

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

THE RACIAL EQUALITY PROPOSAL AT THE 1919 PARIS PEACE
CONFERENCE: JAPANESE MOTIVATIONS AND ANGLO-AMERICAN
RESPONSES

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HILARY TERM 1995

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations

This thesis contains 91,540 words



ABSTRACT

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This thesis is a study of the racial equality proposal at the Paris Peace Conference. It explores Japanese motivations for submitting the proposal, and the responses of the British and American governments which eventually defeated it. The thesis uses an analytical framework based on five categories of possible explanations for the proposal: immigration, universal principle, great power status, peace conference politics and bargaining, and domestic politics. The thrust of the analysis contained in the thesis is as follows. For Japan, the proposal meant three things: a means of reaffirming its great power status by securing racial equality with the western great powers in the League of Nations; a justification for Prime Minister Hara whose pro-League position was maintained by a fragile domestic consensus against sceptics in the government and the wider public; and a means of resolving Japanese immigration problems in the United States and British Dominions. But for Japan the proposal was not originally intended as a demand for universal racial equality. For Britain, the proposal was unacceptable because it meant "free immigration" of non-white immigrants into the Dominions. In particular, Australia adamantly opposed it also because of its political significance for Australian public opinion. For the United States, Wilson's determination to create the League of Nations at almost any cost led him to impose a unanimity ruling at the crucial vote on 11th April 1919. Other explanations worked in the background. The proposal highlighted the importance of the link between race and great power status for Japan, Japan's insecurity concerning the League of Nations and the West, and Japan's different approach to international relations. Moreover, the failure of the proposal revealed the limits of Wilsonian idealism in that neither Britain nor the United States at that time seriously considered the possibility of universal racial equality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my supervisors, Drs Andrew Hurrell and John Darwin, both of Nuffield College, Oxford for their unfailing support and advice. This thesis is an expansion of my M.Phil thesis submitted to the university in Trinity Term 1987. My M.Phil supervisor, Dr. Benedict Kingsbury, gave me many helpful comments and advice at the time. Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Banno Junji, Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo, whose intellectual energy as evidenced in his incisive and highly rigorous approach to political history of Japan has given me much intellectual stimulation. His generous encouragement in the early stages of this thesis was invaluable.

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INTRODUCTION

The principle of racial equality which was enshrined in the United Nations Charter as one of the fundamental principles of postwar international order, emerged for the first time in 1919 at the Paris Peace Conference. At the end of the First World War, the leaders of the world gathered at Paris to determine the future international order and to create the League of Nations, with the most notable new principle being the Wilsonian principle of self-determination. However, the whole peace process was complicated by the fact that underneath the surface of "new" diplomacy, there lay the methods and interests of the old, exercised fully by the great powers. It was in this international environment where contrary forces were at work that the Japanese government proposed that a racial equality clause be inserted into the covenant of the League of Nations. This event is significant on two counts. First, it was an aberration in Japanese foreign policy to have insisted on the acceptance of an international principle at a major international conference. Why did the Japanese government deviate from its traditional foreign policy orientation, ruled by pragmatic concerns? Second, the proposal was defeated by Britain and the United States as a principle unsuitable to be part of the covenant. Why was the racial equality principle not acceptable to the Anglo-Saxon powers in 1919? This study seeks to explain these two fundamental questions by analysing the motivations of the Japanese government and the responses of the British and American governments respectively.

The racial equality proposal was negotiated in the League of Nations Commission at the Paris Peace Conference from February to April 1919. It was

rejected twice, once on 13th February 1919 as an amendment to the religious freedom article, and for the second time on 11th April as an amendment to the preamble. The British Empire delegation took a consistent stance against the proposal because of the position taken by the British Dominions. The American delegation, in spite of showing initial support, changed its position in mid-March to concur with the British. The 11th April defeat was significant because President Wilson as chairman imposed a unanimity ruling even though the majority of the commission was in favour of the Japanese amendment. Then the Japanese still had the opportunity to present their case for the final time at the plenary session on the 28th April. However, they decided not to cause any controversy at this point and, instead, made a speech which simply summarised their attempt.

In order to have a systematic approach to examining the three countries, an overall analytical framework based on five categories of possible explanations will be used. These explanations provide a satisfactory coverage of all the possible factors which are necessary in analysing Japanese motivations and Anglo-American responses. The five explanations can be broadly categorised as follows: immigration, universal principle, great power status, peace conference politics and bargaining, and domestic politics. It is necessary to specify what the terms of each of these explanations are, and how they applied to each country. The analysis of all the explanations will show that no single explanation, but rather a combination of explanations is needed to understand the respective positions taken by Japan, Britain and the United States on the racial equality proposal.

First, there is the immigration explanation which would argue that the Japanese government had submitted the racial equality proposal to resolve the long

standing anti-Japanese immigration problems in the United States and the British Dominions. This was a pragmatic interpretation of the Japanese proposal which underlined how preoccupied the great powers were at the time with practical problems of immigration. In order to understand whether this had any part in explaining the Japanese motivations, it is necessary to investigate the link between the racial equality proposal and immigration in terms of how the proposal was formulated as a result of the perceived correlation between the two issues. In analysing how the explanation is applicable to the British position, it will be necessary first to understand why the proposal was interpreted by the British government as implying immigration, then why it was such an important issue for the British Dominions. Similarly, for the American position, an analysis will be made of the anti-Japanese immigration history in the United States, and how this affected the politics of immigration during the racial equality negotiation at the peace conference.

Immigration is the dominant explanation given in the existing literature on the racial equality proposal. Among Japanese scholars, the immigration factor is seen to explain the political origins of the racial equality proposal. For instance, Ikei Masaru argued that the proposal was intended to resolve the immigration problems.¹ Onuma was also led to conclude that the political origins of the proposal must have derived from the national interest in resolving anti-Japanese immigration problems.² It has

¹Ikei Masaru, "Pari heiwa kaigi to jinshu sabetsu teppai mondai" [The Paris Peace Conference and the Issue of Abolition of Racial Discrimination], Kokusai seiji Vol.23 (1962): 44-58.

²Onuma Yasuaki, "Haruka naru jinshu byôdô no risô" [The Distant Ideal of Racial Equality], Yasuaki Onuma ed., Kokusaihô, kokusai rengô to nihon [International Law, the United Nations and Japan], (Tokyo, 1987). This view is also shared by Mamiya Kunio in his "Okuma Shigenobu to jinshu sabetsu teppai mondai" [Okuma Shigenobu and the Issue of Abolition of Racial Discrimination], Waseda

been argued that the importance of immigration lay in its symbolic value and that the Japanese government wanted to resolve the immigration problems because that was seen as part of the "diplomacy of saving face" (*memmoku gaikô*).³ Fitzhardinge who discussed the racial equality proposal from the perspective of Australian Premier Billy Hughes, also discussed the proposal as an "immigration" proposal.⁴ In spite of its importance, however, this thesis will reveal that immigration was not the only explanation of the proposal but one of many both in terms of understanding the Japanese motivations, as well as the Anglo-American responses.

Second, there is the explanation which claims that the racial equality proposal was a demand of a universal principle of racial equality. This would argue that it was the intention of the Japanese government to use the peace conference as the opportunity of instituting formally the idea of universal racial equality which had been developing within Japanese foreign policy thinking. Accordingly, the proposal was an expression made by the Japanese government of their belief in the universal principle of racial equality of all peoples. In terms of analysing the Anglo-American responses, it would similarly argue that Britain and the United States perceived the Japanese proposal as demanding universal racial equality, and that the proposal was based on idealistic and altruistic motives.

daigakushi kiyô Vol.22 (1989): 213-237.

³According to Asada Sadao in Nichibei kankei to imin mondai [Japanese-American Relations and the Issue of Immigration], quoted from Nakanishi Hiroshi, "Konoe Fumimaro 'Eibei hon'i no heiwashugi o haisu' rombun no haikai" [Konoe Fumimaro: The Background to the Essay on "Abolish the Anglo-American Based Peace"], Hôgaku ronsô Vol.132 (March 1993), p.239, footnote 39.

⁴L.F.Fitzhardinge, William Morris Hughes: A Political Biography, 2 vols, (Sydney, 1964 and 1979).

This explanation, which appears to be the most obvious, is widely quoted in the literature especially amongst international relations writers. This is due to the fact that universal principles are considered to be an essential element of the study of the European expansion of international society.⁵ For instance, this is how the English School interpreted the Japanese proposal:

Japan proposed that the clause in the League of Nations Covenant providing for religious equality should be broadened to embrace racial equality. The principle of the equality of all men might have been taken to mean all men, yellow and even black, as well as white, but the consequences of such a doctrine for the domestic policies of the powers--the treatment of the negroes in the United States, the "White Australian policy"--militated against its acceptance.⁶

Another scholar went even further on similar grounds to claim that it was a "human rights" proposal.⁷ Ikei argues that Japan, as one of five great powers, attempted to represent the interests of the yellow race through the proposal.⁸ What is attempted in this study is to gain an insight into how Japan, Britain and the United States approached the racial equality proposal as a demand of principle. The analysis of the proposal will suggest that the racial equality proposal of 1919, in spite of these assumptions and extrapolations, was not really about universal racial equality. In this sense, it will concur with the view of Onuma that the racial equality proposal was not about universal racial equality but an interesting case whereby Japan seemingly took an important international initiative to change the existing international order without

⁵Hedley Bull and Adam Watson ed., The Expansion of International Society, (Oxford, 1984).

⁶Ibid., p.245.

⁷Paul Gordon Lauren, Power and Prejudice: The Politics and Diplomacy of Racial Discrimination, (Boulder, 1988), p.84.

⁸Ikei, op. cit., p.57.

ever having the awareness or the intention of doing so.⁹

The third explanation claims that the racial equality proposal was motivated by Japan's insecurity as a non-white great power and its desire to "secure" its great power status in the future international organisation. It introduces a new element into the criteria for what constituted "great power" because what the Japanese attempted to do was to claim great power equality on the basis of racial equality. This explanation suggests that the basic criteria of great power status identified by the English School of Martin Wight and Hedley Bull may have been too Eurocentric in its assumptions.¹⁰ It will argue that Japan, coming from the non-western tradition, had a different agenda in submitting the proposal deriving from a different perspective on international relations. In seeking an explanation for the Anglo-American responses, the thesis examines whether or not the British and American governments respectively regarded the proposal as an attempt made by the Japanese to assert their great power status at the peace conference.

In the existing literature, this explanation has been suggested by Russell Fifield that the Japanese wanted to establish their position definitively as a great power and hence the proposal was a sincere manifestation of this desire.¹¹ Fifield argues that Japan had wanted to establish its status by submitting a proposal such as universal

⁹Onuma, op. cit., p.477.

¹⁰There are four criteria suggested by Hedley Bull and Martin Wight which are military strength, having general interests, the recognition by others of having the status of great power, and self-imposed role as managers of the international system in conjunction with other great powers. Martin Wight, Power Politics, (Leicester, 1978), p.46, p.50; Hedley Bull, The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in International Politics, (London, 1977), pp.201-202, p.207.

¹¹R.H.Fifield, Woodrow Wilson and the Far East: The Diplomacy of the Shantung Question, (New York, 1952).

racial equality which would be commensurate with its great power status. Onuma examined Japan's historical experience as a non-white great power, and while he seems to imply that great power status was an important factor, he did not specifically refer to it as a category.¹² Overall, there has not been enough serious consideration given to this explanation, possibly because this factor appeared more implicit than explicit. This study will emphasise great power status as an important analytical factor in explaining the Japanese motivations.

Fourthly, there is the peace conference politics and bargaining explanation which claims that the proposal was used as part of the politics of bargaining to achieve other ends at the peace conference. This is a *realpolitik* view of the proposal. Applied to Japan, this would argue that the government had concocted the proposal specifically in order to use it to obtain other concessions, namely the former German territories of Shantung and the Pacific islands north of the equator. In applying this to the Anglo-American responses, there are two levels of explanation. The first is whether or not Britain and the United States suspected the Japanese government of having deliberately constructed the proposal as a political ploy to obtain Shantung. This argument, known as the "bargaining chip" theory, was one of the key interpretations given to the proposal by the contemporaries in the American delegation at Paris.¹³ The second level of this explanation argues that the British and Americans used their opposition to the proposal to obtain other ends at the peace

¹²Onuma, op. cit.

¹³See for instance, Robert Lansing's The Peace Negotiations: A Personal Narrative, (London, 1921); also R.L.Buell, "The Development of the Anti-Japanese Agitation in the United States II," Political Science Quarterly Vol.38 no.2 (March 1923): 57-81.

conference. In particular, this introduces a completely new perspective on the American position by suggesting that President Wilson used his opposition to the proposal indirectly to attain his objective of establishing the League of Nations.

Fifthly, the domestic politics explanation would argue that it is necessary to understand the proposal in relation to the domestic political constraints of the respective countries. Since the category of domestic politics is too wide, we shall focus on the aspect which had a direct relevance to the racial equality proposal. In the case of Japan, the explanation would argue that the proposal was related to the domestic politics surrounding the League of Nations, and more precisely, Prime Minister Hara's pro-League politics. In dealing with Japan, the explanation will be sub-divided into two categories; one explaining League politics at the official governmental level, and the other at the wider public level. In the case of Britain, it will argue that the domestic or internal politics of British-Dominion relations had a role in explaining the British position. Because immigration was perceived to be an internal political issue of the Dominions, it has been considered best to amalgamate the two explanations of immigration and domestic politics in analysing the British position, instead of having them as two separate categories. As for the Americans, the explanation will argue that domestic partisan politics as manifested in the anti-League and anti-Wilson movement in the United States had a role in explaining the American position.

Although the response of the Japanese public to the racial equality proposal has been analysed in the Japanese works¹⁴, the domestic political explanation, especially in terms of the governmental response to the League of Nations, has been

¹⁴Onuma, *op. cit.*; Nakanishi, *op. cit.*; Mamiya, *op. cit.*

largely overlooked. This study will argue that this domestic political factor was important in understanding the Japanese government's attitude to the League of Nations and concomitantly the racial equality proposal which came as part and parcel of its League policy. For the American response, it will suggest that, contrary to the interpretation that President Wilson was affected by the domestic anti-Wilson lobby which resulted in him changing his attitude towards the racial equality proposal,¹⁵ the domestic political factor was not as decisive as it seemed.

