliance had dominated the international politics of East Asia, and underpinned the territorial *status quo*. Initially, it had done so by discouraging third parties – particularly a possibly revanchist Russia – from further forward moves into China. By the time of its second renewal in 1911, however, its purpose had shifted: it was now conceived as a way to restrain the ambitions of Japan itself. That it was able to do so without a breakdown in relations owed less to the magic touch of British diplomacy, and more to the other constraints on Japanese expansion. While it was the strongest single power in East Asia, it still operated within the confines of a regional balance, in which France, Russia, Germany, and the United States were all significant actors. Its public finances remained weighed down by the legacy of the Russian war. Nor could the resilience of China itself be discounted, especially if it was able to act in concert with an external power, like the United States in the Manchurian controversies of 1909-1910.

This proved an all too fragile equilibrium. The Chinese revolution of 1911 already loosened the reins on Japan, and the outbreak of war in Europe undid them further. The formulation of the so-called ‘Twenty-One Demands’ – whose full implementation would have effectively placed the Chinese central government under Japanese direction – in January 1915 showed the direction of and scale of Tokyo’s ambitions. According to G.E. Morrison, now acting as an advisor to the government in Beijing, they constituted ‘the most serious attack on the

---

<sup>8</sup> Munro-Ferguson to Harcourt, 23 Nov 1914, NLA, Novar Papes, MS 696/1.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Churchill to Borden, 13 Aug 1914, LAC, Borden Papers, C-4238, f. 22902.

<sup>11</sup> Nish, *Alliance in Decline*, p. 120.

British position in the Far East yet attempted'.<sup>12</sup> Yet the grim reality was that between the need for Japanese assistance, and the drained reserves of British power in Asia, there were few practical constraints that Britain could place on Japanese expansionism: 'it is essential to humour Japan during the progress of the war', argued Hardinge, now returned to the Foreign Office.<sup>13</sup> Other controversies – including Tokyo's veto on China's entry, and damaging rumours of its flirtation with the idea of a separate peace – added to the sense that the alliance had been all but hollowed out. 'In England [the Japanese] were extolled as the best and most devoted of Allies,' observed Conyngham Greene in Tokyo. 'Today we have come to know that Japan – the real Japan – is a frankly opportunist, not to say selfish country... with a very exaggerated opinion of her role in the universe.'<sup>14</sup>

If the spectre of Japanese hegemony in the East unnerved London, it was a source of deep anxiety in the British Pacific. Japan's southward sweep into the German colonial empire had brought its naval power a lot closer; already by the end of 1914, London had tacitly acknowledged that Japan was unlikely to surrender the island groups it now occupied.<sup>15</sup> Strategic alarm, moreover, remained intertwined with the fear that Japan might use its military heft to force concessions on immigration. When in the spring of 1916, Sir Edward Grey suggested to Australia's new prime minister, William Morris Hughes, that a symbolic modification of Australia's exclusion policy along the lines of the Canadian 'gentlemen's agreement', might help to preserve Japan's loyalty to the Entente, the latter replied that 'Australia would rather fight to the last ditch than allow Japanese to enter'.<sup>16</sup> The spirit of rivalry persisted: 'all our fears – or conjectures – that Japan was and is most keenly interested in Australia are amply borne out by facts,' Hughes wrote home. The war sharpened such anxieties further: on the settler fringe of the British world, fear of the 'teeming millions' of Asia had expressed itself in demographic as much as strategic terms. Underpopulation and low rates of white immigration had been common features of the pre-war defence debates. In this regard, it was possible to interpret the war a distinctly racial catastrophe: 'a headlong plunge into white race-suicide', as the American racist Lothrop Stoddard put it.<sup>17</sup> Jan Smuts, the apostle of white reconciliation in South Africa, thought the war 'a terrible business, which may put Europe and white civilization permanently back and hasten the day of the Yellow Peril'.<sup>18</sup> In Australia, Hughes found his campaign for conscription defeated, twice over, at least in part on the argument that the haemorrhage on the Western Front would undermine the biological foundations of White Australia. The next war, one anti-

---

<sup>12</sup> Antony Best, 'Britain, Japan, and the Crisis over China, 1915-16,' in Oliviero Frattolino and Antony Best (eds.), *Japan and the Great War* (Basingstoke, 2015), 52-70.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Nish, *Alliance in Decline*, p. 193.

<sup>15</sup> Harcourt to Munro-Ferguson, 6 Dec 1914, NLA, Novar Papers, MS 696/2.

<sup>16</sup> Hughes to Pearce, 21 April 1916, AWM, Pearce Papers, 3DRL/2222/4/2.

<sup>17</sup> Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color against White World-Supremacy*, (New York, 1921), p. 179.

<sup>18</sup> Smuts to Robertson, 21 Aug 1914, in W.K. Hancock and J. van der Poel, *Selections from the Smuts Papers, Vol. III, June 1910-November 1918* (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 190-91.

conscriptivist pamphlet predicted, would be ‘fought in the Pacific between the white and yellow races... we must prepare for the racial war to come’.<sup>19</sup> Hughes, for his part, was not prepared to yield the racial argument to his opponents, retorting that Australia could only preserve itself through ensuring the survival of the imperial system: ‘once Britain is beaten we are doomed men’.<sup>20</sup> For the moment, competing strategies and loyalties pulled the racial impulse in different directions.

Once the war was won, however, the ‘Pacific problem’ (code for the containment of Japan) re-emerged with a vengeance. Japan’s wartime expansion had kept talk of a ‘Yellow Peril’ fully alive. American-Japanese antagonism, which had driven the racial scares of 1907-8 and 1913-14, was again becoming pronounced. Throughout the white Pacific, meanwhile, the pressures of demobilisation and the economic contraction, contributed to a sharpening anti-immigration mood, of which Asians, and Japanese in particular, bore the brunt. In September 1920, amid an election campaign that saw voters ‘deluged with anti-Japanese propaganda’, the Asiatic Exclusion League was re-established in California.<sup>21</sup> British Columbia followed suit in July 1921.<sup>22</sup> In 1920, in response to a moral panic over a small increase in Asian immigration, New Zealand set a new standard for stringency, by amending its immigration act to require a postal application from the country of origin, exempting only those of British and Irish ancestry.<sup>23</sup> Nor was this, again, a purely Pacific phenomenon: in South Africa, the newly formed ‘South Africans’ League’ campaigned, in the words of the government of India, ‘to repress the Indian settler by every possible means... to segregate him, and, if possible, to drive him out of the country’.<sup>24</sup>

At the Paris Peace conference, the ‘colour question’ elbowed its way onto the international stage in dramatic fashion. During the preliminary debates on the establishment of the new League of Nations, the Japanese delegation proposed a clause specifying that the League’s members would accord ‘equal and just treatment’ to each other, without discriminating ‘on account of their race or nationality’.<sup>25</sup> The ‘racial equality clause’ met with dismay among the American and British Empire delegations, unnerved by the implications for colonial self-determination and domestic racial legislation. Hughes was particularly scathing: he announced he would rather walk into the Folies Bergère with his clothes off than agree to anything that might call the legitimacy of White Australia into question.<sup>26</sup> British diplomats, who had kept a tight lid on the racial issue for the past two decades, were now forced to look on as Hughes subjected the Japanese proposal to an outright and very public rejection. In Japan, the defeat of the clause once

---

<sup>19</sup> Meaney, *Australia and the World Crisis*, pp. 176-79.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>21</sup> Daniels, *Politics of Prejudice*, pp. 87-91.

<sup>22</sup> Roy, *The Oriental Question*, pp. 61-63.

<sup>23</sup> P.S. O'Connor, “Keeping New Zealand White, 1908-1920,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 2, no. 1 (1968): 41-65.

<sup>24</sup> “The Position of British Indians in the Dominions,” Memorandum by the Govt. of India, 1921, LAC, Dept of External Affairs, RG 25/1298/812.

<sup>25</sup> Shimazu, *Japan, Race, and Equality*, p. 20.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Minute on Racial Equality,’ 1919, NLA, Hughes Papers, MS 1538/24/11.



again seemed proof that its racial status still kept the country at the bottom end of the international pecking order. It compounded a growing sense that Japan would never be allowed to take its rightful place in the new 'Anglo-Saxon' world order that was constructed in Paris.