At this juncture, it may be necessary to explain why the decision was made to leave out of the thesis a discussion of the responses of the other great powers namely France and Italy and concentrate on Britain and the United States. Admittedly, it would be an interesting contrast to include France and Italy because of their support for the proposal. For instance, France declared in the 11th April session that it was impossible not to accept the Japanese proposal because it was "an indisputable principle of justice".¹⁶ The French were sympathetic to Japanese proposal because they perceived it as a demand of universal principle, and saw hypocrisy in the American determination to create the League of Nations based on international justice whilst refusing racial equality on the grounds of anti-Japanese immigration.¹⁷ The Italians, represented in the League of Nations Commission by Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando, were similarly supportive of the racial equality proposal mainly because its spirit was perceived as in "harmony" with the new

¹⁵Onuma, op. cit., pp.450-451.

¹⁶25th July 1919, Annales de la Chambre des Députés: Débats Parlementaires: 11me Législature; D.H.Miller, The Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.2, (New York, 1928), p.390.

¹⁷29th August 1919, Annales, op. cit.

organisation.¹⁸ Although France and Italy supported the Japanese proposal at the 11th April ruling, they were "uncommitted" supporters as the British and Americans were "committed" opponents. Therefore, the degree of their interest in the issue throughout the negotiation was marginal, and this is reflected in the amount of material available on the topic, both in terms of primary and secondary sources. Moreover, the fact that Japan considered Britain and the United States to be the two key western powers in this period, especially after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, implies that we could gain more insight by focusing on the Anglo-American responses.

Hence, it was considered best to leave out the Italian and French response as it would not have been possible to give them the same coverage and depth of analysis as the Anglo-Saxon opponents. Needless to say, some materials on the French and Italian perspectives have been incorporated whenever appropriate. Similarly, the Chinese reactions to the proposal have also been incorporated whenever appropriate.

In terms of the layout, the thesis is informally divided into two parts. The first part, comprising the first four chapters, explains the Japanese motivations on the racial equality proposal. The second part explains the responses of Britain and the United States respectively. The first part will attempt to reconstruct the Japanese case by analysing the five categories of explanations through a chronological analysis of the racial equality proposal. Chapter One provides a background to Japan as an emerging non-white great power in the late nineteenth century up to the eve of the Paris Peace Conference. The early period is covered thematically by delineating the salient characteristics of Japanese foreign policy. This is followed by a more detailed

¹⁸Miller, *op. cit.*, p.390.

analysis of Japan's involvement in the First World War. This chapter attempts to draw attention to the unresolved state of Japan's international position and the accompanying insecurity which Japan felt vis-a-vis the western powers. Therefore, it functions as the background to the explanation of Japan's great power status. The second chapter analyses the political origins of the proposal in the Hara government in late 1918 by looking at the decision making structure in the government and how the racial equality proposal became part of its peace policy. This chapter analyses, in turn, the applicability of the explanations of great power status, domestic politics and universal principle as motivating factors for the government. The result is that the two explanations of great power status and Hara's pro-League politics are considered to have some ground whereas the universal principle explanation does not seem relevant.

In Chapter Three, we examine the international negotiation of racial equality at the Paris Peace Conference. A detailed chronological analysis of the negotiation with the British Empire delegation and the United States will be given, which focuses much on the interpretation of the proposal as pertaining to immigration. One of the main results of the chapter is that the racial equality proposal was perceived to have been about immigration precisely because of the bureaucratic interest of the Japanese Foreign Ministry. This chapter will also illuminate the problems in Japanese diplomacy over the racial equality negotiation such as the lack of a coherent strategy on the part of Tokyo in pursuing the negotiation, as well as a discrepancy between the positions taken by Tokyo and the plenipotentiaries in Paris. Moreover, it will illustrate that the explanation that the government constructed the proposal as part of politics of bargaining at the peace conference did not hold ground. Finally, in

Chapter Four, an analysis of Japanese public opinion is made, the key actors being the pressure groups, the broadsheets and intellectuals. This chapter will show that the Hara government's pro-League position ran against the prevailing view of the wider public which remained more pan-Asian and sceptical of the League. In any case, the point will be made that the intensity of public interest in Japan had made public opinion a domestic factor, putting considerable pressure on the government to succeed at the peace conference over the racial equality issue.

The second part of the thesis dealing with the Anglo-American responses will proceed systematically by applying the framework of the five categories of explanations. In Chapter Five, the British government's response will be analysed in terms of its understanding of the proposal as relating to Japan's insecurity as great power, as universal principle, and as peace conference politics and bargaining. It will show that though the great power explanation had a minor role in understanding the British position, the other two explanations did not play a role. In Chapter Six, the combined immigration and domestic politics factor within the British Empire delegation will be analysed in detail. First, it will be examined why the British government, having interpreted the proposal as implying immigration, decided to refer the proposal to the British Dominions. Then a detailed analysis will be made of the reasons why the British Dominions, and especially Australia opposed the proposal by looking at the history of anti-Japanese immigration policies in the Dominions, as well as the Australian perception of Japan as a threat.

In Chapters Seven and Eight, the American position will be analysed. It will become clear that there were two levels within the American position. One was the position held by the American peace commissioners and the public; and the other was

Wilson's personal position. In Chapter Seven, an attempt will be made to analyse the explanations of great power status, universal principle, domestic politics, and immigration. We shall discover that apart from the universal principle factor, the other three did have some role in explaining the American position. However, it will become clear that they acted in the background because of the hierarchical structure of decision making adopted by President Wilson which effectively marginalised every other perspective but his own. In Chapter Eight, we shall look at the two aspects of the explanation based on peace conference politics and bargaining. Firstly, the "bargaining chip" theory expounded by some of the American peace commissioners who took the view that the Japanese government had concocted the proposal as a political instrument to gain Shantung. Then, we look at the most important explanation which is that President Wilson used the proposal to appease the British in order to attain his own primary objective, the establishment of the League of Nations.

As an historical study, the thesis relies heavily on primary sources. Japanese primary sources were extensively consulted both in the published and unpublished forms at the Diplomatic Record Office in Tokyo, the National Diet Library, and at the University of Tokyo. For the British primary sources, the Public Record Office was consulted for official materials, and House of Lords Record Office, British Library, Bodleian Library, University of Cambridge Library for private papers. For American sources, the National Archives in Washington D.C. for official documents, and the Library of Congress, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library at Princeton University, Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, and Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Columbia University were consulted for private papers. In

addition, published primary sources in the form of memoirs and diaries were extensively consulted as well as secondary source materials in both Japanese and English languages. In accordance with normal Japanese practice, Japanese names have been rendered with the family name preceding the given name; and wherever possible, my own translation of titles of Japanese sources have been provided. Also, some key Japanese words have been used in the text in order to give more accurate nuances but in such cases, the English equivalents are provided in parenthesis.

The significance of the racial equality proposal lies in what it reveals both about Japan and the nature of international society of 1919.

CHAPTER 1 JAPAN'S EMERGENCE AS A GREAT POWER

The purpose of this chapter is to "set the scene" for the rise of the racial equality proposal in 1918 by illustrating the unresolved nature of Japan's international position and how this affected its confidence as a great power. We shall delineate the relevant themes in Japan's foreign relations in the preceding periods, first in the Meiji period (1868-1912), followed by a more detailed political analysis of Japan's involvement in the First World War. It will become clear that as Japan gradually consolidated its great power status in the Meiji period, its interests were geographically confined to East Asia, as opposed to the western great powers whose interests were truly global.¹ In order to understand how Japan's foreign relations were perceived domestically, it is necessary to look at the development of two main perspectives--*ajia shugi* (pan-Asian) and *datsu-A ron* (escape Asia)--in foreign policy debates which were used extensively to explain or justify Japan's policy in East Asia. We shall discover that Japan was historically sensitive about the racial aspect of its international identity as seen in the prominence of *jinshuron* (racial discourse) in foreign policy debates. The analysis of Japan's policy in the First World War will suggest that Japan was becoming increasingly isolated due to its expansionist policy in China which antagonised both Britain and the United States. This chapter will show that in spite of its overtly imperialist foreign policy, Japan often felt insecure vis-a-vis the western powers about its position as a non-white great power.

¹In today's terms, what was then Japan's position would be best described by the term, "regional" great power. However, such a term did not exist at the time.

PART I: THEMES IN JAPAN'S FOREIGN RELATIONS PRE-1914

As a background to understanding Japan's involvement in the First World War and the subsequent participation at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, it is necessary albeit very briefly to give some account of Japan's foreign relations in the period before 1914. This study seeks to do this by delineating the salient features of Japan's foreign relations in the Meiji period (1868-1912). Broadly speaking, three general themes in Japanese foreign policy in this period will be discussed below: first, foreign policy based on pragmatism; second, the intense preoccupation with East Asia but particularly with the control over Korea which influenced Japan's relations with China and Russia; third, the extensive use of East-West debate, that is, *ajia shugi* (Asia-orientated or pan-Asian) versus *datsu-A ron* (escape Asia) axis in foreign policy debates to explain or to justify Japan's policy in East Asia.

The Early Days of Japan's Foreign Relations

Japan's history of foreign relations in the modern period has been relatively short. Japan experienced over two hundred years of self-imposed isolation (*sakoku*) from 1636 to 1853 when Commodore Perry demanded the Tokugawa shogunate to open up the country (*kaikoku*).² Subsequently, Japan signed a series of "unequal" treaties with the United States in March 1854, Britain in August and Russia in October of the same year, and France and the Netherlands in 1855.³ One of the major tasks of the Meiji government after 1868 was to revise these unequal treaties

²In this period, only the Dutch and the Chinese were allowed to trade with the Japanese in Nagasaki, and the Koreans were allowed to send envoys to Japan.

³Tokyo daigaku kyôyô gakubu nihonshi kenkyûshitsu ed., Nihonshi gaisetsu [An Outline of Japanese History], (Tokyo, 1985), p.150, pp.185-186.

in order to improve Japan's position in relation to the western powers. Therefore, Japanese foreign policy in the immediate post-Restoration era was driven by a pragmatic objective of unequal treaties revision.⁴ It is well known that the Iwakura Mission⁵ had confirmed how backward Japan was in comparison to Europe and the United States and concluded that the urgent national imperative should be to modernise and westernise the country as fast as possible in order to catch-up with the West. This led to the emergence of the Meiji slogans of "wealthy nation, strong army" (*fukoku kyôhei*), "civilisation and enlightenment" (*bummei kaika*), and "encouraging industry" (*shokusan kôgyô*), all of which were regarded as the central tenets of Japan's national independence.⁶ Naturally, the crucial importance of state building through modernisation to maintain and strengthen Japan's national independence was also applied to Japan's foreign relations. This meant that Japan's general thrust in foreign policy in this period became the protection of Japan's national independence from other great powers. Pursuit of pragmatic concerns and concrete goals came to characterise Japanese foreign policy which lacked an ideological backbone.⁷

⁴After several unsuccessful attempts at treaty revision from 1878 onwards, the Japanese government finally managed to sign an Anglo-Japanese treaty for commerce and navigation in 1894, and similar treaties were soon signed by the other powers.

⁵The Iwakura Mission (1871-1873) which toured twelve European countries and the United States as a preparatory step to treaty revision, was headed by Iwakura Tomomi, and included other notable Meiji leaders such as Itô Hirobumi.

⁶For an excellent study of the role of ideology in Meiji Japan, consult Carol Gluck, Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period, (Princeton, 1985).

⁷Iriye calls this "*mu-shisô no gaikô*". Iriye Akira, Nihon no gaikô: Meiji ishin kara gendai made [Japanese Foreign Policy: From the Meiji Restoration to the Present], (Tokyo, 1966), p.27.

What did Japan mean by protecting national independence? Until the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, two external forces were perceived to have threatened Japan's existence in East Asia. One was China and the other was the West (*ôbei*). The threat from the western powers before 1894 was more symbolic than real, since Japan was not under an immediate physical threat from these powers, as China had been. However, it was inevitable that Japan should feel deeply threatened by the destructive force of western imperialism in China, which offered a living example of what could happen to itself, should it not succeed in convincing the western great powers of its national independence. Whilst the symbolic threat of the West loomed in the background, Japan was more immediately concerned with China. Japan's perception of China was influenced by two conflicting factors. On the one hand, Japan was wary of China because of the myth that China was a "sleeping lion"; a myth which survived until China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War.⁸ The fact that Japan continued to hold China in high regard, owing to the historical greatness of Chinese civilisation, was an underlying factor in the generally cautious attitude shown towards China. On the other hand, China had shown itself incapable of rapid modernisation which cast a shadow over Japan's assessment of China as an equal partner in East Asia.

Having said that, why should Japan's national independence have been threatened by the Chinese and the West if they posed no imminent, direct threat? This was due to the Japanese perception that the "independence" of Korea, meaning that the control of Korea should not be in Chinese or Russian hands, was crucial to

⁸A.M.Pooley, The Secret Memoirs of Count Tadasu Hayashi, (London, 1915), p.292.

Japan's national independence. It is true that if Korea were to fall into the hands of a western great power, namely Russia, at the time the only western power interested in occupying Korea, then the physical proximity of Russia to Japan would unquestioningly pose a national security threat for Japan. In this sense, when the Japanese referred to the "western" threat in this period, it was often a generic term used to imply specifically a Russian threat to Korea.⁹ However, Japan's concern over Korea's independence was not altruistic either. Japan was intensely interested in having control over Korea¹⁰, and this conflicted with China's suzerain control over it. This was why there remained a high degree of tension in the Sino-Japanese relationship until China indirectly recognised Japan's special interest in Korea in the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895. The future of Korea and the associated power political relationship between China and Japan occupied the greater part of Japan's foreign policy debates in this period. In fact, the centrality of the Korean question in the Meiji period is a testimony to the beginnings of expansionist thinking (*bôchôshugi*) in Japanese foreign policy. This, in turn, demonstrates how narrowly based Japanese foreign policy interests were, even in East Asia.

The East-West Debate in Foreign Policy

⁹On the general level, the "western" threat implied the force of western imperialism globally (eg. the British in Egypt, etc.) which was a more "abstract" threat as far as Japan was concerned.

¹⁰Towards the end of the Tokugawa shogunate, there was a prominent group who favoured an invasion of Korea (*seikanron*). This idea did not die with the end of Edo period but was carried into the new era when it was debated with a renewed vigour. The idea was quashed in 1873 by the Iwakura Mission which had just returned from the West and over-ruled the *seikanron* group by insisting that domestic priorities of modernisation and westernisation should come before invading Korea.

As mentioned above, Japan lacked an ideological (*shisôteki*) framework of foreign policy, which meant that the government's policy was based on achieving pragmatic, concrete objectives. In order to make some ideological sense out of foreign policy, particularly as it related to Japan's "unjustified" interest in Korea, there developed a tendency domestically to justify or to explain such foreign policy in terms of one of two competing perspectives on foreign policy, namely *ajia shugi* (pan-Asian) and *datsu-A ron* (escape-Asia). Basically, *ajia shugi* saw Japan's place as being in Asia, and *datsu-A ron* saw it as being in the West. There were many subtle variations of *ajia shugi* and *datsu-A ron*.¹¹

Commonly, *ajia shugi* and *datsu-A ron* were used to explain the changing pattern of Japan's foreign policy debates which evolved to adjust to the changing political situation in East Asia. For instance, the development of the two perspectives can be lineally explained as follows.¹² In the early days of Meiji, *nisshin teikeiron* (Sino-Japanese coalition) flourished. Japan sought to align with China because it was perceived that their shared cultural background and a long bilateral historical association made China the most natural "ally" of Japan, to protect jointly their

¹¹For instance, *nisshin kyôchôron* (Sino-Japanese cooperation), *nisshin dômeiron* (Sino-Japanese solidarity), *nisshin teikeiron* (Sino-Japanese coalition), *ajia rentairon* (Asian solidarity), *shinkoku kaizôron* (reform China), *shinkan kaizôron* (reform China and Korea), *chôsen kaizôron* (reform Korea), *ajia kaizôron* (reform Asia) come under the umbrella of *ajia shugi*; and *tairiku shinshutsuron* (continental expansion), *ôbei kyôchôron* (cooperation with the West) come under *datsu-A ron*. It seems that the difference between the number of ways in which *ajia shugi* can be expressed, compared to *datsu-A ron*, is indicative of the importance of identification with Asia in Japanese foreign policy debates in the Meiji period.

¹²This is representative of Oka's analysis. See Oka Yoshitake, "Kokuminteki dokuritsu to kokka risei" [National Independence and Rationality of the State], *Kindai nihon shisôshi kôza: Sekai no naka no nihon* [Modern Japanese Thought: Japan in the World], Vol.8, (Tokyo, 1961).

national independence from the West. However, as China failed to modernise rapidly, Japan began to lose confidence in the former as its equal partner. So, a shift in attitude occurred, from one of mutual respect, to one more critical of China's incapacity to fight against western imperialism. Japan sought increasingly to "reform" China, in order to help it become more modernised and westernised, like Japan, because it was perceived by the Japanese to be the only conceivable way of countering the western threat. This is known as *shinkoku kaizôron* (reform China) or *ajia kaizôron* (reform Asia). Both *nisshin teikeiron* (Sino-Japanese coalition) and *shinkoku kaizôron* (reform China) attempted to find a framework for cooperation with China against the West albeit with different emphases. Nonetheless, *shinkoku kaizôron* was abandoned eventually when it was perceived that Japan was being disadvantaged by its association with "backward" countries like China and Korea because the western great powers would likely confuse Japan with them. It became imperative for Japan to escape from Asia (*datsu-A ron*) and join the West, because it was already there in spirit, having modernised and westernised. The "escape-Asia" perspective has been attributed especially to a preeminent Meiji thinker, Fukuzawa Yukichi¹³, who formalised the idea in his ground-breaking article, "*Datsu-A ron*" published in 1885.¹⁴ This linear interpretation of the evolution of foreign policy

¹³Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901) was a preeminent thinker and educator of the Meiji period. His visits to the United States in 1860 and Europe in 1866 led to the publication of an enormously influential work, *Seiyô jijô* [Conditions in the West] in 1868. He was an ardent advocate of modernisation and westernisation as preached in his *Bummeiron no gairyaku* [An Outline of the Theory of Civilisation] in 1875 and through a vast range of influential books, articles and pamphlets. He founded Keiô University and established *Jiji shimpô* in 1882.

¹⁴Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Fukuzawa Yukichi zenshû* [Complete Works of Fukuzawa Yukichi], Vol.10, (Tokyo, 1959-1960), pp.221-224.

debates points towards Japan's inevitable "graduation" from an Asian to a western nation.

However, it has been said that too much reliance on the *ajia shugi* versus *datsu-A ron* axis as an explanation of Japanese foreign policy is problematic for a number of reasons. According to Banno Junji, it is historically inaccurate to take these two dominant perspectives of foreign policy at face value as "schools of thought" because they were essentially "expressions" (*hyôgen*) of the "understanding" (*ninshiki*) of "reality" (*genjitsu*) held by those who were engaged in foreign policy debates.¹⁵ Therefore, *ajia shugi* and *datsu-A ron* were not necessarily concrete reflections of the reality to which they were being referred. In analysing how some of the prominent Meiji thinkers and politicians used these two "expressions", Banno concludes that they were used to explain the same policy or situation at different times depending on the degree of perceived tension in the Sino-Japanese relationship.¹⁶ Fukuzawa Yukichi mentioned in the preceding paragraph provides an interesting example. Banno states that although it is generally understood that Fukuzawa used his famous "*Datsu-A ron*" (escape Asia) article in 1885 to promote a new direction in Japan's East Asia policy due to Japan's disillusionment with the weakness of China, in reality it was a well-camouflaged justification of why Japan gave up temporarily its interest in Korea, having witnessed the impressive strength of Chinese forces which successfully quashed the pro-Japanese uprising in Korea in

¹⁵See his introductory chapter especially pages 12-16 in Meiji: Shisô no jitsuzô [Meiji: The Real Image of Thought], (Tokyo, 1977).

¹⁶After Russia's invasion into Manchuria in 1900, the source of tension in the Sino-Japanese relationship expanded to include Manchuria which was now regarded to be crucial to Japan's national independence. Ibid., p.172.

1884.¹⁷ This challenges the established understanding that *datsu-A ron* was synonymous with *tairiku shinshutsuron*¹⁸ (continental expansion), at least as far as Fukuzawa's precise usage of the term was concerned. Banno argues that in this particular instance, *datsu-A ron* actually indicated a heightened sense of apprehension felt towards China and a corresponding decline in the desire to expand on the continent. The most important message in Banno's work is that *ajia shugi* and *datsu-A ron* should not be treated as schools of thought or ideology because this would lead to misunderstanding and misrepresenting history. Basically, these two "expressions" catered to the need, felt by the Meiji leaders, to find justifications for Japan's newly found continental expansionist tendency, which the indigenous value system (*nihonteki kachikan*) had failed to provide.¹⁹ Therefore, Fukuzawa and others sought to justify it either as a reaction against western imperialism (*ajia shugi*) or as a positive response to western imperialism (*datsu-A ron*) in East Asia.

From the Sino-Japanese War to Russo-Japanese War

The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 were a culmination of tension between Japan and the two traditional external forces,

¹⁷Fukuzawa was also disillusioned by the anti-Japanese riots in Korea in 1883. These two events in 1882 and 1884 had convinced Fukuzawa of temporarily shelving Japan's interest in Korea. Ibid., p.53. Oka also mentions that China became Japan's hypothetical enemy after 1883. Oka, op. cit., p.24.

¹⁸Generally, it is understood that *datsu-A ron* enabled Japan to act as a western power and treat China and Korea from a position of strength. Before 1895, however, it was mostly hypothetical as Japan had yet to prove that it was entitled to perceive itself as a member of the West.

¹⁹Banno, op. cit., pp.16-19.

China and Russia.²⁰ The years between 1895 and 1905 can be seen as Japan's first decade of western-style imperialism. This decade also witnessed increasing tension between Japan and Russia, which now replaced China as the greatest threat to Japan's interest in Korea and, increasingly, Manchuria. Furthermore, there continued to be those who favoured the *ajia shugi* type of policy towards China, in spite of the resoluteness with which the government abided by the *datsu-A* path in foreign policy by participating in the game of western imperialism.

The Sino-Japanese War had strengthened Japan's position vis-a-vis China in a number of ways but also exposed Japan's isolated position as a great power. In terms of Japan's gains, China acknowledged the "independence" of Korea which meant that Japan now had *de facto* informal control over Korea.²¹ This was obviously a great source of satisfaction for the Japanese whose expansionist desire for Korea was finally realised, concurrently removing a long standing source of tension in the Sino-Japanese relationship. The acquisition of Formosa was another factor which strengthened Japan's position relative to China. Japan was also promised the Liaotung Peninsula, but this failed to materialise, due to the Triple Intervention of Russia, Germany and France in the immediate aftermath of the war. The greatest

²⁰There are numerous studies on these two wars. For the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, consult, for example, Mutsu Munemitsu, Kenkenroku: A Diplomatic Record of the Sino-Japanese War, 1894-1895, ed. by G.M.Berger, (Tokyo, 1982) and Fujimura Michio, Nisshin sensô: Higashi ajia kindaiishi no tenkanten [The Sino-Japanese War: A Turning Point in the Modern History of East Asia], (Tokyo, 1973); for the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, Shinobu Seizaburô ed., Nichiro sensôshi no kenkyû [A Study of the Russo-Japanese War], (Tokyo, 1959) and I.H.Nish, The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War, (London, 1985).

²¹Japan gradually absorbed Korea after 1904 starting from signing a protocol in February 1904, then three successive agreements in August 1904, November 1905, and July 1907, culminating with annexation in August 1910.

impact of the Triple Intervention on Japan was undoubtedly psychological. Japan was publicly humiliated by being denied one of the fruits of victory in the face of a threat made jointly by the three European powers. Japan learnt two painful lessons from this experience. First, Japan needed to build up the military rapidly in order to strengthen its standing among the western great powers.²² Second, Japan should never again be isolated internationally from other great powers.²³ According to the then Foreign Minister Mutsu, Japan failed to obtain assistance from Britain and the United States during the crisis because of its political isolation from the great powers in East Asia.²⁴ Henceforth, the government consciously tried to "cooperate with the West" (*ôbei kyôchô*) and operate within the western great power framework, that is, western imperialism, especially in the light of the fact that Japan had symbolically turned its back on Asia by imposing an unequal treaty on China (and earlier on Korea in 1876). This symbolic act against China was repeated when Japan played a major part in quashing the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 as one of the western great powers. In this sense, the Sino-Japanese War had symbolised Japan's "escape" from Asia.

The years between the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars was a period of consolidation of Japan's status as an imperial power in East Asia. Japan was no longer concerned about China, but Russia. In 1897, Russia occupied Dairen and Port Arthur on the Liaotung Peninsula. This was followed by a Russian invasion into Manchuria proper in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion. The Russian threat became more imminent by these two successive manoeuvrings, leading to the rise of

²²Mutsu, op. cit., p.250.

²³Pooley, op. cit., p.81.

²⁴Mutsu, op. cit., pp.212-213.

the "advance north" debate (*hokushinron*) which demanded that both Korea and Manchuria should come under Japanese control. The only way for Japan to counter effectively the Russian threat was to form an alliance with another western power as a counterbalance in East Asia. Hence, Britain became the object of Japan's policy of "cooperation with the West" (*ôbei kyôchô*) and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance²⁵ was signed in 1902. The aim of the alliance was to maintain the *status quo* in the Far East and to preserve the territorial integrity of China and Korea.²⁶ There was euphoria in Japan over the signing because it not only relieved the "inferiority complex" which the Japanese had been harbouring since the Triple Intervention but also enhanced Japan's international prestige.²⁷ For Britain, it was a pragmatic arrangement whereby "...the burden of *Pax Britannica*...could be shared with another power."²⁸ Japan, feeling secure in the thought that the alliance would protect it from international isolation, clashed with Russia in 1904-5.

Within Japan, there was a gradual shift in the thinking of those in the public

²⁵For an authoritative study of the alliance, consult I.H.Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires 1894-1907, (London, 1966) and Alliance in Decline: A Study in Anglo-Japanese Relations 1908-1923, (London, 1972).

²⁶It "recognised the independence of China and Korea, and the special interests therein of Great Britain and Japan respectively; and bound themselves to maintain strict neutrality in the event of either of them being involved in war, and to come to one another's assistance in the event of either of them being confronted by the opposition of more than one hostile Power," quoted from the Paris Peace Conference Handbook on Japan prepared under the direction of the historical section of the Foreign Office, March 1919, PRO FO 373/4/15, p 81.

²⁷Nish, Anglo-Japanese Alliance, p.372; Oka, *op. cit.*, pp.37-38; Makino Nobuaki, Kaikoroku [Reminiscences], Vol.1, (Tokyo, 1978), p.246.

²⁸Nish, Anglo-Japanese Alliance, p.1. Britain's perspective on the alliance will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 5.

(*minkan*) who continued to support the *ajia shugi* (pan-Asian) type of policy towards China after 1895. It has been suggested that the rise of a more nationalistic *ajia shugi* reflected public dissatisfaction with the government's overly pragmatic approach to foreign policy.²⁹ The supporters of *ajia shugi* increasingly demanded a more moralistic, sentimental basis for justifying the government's imperial diplomacy, which would have an appeal on grounds other than the pursuit of national interests. There was a rise in the number of ultra-nationalist groups such as Genyôsha (Dark Ocean Association) and Kokuryûkai (Amur River Association) which demanded that Japan act as "leader of Asia" (*Tôa no meishu*). Konoe Atsumaro³⁰, one of the influential figures in the pan-Asian movement who pushed for *shinkoku kaizôron* (reform China) through his Tôa dôbunkai (East Asia Common Script Association), advocated the "preservation of China" (*shina hozen*) from the western powers. However, this slogan was a convenient cloak for hiding an increasingly more imperialistic ambition of controlling Manchuria, especially after the Russians occupied it in 1900.³¹ In 1898, Konoe called for solidarity of the same race (*dôjinshu dômeiron*) between the Japanese and Chinese to fight against the white race on the grounds that East Asia would ultimately become a theatre for rivalry between the white and yellow races.³² These right-wing supporters of *ajia shugi* attempted to

²⁹Iriye, op. cit., p.28, pp.42-43.

³⁰Konoe Atsumaro (1863-1904) was a Meiji politician, an influential figure in the early pan-Asian movement as head of Tôa dôbunkai and Kokumin dômeikai (Association of National Solidarity) with Inukai Tsuyoshi and the ultra right-wing activist, Tôyama Mitsuru (leader of Genyôsha).

³¹Banno, op. cit., p.107, pp.116-117.

³²Ibid., p.85.

justify Japan's continental expansion into Korea and Manchuria as its prerogative as "leader of Asia". Clearly, this shift in pan-Asianism reflected the changing balance of power in East Asia after 1895, as revealed by both Japan's victory over China in 1895 and the increasing threat from Russia.

From the Russo-Japanese War to the First World War

The Russo-Japanese War was a watershed. The western powers could no longer doubt that Japan was a significant imperialist player in East Asia. The Japanese victory over Russia had a substantial impact in changing both Japan's self-perception and the western powers' perception of Japan as an Asian great power. This period was marked by two factors: first, Japan's preoccupation with protecting its spheres of interest from Russia and China; second, the increasing prominence of *jinshuron* (racial discourse) as a feature of Japan's external identity, and its relationship with the more chauvinistic *ajia shugi* (pan-Asian) perspective in foreign policy debates.