These new controversies reflected how much Japan's standing in the international system, and the Anglo-Japanese relationship with it, had changed since the initial formation of the alliance in 1902. The British government had conceived of its Japanese treaty as an exercise in balance-of-power diplomacy, primarily to contain Russian expansion in northeast Asia. It had not involved the wider British world to any significant degree, nor was there any obvious reason why it should have: apart from the minor controversy of Japan's objections to White Australia, to most in the dominions Japan remained a distant presence. The Russo-Japanese War had changed that. The extensive coverage of the war, and the symbolic significance of Japan's defeat of a European power, now made it loom larger in the politics of the Pacific. Its post-war expansion, both material and imagined, had produced new channels of contact, connection, and friction with the British world. This in turn added a new layer of complexity to the Anglo-Japanese relationship, and London had to account for the fact that the alliance was now subject to pressures from unexpected directions.

Of these, the most troubling and complex was the controversy over Japanese migration. In the aftermath of the Russian war, optimists had expected the issue to either resolve itself, or remain a minor irritation; Canada's signing of the Anglo-Japanese commercial treaty, in the hope of instilling an appetite for its produce 'in the stomach of the Orient' was a promising sign. Such hopes proved misplaced. To whites on the Pacific coast, Japan's 'civilisational' achievements did not invalidate the bar of race. If anything, its recent triumphs added an additional argument for exclusion, since the Japanese diaspora now enjoyed the potential support of a strong military power. A sense of geopolitical rivalry, shaped by rise of Japanese-American antagonism, intermeshed with older anti-Asian prejudices in an alarmist outlook on global politics, centred on the notion of a coming conflict between Asians and Anglo-Saxons for control of the Pacific. Reconciling Pacific whites' commitment to racial security with Japan's international status was always going to be difficult. Within the hothouse atmosphere of populist racialism fomented by the exclusion leagues, it proved almost impossible. The Vancouver riots and their aftermath pointedly illustrated that the immigration controversy would intensify, rather than dissipate, as Japan's power grew. Potentially, moreover, immigration possessed the disruptive capacity to reorder the politics of the Pacific on georacialist lines – this was the intimation, after all, in Theodore Roosevelt's suggestions for an Anglo-American pact to keep the Japanese 'to their own side of the Pacific'.<sup>27</sup>

This was not the seamless integration that the Japanophiles had hoped for, or which some later histories of Japan's 'entry into international society' have presented. Yet neither was it

---

<sup>27</sup> King Diary, 25 Jan 1908, LAC, King Papers [digital], ff. 2177-83.

an unqualified story of escalating racial conflict. The Anglo-Japanese alliance, crucially, provided several mechanisms to ease and manage the racial question. It allowed Japan to be secure in the knowledge that its status as the sole Asian power would not leave it internationally isolated, as had happened during the Triple Intervention in 1895, and as again seemed possible in the early 1920s. During the Russo-Japanese War, the alliance's small-l liberal undertones had provided an ideological framework within which the rise of Japan could be presented as a progressive, beneficial force. One did not have to be a full-blown Japanophile, moreover, to recognise that the alliance offered a degree of insulation against Japanese expansion, and that its strategic utility was a sound reason not to alienate Japan through 'Yellow Perilist' rhetoric. After 1905, the same logic came to extend to the dominions, and the necessity of dealing with Japan 'in the spirit of the alliance' proved a brake on the racial fears stoked by Tsushima – or at the very least, it restricted their airing in public.

The Canadian response to the Vancouver riots exemplified this well. Privately, several senior figures denounced Japanese immigration as a covert invasion of British Columbia, and even Laurier came to demand stringent restrictions. But this was to be achieved through diplomacy rather than a legislative colour bar. As Laurier later acknowledged, the successful conclusion of the Lemieux agreement owed everything to the alliance and Canada's membership of the imperial system. At the 1911 imperial conference, he supported renewal wholeheartedly. In London, this policy of quiet diplomacy – quiet in comparison to the grand declarations and sweeping gestures with which Roosevelt attempted to resolve his own Japanese crisis – was welcomed with relief: it fitted comfortably alongside Whitehall's own policy of managing the immigration question through legislative compromises, and not initiate a public controversy on the subject. To that end, London looked approvingly on the formation of the 'gentlemen's agreement' and favoured its extension to other Asian countries.<sup>28</sup>

In Australia and New Zealand, a different set of issues predominated. Here, proposals to soften the impact of exclusion through a diplomatic agreement never made serious headway; Deakin toyed with the idea, but relented once it became clear that the British government would prefer not to raise the issue at all. Instead, Australasia's 'Japanese question' came to concentrate on the issue of imperial defence, and particularly on the search for a robust naval presence that could guarantee the long-term security of 'White' Australia and New Zealand. It was recognised, in this regard, that the alliance provided a degree of insurance, and 'breathing time' to organise a local defence. It was on this understanding that Fisher and Pearce agreed to an extension in 1911. A decade later, Japan's expansion in the Pacific had only reinforced this logic: at the 1921 imperial conference, Hughes declared that the alliance was 'a thing more precious than rubies', and passionately argued for its continuation.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> King to Grey, 1 Jan 1909, DUL, Grey Papers, 179/6.

<sup>29</sup> Meaney, *Australia and the World Crisis*, p. 477.

Australia's (and New Zealand's) desire to cling on to the alliance, even as Britain had lost enthusiasm for it, reflected the extent to which the post-war order had failed to lay to rest their dread of Japanese expansion that arose Tsushima's wake. The roots of these fears, of course, stretched back further than 1905. The 'Yellow Peril' was not a new phenomenon: in Australasia and British Columbia, Japanese immigration was tarred with the well-worn brush that had been consistently applied to the Chinese from the 1870s onwards. After 1905, however, these fears were bundled around Japan; a threat credible enough to give strategic momentum to calls for an autonomous defence policy – hitherto framed mostly in constitutional terms. Yet the move towards a 'national' defence in Australia – and after 1912 in New Zealand – should not be seen out of its Britannic context: instead, to the Australasian elites, the move towards operating their own ships and training their own forces became a way to demonstrate their deepening participation in the system on which their white, British character depended. This was the logic that underpinned Deakin's proposals for a national navy as well as Ward's dreadnought donation, and on which Hughes would fight his campaign for conscription. 'Australian influence in Imperial counsels,' as Frederic Eggleston concluded a post-war memorandum, 'will be in proportion to the activity it displays and the sacrifices it is prepared to make'.<sup>30</sup>

The main effect of the Japanese challenge, then, was to reinforce the case for Australasia's attachment to the British world-system: this was the 'solid national advantage accruing from the British connection' that Richard Jebb had diagnosed in 1905.<sup>31</sup> Yet underneath the rhetoric of Britannic unity, this often proved a conflicted process. With Australasian sacrifice, in treasure and blood, came an expectation of reciprocity, as the Pacific dominions expected London to share their aspiration to racial solidarity. Just as they understood that their own security was bound up with Britain's global naval dominance, they also insisted that the supremacy of the 'British race' in the coming century would hinge on the growth of its demographic bridgeheads in the Pacific. For Eggleston, the core purpose of empire was 'the realisation of the unity of the British race and its mission of civilization to the world'.<sup>32</sup> Framing the imperial system in racial terms, in other words, could elevate their own interests to a position of equivalence to those of the 'mother country'.

At moments of crisis, like the 1909 naval scare, or the outbreak of the First World War, this logic could harmonise imperial interests with concerns over local security to produce impressive displays of unity. Conflicts began when dominion politicians began to suspect that London was failing to live up to their standard of racial imperialism. Thus Churchill's intimation in March 1914 that the Japanese alliance kept the Pacific secure struck many in the dominions as naïve and narrow-minded – though, of course, the First Lord judged their Japanese paranoia in

---

<sup>30</sup> F.W. Eggleston, 'Memorandum on the National Policy of Australia,' [n.d., content suggests 1919], NLA, Eggleston Papers, MS 423/6/367.

<sup>31</sup> Richard Jebb, *Studies in Colonial Nationalism*, (London, 1905), pp. 81-85.