The victory in the Russo-Japanese War had established Japan's position as great power in East Asia, according to the western definition of the term, by demonstrating militarily its capacity to confront and defeat a traditional European power, Russia.³³ Territorially, Japan gained the Liaotung Peninsula which was denied to it by the Triple Intervention led by Russia in 1895. Thus, the war had managed to secure for Japan its long held territorial ambitions of controlling Korea and the southern part of Manchuria. However, due to its increasing prominence as

³³Martin Wight, Power Politics, (Leicester, 1978), p.46; Hedley Bull, The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics, (London, 1977), p.201.

an imperialist power in East Asia, Japan became increasingly conscious of its position among the other great powers and began to feel diplomatically isolated.³⁴ What was worrying was that this sense of insecurity was developing despite the fact that Japan was fully following a *datsu-A, ôbei kyôchô* (cooperation with the West) path in foreign policy. There were a number of external reasons for Japan's uneasiness about its international position. First of all, Japan's position in East Asia had become generally more complicated due to the involvement of more powers in its security arrangements. For instance, the defeat of Russia was only a temporary respite: there was now pressure on Japan to protect the Liaotung Peninsula both from Russia and China, especially as the Chinese began to insist on claiming back the territory.³⁵ In order to safeguard its sphere of interest, the Japanese government negotiated the Russo-Japanese and Franco-Japanese agreements in 1907. Secondly, the rising trend of nationalism in China sowed the seeds of instability in the region. The 1911 revolution in China had two paradoxical implications for Japan.³⁶ On the one hand, the revolution indirectly posed a threat to Japan's national independence by destabilising its relationship with the Chinese government. On the other hand, the fact that there was a political turmoil in China fuelled Japan's expansionist desire for further continental expansion. This is evidenced in the change in attitude of some political and military leaders increasingly towards *ajia shugi*, an attitude which they had historically manifested when it was perceived that Japan could "take advantage

³⁴This is what Iriye calls "*shukanteki gaikô koritsukan*" (the subjective feeling of diplomatic isolation) in op. cit., pp.49-50.

³⁵Banno, op. cit., p.124.

³⁶Oka, op. cit., p.47.

of China" in the latter's moments of weakness. For example, Yamagata Aritomo³⁷ who had shown a *datsu-A* inclination in his pronouncements after 1905 became increasingly pan-Asian in his views after the 1911 revolution, coinciding with the change in national outlook which increasingly demanded that Japan obtain Manchuria.³⁸

Japan's sense of international isolation was also affected by the anti-Japanese movements particularly in the United States.³⁹ Historically, ever since Japanese immigration to the British Dominions and the United States had begun, the problem of how to deal with anti-Japanese immigration legislation and, more generally, anti-Japanese sentiment, caused considerable consternation and aggravation for the Japanese government. In particular, the 1913 Californian Alien Land Law was a painful and humiliating experience for the Japanese government because it was specifically targeted against Japanese immigrants. Ironically, it was the Japanese victory in 1905 which jolted the Californians into actively launching an anti-Japanese movement. The fundamental problem was the inability of the Japanese government to convince the Americans that the Japanese were not an inferior race to the white Americans. This failure was especially painful as the Japanese considered themselves as a civilised nation belonging to the West. The anti-Japanese immigration problem

³⁷Yamagata Aritomo (1838-1922) was an influential Chôshû clan army general and *genrô*. He was prime minister twice in 1889 and 1898. His famous declaration of December 1890 of Japan's need not only to defend *shukensen* (national boundary) but also *riekisen* (the area in between the enemy and national boundary) became the mainstay of the early Japanese defence policy. Although keen to strengthen the military, he was nevertheless aware of the importance of cooperating with the great powers, especially Britain and the United States.

³⁸Banno, *op. cit.*, pp.126-127.

³⁹This will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 7.

was symbolic of the fact that Japan's status as great power could not eradicate the Anglo-Saxon view of Japanese as undesirable immigrants.⁴⁰ It pointed up the gap between the way Japan saw itself and the way the West saw it. In any case, the psychological impact of the national humiliation experienced at the hands of the Americans, and in the British Dominions, was to have a lasting impact on Japanese thinking. As we shall discover later, it became one explanatory factor for the submission of the racial equality proposal in 1919.

The Rise of *Jinshuron* in Foreign Policy Debates

The rise of *jinshuron* (racial discourse) in mainstream Japanese foreign policy debates is an important and highly relevant aspect of this period. As we shall discover later, one of the fundamental reasons for the public uproar over the fate of the racial equality proposal at the Paris Peace Conference was precisely because it hit a raw nerve of a nation which was extraordinarily sensitive to issues related to race or, more precisely, the Japanese race. In order to understand *jinshuron*, it is necessary to distinguish between two types of arguments--*jinshuron* and *bummeiron* (discourse on civilisation)--which are sometimes conflated.⁴¹

It is commonly known that Japan's sensitivity to race could be traced back to the Sino-Japanese War when Kaiser Wilhelm II first coined the phrase, the "yellow

⁴⁰Paul Birdsall, Versailles Twenty Years After, (Hamden, 1962), p.90.

⁴¹Mamiya Kunio, "Okuma Shigenobu to jinshu sabetsu teppai mondai" [Okuma Shigenobu and the Issue of Abolition of Racial Discrimination], Waseda daigakushi kiyô Vol.22 (1989), p.222.

peril".⁴² Evidently, the newly emergent imperial Japan was perceived to be a threat to western imperialism because Japan was culturally and religiously incompatible with the western great powers.⁴³ In this sense, the yellow peril concept was both racial and cultural in connotation. For the Japanese, the concept had highlighted the "foreign-ness" of Japan culturally, religiously, but most of all, racially, which left a bitter after-taste by inflicting "permanent damage", according to one Japanese diplomat, on the Japanese nation.⁴⁴ Henceforth, *kôkaron* (the yellow peril) as one variant of *jinshuron* gained regular usage in foreign policy debates. Although there had always been to some extent a racial element present in foreign policy debates, *jinshuron* became a high profile issue after 1895. It has been mentioned previously that Konoe Atsumaro advocated "solidarity of the same race" (*dôjinshu dômeiron*) in 1898 because of the prospect of racial rivalry between the white and yellow races.⁴⁵ Such a view, expressed also by Yamagata in 1899, was clearly a reflection of how menacing the white Russian threat had appeared to the Japanese in the light of the Russian occupation of Dairen and Port Arthur.

Clearly, Japan became more aware of the racial aspect of its identity in the Russo-Japanese War. There was an intense anxiety within Japan that its victory would lead to a resurgence of the "yellow peril" feeling in the West. This led the government to take the exceptional preemptive action of sending two special public

⁴²Jean-Pierre Lehmann, The Image of Japan: From Feudal Isolation to World Power, 1850-1905, (London, 1978), p.149.

⁴³Iriye, op. cit., pp.45-47.

⁴⁴Ishii Kikujirô, Gaikô zuisô [Occasional Thoughts on Diplomacy], (Tokyo, 1967), p.186, p.188.

⁴⁵Banno, op. cit., pp.85-86.

relations envoys to the United States and Europe respectively from February 1904 to October 1905. Their objective was to disseminate Japan's side of the story by emphasising the self-defensive nature of the war, and denying the rise of the "yellow peril" and any religious interpretation of the war as one of Christians versus heathens.⁴⁶ In other words, its mission was to prevent the alienation of Japan as a non-Christian nation from the white Christian West.⁴⁷ It is highly likely that such an intense concern over the "yellow peril" underpinned Japan's deep sense of insecurity that if the West turned against Japan, it would be left isolated from both the West and East.⁴⁸ Otherwise, in foreign policy debates, there was much concern over the rising world trend towards racial confrontation. Takahashi Sakue, a well-known international lawyer and member of the House of Peers, expressed such fears and recommended that Japan should coalesce with the eastern race (ie. Chinese) in order to face this threat.⁴⁹ This was an alarmist response to the government's pro-western attitude. It spelled out the dangers of the government's policy of joining the West against Japan's natural racial alliance with China, that it effectively went against the growing world trend of confrontation between the western and the eastern races. Solidarity with China was important because it was impossible for Japan to fight this racial conflict alone. Not only *kôkaron*, but also other ideas such as *jinshu sensô* (racial war) and *jinshu kyôsô* (racial rivalry), stayed henceforth in the public

⁴⁶Matsumura Masayoshi, "Kôkaron to nichiro sensô" [The "Yellow Peril" and the Russo-Japanese War], *Kokusai seiji* Vol.71 (1982), p.40. See also Nish, Origins of the Russo-Japanese War, pp.238-239.

⁴⁷Matsumura, op. cit., p.44.

⁴⁸Oka, op. cit., p.42.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp.42-43.

consciousness, and were used in mainstream public debates by the ultra-nationalistic wing of pan-Asian thinkers and groups, and also by mainstream politicians. The extent of public interest in *jinshuron* can be witnessed in a prominent pan-Asian intellectual journal, Taiyô, which dedicated a special issue to "The clash of the yellow and white peoples" in February 1908.

On the other hand, *jinshuron* is often confused with and conflated with *bummeiron* (discourse on civilisation). Commonly, *jinshuron* is regarded as an *ajia shugi* (pan-Asian) type of argument whereas *bummeiron* represents a *datsu-A ron* (escape Asia) point of view. As we have seen, *jinshuron* emphasises the racial aspect of Japanese identity in opposition to the "whiteness" of the West. *Bummeiron* argues the distinctness of the Japanese race not on the basis of race but of civilisation and culture. Sometimes, confusion arises because *bummeiron* supporters would use racial issues to explain why Japanese civilisation was different from and superior to the rest of Asia, and how it effectively belonged to the West. Okuma Shigenobu⁵⁰ participated in the *jinshuron* debate by presenting a *bummeiron* argument in January 1904 when he spoke on the "yellow peril" at his *alma mater*, Waseda University.⁵¹ His point was that the "yellow peril" was a result of "national" (*minzokuteki*) misunderstandings, leading to increased tension based on jealousy and rivalry felt towards Japan by the western states.⁵² Okuma published a short volume in 1919

⁵⁰Okuma Shigenobu (1838-1922) was a Meiji and Taishô politician, who was Foreign Minister in 1888 during which time he was involved in the revision of the unequal treaties, and again in the Matsukata cabinet in 1896, and formed a coalition government with Itagaki Taisuke in 1898. He was Chancellor of Waseda University in 1907, returned to politics and formed the second Okuma cabinet in 1914.

⁵¹Mamiya, op. cit., p.221.

⁵²Ibid., footnote 24.

where he argued that racial antagonism was really a conflict of civilisations, and that Japan had shown through the years that it was a civilised nation (*bummei kokka*) worthy of belonging to the ranks of the western civilised nations.⁵³ An interesting example of the confusion over *bummeiron* can be seen in the response of the non-western world to Japan's 1905 victory. The war had important psychological implications for nationalist movements in Asia because the Japanese victory was a symbolic annihilation of the myth of the invincibility of white men.⁵⁴ This was ironic because whilst the colonised peoples saw the victory as an advancement of eastern civilisation, the Japanese themselves tended to perceive their victory as a proof of their achieving the "civilised" status of the West.⁵⁵ Hence, for the Japanese who supported the "*datsu-A nyûô*" (escape Asia, enter Europe) view, the war was a war of the two civilisations in which Japan had demonstrated its capacity to belong to western civilisation, by becoming a civilised nation (*bummei kokka*).⁵⁶

In the light of the above, it is not difficult to understand how hurtful the anti-Japanese immigration problems in the United States and the British Dominions were to the pride of the Japanese nation. The Japanese were less annoyed about "the fact of exclusion than about the symbol of discrimination, the label of an inferior

⁵³Okuma makes the case also that nations should be judged not in terms of "standard of nation" (*minzoku hyôjun*) but "standard of civilisation" (*bummei hyôjun*) because the latter is attainable by all nations regardless of race. Okuma Shigenobu, Jinshu mondai [The Race Problem], (Tokyo, 1919), p.76, pp.88-90.

⁵⁴Oka, op. cit., pp.45-46.

⁵⁵S.R.Mehrotra, India and the Commonwealth 1885-1929, (London, 1965), p.33.

⁵⁶Oka, op. cit., p.45.

people."⁵⁷ Makino Nobuaki⁵⁸ who was the chief Japanese negotiator on the racial equality proposal in 1919 said of the 1913 Californian Alien Land Law that it was particularly painful because it involved the physical characteristics of the Japanese people.⁵⁹ Domestically, the 1913 Californian Alien Land Law produced some bitter reactions as some public figures such as Nakano Seigô saw the whole problem as originating from the feeling in the Anglo-Saxon territories that the Japanese were being "cheeky" in achieving this "western" status despite having "yellow faces" and belonging to an inferior race.⁶⁰ In 1915, Foreign Minister Katô made a *bummeiron* (discourse on civilisation) argument in his speech on the 1913 immigration crisis:

What we regard very unpleasant about the Californian question...is the discrimination made against our people in distinction from some other nations. We would not mind disabilities if they were equally applicable to all nations. We are not vain enough to consider ourselves at the very forefront of enlightenment; we know that we still have much to learn from the West. But...we thought ourselves ahead of any other Asiatic people and as good as some of the European nations.⁶¹

It can be seen from the above reactions that the Japanese tended to perceive a direct correlation between race and great power status. This was why race as expressed through the *jinshuron* debate was such an important aspect of their national identity

⁵⁷Birdsall, op. cit., p.90.

⁵⁸Makino Nobuaki (1861-1954) from Satsuma clan was a diplomat and politician with a strongly liberal inclination. He joined the Iwakura Mission and studied in the United States, joined the Foreign Ministry in 1891, became Minister of Education 1906-1908, Privy Councillor 1908-1911, Foreign Minister 1913-1914, and became acting chief plenipotentiary at the Paris Peace Conference. Later he became head of Imperial Household Agency and then Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal.

⁵⁹Makino, op. cit., p.85.

⁶⁰Nakano Seigô, "Nihon teikoku no shimei" [The Mission of the Japanese Empire], *Nihon oyobi nihonjin* no.639 (20th September 1914), p.111.

⁶¹Greene to Grey, 15th March 1915, PRO FO 371/2388, f 50192.

and played a prominent part in foreign policy debates.