<sup>32</sup> Eggleston, 'Memorandum on the National Policy of Australia,' [1919] NLA, Eggleston Papers, MS 423/6/367.

much the same way. Suspicions in this vein continued to fester during the war. In a memorandum on Pacific policy, drawn up in 1915, Arthur Jose, now secretary of the Australian naval board, noted that even after a decade of exertions, some in London still saw 'White Australia' as a liability rather than an asset: 'the interest of maintaining in the Pacific a purely British stock, free from the admixture of Asiatic or other races,' he wrote to Hughes, 'seems to be regarded by a great many British publicists as hardly an Imperial interests at all'.<sup>33</sup> Clearly, his exchanges with Chirol on the subject had left a lasting impression. The only way, Jose concluded, through which Australia could reverse this was to demonstrate its imperial value: by throwing itself 'wholeheartedly into the war'.<sup>34</sup>

These criticisms were not entirely justified. If the observations of Mackenzie King can be taken as a rough indication, it seems clear that the immigration crisis of 1907-8 had convinced the majority of the British elite that exclusion was both justified and necessary. The racial-imperial nexus articulated in Australasia, moreover, had its advocates among *soi-disant* 'imperialists' in Britain. Yet these remained voices on the fringes; London was forced to operate in a more complex reality. While British officialdom was not as complacent about the growth of Japanese power as is sometimes suggested, competing strategic pressures, above all the German challenge in the North Sea, were more immediate. There was the obvious concern, moreover, that the new gospel of imperial cooperation excluded the majority of the empire's subjects that did not fit its narrow racial definition. Indeed, if the rise of Japan had illustrated anything, a number of prominent commentators argued, it was that the future of the British system would increasingly hinge on its ability to manage the rising tide of Asian nationalism. Alienating the greatest Asian power by ranging the empire's international politics along the 'colour line' would be deeply self-destructive: the only 'Yellow Peril' that Britain had to fear, as pro-Japanese commentators had cautioned during the Russo-Japanese War, was that which it helped to create. Like Pandora's box, the window on a racially ordered world was best kept firmly shut. The argument persisted right until the end. 'No greater calamity,' Lloyd George told the assembled dominion leaders at the 1921 imperial conference, 'could overcome the world than any further accentuation of its division along lines of race.'<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> [A.W. Jose and W.H.C. Thring], 'A Post-Bellum Naval Policy for the Pacific, Part I,' 22 Oct 1915, NLA, Hughes Papers, MS 1538/19/1.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 'Part II,' NLA, Hughes Papers, MS 1538/19/1.

<sup>35</sup> McKcown, *Melancholy Order*, p. 185.

# Bibliography

## 1. MANUSCRIPTS AND ARCHIVAL SOURCES

### *Official Records*

#### **British Library, London**

India Office Records (IOR)

#### **Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa**

Department of External Affairs (RG 25)

Department of Militia and Defence (RG 24)

#### **National Archives of Australia, Canberra**

Prime Minister's Office (A1)

Department of External Affairs (CA7)

#### **National Archives of the United Kingdom, London**

Admiralty (ADM)

Cabinet Office (CAB), in particular

CAB 1 (Miscellaneous records)

CAB 38 (Copies of CID minutes and memoranda)

Colonial Office (CO), in particular,

CO 42 (Canada correspondence)

CO 129 (Hong Kong)

CO 209 (New Zealand)

CO 418 (Australia)

CO 532 (Secretariat of the Imperial Conference)

CO 886 (Dominions, confidential print)

Foreign Office (FO), in particular,

FO 46 (Japan before 1906)

FO 371 (General correspondence after 1906)

FO 881 (Confidential print)

**Australian War Memorial, Canberra**

George Foster Pearce

**Bodleian Library, Oxford**

James Bryce, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Bryce

Lionel Curtis

Edward Grigg

Lewis Harcourt, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Harcourt

William Palmer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Selborne

Sir Horace Rumbold

Records of the *Round Table*

Records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

**British Library**

Arthur James Balfour

Sir George Clarke

George Nathaniel Curzon, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Curzon of Kedleston

John Morley, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Morley

Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, 5<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Lansdowne

Oliver Russell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Amptill

**British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics**

Beatrice Webb\*<sup>1</sup>

**Broomhall House, Dunfermline**

Victor Bruce, 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Elgin

*All quotations reproduced by kind permission of the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine*

**Cadbury Research Library, Birmingham**

Austen Chamberlain

Joseph Chamberlain

**Cambridge University Library**

Robert Crewe-Milnes, 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess of Crewe

---

<sup>1</sup> Collections marked [\*] were consulted partly or fully in digital form.

Sir Charles Hardinge

**Churchill College Archives Centre, Cambridge**

Leopold Amery

Reginald Brett, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Esher

Sir John Fisher

Alfred Lyttelton

Reginald McKenna

Arnold Robertson

Sir Cecil Spring Rice

**Cornell University Library, Ithaca**

Willard Dickerman Straight\*

**Durham University Library**

Albert Grey, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl Grey

**Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, Toronto**

John Otway Percy Bland

**Institute for Commonwealth Studies, London**

Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett

Richard Jebb

**Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College London**

Sir Ian Hamilton

**Library and Archives of Canada**

Sir Robert Laird Borden

Victor Bruce, 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Elgin\*

Albert Grey, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl Grey

William Lyon Mackenzie King\*

Sir Wilfrid Laurier

Rodolphe Lemieux

Sir Joseph Pope

**Library, Sydney**

Arthur Jose

George Ernest Morrison

**National Archives of Australia**

Joseph Cook\*

**National Archives of the United Kingdom**

Sir Beilby Francis Alston

Sir Edward Grey\*

Sir John Jordan

Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, 5<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Lansdowne\*

Henry Northcote, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Northcote

Sir Ernest Satow

**National Maritime Museum, Greenwich**

Sir Gerard Noel

**National Library of Australia, Canberra**

Edmund Barton\*

Joseph Cook

Alfred Deakin\*

Thomas Denman, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron Denman

Frederic William Eggleston

Andrew Fisher

John Hope, 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Hopetoun

William Morris Hughes

Arthur Atlee Hunt

Ronald Munro-Ferguson, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Novar

Edmund Leolin Piesse

Hallam Tennyson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Tennyson

**National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh**

Gilbert Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Minto

James Haldane Stewart Lockhart



### **News UK Archive, London**

Charles Moberley Bell

Sir Valentine Chirol

Henry Wickham Steed

Records of *The Times*

### **Parliamentary Archives, London**

John St Loe Strachey

### **School of Oriental and African Studies, London**

Charles Addis

Records of the China Association

#### *Edited Collections of Primary Sources*

D. G. Boyce (ed.), *The Crisis of British Power: The Imperial and Naval Papers of the Second Earl of Selborne, 1895–1910* (London, 1990)

Churchill, R. and M. Gilbert (eds.), *The Churchill Documents, Companion Volumes, Vol. V, At the Admiralty, 1911-1914* (Hillsdale, 2008)

Fairbank, J.K. and K.F. Bruner, E.M. Matheson, J.D. Campbell (eds.), *The I. G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868-1907*, (Cambridge, MA, 1975)

Hancock, W.K., and J. van der Poel, *Selections from the Smuts Papers, Vol. III, June 1910-November 1918* (Cambridge, 1966)

La Nauze, J.A., (ed.), *Federated Australia: Selections from Letters to the Morning Post, 1900-1910* (Melbourne, 1968)

Lo, H. (ed.), *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison, 1895-1912* (Cambridge, 1976)

Marder, A.J. (ed.), *Fear God and Dread Nought: The Correspondence of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher of Kilverstone*, (London, 1956)

Morison, E.E. (ed.), *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt* (8 Vols., Cambridge, MA., 1951-54)

Ruxton, I. (ed.), *Sir Ernest Satow's Private Letters to W.G. Aston and F.V. Dickins: The Correspondence of a Pioneer Japanologist from 1870 to 1918* (Self-published, 2008)

Ruxton, I. (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Ernest Satow, British Envoy in Peking (1900-06)*, (Self-published, 2006)

Ruxton, I. (ed.), *The Semi-Official Letters of British Envoy Sir Ernest Satow from Japan and China (1895-1906)*, (Self-published, 2007)

## 2. OFFICIAL RECORDS

### **Parliamentary Debates**

Canadian Parliamentary Debates

Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates

Hansard, United Kingdom

New Zealand Parliamentary Debates

### **Parliamentary Papers, Canada**

*Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration* (1902)

*Report by W.L. Mackenzie King, C.M.G., Commissioner Appointed to Investigate into the Losses Sustained by the Japanese Population of Vancouver, B.C., on the Occasion of the Riots in that City in September, 1907*  
(1907)

*Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Methods by which Oriental Labourers Have Been Induced to Come to Canada* (1908)

*Report by W.L. Mackenzie King, C.M.G., On Mission to England to Confer with the British Authorities on the Subject of Immigration to Canada from the Orient, and Immigration from India in Particular* (1908)

### **Parliamentary Papers, United Kingdom**

*Proceedings of the Imperial Conference, 1911* (Cd. 5745)

## 3. NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

### **Newspapers**

*Age* [Melbourne]

*Argus* [Melbourne]

*Auckland Star*

*Daily Mail*

*Daily Telegraph*

*Evening Post* [Wellington]

*Manchester Guardian*

*Morning Post*

*New York Times*

*New Zealand Herald* [Auckland]

*New Zealand Truth* [Wellington]

*North China Herald* [Shanghai]

*Sydney Morning Herald*

*Truth* [Sydney]  
*The Times*  
*Victoria Daily Colonist*  
*Westminster Gazette*

#### **Periodicals**

*The Academy*  
*Blackwood's Magazine*  
*British Columbia Magazine*  
*Contemporary Review*  
*Empire Review*  
*The Economist*  
*Fortnightly Review*  
*Journal for the Royal Society of the Arts*  
*Journal of the Royal Colonial Institute*  
*Journal of the Royal United Services Institute*  
*Monthly Review*  
*The Nation*  
*National Review*  
*The Nineteenth Century and After*  
*The Observer*  
*Quarterly Review*  
*Review of Reviews*  
*The Round Table*  
*Saturday Review*  
*The Speaker*  
*Spectator*  
*United Empire*  
*Westminster Review*

#### 4. ARTICLES AND BOOKS PUBLISHED BEFORE 1925

[Anonymous], *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, (Oxford, 1905)  
Amery, L. S., *Union and Strength: a Series of Papers on Imperial Questions*, (London, 1912)  
Ashmead-Bartlett, E., *Port Arthur: the Siege and Capitulation*, (London, 1905)  
Baden-Powell, R., *Scouting for Boys: a Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship*, (London, 1908)  
Borden, R.L., *The Question of Oriental Immigration: Speeches (in Part) Delivered by R.L. Borden, M.P. in*

- 1907 and 1908, (Ottawa, 1908)
- Bland, J.O.P., *Recent Events and Present Policies in China*, (London, 1912)
- Burleigh, B., *Empire of the East or Russia and Japan at War, 1904-5*, (London, 1905)
- J. Castell Hopkins, (ed.), *Empire Club Speeches, Being Addresses Delivered Before the Empire Club of Canada During Its Session of 1907-1908*, (Toronto, 1910)
- Chirol, V., *The Far Eastern Question*, (London, 1896)
- “Our Imperial Interests in Nearer and Further Asia,” in C.S. Goldman (ed.) *The Empire and the Century*, (London, 1905), 728–59
- Compatriots' Club (ed.), *Compatriots' Club Lectures First Series*, (London, 1905)
- á Court Repington, C., *The War in the Far East*, (New York, 1905)
- Curzon, G.N., *Problems of the Far East: Japan-Korea-China*, (1894)
- *The Place of India in the Empire: Being an Address Delivered Before the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh*, (London, 1909)
- Dyer, H., *Dai Nippon, the Britain of the East*, (Glasgow, 1904)
- *Japan in World Politics*, (London, 1909)
- Gulick, S.L., *The White Peril in the Far East: an Interpretation of the Significance of the Russo-Japanese War*, (New York, 1905)
- Hamilton, I., *A Staff Officer's Scrap-Book During the Russo-Japanese War*, (2 Vols., London, 1906-7)
- [James, L.], *The Yellow War*, (London, 1905)
- Jebb, R., *Studies in Colonial Nationalism*, (London, 1905)
- “The Imperial Problem of Oriental Immigration,” *Journal of the Royal Society for the Arts* 56 (April 1908): 585-603
- *The Britannic Question: a Survey of Alternatives*, (London, 1909)
- Kirmness, C.H., *The Australian Crisis*, (Sydney, 1909)
- Lucas, C.P. *Greater Rome and Greater Britain*, (Oxford, 1912)
- Mackinder, H., “The Geographical Pivot of History,” *The Geographical Journal* 23 (April 1904): 421–37
- Mahan, A.T., *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future*, (London, 1897)
- Maxwell, W., *From the Yalu to Port Arthur*, (London, 1906)
- McKenzie, F.A., *From Tokyo to Tiflis: Uncensored Letters From the War*, (London, 1905)
- *The Tragedy of Korea*, (New York, 1908)
- *The Unveiled East*, (New York, 1907)
- Milner, A., *The Nation and the Empire*, (London, 1913)
- Neame, L E., *The Asiatic Danger in the Colonies*, (London, 1907)
- Nitobe, I., *Bushido: the Soul of Japan*, (Tokyo, 1905)
- Norman, F. J., *The Fighting Man of Japan: the Training and Exercises of the Samurai*, (London, 1905)
- Parkin, G., “Canada and the Pacific,” in C.S. Goldman (ed.), *The Empire and the Century*, (London,

- 1905), 409-419.
- Pearson, Charles, *National Life and Character: A Forecast* (London, 1893)
- Putnam Weale, B L., *The Coming Struggle in Eastern Asia*, (London, 1908)
- *The Conflict of Colour*, (Norwood, MA, 1910)
- *The Re-Shaping of the Far East*, (2 Vols., London, 1905)
- *The Truce in the East and Its Aftermath*, (London, 1907)
- Stead, A., *Great Japan: a Study of National Efficiency*, (London, 1906)
- Stoddard, L., *The Rising Tide of Color against White World-Supremacy*, (New York, 1921)
- Suematsu, K., *The Risen Sun*, (London, 1905)
- Villiers, F., *Port Arthur, Three Months with the Besiegers; a Journal of Occurrences*, (London, 1905)
- Watson, W.P., *Japan: Aspects and Destinies*, (London, 1904)
- Wells, H.G., *An Englishman Looks at the World: Being a Series of Unrestrained Remarks Upon Contemporary Matters*, (London, 1914)
- Wilson, H.W., *Japan's Fight for Freedom: the Story of the War Between Russia and Japan*, (London, 1904)

## 5. SECONDARY WORKS

### Books

- Anderson, S., *Race and Rapprochement: Anglo-Saxonism and Anglo-American Relations, 1895-1904* (London, 1981)
- Auslin, M., *Pacific Cosmopolitans: A Cultural History of U.S.-Japan Relations* (Cambridge, MA, 2011)
- Aydin, C., *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York, 2007)
- Beasley, W.G., *Japanese Imperialism, 1894-1945* (Oxford, 1985)
- Belich, James, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Honolulu, 2002)
- *Replenishing the Earth: the Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford, 2009)
- Bell, C., *Churchill and Sea Power* (Oxford, 2013)
- Bell, D., *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton, 2007)
- Benesch, O., *Inventing the Way of the Samurai: Nationalism, Internationalism and Bushidō in Modern Japan* (Oxford, 2014)
- Bickers, R., *Britain in China: Community, Culture and Colonialism, 1900-1949* (Manchester, 1999)
- *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832-1914* (London, 2011)
- Brawley, S., *The White Peril: Foreign Relations and Asian Immigration to Australasia and North America, 1919-1978* (Sydney, 1995)