What can be said generally about Japanese foreign policy from the early Meiji period to the outbreak of the First World War is that whilst the government was pursuing faithfully a pragmatic foreign policy based on imperialist ambitions of continental expansion, there was a reaction against the government's strongly *datsu-A* (escape Asia) bias in favour of a more *ajia shugi* (pan-Asian) orientated approach which emphasised the importance of the traditional relationship with China. Hence, whilst there was general agreement that Japan should expand by having control over Korea and, after 1900, Manchuria, there was disagreement as to how this was to be justified. This was reflected in the *datsu-A ron* versus *ajia shugi* debate. On the one hand, Japan continued to be wary of China's national power until 1895. However, after 1895, the threat came from the West, or more specifically, from Russia. Although Japan's position in East Asia was gradually being established through the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars, and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Japan always remained wary of being politically isolated from the western powers. One of the side effects of this innate fear of international isolation was the popularisation of *jinshuron* (racial discourse) in foreign policy debates. *Jinshuron* was a defensive measure in which the Japanese attempted to find a niche based on racial affinity with China, in a world which was perceived to be becoming increasingly racially antagonistic towards Japan. In any case, such a feeling of isolation was aggravated by Japan's participation in the First World War, as we shall see below.

PART II: THE IMPACT OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Let us now turn to Japan's foreign policy in the First World War in order to

understand why the postwar Japanese government adopted an *ôbei kyôchô* (pro-western, internationalist) attitude to diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference. Japan pursued an aggressively expansionist policy during the war. The most contentious aspects of Japan's foreign policy can be found in its China policy which included the Twenty-One Demands of 1915, and the Nishihara Loans (Nishihara *shakkan*) of 1916-1918. Moreover, there were other bones of contention such as the American opposition to Japan's troop deployment in Siberia, and discontent felt by Britain and the United States that Japan was benefiting more from the war than it contributed. It will be shown below that Japan's ambitious continental policy during the war had the undesired effect of heightening its sense of international isolation by alienating Britain and the United States. This, in turn, enlivened *jinshuron* (racial discourse) in foreign policy debates.

Japan's Objectives in the War

Japan participated in the First World War for imperialistic reasons. It was generally perceived that the temporary power vacuum created in East Asia due to the preoccupation of the other powers with the war in Europe, presented an excellent opportunity for Japan to pursue unchecked its interests in China.⁶² Hitherto Japan felt impeded from increasing its influence in China because of the presence of other great powers. For Japan, its participation in the First World War was as "the grace of Heaven"⁶³ because it allowed for an expansion of Japanese control in East Asia,

⁶²Oka, op. cit., pp.52-53.

⁶³This was uttered by Yamagata Aritomo and the Okuma cabinet. Kobayashi Tatsuo, "Rinji gaikô chôsa iinkai no setchi" [Establishment of the Diplomatic Advisory Council], Kokusai seiji Vol.28 (1964), p.55.

stimulated the domestic economy, and bolstered national confidence.⁶⁴

However, the Japanese participation was viewed with much suspicion by Britain and the United States. Japan entered war in August 1914 on the basis of its obligations under its alliance with Britain.⁶⁵ It was the way in which the Japanese government had entered the war which first gave rise to British suspicion of Japan's intentions. The problem was that Japan delivered an ultimatum to Germany without first consulting Britain even though it was done in response to Britain's request for Japanese protection of British vessels in the Pacific.⁶⁶ Japan declared war on Germany on 23rd August and sent troops to Shantung, capturing Tsingtao by November, and followed this by the capture of the German colonies in the Pacific north of the equator.⁶⁷ Although Japan was ostensibly entering the war on the basis of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, its real objective was to obtain the German territories and rights in China and the Pacific in order to establish Japan's preeminence in East Asia.⁶⁸ This, in turn, was perceived to enhance Japan's international position.

⁶⁴Nakano Yasuo, Seijika: Nakano Seigô [The Politician: Nakano Seigô], Vol.2, (Tokyo, 1971), p.244.

⁶⁵For Prime Minister Okuma's statement of war aims made on 17th August 1914, consult Nish, Alliance in Decline, p.124.

⁶⁶The British government sent a message to the Japanese government for the assistance on 7th August 1914, and within thirty-six hours, the Okuma cabinet decided to go to war in support of Britain. On 23rd August, Japan declared war on Germany after the latter failed to respond to the ultimatum.

⁶⁷Technically, the Japanese capture of Shantung constituted a violation of Chinese neutrality which the Chinese government could not defend due to lack of military strength. Chinese Oral History Project, Wellington Koo Memoir, Part 2, Vol.2, pp.76-80, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

⁶⁸Takamura Naosuke, "Tenkanki to shiteno daiichiji taisen to nippon" [The First World War as a Turning Point and Japan], in Kôza nihon rekishi [Japanese History] Part 3 Vol.9, (Tokyo, 1985), p.10.

However, the swiftness of the actions and the readiness of the Japanese government to take advantage of the situation in East Asia made Britain suspicious of Japan.

As far as Japan was concerned, its interest in the war was geographically confined to East Asia. This can be evidenced in the Okuma government's perception that the war would end quickly in Europe and that Japan, having achieved its objective of defeating the Germans in East Asia and the Pacific, would have met its obligations as an alliance partner of Britain. This attitude underlined the limited scope of Japanese war aims and the limited Japanese understanding of the complex situation in Europe.⁶⁹ Moreover, it meant that Japanese military assistance did not extend readily beyond East Asia and, when it did, it came on the basis of a *quid pro quo* which the British resented.⁷⁰ Paradoxically, the Japanese felt that their assistance was not being fully appreciated by the British.⁷¹ Thus, Anglo-Japanese war time collaboration had an uneasy start, which made each country wary of the other.

Japan's China Policy

Clearly, Japan's China policy became the most contentious issue in its relations with Britain and the United States. As mentioned above, it was Japan's urge to expand in China that prompted its participation in the war. Having swiftly

⁶⁹Gaimushô hyakunenshi hensan iinkai ed., Gaimushô no hyakunen [One Hundred Years of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs], Vol.1, (Tokyo, 1969), p.611.

⁷⁰Balfour complained that the Japanese assistance was not too great. Balfour to Milner, 19th January 1918, MS Milner 46, f.3, Bodleian Library, Milner Papers. See also Captain E.H. Rymer, 8th February 1918, PRO FO 371/3233, f 46022; Greene to Balfour, 7th January 1918, FO 371/3233, f 33087.

⁷¹Ibid., Greene to Balfour, 23rd December 1918, FO 371/3816, f 20038.

occupied Shantung and the Pacific islands in 1914, Japan sought to consolidate further its preeminent position in China by controversial means, namely, the Twenty-One Demands and the Nishihara Loans. However, both measures were unsuccessful because they antagonised Britain and the United States, and fuelled the anti-Japanese movement in China.

The notification of the Twenty-One Demands on 18th January 1915 was the most controversial example of Japan's imperialist ambitions in China.⁷² It included the notorious Group Five of Demands which was designed to bring China half way under Japan's control by stipulating the appointment of influential Japanese as political, financial, and military advisers, etc., in the Chinese government. In fact, the Demands were so overtly imperialistic that Yamagata did not agree to the final form until after the controversial Group Five was deleted.⁷³ Interestingly, the public, on the whole, was very supportive of the Demands. Even a liberal intellectual, Yoshino Sakuzô, considered that "it was necessary for Japan's survival" because the "preservation of China" (*shina hozen*) was essential to Japan's national

⁷²The terms of the Twenty-One Demands which were divided into five groups were as follows: i) Chinese asked to assent to any future agreement on the disposal of rights to former German Shantung, and also Japan having further commercial rights; ii) demands extended the Manchuria leases to 99 years, and further rights in Inner Mongolia and South Manchuria; iii) Chinese consent to monopoly rights for an existing Japanese industrial complex in the Yangtze valley; iv) Chinese to promise not to cede to any other power any harbour or bay or island along the coast of China; v) to engage influential Japanese as political, financial and military advisers, etc., bringing China more than half-way under Japan's direct political supervision. It was the group (v) demand which caused international uproar and was subsequently withdrawn upon intervention by Genrô Yamagata. See Richard Storry, Japan and the Decline of the West in Asia 1894-1943, (New York, 1979), pp.108-109.

⁷³Tokutomi Iichiro ed., Kôshaku Yamagata Aritomo den (Biography of Prince Yamagata), Vol.3, (Tokyo, 1933), pp.932-933.

independence.⁷⁴ This reflected the prevailing view of supporting "constitutionalism inside, imperialism outside" (*uchini rikkenshugi, sotoni teikokushugi*).⁷⁵ Indeed, only a very small minority strongly condemned the government's manoeuvre as being opportunistic.⁷⁶

Both the Americans and British responded very negatively to the Twenty-One Demands. The Americans strongly condemned it because it was a blatant attempt by the Japanese not only to control China but indirectly to quash Chinese nationalism. Not only did it turn the tide of Chinese nationalism into an anti-Japanese movement but the devastating long term foreign policy implication was that it made an "enemy" out of the United States.⁷⁷ Although the British had acted with more restraint than the Americans, they had been snubbed by Foreign Minister Katô who failed to consult them before the Demands were imposed.⁷⁸ However, the Japanese insisted that they had made the claims based on the conversation which took place between Katô who was then the Japanese ambassador in London and Foreign Secretary Grey on 9th August 1914 when Grey reportedly said that Britain would not object to Japan's

⁷⁴Oka, op. cit., p.57; Kizaka Jun'ichirô, "Taishôki minponshugisha no kokusai ninshiki" [Liberal Democrats' Understanding of the International in the Taishô Period], *Kokusai seiji* Vol.51 (1974), p.63.

⁷⁵Oka, op. cit., p.57.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp.57-58; Ishibashi Tanzan, "Kakon o nokosu gaikô seisaku" [Our Foreign Policy which Leaves the Root of Evil], 5th May 1915, in Matsuo Takayoshi ed., *Ishibashi Tanzan hyôronshû* [Collected Reviews of Ishibashi Tanzan], (Tokyo, 1986), p.56.

⁷⁷Mitani Taichirô, *Nippon seitô seiji no keisei: Hara Kei no seiji shidô no tenkai* [The Formation of Party Politics in Japan: The Development of Hara Kei's Political Leadership], (Tokyo, 1980), p.236.

⁷⁸Peter Lowe, *Great Britain and Japan 1911-15: A Study of British Far Eastern Policy*, (London, 1969), p.229, p.254.

continued possession of the captured territories after the war in the event of it declaring war on Germany.⁷⁹ The incident had the effect that Britain "lost confidence in her ally, Japan, whose action was often compared with Germany's action in invading Belgium, and in Katô, who had hitherto been the personification of Anglo-Japanese friendship."⁸⁰ The intensity of opposition from Britain and the United States did concern many in the government, including Yamagata who supported a Russo-Japanese agreement as an additional check against the United States in China.⁸¹ Having recognised the mistake they made in the Twenty-One Demands, the Japanese government had to rectify the immense damage the incident had inflicted on Japan's international reputation.

After the demise of the Okuma government over the Twenty-One Demands, the new militarist government under General Terauchi⁸² was determined to change

⁷⁹According to the British, the record of the conversation did not exist. However, there is a record of Grey's conversation with the Japanese Counsellor in London on 9th May 1915 when Grey indicated that Britain would not object to the Japanese demands on the former German settlements in China, should these concessions become part of the negotiation between China and Japan. See Box 56, Davidson Papers, Historical Collection 187, House of Lords Record Office.

⁸⁰Nish, Alliance in Decline, p.155.

⁸¹Whereas some in the Army General Staff such as Tanaka Giichi did not take the Americans seriously and considered quashing Chinese opposition internally by using revolutionaries to incite disturbance in China, and internationally by relying on the strength of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and Russo-Japanese Agreement. Banno Junji, Kindai nippon no gaikô to seiji [Foreign Policy and Politics in Modern Japan], (Tokyo, 1985), pp.80-81, pp.83-84.

⁸²Terauchi Masatake (1852-1919) was a general and politician. He was a protégé of Yamagata Aritomo, and became Army Minister in 1902-1911. He was the first Governor to Korea where he increased the power of *kempei* police, quashed all anti-Japanese organs, and suppressed independence movements. In October 1916, Terauchi was appointed prime minister but fell from power in August 1918 due to rice riots.

the tactics used in Japan's China policy by increasing Japanese influence through financial and economic means. Terauchi sought to do this by maintaining the Russo-Japanese agreement, whilst at the same time cooperating with the Northern forces in China to make economic advances to North Manchuria and Siberia.⁸³ The aim of the new softer *ajia shugi* approach was to protect Japan's interests by making China, and specifically Yuen Shi-kai, more sympathetic to Japan.⁸⁴ The Nishihara Loans (Nishihara *shakkan*) of 1916-1918 was representative of this approach because it sought to increase Japan's political and economic leverage in China by making eight separate loans through a private individual named Nishihara Kamezô, totalling some 145 million yen, designed to lend money to China outside of the framework of the international consortium.⁸⁵ However, the scheme was considered to have failed by the mid-1920s for two reasons. Domestically, it attracted much criticism for entrusting such an important foreign economic policy to the hands of a private individual without involving the Foreign Ministry.⁸⁶ Internationally, it caused friction for violating the rules of the international consortium and gaining an upper hand at the expense of the other members. Therefore, the Nishihara Loans only helped to put another dent in Japan's fragile international reputation, already severely

⁸³Mitani, op. cit., p.234.

⁸⁴Banno, Kindai nippon no gaikô to seiji, p.79, pp.91-92.

⁸⁵At the time, there existed an international consortium composed of Britain, France, Germany, the United States and Japan created in 1909 to prevent excessive competition among foreign investors in China.

⁸⁶Hirano Ken'ichirô, "Nishihara shakkan kara shinyonkoku shakkandan e" [From Nishihara Loans to Four Power Consortium], in Hosoya Chihiro and Saitô Makoto ed., Washinton taisei to nichibei kankei [The Washington System and Japanese-American Relations], (Tokyo, 1978), p.291.

damaged by the Twenty-One Demands.

The Problem of Siberian Troop Deployment

The sense of distrust felt by the United States towards Japan was most clearly manifested in the Siberian troop deployment.⁸⁷ In January 1918, the British government on behalf of the Allied forces asked the Japanese government to send troops to Vladivostok to protect armaments. However, President Wilson decided against Japanese participation on 7th March 1918 on the basis that Japanese forces might permanently occupy Siberia. Domestically, this had an effect of dividing the Terauchi cabinet into two camps, a minority led by Foreign Minister Motono⁸⁸, Army Minister Tanaka and Privy Councillor Itô Miyoji⁸⁹ who supported the intervention, and the majority who opposed it, including Genrô Yamagata, Prime Minister Terauchi, leader of the opposition Hara Kei⁹⁰, and Ambassador Uchida in

⁸⁷The details on the issue of Siberian troop deployment have been extracted from Gaimushô no hyakunen, Vol.1, pp.675-685.