- Bright, R.K., *Chinese Labour in South Africa, 1902-1910: Race, Violence, and Global Spectacle* (London, 2013)
- Cain, P., and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism, 1688-2000*, (Abingdon, 2001)
- Chida, T., and P.N. Davies, *The Japanese Shipping and Shipbuilding Industries: A History of their Modern Growth* (London, 1990)
- Clark, C., *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe went to War in 1914* (London, 2014)
- Connor, J., *Anzac and Empire: George Foster Pearce and the Foundations of Australian Defence* (Melbourne, 2011),
- Darwin, J., *The Empire Project: the Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge, 2011)
- Dayer, R.A., *Finance and Empire: Sir Charles Addis, 1861-1945* (London, 1988)
- Doulman, J., and D. Lee, *Every Assistance & Protection: a History of the Australian Passport* (Sydney, 2008)
- Dwyer, S., *Sir William Rooke Creswell and the Foundation of the Australian Navy* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2014)
- Edwards, E.W., *British Diplomacy and Finance in China, 1895-1914* (Oxford, 1987)
- Esthus, R., *Theodore Roosevelt and Japan* (Seattle, 1966)
- Frei, H., *Japan's Southward Advance and Australia: From the Sixteenth Century to World War II* (Honolulu, 1991)
- Fritzing, L.B., *Diplomat Without Portfolio: Valentine Chirol, His Life, and 'the Times'* (London, 2006)
- Gong, G., *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society* (Oxford, 1984)
- Henning, J., *Outposts of Civilization: Race, Religion, and the Formative Years of Japanese-American Relations* (New York, 2000)
- Hirobe, I., *Japanese Pride, American Prejudice: Modifying the Exclusion Clause of the 1924 Immigration Act* (Stanford, 2000)
- Hollwitzer, H., *Die Gelbe Gefahr: Geschichte eines Schlagworts, Studien zum imperialistischen Denken* (Göttingen, 1962)
- Huttenback, R.A., *Gandhi in South Africa: British Imperialism and the Indian Question, 1860-1914* (Cornell, 1971)
- *Racism and Empire: White Settlers and Colored Immigrants in the British Self-Governing Colonies, 1830-1910* (Ithaca, NY, 1976)
- Hyam, R., *Elgin and Churchill at the Colonial Office, 1905-1908: the Watershed of the Empire-Commonwealth* (London, 1968)
- Ichioda, Y., *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924* (New York, 1988)
- Iriye, A., *Across the Pacific: an Inner History of American-East Asian Relations* (New York, 1967)
- *Pacific Estrangement: Japanese and American Expansion, 1897-1911* (Cambridge, MA, 1976)

- Irving, H., *To Constitute a Nation: a Cultural History of Australia's Constitution* (Melbourne, 1997)
- Keene, D., *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and his World, 1852-1912* (New York, 2002)
- Kennedy, P., *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London, 1976)
- *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict From 1500-2000* (London, 1989)
- Kowner, R., *The Historical Dictionary of the Russo-Japanese War* (Toronto, 2006)
- La Nauze, J.A., *Alfred Deakin: a Biography* (Melbourne, 1965)
- Lake, M., and H. Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge, 2008)
- Lavin, D., *From Empire to Commonwealth: a Biography of Lionel Curtis* (Oxford, 1995)
- Lehmann, J., *The Image of Japan: From Feudal Isolation to World Power, 1850-1905* (London, 1978)
- Lisle, R.A., *Power at Sea: The Age of Navalism, 1890-1918* (Columbia, MO, 2007)
- Lissington, M.P., *New Zealand and Japan, 1900-1941* (Wellington, 1971)
- Lowe, P., *Great Britain and Japan, 1911-15: a Study of British Far Eastern Policy* (London, 1968)
- *Britain in the Far East: a Survey from 1819 to the Present* (London, 1981)
- Magee, G.B., and A.S. Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, C. 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 2010)
- Marder, A., *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow* (Annapolis, 1961)
- Markus, A., *Fear and Hatred: Purifying Australia and California, 1850-1901* (Sydney, 1979)
- Matsusaka, Y.T., *The Making of Japanese Manchuria, 1904-1932* (Cambridge, MA, 2001)
- McKenna, M., *The Captive Republic: a History of Republicanism in Australia, 1788-1996* (Melbourne, 1996)
- Meaney, N., *The Search for Security in the Pacific, 1901-14* (Sydney, 1976)
- *Fears & Phobias: EL Piessé and the Problem of Japan, 1909-39* (Canberra, 1996)
- *Australia and World Crisis, 1914-1923* (Sydney, 2009)
- McGibbon, I., *The Path to Gallipoli: Defending New Zealand, 1840-1915* (Wellington, 1991)
- McKeown, A., *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders* (New York, 2008)
- Mitcham, J., *Race and Imperial Defence in the British World, 1870-1914* (Cambridge, 2016)
- Nagata, Y., and J. Nagatomo, *Japanese Queenslanders: A History* (Brisbane, 2007)
- Neilson, K., *Britain and the Last Tsar: British Policy and Russia, 1894-1917* (Oxford, 1995)
- Nish, I.H., *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: the Diplomacy of Two Island Empires, 1894-1907* (London, 1966)
- *Alliance in Decline: a Study in Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1908-1923* (London, 1972)
- *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (London, 1985)
- O'Brien, P.P., *British and American Naval Power: Politics and Policy, 1900-1936* (West Port, CT, 1998)
- Okagaki, T., *The Logic of Conformity: Japan's Entry into International Society* (Toronto, 2013)
- Otte, T. G., *The China Question: Great Power Rivalry and British Isolation, 1894-1905* (Oxford, 2007)

- *The Foreign Office Mind* (Cambridge, 2011)
- Paine, S.C.M., *Imperial Rivals: China, Russia, and Their Disputed Frontier* (London, 1996)
- *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy* (Cambridge, 2003)
- Pearl, C., *Morrison of Peking* (Sydney, 1967)
- Popplewell, R., *Intelligence and Imperial Defence: British Intelligence and the Defence of the Indian Empire, 1904-1924* (London, 1995)
- Porter, B., *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford, 2006)
- Potter, S., *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System* (Oxford, 2003)
- Price, C.A., *The Great White Walls Are Built: Restrictive Immigration to North America and Australia, 1836-88* (Canberra, 1978)
- Reckner, J.R., *Teddy Roosevelt's Great White Fleet* (Annapolis, MD, 1988)
- Reynolds, H., *North of Capricorn: the Untold Story of Australia's North* (Sydney, 2005)
- Rhoads, E.J.M., *China's Republican Revolution: the Case of Kwantung, 1895-1913* (Cambridge, MA, 1975)
- Roy, P., *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1895-1914* (Vancouver, 1989)
- *The Oriental Question: Consolidating a White Man's Province, 1914-41* (Vancouver, 2003)
- *The Triumph of Citizenship: the Japanese and Chinese in Canada, 1941-67* (Vancouver, 2007)
- Rüger, J., *The Great Naval Game: Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge, 2007)
- Schwarz, B., *The White Man's World* (Oxford, 2011)
- Searle, G., *The Quest for National Efficiency: a Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1899-1914* (Oxford, 1972)
- Siegel, J., *Endgame: Britain, Russia, and the Final Struggle for Central Asia* (London, 2002)
- Shimazu, N., *Japan, Race and Equality: the Racial Equality Proposal of 1919* (London, 1999)
- Steiner, Z.S., and K.Neilson, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, Second Edition (London, 2003)
- Stockings, C.A.J., *The Torch and the Sword: a History of the Army Cadet Movement in Australia* (Sydney, 2007)
- Sugimoto, H.H., *Japanese Immigration, the Vancouver Riots and Canadian Diplomacy* (New York, 1979)
- Thompson, A.S., *Imperial Britain: the Empire in British Politics, C. 1880-1932* (Harlow, 2000)
- Thornton, M., *Churchill, Borden and Anglo-Canadian Naval Relations, 1911-14* (Basingstoke, 2013)
- Tomes, H., *Balfour and Foreign Policy: the International Thought of a Conservative Statesman* (Cambridge, 1997)
- Trainor, L., *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism* (Melbourne, 1994)
- Tweedie, S., *Trading Partners: Australia & Asia, 1790-1993* (Sydney, 1993)
- Walker, D., *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia, 1850-1939* (St Lucia, Qld, 1999)
- Wang, G., *In Search of Justice: the 1905-1906 Chinese Anti-American Boycott* (Cambridge, MA, 2001)



- Ward, W.P., *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Towards Orientals in British Columbia* (Montreal, 1978)
- Wilkinson, G. R., *Depictions and Images of War in Edwardian Newspapers, 1899-1914* (New York, 2003)
- Williams, R., *Defending the Empire: the Conservative Party and British Defence Policy, 1899-1905* (New Haven, 1991)
- Wyatt, C., *Afghanistan and the Defence of Empire: Diplomacy and Strategy during the Great Game* (London, 2011)
- Yarwood, A.T., *Asian Migration to Australia: The Background to Exclusion, 1896-1923* (Melbourne, 1968)
- Young, L.K., *British Policy in China, 1895-1902* (Oxford, 1970)