⁸⁸Eventually, Motono resigned over the crisis and was replaced by Gotô Shimpei.

⁸⁹Itô Miyoji (1857-1934) was a politician whose career spanned the Meiji, Taishô and Shôwa periods. Itô was a *protégé* of Itô Hirobumi and was involved in the drafting of the Meiji constitution. In December 1885, he became Private Secretary to Itô Hirobumi in the Itô cabinet, Secretary of the Privy Council in 1889, member of House of Peers in 1890, chairman of Tokyo nichichi shimbun in 1891-1904, Agriculture Minister in the third Itô cabinet in 1898, and Privy Councillor in 1899. He was partly instrumental in the fall of the Okuma cabinet and the rise of the Terauchi cabinet, and was appointed as member of the Diplomatic Advisory Council.

⁹⁰Hara Kei (1856-1921) was a Christian, journalist, diplomat and politician. He pursued his journalistic career at Yûbin hôchi shimbun and Daitô nippô from 1879 to 1882 until he entered Foreign Ministry. He became consul at Tientsin, then First Secretary at Paris, before being appointed as Private Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce in 1889-1892. As a protégé of Mutsu Munemitsu, Hara went back to the Foreign Ministry when Mutsu became Foreign Minister in the second Itô cabinet. Then Hara became editor of Osaka mainichi shimbun, and

Russia. Hara in particular, backed by Makino Nobuaki was concerned about maintaining good relations with the United States. Hara argued that since "the future of Japan depends on the close relationship with the United States, the only reason why there would be any problem between Japan and the United States would be because of their suspicion of Japan's aggressive ambitions."⁹¹ Apart from Motono who was a keen supporter of the Tsarist regime, the military was clearly interested in having a pretext for going into Siberia. To this end, it was secretly supporting the anti-Bolshevik elements in Northern Manchuria, and laid the groundwork for Chinese military involvement in Siberia through the signing of Sino-Japanese Joint Defence Agreements in mid-May 1918.

The international tension was eased by the American decision in late June 1918 to consider a joint troop deployment with Japan as a response to the Allied requests to aid the Czech forces against the Soviets. The Japanese troop deployment began on 12th August 1918, followed by the Americans on the 19th, and a general command office was established in Vladivostok under a Japanese official. As soon as the deployment started, there was a debate in Japan whether to restrict the number of troops around Vladivostok to 7000 as had been agreed, or to go for a "general deployment" with the aim of establishing a pro-Japanese government near Lake Baikal which would have extended the geographical area of deployment from East Siberia (East of Baikal) to North Manchuria. Again, the government split, with the military advocating for a general deployment, whilst Hara and Makino strongly criticised it.

subsequently joined Seiyūkai in 1900. He served twice as Home Affairs Minister in the Saionji cabinets 1905-1912, then for the third time in 1913 in the Yamamoto cabinet. He became head of Seiyūkai in 1914, and became prime minister in 1918.

⁹¹Gaimushô no hyakunen, Vol.1, pp.681-682.

In the end, the government decided on a general deployment but with modifications to accommodate the criticisms. Consequently, the Japanese deployed 73,000 troops in the three provinces of Russia.⁹² It may be said that the Siberian troop deployment demonstrated the extent of American distrust of Japan, but also the emergence of Hara who favoured a more *ôbei kyôchô* (pro-western, internationalist) approach in foreign policy.

Since Japan's China policy was responsible for alienating Britain and the United States from Japan during the First World War, the question arises as to why Japan pursued such an aggressive policy? Although it has already been mentioned that Japan was beginning to feel isolated internationally after 1905, this was fundamentally a subjective assessment made by Japan of its position in East Asia.⁹³ Japan felt that not only was its position in the region tightly checked by the other powers, but that Japan was somehow unfairly treated by them as the anti-Japanese immigration row had demonstrated. Since the First World War was perceived to be a European war by the majority of Japanese, they seemed to have underestimated the ability of the western powers to hold on to their interests and check Japanese advances in China.⁹⁴ Hence, the Japanese seemed to have taken for granted that Britain and the United States would turn a blind eye to their expansionist policy in China, especially as Japan was an ally of Britain, if it did not directly infringe on those countries' respective spheres of influence. Consequently, the fear of

⁹²When Lansing protested about the size of the forces in November 1918, Hara immediately decreased the figure to 26,000 by mid December 1918.

⁹³Iriye, *op. cit.*, pp.49-50.

⁹⁴Banno, Kindai nippon no gaikô to seiji, pp.91-92.

international isolation became a concrete reality during the war as a result of Japan's war time conduct.

Jinshuron in the First World War

Finally, *jinshuron* (racial discourse) resurfaced as a prominent feature in foreign policy debates during the war. In a sense, the rise and fall of *jinshuron* was an interesting barometer of how secure or insecure the Japanese felt about their great power status. There appeared to be a corresponding rise in the frequency of *jinshuron* type of argument in domestic debates when Japan felt insecure about its relationships with the other great powers. Under such circumstances, *jinshuron* would claim that Japan should prepare itself for a racial war (*jinshu sensô*) between the white and yellow races. *Jinshuron* offered an alternative at times when tension ran high in Japan's relations with the West, in that it assumed that China would always gladly join forces with Japan against the West out of racial kinship. It was necessary for Japan to rely on the most basic common denominator between it and China in order to obtain China's sympathy because Japan had, in reality, "betrayed" China by behaving ruthlessly towards the latter as a western imperialist power. Hence, the desire to foster *jinshuron* was partly a response to the fear that Japan was falling into an abyss of international isolation by recklessly following an imperialist policy (ie. *datsu-A* policy) in China, regardless of international implications of these actions.⁹⁵

Consider some of the examples of *jinshuron* propounded by some intellectuals during the war. There were a few intellectuals who argued against a pan-Asian view

⁹⁵Oka, op. cit., p.54.

of *jinshuron* by emphasising that the so-called racial antagonism was essentially an inter-group problem because all races originate from the same source.⁹⁶ However, the views of the majority were alarmist in nature. In 1914, a prominent newspaper, Asahi shimbun, argued that the western powers were suspicious of Japan partly due to their racial prejudice, since they tended to regard Japan as militarily strong but racially inferior.⁹⁷ Therefore, Japan should help to "preserve China" in order to confront jointly the western imperialists. In 1916, Tokutomi Sohô, a right-wing intellectual, warned of the existence of a white clique (*hakubatsu*) and argued that Japan had a mission to reestablish racial equilibrium by eliminating this white clique from Asia, and realise an Asian Monroe Doctrine.⁹⁸ In part, this was a pan-Asian backlash against the preeminence of *bummeiron* which promoted unity of eastern and western civilisations. It has been argued that Tokutomi's *hakubatsu* was a result of "double-victim mentality" (*nijû no higaisha ishiki*) founded on the strength of distrust towards the West compounded by the feeling that the West was fundamentally suspicious of Japan.⁹⁹ In 1918, another writer warned that Japan should prevent the "terrifying prospect of a racial war" by assisting the less developed countries in the East in order to achieve equality between the white and coloured races.¹⁰⁰

It was not only the intellectuals who engaged in the *jinshuron* debate but also mainstream politicians like Yamagata Aritomo. Interestingly, Yamagata had been

⁹⁶Inada Shunosuke, Jinshu mondai [The Race Problem], (Tokyo, 1915), pp.6-7.

⁹⁷Oka, op. cit., pp.54-55.

⁹⁸Ibid., p.55.

⁹⁹Iriye, op. cit., pp.78-79.

¹⁰⁰Oka, op. cit., p.55.

previously critical of those pan-Asians who interpreted Japan's victory over Russia in 1905 as a victory of the yellow race against the white, arguing that the war had only demonstrated that the yellow race could defeat the white race with western technology. Evidently, this argument underlined his *datsu-A ron* (escape Asia) perspective by including Japan as part of the West.¹⁰¹ However, he seemingly reversed his position at the outbreak of the First World War by calling for a racial alliance between Japan and China in order to prevent the white race from uniting against the yellow race. It has been suggested that a detailed analysis of the circumstances surrounding this statement show that Yamagata had another agenda in enunciating a racial alliance with China, which was to persuade the Chinese to become more pro-Japan in order to facilitate Japan's China policy at the time.¹⁰² Notwithstanding his hidden agenda, the fact that Yamagata felt inclined to express such views demonstrate the complicated nature of the perception held by the Japanese that the issue of race was intertwined with the political uncertainty surrounding Japan's position in China.

In the end, it can be said that *jinshuron* was a double-edged sword, as both an attempt to justify Japan's expansion into China and to rationalise Japan's insecurity vis-a-vis the western powers. *Jinshuron* highlighted Japan's sense of racial alienation from the West, by appealing to the *ajia shugi* (pan-Asian) instincts of finding a rationale in Japan's relationship with China. Ultimately, it seems that the important role played by *jinshuron* in foreign policy debates was to underpin Japan's sense of insecurity as non-white great power.

¹⁰¹Banno, Meiji, pp.129-130.

¹⁰²Banno, Kindai nippon no gaikô to seiji, pp.80-81.

Conclusions

The image of Japan we derive from this chapter is a paradoxical one. On the one hand, there was the Japan which had steadily followed an imperialistic, *datsu-A* (escape-Asia) foreign policy since the late Meiji period (1890-1912) by consolidating its position on the Korean peninsula and in China. These political and military successes on the continent had made Japan a great power. On the other hand, there was the Japan which felt insecure about its great power status and isolated from the western powers. The feeling of insecurity existed at two levels. At the political level, Japan was feeling isolated from the western powers because of the competing imperial interests in China. However, Japan also perceived itself, rightly or wrongly, to be alienated from the West due to racial difference. This implied that for Japan, the issues of race and great power status were interconnected. It, therefore, provides the background to the explanation that the racial equality proposal was motivated in part by Japan's insecurity of its great power status. In the next chapter, we shall see how Hara Kei who became premier in September 1918 faced the challenges of the peace conference and how the racial equality proposal emerged as an attempt to face this challenge both domestically and internationally.

CHAPTER 2 THE ORIGINS OF THE RACIAL EQUALITY PROPOSAL IN 1918

It has been argued in the previous chapter that by the end of the First World War, Japan felt isolated internationally because of its wartime actions which increased the suspicion with which it was viewed by Britain and the United States. We must now proceed to explain the political origins of the racial equality proposal, which was one aspect of the Hara government's policy at the Paris Peace Conference. In this chapter, we shall attempt to analyse the Japanese motivations for the racial equality proposal in 1918, and how the proposal was inextricably linked to the government's policy towards the League of Nations. We shall also examine the meaning of the proposal when it was first conceived and discussed within the government circles. In the process, it will become increasingly clear that the Japanese government did not originally intend their racial equality proposal to have universal implications--linked with Japan's insecurity concerning its great power status in the new organisation. Moreover, a suggestion will be made that racial equality could have inadvertently appeased the opponents of Prime Minister Hara's determination to support the League of Nations. However, let us first "set the scene" by understanding the foreign policy making machinery in which the peace policy of the Hara government was conceived, in an effort to understand how and why the racial equality demand was included as one of Japan's three peace terms to be negotiated at Paris.

The Foreign Policy Making Machinery

We first explain the foreign policy making machinery which existed in Japan around the time of the Paris Peace Conference. There were three main bodies that

influenced foreign policy: the Diplomatic Advisory Council (*rinji gaikô chōsa iinkai*), the Foreign Ministry, and the *genrō* (Elder Statesmen). The prime minister exercised a considerable control over foreign policy as we shall see in the case of Hara Kei. The military exerted influence indirectly through the Diplomatic Advisory Council and *genrō*. The important point is that top level consultations occurred frequently between the members of these bodies. During the Paris Peace Conference, the normal procedure for foreign policy making would be as follows: the Foreign Ministry would do the groundwork and submit a proposal to the Diplomatic Advisory Council for discussion and approval. At the same time, some members of the Diplomatic Advisory Council who had personal access to the *genrō*, Yamagata Aritomo, would consult him and seek his informal approval on the issue. Once the council had given its approval, the proposal would then be passed on to the cabinet which normally approved the council's decision as a matter of course. The purpose of this complex system was to encourage political unity in foreign policy. However, beneath the surface, there was much tension, especially between the Foreign Ministry and the Diplomatic Advisory Council.

The Diplomatic Advisory Council was established in June 1917 and acted as the highest foreign policy making organ, directly under the auspices of the Emperor, until it was dismantled in September 1922.¹ It was created as a means of unifying

¹Its members during the peace conference were Hara Kei (Prime Minister), Uchida Yasuya (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Tanaka Giichi (Minister of Army), Katō Tomosaburō (Minister of Navy), Makino Nobuaki (Privy Councillor), Itō Miyoji (Privy Councillor), Hirata Tōsuke (Privy Councillor), Inukai Tsuyoshi (leader of Kokumintō), Terauchi Masatake (ex-Prime Minister), Gotō Shimpei (ex-Foreign Minister), and Motoda Hajime (Privy Councillor).

national opinion on foreign policy, and de-politicising foreign policy.² Due to its somewhat ambiguous status, the council attracted much criticism from the time of its inception.³ Notwithstanding its problems, the council debated and made decisions on all foreign policy issues during the Paris Peace Conference. When Hara ascended to power in late September 1918, the council faced the challenging task of urgently formulating a peace policy. However, Hara was criticised for not convening the first meeting until mid November 1918, and thereafter the council met sixteen times before the end of June 1919. It is highly significant that the council only met seven times from January to June 1919 when the heads of governments and the foreign ministers of the United States, Britain, France and Italy were negotiating daily their peace terms at Paris.⁴ This can only indicate how psychologically remote the peace conference was for the Japanese government, and how preoccupied Hara was with domestic politics. When the council was in session, Itô Miyoji often challenged the Foreign Ministry's *ôbei kyôchô* (pro-western, internationalist) view. Hara's role was that of a moderator who coaxed the anti-Foreign Ministry faction to agree to a consensus which was closer to his personal position.

²Kobayashi Tatsuo, "Rinji gaikô chôsa iinkai no setchi" [Establishment of the Diplomatic Advisory Council], Kokusai seiji Vol.28 (1964), p.67.

³Apparently, the newspapers such as Nichi nichî, Asahi and Hôchi were all dissatisfied with its creation. Greene to Balfour, 7th June 1917, PRO FO 371/2951, f 144032; Gaimushô hyakunenshi hensan iinkai ed., Gaimushô no hyakunen [One Hundred Years of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs], Vol.1, p.663. For criticisms, see Makino Nobuaki, Kaikoroku [Reminiscences], Vol.2, (Tokyo, 1978), pp.144-145; Kobayashi Tatsuo ed., Suiusô nikki: Itôke monjo [Diary of Suiusô: Papers of the Itô Family], (Tokyo, 1966), p.9; Kojima Kazuo, Ichi rôseijika no kaisô [Reminiscences of One Old Politician], (Tokyo, 1951), pp.161-167; Kobayashi, "Rinji gaikô chôsa iinkai no setchi," p.65.

⁴Gaimushô no hyakunen, Vol.1, p.658.

The Foreign Ministry was first established in 1869 and became a full ministry in 1885 under Foreign Minister Inoue Kaoru.⁵ Diplomatic and consular representations were established from 1871 and 1870 respectively.⁶ The organisational structure of the ministry in the early Taishô period was rudimentary, consisting of the Minister's Secretariat which embodied the offices of Foreign and Vice Ministers, and Political and Commercial Divisions, each with two sub-divisions of Asia and Outside Asia. The increased workload created as a result of the Paris Peace Conference led to the creation of Treaty Division in August 1919, and this was followed by structural expansion of the ministry between 1921-1923.⁷ The officials tended to be composed of those very few élites in Japan at the time who had spent some years studying abroad, and the recruitment base was narrow. From 1887 onwards, the majority came from the University of Tokyo.⁸

Within the Foreign Ministry, there were historically two factions. After the fall of the Romanovs, the Anglo-American faction began to have an upper hand over the Russian faction. This was also reflected by the appointment of Shidehara Kijûrô as Vice Foreign Minister who later became known for his own brand of diplomacy (Shidehara *gaikô*) which was pro-western, internationalist, and based on economic

⁵I.H.Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires 1894-1907, (London, 1966), p.3.

⁶Diplomatic representations were established in Paris and Washington in May 1871, London in September 1872, Berlin in January 1873, Vienna in April 1873, Rome in February 1874, St.Petersburg in March 1874, and Peking in August 1874. Consular representations established in 17 cities within a decade. Gaimushô no hyakunen, Vol.1, p.97, p.107.

⁷Ibid., p.752.

⁸Ibid., pp.169-179, p.198.

cooperation with the British and Americans. Generally, the ministry took a *datsu-A* (escape Asia) view by seeking to protect Japan's interests in China through cooperation with the western great powers rather than confrontation.⁹ With the departure of Gotô Shimpei who belonged to the Russian faction, the appointment of Uchida Yasuya¹⁰ as foreign minister ensured the ascendancy of *ôbei kyôchô* (pro-western, internationalist) diplomacy. Interestingly, the appointment of Uchida was seen as a disappointment by many. Although his credentials were impeccable, having trained as diplomat and served as foreign minister in the second Saionji cabinet in 1911, he was generally considered to be unremarkable as best described by Conyngham Greene, the British ambassador:

Viscount Uchida, though understood to have capacity, is hardly a man of commanding personality. His appearance has given rise to his nickname of 'the rubber doll' by which he is sometimes described in the press.¹¹

However unkind the public's perception of Uchida might be, the choice of Uchida underlined Hara's need to have a Seiyûkai (the political party in power) sympathiser heading the ministry in order to control foreign policy.¹² In any case, Hara's rise

⁹Iriye Akira, Nihon no gaikô: Meiji ishin kara gendai made [Japanese Foreign Policy: From the Meiji Restoration to the Present], (Tokyo, 1966), p.80.

¹⁰Uchida Yasuya (1865-1936) was a diplomat and politician. Having entered the Foreign Ministry in 1887, he was posted to Washington, London, Peking, Vienna, and St.Petersburg. He stayed on as foreign minister after Hara's assassination in the Takahashi Korekiyo and Katô Tomosaburô cabinets. In 1925 he was appointed Privy Councillor, in 1931 Chairman of the Manchurian Railway where he assisted the military in the Manchurian crisis, and became foreign minister for the third time in the Saitô Makoto cabinet in 1932. In the early 1930s, he gained notoriety for his "scorched-earth diplomacy" (*shôdo gaikô*) in Manchuria.

¹¹Greene to Balfour, 15th December 1916, PRO FO 371/2951, f 14332.

¹²Uchida Yasuya denki hensan iinkai ed., Uchida Yasuya, (Tokyo, 1969), p.230. He became increasingly pan-Asian in his thinking in his later years. See Ikei Masaru, "Uchida Yasuya--shôdo gaikô e no kiseki" [Uchida Yasuya--the Route to the

to power indicated that the Foreign Ministry would regain its preeminence in foreign policy making after being seriously neglected by the Terauchi government.

It must be emphasised at this point that there was much tension in the relationship between the two important foreign policy making bodies, the Foreign Ministry and the Diplomatic Advisory Council. The establishment of the Diplomatic Advisory Council in 1917 as a superior body on foreign policy had effectively reduced the Foreign Ministry into an administrative organ, implementing the decisions made by the council. The Terauchi government especially tended to marginalise the Foreign Ministry and its top officials were treated as mere junior officials. Although the creation of Diplomatic Advisory Council was supposed to strengthen Japanese foreign policy, the antagonistic relationship which it developed with the Foreign Ministry meant that, in practice, it had the contrary effect.¹³

Who were the *genrô* whose elusive influence was of the utmost importance in the Meiji and Taishô politics? *Genrô* had created themselves into an exclusive body on the basis of their proximity to the Emperor and as guardians of Japanese politics.¹⁴ They were elder statesmen who "all received, on one or more occasions, imperial commands that they should receive the honours due to elder statesmen" called *genkun* and who have all served on the *sangi*, which was a body of

"Scorched-Earth" Diplomacy], Kokusai seiji Vol.56 no.2 (1976), p.19.

¹³Gaimushô no hyakunen, Vol.1, pp.665-666.

¹⁴Basically, there only existed nine *genrô* in the history of Japan who were Kuroda Kiyotaka (1840-1900) from Satsuma clan, Itô Hirobumi (1841-1909) Chôshû clan, Yamagata Aritomo (Chôshû clan), Matsukata Masayoshi (1835-1924) Satsuma clan, Inoue Kaoru (1836-1915) Chôshû clan, Saigô Tsugumichi (1843-1902) Satsuma clan, Oyama Iwao (1842-1916) Satsuma clan, Katsura Tarô (1847-1913) Chôshû clan and Saionji Kimmochi. Saionji was, of course, the chief plenipotentiary to the Paris Peace Conference.

predominantly Satsuma and Chôshû councillors advising the Emperor.¹⁵ Their extra-constitutional legitimacy derived from the fact that they were the leaders of the Meiji Restoration and came from the two most powerful feudal clans, Satsuma and Chôshû. Their major functions were as overseers of foreign policy¹⁶ and more importantly, as "cabinet makers".¹⁷ After 1892, it was the *genrô* who recommended and effectively appointed the successive governments. Hence, they were very much part of the Meiji legacy and played a central role in providing political sanctity and legitimacy to the successive Meiji and Taishô governments until the constitutional political system became firmly established. By their very nature, the existence of *genrô* went against the parliamentary party political system¹⁸ which explains the gradual disappearance of the system by 1940 with the death of the last *genrô*, Saionji Kimmochi. At the time of the Paris Peace Conference, Yamagata Aritomo wielded considerable power over Japanese politics. Yamagata effectively acted as a spokesman for the military which in turn controlled much of Japan's China policy. This explains why Hara was extremely careful to cultivate Yamagata's trust. It was difficult to govern effectively without sufficient approval from this powerful *genrô*. Although the *genrô* were technically excluded from foreign policy making with the

¹⁵Leslie Connors, The Emperor's Adviser: Saionji Kimmochi and Pre-war Japanese Politics, (London, 1987), p.44.

¹⁶This was much curtailed by the Okuma cabinet when Foreign Minister Katô Kômei had stopped the tradition of sending confidential diplomatic documents to the *genrô* which greatly angered Yamagata.

¹⁷Oka Yoshitake, Kindai nihon no seijika: Sono seikaku to unmei [Politicians in Modern Japan: Their Personality and Fate], (Tokyo, 1960), p.221; Connors, op. cit., p.46.

¹⁸Ishibashi Tanzan, Ishibashi Tanzan zenshû [Collected Works of Ishibashi Tanzan], Vol.3, (Tokyo, 1970), p.562.

establishment of the Diplomatic Advisory Council, their influence continued to be felt.

Lastly, the military had always been a factor in Japan's foreign policy though to a much lesser extent during Hara's premiership. The root of military involvement can be found in their basic belief that the control over Japan's China policy was paramount to Japan's national survival; therefore, it was too important to be left entirely in the hands of diplomats.¹⁹ This meant that there was historically an uneasy relationship between the Foreign Ministry and the military, as the latter exerted influence on foreign policy through Yamagata.²⁰ The conventional view that the military was pan-Asian in outlook is considered to be over-simplistic, as it was not until the 1920s that the military had clearly defied the West and adopted an independent policy in China.²¹ Therefore, the army leaders such as Tanaka Giichi²² and Ugaki Kazushige²³ were more in agreement with the *ôbei kyôchôshugi*

¹⁹Banno Junji, Kindai nippon no gaikô to seiji [Foreign Policy and Politics in Modern Japan], (Tokyo, 1985), p.78; Ugaki Kazushige, Ugaki Kazushige nikki [Diary of Ugaki Kazushige], Vol.1, (Tokyo, 1968), p.161.

²⁰Shinobu Seizaburô, "Taishô gaikôshi no kihon mondai" [Fundamental Issues of the Taishô Diplomatic History], Kokusai seiji Vol.6 (1958), p.2.

²¹Banno, op. cit., pp.79-80.

²²Tanaka Giichi (1864-1929) was a Chôshû clan general and politician. He worked in the General Staff, particularly on the strategy against Russia. His plan for military expansion led to the fall of the second Saionji cabinet. He was again appointed as Army Minister in 1923 in the second Yamamoto Gon'nohyôe cabinet, but later left the Army and became head of Seiyûkai in 1925, and formed his cabinet in 1927 until his resignation in 1929.

²³Ugaki Kazushige (1868-1956) studied in Germany in 1902-1904, then again after the Russo-Japanese war. He occupied various important posts in the Army Ministry until he became the Army Minister in 1924 in the Kiyoura cabinet, and remained in the post for the next five years under the Katô Kômei, first Wakazuki, and Hamaguchi cabinets. He supported arms limitations.

leaders in terms of their general foreign policy outlook,²⁴ and sought to expand in China in collaboration with the West rather than against it. The army especially was cautious not to make an enemy of the United States in China after experiencing the strength of American opposition to the Twenty-One Demands.²⁵ The Foreign Ministry was able to take the lead over the military in foreign policy in the Hara government precisely because Tanaka sought cooperation with Hara in order to maintain long term political stability.²⁶ That was why the military was generally cooperative towards the Foreign Ministry at the Paris Peace Conference,²⁷ making an effort to coordinate the view on key issues such as the League of Nations.²⁸

Hence, Japan's peace policy needs to be understood in the light of the interplay of these institutions. It was up to Prime Minister Hara to get these influential bodies to agree on his preferred *ôbei kyôchô* approach to peace policy.

Foreign Policy under the Hara Government

²⁴Banno, op. cit., pp.80-81.

²⁵Ibid., pp.99-100.

²⁶Roger Dingman, "Nihon to Wirusonteki sekai chitsujo" [Japan and the Wilsonian World Order], in Satô Seizaburô and Roger Dingman ed., Kindai nihon no taigai taido [Modern Japan's Attitude to the External World], (Tokyo, 1974), p.108.

²⁷Takeshita to Navy Vice-Minister, 7th February 1919, telegram no.9, Bessatsu Takeshita kaigun chûshô hôkokushû, (January 1919-), 2.3.1./17-1, Pari heiwa kaigi [Paris Peace Conference], Diplomatic Record Office, Tokyo.

²⁸The military, on the whole, expressed no objection to Japan's joining the League though they did oppose some aspects of the covenant such as abolition of conscription. General Tanaka to Nara, 7th March 1919, doc.34, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nihon gaikô monjo [Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy] Part 1 Vol.3 1919; Ugaki, op. cit., p.194.

Hara Kei's (leader of Seiyūkai) rise to premiership in September 1918 marked a departure from the past as the beginning of party politics (*seitō seiji*) in Japan.²⁹ As the first commoner to head the government, he was seen to symbolise the spirit of *Taishō demokurashī* (Taishō democracy). In reality, his government³⁰ was not necessarily progressive or democratic, but founded on a compromise between party and clan politicians which underlined his realist approach to politics.³¹ Domestically, he was a shrewd political operator who understood the importance of moving with the times (*jiseiron*).³²

The most important characteristic of Hara's foreign policy was his belief in the need for Japan to cooperate with the West. The failure of war time diplomacy of the Okuma and Terauchi governments as evidenced by their disastrous initiatives, namely, the Twenty-One Demands, Nishihara Loans and Siberian troop deployment, had convinced Hara of the necessity for Japan to move towards the West if it wanted

²⁹There were three main political parties in Japan in this period--Seiyūkai (headed by Hara Kei), Kenseikai (Katō Kōmei), and Kokumintō (Inukai Tsuyoshi). Seiyūkai had been out of power for the most of the war as the Okuma cabinet was of Dōshikai which was a predecessor of Kenseikai, and the Terauchi cabinet was a militarist, non-party government.

³⁰The newly inaugurated Hara cabinet on the 29th September 1918 consisted of the following: Hara Kei (Prime Minister and Minister of Judicial Affairs), Uchida Yasuya (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Tokonami Takejirō (Minister of Interior and head of Railways), Takahashi Korekiyo (Minister of Finance), Tanaka Giichi (Minister of Army), Katō Tomosaburō (Minister of Navy), Yamamoto Tatsuo (Minister of Agriculture), Nakabashi Tokugorō (Minister of Education).

³¹The Hara cabinet's four major policies were to i) improve education, particularly higher education; ii) improve transportation and communication; iii) attain a satisfactory balance in national defence; iv) readjust price of goods. Ishibashi, op. cit., p.562; Kojima, op. cit., pp.178-179; Makino, op. cit., p.16.