### Articles and Chapters

- Avery, D., and P. Neary, "Laurier, Borden and a White British Columbia," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 12.4 (1977): 23–34
- Bashford, A., "Is White Australia Possible? Race, Colonialism and Tropical Medicine," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23.2 (2000): 248–271
- Bashford, A., and C. Gilchrist, "The Colonial History of the 1905 Aliens Act," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 40.3 (2012): 409–437
- Belich, J., "Race and the Pacific," in D. Armitage and A. Bashford (eds.), *Pacific Histories: Land, Ocean, People*, (Basingstoke, 2014) 263–281
- Bell, C.M., "Sentiment vs Strategy: British Naval Policy, Imperial Defence, and the Development of Dominion Navies, 1911–14," *The International History Review* 37.2 (2014): 262–281
- Bell, D., "The Project for a New Anglo Century: Race, Space, and Global Order," in Peter Katzenstein (ed.) *Anglo-America and Its Discontents: Civilizational Identities Beyond West and East*, (London, 2012) 33–55
- Best, A., "India, Pan-Asianism and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance," in P.P. O'Brien, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-1922*, (London, 2004) 236–248
- "Race, Monarchy, and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-1922," *Social Science Japan Journal* 9.2 (2006): 171–186
- "The 'Cultural Turn' and the International History of East Asia: a Response to David Reynolds," *Cultural and Social History* 3.4 (2006): 482–489
- "The 'Ghost' of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance: an Examination Into Historical Myth-Making," *The Historical Journal* 49.3 (2006): 1–22
- "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the International Politics of Asia, 1902-1923," in A. Best (ed.), *The International History of East Asia, 1900-1986*, (Abingdon, 2010) 21–36
- "The Shanghai 'Temper': J.O.P. Bland and Japan," in Hugh Cortzzi (ed.), *Britain and Japan:*

- Biographical Portraits, Vol. VII*, (Leiden, 2010) 311–322
- “G. E. Morrison (1862-1920) and Japan, 1897-1920,” in Hugh Cortazzi (ed.), *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits, Vol. VIII*, (Leiden, 2013) 469-480
  - “'The Great Question of the World Today,' Britain, the Dominions, East Asian Immigration and the 'Treat of Race War, 1905-1911'”, in R. Kowner and W. Demel (eds.), *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia, Vol. II: Interactions, Nationalism, Gender, and Lineage* (Leiden, 2015) 178-95
  - “Britain, Japan, and the Crisis over China, 1915-16,” in O. Frattolino and A. Best (eds.), *Japan and the Great War* (Basingstoke, 2015) 52-70.
- Bickers, R. and J.N. Wasserstrom, “Shanghai’s ‘Dogs and Chinese Not Admitted’ Sign: Legend, History and Contemporary Symbol,” *China Quarterly* 142.2 (1995): 444–466
- “Anglo-Japanese Relations in Treaty Port China: the Case of the Chinese Maritime Customs Service,” in A. Best (ed.), *The International History of East Asia, 1900-1986*, (Abingdon, 2010) 35–56.
  - “Shanghailanders: the Formation and Identity of the British Settler Community in Shanghai, 1843-1937,” *Past and Present* 159.1 (1998): 161–211
- Bieganiec, R., “Distant Echoes: the Reflection of the War in the Middle East,” in R. Kowner (ed.), *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War: Centennial Perspectives*, (Folkestone, 2007) 444–455
- Blue, G., “Gobineau on China: Race Theory, the ‘Yellow Peril,’ and the Critique of Modernity,” *Journal of World History* 10.1 (1999): 93–139
- Bosher, J.F., “Vancouver Island in the Empire,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 33.3 (2005): 349–368.
- Bridge, C., and K. Fedorowich, “Mapping the British World,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 31.2 (2003): 1–15
- Bright, R.K., “Asian Migration and the British World, 1850-1914,” in K. Fedorowich and A.S. Thompson (eds.), *Empire, Identity, and Migration in the British World*, (Manchester, 2013) 246-247
- Buckner, P.A., “Reinventing the British World,” *The Round Table* 92.368 (2003): 77–88
- Chang, K., “Enforcing Transnational White Solidarity: Asian Migration and the Formation of the U.S.-Canadian Boundary,” *American Quarterly* 60.3 (2008): 671–696
- “Circulating Race and Empire: Transnational Labor Activism and the Politics of Anti-Asian Agitation in the Anglo-American Pacific World, 1880–1910,” *The Journal of American History* 96.3 (2009): 678–701
- Chang, R.T., “The Failure of the Katsura-Harriman Agreement,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 21.1 (1961): 65–76
- Chapman, J.W.M., “Admiral Sir John Fisher (1841-1920) and Japan, 1894-1904” in Hugh Cortazzi (ed.), *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits, Vol V*, (London, 2004) 174–185
- Chapman, J.W.M., “The Secret Dimensions of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1900-1905,” in P.P.

- O'Brien, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-1922*, (London, 2004) 82–98
- Darwin, J. "The Fear of Falling: British Politics and Imperial Decline Since 1900," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 36 (1986): 27–43
- "Imperialism and the Victorians: the Dynamics of Territorial Expansion," *English Historical Review* 122.447 (1997): 614–642
- "A Third British Empire? The Dominion Idea in Imperial Politics," in J. Brown and W.R. Louis (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol IV: the Twentieth Century*, (Oxford, 2001) 64-87
- Davis, C.B. "Railway Imperialism in China, 1895-1939," in C.B. Davis and K.E. Wilburn Jr. (eds.), *Railway Imperialism*, (New York, 1991) 155–174
- Davis, C.L., "Linkage Diplomacy: Economic and Security Bargaining in the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-23," *International Security* 33, no. 3 (December 1, 2008): 143–79
- Eddy, J. and D. Schreuder, "The Edwardian Empire in 'Transformation and 'Decline', 1902-1914," in J. Eddy and D. Schreuder (eds.), *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism*, (Sydney, 1988) 19–62
- Edwards, E.W., "Great Britain and the Manchurian Railways Question, 1909-1910," *English Historical Review* 81.321 (1966): 740–769
- Esenbel, S., "Japan's Global Claim to Asia and the World of Islam: Transnational Nationalism and World Power, 1900-1945," *The American Historical Review* 109.4 (2004): 1140–1170
- Esthus, R.A., "The Changing Concept of the Open Door, 1899-1910," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 46.3 (1959): 435–454
- Ferguson, D.S., "'Splendid Allies' or 'No More Deadly Enemies in the World?'" General Sir Ian Hamilton, the British Military and Japan 1902–1914," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 4 (2010): 523–536
- Fraser, T.G., "The Sikh Problem in Canada and Its Political Consequences, 1905–1921," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 7.1 (1978): 35–55
- Gordon, D.C., "Roosevelt's 'Smart Yankee Trick'," *Pacific Historical Review* 30.4 (1961): 351–358
- Gowen, R.J., "Canada and the Myth of the Japan Market, 1896-1911," *Pacific Historical Review* 39.1 (1970): 63–83
- "British Legerdemain at the 1911 Imperial Conference: the Dominions, Defense Planning, and the Renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance," *The Journal of Modern History* 52.3 (1980): 385–413
- Hallett, M.E., "A Governor-General's Views on Oriental Immigration to British Columbia, 1904-1911," *BC Studies: The British Columbian Quarterly* 14 (1972): 51–72
- Hearn, M., "Bound with the Empire: Narratives of Race, Nation, and Empire in the Australian Labor Party's Defence Policy, 1901–21," *War and Society* 32.2 (2013): 95–115
- Henning, J.M., "White Mongols? The War and American Discourses on Race and Religion," in

- R. Kowner (ed.), *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War*, (New York, 2007) 153-66
- Henriot, C., "‘Little Japan’ in Shanghai: an Insulated Community, 1875-1945," in R. Bickers and C. Henriot (eds.), *New Frontiers: Imperialism's New Communities in East Asia, 1842-1953*, (Manchester, 2000) 146-169
- Hashimoto, Y., "White Hope or Yellow Peril?: Bushido, Britain, and the Raj," in David Wolff et al. (eds.), *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero, Vol II*, (Leiden, 2007) 379-402
- Hirama, Y., 'Japanese Naval Assistance and its Effect on Australian-Japanese Relations,' in P.P. O'Brien (ed.), *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-1922*, (London, 2004) 140-158.
- Holmes, C., and A.H. Ion, "Bushido and the Samurai: Images in British Public Opinion, 1894-1914," *Modern Asian Studies* 14.2 (1980): 309-329
- Howe, S., "British Worlds, Settler Worlds, World Systems, and Killing Fields," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 40.4 (2012): 691-725
- Huttenback, R.A., "The British Empire as a 'White Man's Country': Racial Attitudes and Immigration Legislation in the Colonies of White Settlement," *Journal of British Studies* 13.1 (1973): 108-137
- Hyam, R., "The Colonial Office Mind 1900-1914," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 8.1 (2008): 30-55
- Ikura, A., "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the Question of Race," in P.P. O'Brien (ed.), *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-1922*, (London, 2004) 222-236
- "The 'Yellow Peril' and its Influence on Japanese-German Relations," in C.W. Spang and R. Wippich (eds.), *Japanese-German Relations, 1895-1945: War, Diplomacy and Public Opinion* (London, 2006) 80-97
- Jansen, M., "Japan and the Chinese Revolution of 1911," in L. Kwang-Ching and J.K. Fairbank (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. XI: Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911*, (Cambridge, 1980), 339-374
- Kendle, J.E., "The Round Table Movement, New Zealand, and the Conference of 1911," *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 3.2 (1965): 104-117
- Kologlu, O., "Turkish and Islamic Perspectives of Japanese Modernisation: the Role of the Japanese Victory Over Russia 1904-1905," *Turkish Review of Middle East Studies* 11 (2000): 9-42
- Kornicki, R.F., "General Sir Ian Hamilton (1853-1947) and the Russo-Japanese War," in Hugh Cortazzi (ed.), *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits, Vol. VII*, (London, 2010) 162-178
- Kowner, R., "Lighter Than Yellow, but Not Enough: Western Discourse on Japanese 'Race,' 1854-1904." *The Historical Journal* 43.1 (2000): 103-131
- "Becoming an Honorary Civilized Nation: Remaking Japan's Military Image During the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905." *The Historian* (2006): 19-38

- “Between a Colonial Clash and World War Zero: the Impact of the Russo-Japanese War in a Global Perspective,” in R. Kowner (ed.), *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War*, (New York, 2007) 29–46
- “The High Road to the First World War? Europe and the Outcomes of the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1914,” in J.W.M. Chapman and I. Chiharu (eds.), *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5: The Nichinan Papers*, (Folkestone, 2007) 293–31
- and W. Demel, “Modern East Asia and the Rise of Racial Thought: Possible Links, Unique Features and Unsettled Issues,” in R. Kownder and W. Demel (eds.), *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia: Western and Eastern Constructions*, (Leiden, 2013)
- Kramer, P.A., “Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule Between the British and United States Empires, 1880-1910,” *The Journal of American History* (2002): 1315–1353
- “Empire Against Exclusion in Early 20th Century Trans-Pacific History,” *Nanzan Review of American Studies* 33 (2011): 13–32
- Klaus K., “Der Japanische Sieg über Russland (1905) Und sein Echo unter den Muslimen,” *Die Welt Des Islams* 21, no. 4 (1981): 209–39
- Lake, M., “The White Man Under Siege: New Histories of Race in the Nineteenth Century and the Advent of White Australia,” *History Workshop Journal* 58 (2004): 41–62
- “British World or New World? Anglo-Saxonism and Australian Engagement with America,” *History Australia* 10.3 (2013): 36-50
- “Colonial Australia and the Asia-Pacific Region,” in A. Bashford and S. Macintyre (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Australia*, (Cambridge, 2013), 535–559
- Lambert, N., “Economy or Empire? the Fleet Unit Concept and the Quest for Collective Security in the Pacific, 1909-1914,” in K. Neilson and G. Kennedy (eds.), *Far-Flung Lines: Studies in Imperial Defence in Honour of Donald Mackenzie Schurman*, (London, 1996) 55–83
- Lee, E., “The ‘Yellow Peril’ and Asian Exclusion in the Americas,” *Pacific Historical Review* 76.4 (2007): 537–562
- Lowe, P., “The British Empire and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1911-1919.” *History* 54.181 (1969): 212–225
- “The Round Table, the Dominions, and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance,” in A. Bosco and A. May (eds.), *The Round Table, the Empire/Commonwealth, and British Foreign Policy*, (London: 1997) 423–436
- Marks, S.G., “Bravo, Brave Tiger of the East: the Russo-Japanese War and the Rise of Nationalism in British Egypt and India,” in J.W. Steinberg et al. (eds.), *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero, Vol. I* (Leiden, 2005) 609–627
- Martens, J., “A Transnational History of Immigration Restriction: Natal and New South Wales, 1896–97,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 34.3 (2006): 323–344
- “Richard Seddon and Popular Opposition in New Zealand to the Introduction of Chinese

- Labour Into the Transvaal, 1903-4,” *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 42.2 (2008): 176–195
- Masuda, H., “Rumors of War: Immigration Disputes and the Social Construction of American–Japanese Relations, 1905–1913,” *Diplomatic History* 33.1 (2009): 1–37
- Matsusaka, Y.T., “Japan's South Manchuria Railway Company in Northeast China, 1906-1934,” in B.A. Ellemean and S. Kotkin (eds.), *Manchurian Railways and the Opening of China: an International History*, (Armonk, NY, 2010) 37–58
- McGregor, R., “Drawing the Local Colour Line: White Australia and the Tropical North,” *The Journal of Pacific History* 47.3 (2012): 329–346
- McKeown, A., “Global Migration 1846-1940,” *Journal of World History* 15.2 (2004): 155–189
- Meaney, N., “‘A Proposition of the Highest International Importance’: Alfred Deakin's Pacific Agreement Proposal and Its Significance for Australian–Imperial Relations,” *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 5, no. 3 (November 1967): 200–213
- Mehrotra, S.R., “Imperial Federation and India, 1868–1917,” *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 1.1 (1961): 29–40
- Miller, E.S., “Japan's Other Victory: Overseas Financing of the Russo-Japanese War,” in J.W. Steinberg et al. (eds.), *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero, Vol. I*, (Leiden, 2005) 465–483
- Mizoguchi, T., “The Changing Pattern of Sino-Japanese Trade, 1884-1937,” in P. Duus et al. (eds.), *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937*, (Princeton, 1989) 10–30
- Moloughney, B. and J. Stenhouse, “‘Drug-Besotten, Sin-Begotten Fiends of Filth’: New Zealanders and the Oriental Other, 1850-1920,” *The New Zealand Journal of History* 33.1 (1999): 43–64
- Mountford, B., “The interest of our Colonies seems to have been largely overlooked: Colonial Australia and Anglo-Chinese relations,” in R. Bickers and J.J. Howlett (eds.), *Britain and China, 1840-1970: Empire, Finance, War* (Abingdon, 2016) 84-92
- Neilson, K., “‘A Dangerous Game of American Poker’: the Russo–Japanese War and British Policy” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 12.1 (1989): 63–87
- “Greatly Exaggerated: the Myth of the Decline of Great Britain Before 1914,” *The International History Review* 13.4 (1991): 695–725
- “The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and British Strategic Foreign Policy, 1902-1914,” in P.P. O'Brien (ed.), *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-1922*, (London, 2004) 48–63
- “The War and British Strategic Foreign Policy,” in R. Kowner (ed.), *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-05*, (Folkestone, 2007) 307–318
- Newman, R.K., “India and the Anglo-Chinese Opium Agreements, 1907-14,” *Modern Asian Studies* 23.3 (1989): 525–560
- Niergarth, K., “‘This Continent Must Belong to the White Races’: William Lyon Mackenzie King, Canadian Diplomacy and Immigration Law, 1908,” *The International History Review* 32.4

- (2010): 599–617
- Nish, I.H., “Australia and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1901-1911,” *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 9.2 (1963): 201–212
- “Stretching Out to the Yalu: a Contested Frontier, 1900-1903,” in J.W. Steinberg et al. (eds.), *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero, Vol. I*, (Leiden, 2005) 45–65
- O'Brien, P.P., “The Titan Refreshed: Imperial Overstretch and the British Navy Before the First World War,” *Past and Present* 172 (2001): 146–169
- O'Connor, P.S., “Keeping New Zealand White, 1908-1920,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 2.1 (1968): 41–65.
- Offer, A., “‘Pacific Rim’ Societies: Asian Labour and White Nationalism,” in J. Eddy and D. Schreuder (eds.), *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism*, (Sydney, 1988) 227-247
- Osterhammel, J., “Semi-Colonialism and Informal Empire in Twentieth-Century China: Towards a Framework of Analysis,” in W.J. Mommsen and J. Osterhammel, *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities*, (London, 1986) 290–314
- “British Business in China, 1860s-1950s,” in R.P.T. Davenport-Hines, *British Business in Asia Since 1860*, (Cambridge, 1989) 189–216
- “Britain and China, 1842-1914,” in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. III: the Nineteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1999) 146–169
- Otte, T. G., “‘Not Proficient in Table-Thumping’: Sir Ernest Satow at Peking, 1900-1906,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 13.2 (2002): 161–200
- “‘Almost a Law of Nature’? Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Office, and the Balance of Power in Europe, 1905-12,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 14.2 (2003): 77–118
- “The Fragmenting of the Old World Order: Britain, the Great Powers, and the War,” in R. Kowner (ed.), *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War* (New York, 2007) 91–108
- “‘A Very Great Gulf’: Late Victorian British Diplomacy and Race in East Asia,” in R. Kowner and W. Demel (eds.), *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia: Western and Eastern Constructions*, (Leiden, 2013) 127–152
- Paine, S.C.M., “The Chinese Eastern Railway From the First Sino-Japanese War Until the Russo-Japanese War,” in B.A. Elleman and S. Kotkin (eds.), *Manchurian Railways and the Opening of China: an International History*, (Armonk, NY, 2010) 13–36
- Peattie, M.R., “Japanese Treaty Port Settlements in China, 1895-1937,” in Peter Duus et al. (eds.), *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937*, (Princeton, 1989) 166–209
- Potter, S.J., “Richard Jebb, John S. Ewart and the Round Table, 1898-1926,” *The English Historical Review* CXXII.495 (2007): 105–132
- Price, J., “‘Orienting’ the Empire: Mackenzie King and the Aftermath of the 1907 Race Riots,” *British Columbia Studies* 156 (2008): 53-81
- Roy, P., “Canadian and American Treatment of the Nikkei, 1890–1949: A Compariso,” *American*

- Review of Canadian Studies* 45.1 (2015): 44–70
- Rüger, J., “Nation, Empire and Navy: Identity Politics in the United Kingdom 1887-1914.” *Past and Present* 185 (2004): 159–187
- “Revisiting the Anglo-German Antagonism,” *The Journal of Modern History* 83.3 (2011): 579–617
- Sarty, R., “‘There Will Be Trouble in the North Pacific’: the Defence of British Columbia in the Early Twentieth Century.” *BC Studies: The British Columbian Quarterly* 61 (1984): 3–29
- Schiffrin, H.Z., “The Impact of the War on China,” in R. Kowner (ed.), *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War* (New York, 2007), 169–182
- Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, D., “The Immediate Origins of the War,” in J.W. Steinberg et al. (eds.), *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero, Vol. I*, (Leiden, 2005) 23–45
- Searle, G., “National Efficiency’ and the ‘Lessons’ of the War,” in D. Omissi and A.S. Thompson, *The Impact of the South African War*, (Basingstoke, 2002) 194-211
- Shimazu, N., “Patriotic and Despondent: Japanese Society at War, 1904–5,” *The Russian Review* 67 (2008): 34-49
- Sites, R., "Russian Representations of the Japanese Enemy," in J.W. Steinberg et al. (eds.) *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero, Vol. I*, (Leiden, 2005) 395-410
- Steinberg, J.W., “Was the Russo-Japanese War World War Zero?” *The Russian Review* 67 (2008): 1–7
- Stevens, K., “Between Scylla and Charybdis: China and the Chinese During the Russo-Japanese War, 1905-5,” *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 43 (2003): 127–162
- Steward, G.T., “The War and the British Invasion of Tibet, 1904,” in R. Kowner (ed.), *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War: Centennial Perspectives*, (Folkestone, 2007) 430–443
- Stolberg, E.M., “The Siberian Frontier Between “White Mission” and “Yellow Peril,” 1890s–1920s,” *Nationalities Papers* 32.1 (2004): 165–181
- Taylor, G.P., “New Zealand, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the 1908 Visit of the American Fleet,” *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 15.1 (1969): 55–76
- Thompson, A.S. “Imperial Ideology in Edwardian Britain,” in A. Bosco and A. May, *The Round Table, the Empire/Commonwealth, and British Foreign Policy*, (London, 1997) 3–20
- Towle, P., “The Russo-Japanese War and the Defence of India,” *Military Affairs: The Journal of Military History, Including Theory and Technology* (1980): 111–117
- “British Naval and Military Observers of the Russo-Japanese War,” in I.H. Nish, *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits, Vol. III*, (London, 1997) 158–169
- “Race, Culture and the Reaction to the Japanese Victory of 1905 in the English-Speaking World,” in R. Kowner and W. Demel (eds.) *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia: Western and Eastern Constructions*, (Leiden, 2013) 281–308
- Valliant, R.B., “The Selling of Japan: Japanese Manipulation of Western Opinion, 1900-1905,”



*Monumenta Nipponica* 29.4 (1974): 415–438

- Van Bijlert, V.A., “The Icon of Japan in Nationalist Revolutionary Discourse in India, 1890-1910,” in R. Cribb and L. Narangora (eds.), *Imperial Japan and National Identities in Asia, 1895-1945*, (London, 2003) 23–42
- Varg, P.A., “The Myth of the China Market, 1890-1914,” *The American Historical Review* 73.3 (1968): 742–758.
- Venier, P., “The Geographical Pivot of History and Early Twentieth Century Geopolitical Culture,” *The Geographical Journal* 170.4 (2004): 330–336
- Ward, S., “Security: Defending Australia's Empire,” in D. Schreuder (ed.), *Australia's Empire (Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series)* (Oxford, 2010) 232–258
- Wilson, K.M., “The Anglo-Japanese Alliance of August 1905 and the Defending of India: a Case of the Worst Scenario,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 21.2 (1993): 334–356
- Worringer, R., ““Sick Man of Europe” or ‘Japan of the Near East’?: Constructing Ottoman Modernity in the Hamidian and Young Turk Eras,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 36.1 (2004): 207–230
- Yabuki, H., “Britain and the Resale of Argentine Cruisers to Japan Before the Russo-Japanese War,” *War in History* 16.4 (2009): 425–446

### **Theses**

- Atkinson, D.C., “The Burdens of Whiteness: Asian Immigration Restriction and White Supremacy in the British Empire and the United States, 1897-1924,” (Boston University, 2010)
- Chase, R., “Imagining an Anglo Ocean: the Great White Fleet in the Pacific,” (University of California, Irvine, 2012)
- Gowen, R.J., “Canada's Relations with Japan, 1895-1922: Problems of Immigration and Trade”, (University of Chicago, 1966)
- Lister, A. , “The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910: Its Diplomatic, Economic and Educational Aspects,” (London School of Economics, 2008)
- Matsusaka, Yoshihisa T, “Japanese Imperialism and the South Manchuria Railway Company,” (Harvard University, 1993)
- May, A., “The Round Table, 1910-66,” (University of Oxford, 1995)
- Mountford, B., "The Open Door Swings both Ways: Australia, China, and the British World System, c. 1770-1907," (University of Oxford, 2012)
- Prince, G., "The Yellow Peril in Britain," (McGill University, 1987)
- Tumblin, J., “The Widening Gyre: Security, Sovereignty, and the Making of Modern Statehood in the British Empire, 1898-1931,” (Boston College, 2016)

### **Presentations and Conference Proceedings**

Best, A., "Alliance in Parallel: the Rise and Fall of the Times's Love Affair with Japan, 1895-1922," read at the BIHG Annual Conference, Liverpool, Sept 2007.

Daniels, G., "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the British Press," read at International House, Tokyo, May 2002.

Nish, I., "Suematsu Kenchō: International Envoy to Wartime Europe," read at the Suntory and Toyota Centre, London, May 2005