³²Kikuchi Gorō and Mizoguchi Hakuyō ed., Hara Kei zenden [Biography of Hara Kei], Vol.2, (Tokyo, 1922), pp.262-265.

to avoid further international isolation.³³ What Hara advocated was a foreign policy based on liberal internationalism which recognised the limits of Japan pursuing an independent policy. Hara's foreign policy based on economic diplomacy became the mainstay of Japanese foreign policy in the 1920s under the name of Shidehara diplomacy.³⁴

What did his *ôbei kyôchô* foreign policy entail in practice? First of all, Hara recognised the increasing importance of the United States and the necessity of improving Japan's relations with the country.³⁵ This was most clearly conveyed during the Siberian troop deployment crisis in 1918 when he stated that "the future of Japan depends on the close relationship with the United States."³⁶ It was crucial for Japan to maintain friendly relations with the United States, both as a means to further economic interests and to avoid military friction. Emphasis on economic diplomacy was based on the belief that a peaceful expansion of trade and investment was the best way of furthering the national interest.³⁷ Secondly, as part of Japan's effort to foster great power cooperation, the Hara government took pains to reiterate the fundamental importance of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance as a "cornerstone" of

³³Hayashi Shigeru and Tsuji Kiyooki ed., Nippon naikaku shiroku [The History of the Cabinet in Japan], Vol.2, (Tokyo, 1981), p.305.

³⁴Uchiyama Masakuma, Gendai nippon gaikôron [Theories of Contemporary Japanese Foreign Policy], (Tokyo, 1971), p.24.

³⁵Hara reportedly said, he "keenly desire[s] to see Japan and America brought closer together and every shadow of misunderstanding removed." 21st October 1918, The New York Times.

³⁶Gaimushô no hyakunen, Vol.1, pp.681-682.

³⁷Iriye, op. cit., p.77; Hosoya Chihiro, "Makino Shinken to berusaiyu kaigi" [Makino Shinken and the Versailles Conference], Chûô kôron Vol.80 no.5 (1965), p.369.

Japanese foreign policy.³⁸ The maintenance of the alliance was the easiest means of avoiding international isolation for Japan.³⁹ Thirdly, Hara recognised the need to change Japan's China policy if Japan wanted to cooperate with the western powers.⁴⁰ This implied non-interference in Chinese politics, support of a unified government in China, and participation in the Four Power Consortium.⁴¹ Lastly, as a manifestation of his *ôbei kyôchô* attitude, he was determined to support the League of Nations at the Paris Peace Conference.⁴² Both he and Makino Nobuaki considered Japan's support for the League as the most important gesture Japan could make at Paris in terms of regaining Japan's lost reputation amongst the Anglo-Saxon powers. As we shall witness below, Hara fought hard to maintain this position in the Diplomatic Advisory Council.

In practice, Hara did not always manage to succeed in implementing the above agenda. His need to maintain domestic consensus meant that it was often necessary

³⁸Press conference given by Foreign Minister Uchida, 7th October 1918, Nihon gaikô monjo Vol.3 1918.

³⁹Nish, op. cit., pp.280-290.

⁴⁰Ibid., p.250; Hosoya, op. cit., p.368.

⁴¹Banno Junji, "Rikugun no ôbeikan to chûgoku seisaku," [The Army's Perspective of the West and the China Policy], in Hosoya Chihiro and Saitô Makoto ed., Washinton taisei to nichibei kankei [The Washington System and Japanese-American Relations], (Tokyo, 1978), p.457; Hayashi and Tsuji, op. cit., p.306.

⁴²This was a consistent strand in Hara's thoughts regarding Japan's general policy at the peace conference. Diary, 17th November, 2nd, 8th December 1918, 30th March 1919, Hara Keiichirô ed., Hara kei nikki [Diary of Hara Kei], Vol.8, (Tokyo, 1950). Also "Memorandum: Collection of press clippings from certain Japanese papers to April 26, 1919, regarding Japan and the Peace Conference," SDR 894.9111/3, reel 563, National Archives Microfilm Publication (hereafter NAMP) M820.

to make compromises.⁴³ He had to manoeuvre carefully and skilfully among contending domestic elements to ensure that his preferred policies were supported by the government.

Preparations for the Paris Peace Conference

How well prepared was the Japanese government for the Paris Peace Conference? Evidence shows that the war time governments had been negligent in creating a realistic framework for the eventual peace, causing a great confusion when the prospect of a peace conference became imminent in November 1918. In contrast to the other great powers, all of whom had invested considerable time and effort into preparations for peace, successive Japanese governments' attitudes towards peace were surprisingly complacent.⁴⁴ This stemmed from a limited view held by the war governments of Japan's role in the war and, subsequently, of the peace. Basically, the Okuma and Terauchi governments tended to perceive the war as predominantly a European war, in which Japan's role was limited to confronting Germany in the East. Therefore, it was generally assumed that Japan had accomplished its fundamental objective for entering the war when it captured the German possessions in the Far East and the Pacific in 1914. With such a limited objective in mind, the Okuma government started its peace preparations in October 1914,⁴⁵ and established

⁴³Seki Shizuo, Nippon gaikô no kijiku to tenkai [The Axis and Development in Japanese Foreign Policy], (Tokyo, 1990), p.222.

⁴⁴Unno Yoshirô, Kokusai remmei to nihon [The League of Nations and Japan], (Tokyo, 1972), p.7.

⁴⁵This was very preliminary in nature as Foreign Minister Katô ordered the assembly of information to prepare for peace. Unno Yoshirô, "Pari kôwa kaigi to gaimushô" [Paris Peace Conference and the Foreign Ministry], Rekishi kyôiku Vol.15

the Japan-Germany Peace Preparatory Committee (Nichidoku kôwa jumbi iinkai) in September 1915 under the Foreign Ministry to deliberate on armistice and peace terms.⁴⁶ The committee's agenda reflected the government's preoccupation with the desire to keep the East Asian settlement free of other great powers, in exchange for Japan's non-interference in the European settlement.⁴⁷ The problem was that the Japanese government continued to hold this view, which was based on assumptions dating back to 1914, as late as November 1917 when the Foreign Ministry, after having attended the Inter-Allied Conference in Paris, finally realised that the western powers could not be kept out of the Far Eastern settlement. Since the government was premising its peace plan exclusively on the practical terms of a settlement in East Asia, it was thrown into confusion on discovering in late 1918 that the forthcoming peace was to be based on the Wilsonian Fourteen Points of January 1918, which included not only the important principle of self-determination but also a promise to establish a new international order in the form of an association of nations.⁴⁸

In September 1918, the newly inaugurated Hara government was landed with the thankless task of urgently formulating a set of comprehensive peace terms, almost

no.1 (1967), p.47.

⁴⁶The committee was headed by the Vice Foreign Minister and included chiefs of political and commercial divisions of the ministry as well as representatives from the Navy and Army Ministries. It had the following special sub-committees: i) Shantung Railway, ii) German South Pacific territories, iii) Shantung lease, peace drafting, iv) international law relating to the peace, v) control of industrial rights. Nagaoka Harukazu, Nihon gaikô monjo: Nihon gaikô tsuikairoku 1900-1935 [Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy: Diplomatic Memoirs of Nagaoka Harukazu], p.318, Diplomatic Record Office, Tokyo.

⁴⁷Unno, "Pari kôwa kaigi to gaimushô," p.47.

⁴⁸Shidehara Kijûrô heiwa zaidan ed., Shidehara Kijûrô, (Tokyo, 1955), pp.135-136; Minutes of Diplomatic Advisory Council, 13th November 1918, Suiusô nikki.

from scratch, since the preparatory work undertaken by the Foreign Ministry was inadequate and obsolete.⁴⁹ The unpreparedness of the Hara government is evident in Foreign Minister Uchida's early attempt in October 1918 to enunciate the government's general foreign policy orientation. This ended up sounding strikingly similar to that of the previous government, despite the fact that Hara's *ôbei kyôchô* attitude differed from that of Terauchi.⁵⁰ Amidst growing criticisms,⁵¹ Hara finally implemented measures to deal with the peace conference in November 1918. Firstly, he appointed two members of the Diplomatic Advisory Council, Makino Nobuaki and Itô Miyoji, to draft a peace policy at short notice. Secondly, the Diplomatic Advisory Council established the Second Peace Preparatory Committee on 13th November 1918, with the aim of providing foreign policy guidelines, based on the Fourteen Points, to the Diplomatic Advisory Council and the peace delegation.⁵² There can be no doubt that the government suffered a setback in having to formulate a new peace strategy as late as November 1918, as a result of combination of the limited perception of war aims by the successive war governments, and the lack of a well-deliberated peace policy on the part of the new government under Hara.

The selection of the peace delegates also underlined how unprepared the government was for an international conference of the magnitude and

⁴⁹Diary of Itô, 23rd November 1918, Suiusô nikki.

⁵⁰8th October 1918, Yomiuri shimbun; 8th October 1918, Tokyo nichichi shimbun. Unfortunately, there is no record of Uchida's thoughts on the Paris Peace Conference. Ikei suggests that it was possibly because Uchida was too preoccupied as foreign minister or the scope of the principal issues pertaining to the conference were too large for him or his interest. Ikei, op. cit., p.7.

⁵¹Diary of Itô, 26th October and 6th November 1918, Suiusô nikki.

⁵²Unno, "Pari kôwa kaigi to gaimushô," p.47.

comprehensiveness which the western great powers were envisioning. Initially, the Hara government was unaware of the scale of the peace conference, only intending to send Ambassadors Matsui and Chinda (in Paris and London respectively). But Chinda, after arriving in Paris, asked for more senior statesmen to be sent as plenipotentiaries, indicating a preference for the prime minister and or the foreign minister.⁵³ Neither Hara nor Uchida, who would have been the natural choice, felt it politically expedient to leave the newly elected government.⁵⁴ Finally, Hara succeeded in persuading Marquis Saionji Kimmochi to accept the position of chief plenipotentiary. Saionji, though frail and weak with old age, was widely acceptable domestically as an "uncontroversial figure of some standing" being a *genrô*, an aristocrat, and a retired senior politician.⁵⁵ The Japanese delegation⁵⁶ consisted of Saionji Kimmochi, Makino Nobuaki as acting chief until the arrival of the former, Chinda Sutemi (ambassador in London), Matsui Keishirô (ambassador in Paris), and Ijûin Hikokichi (ambassador in Rome). The delegation was a collection of pro-western internationalists who, though representative of the *ôbei kyôchô* spirit of Hara diplomacy, were not necessarily representative of the government or the country as

⁵³Chinda to Uchida, 21st November 1918, doc.513, Nihon gaikô monjo Vol.3 1918.

⁵⁴Diary, 22nd November 1918, Hara Kei nikki, Vol.8; Koizumi Sakutarô, Saionji Kimmochi jiden [Biography of Saionji Kimmochi], (Tokyo, 1949), pp.168-169.

⁵⁵Connors, op. cit., pp.60-61. According to Hara, Saionji finally acquiesced informally around 26th November 1918 to go to Paris on the condition that Makino would go as well. Saionji left for Paris on 11th January 1919 and arrived on 5th March. See diary, 17th, 21st, 26th November 1918, Hara Kei nikki, Vol.8.

⁵⁶The Japanese delegation consisted of sixty-four members. The Americans thought that the selected plenipotentiaries were "moderately liberal" and sympathetic to the present international system. Morris to Secretary of State, 29th November 1918, SDR 763.72119/2830, reel 388, NAMP M367.

a whole. Saionji whose actual role at Paris was very limited, was "the Patrician Liberal" who strongly believed that Japan could not survive in isolation from the West.⁵⁷ His views were strongly shared by Makino who effectively had to run the delegation. Although the plenipotentiaries were possibly the most suitable people in Japan, they simply did not carry the same weight internationally as politicians in power. This undermined Japan's bargaining position at Paris, especially when lined up against the formidable Big Four: Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Orlando.⁵⁸

Japan's participation at Paris was the first major challenge confronted by the new government, and it attracted much criticism prior to and during the peace conference. At first, the government was criticised for not having a well-prepared peace policy which would justify Japan's representation as one of five great powers at Paris.⁵⁹ Due to the delay in starting the domestic peace preparations, Hara was accused of relying too heavily on his "wait and see" approach.⁶⁰ During the peace conference, the majority of criticism centred on the fact that the government was keeping the nation in the dark regarding the progress it was making at Paris. For instance, both Hara and Uchida refused to divulge the details of any of the issues discussed at the peace conference on the basis that any disclosure might jeopardize

⁵⁷Greene to Balfour, 23rd January 1919, PRO FO 608/211, f 475.

⁵⁸According to Makino's report on the peace conference made to Hara on his return from Paris. Diary, 13th September 1919, Hara Kei Nikki, Vol.8. This was possibly caused by the difference in political culture since in Japan it was considered just as prestigious, if not more to send Saionji and Makino who had an impressive record of experience in foreign affairs and domestic politics.

⁵⁹Nakano Yasuo, Seijika: Nakano Seigô [The Politician: Nakano Seigô], Vol.2, (Tokyo, 1971), p.262; "Gaikô butai tōmen no sanhanagata" [The Three Principal Actors on the Diplomatic Stage], Chūō kōron no.364 (1st December 1918), p.57.

⁶⁰"Gaikô butai tōmen no sanhanagata," p.57.

the negotiations in Paris.⁶¹ The main opposition party, Kenseikai, made political capital out of the inadequacies of Hara government, and its leader, Katô Kômei, strongly criticised Hara's peace diplomacy as lacking in dignity as a great power.⁶²

Japan's Peace Terms

What was the Hara government's peace policy at the Paris Peace Conference? It comprised three major principles: i) "conditions of peace in which Japan alone has interest independently from the Allied and Associated Powers" which included the transfer of rights pertaining to the former German colonies of Tsingtao and the Pacific Islands north of the equator; ii) "conditions of peace in which Japan has no direct interest" in which case Japan should be vigilant and try to contribute whenever possible; iii) "conditions of peace in which Japan has common interest with the allied and associated powers," for which the delegates are instructed to coordinate as much as possible with other allied powers.⁶³ These peace principles were grouped according to the degree of vested interest. In concrete terms, the first principle was the most important as it referred to the acquisition of rights to Shantung and the Pacific Islands north of the equator. The third principle, a reference to the Wilsonian Fourteen Points, underlined the Hara government's pro-western internationalist

⁶¹See for instance, 24th January 1919, Teikoku gikai kizokuin giji sokkiroku [Stenographic Record of the House of Peers], Vol.35 (41st Session), (Tokyo, 1981); 3rd February and 21st March 1919, Teikoku gikai shûgiin giji sokkiroku [Stenographic Record of the Imperial Diet], Vol.35 (41st Session), (Tokyo, 1981).

⁶²"Dai yonjû-ikkai gikai hôkokusho" [Report on the 41st Diet Session], Kensei Vol.2 no.3 (1919), pp.5-6; "Katô sôsai no enzetsu" [Speech by Party Chairman Katô], Kensei Vol.2 no.6 (1919), p.13.

⁶³Doc.538, Nihon gaikô monjo Vol.3 1918.

attitude which recognised the necessity of Japan cooperating with the western great powers in creating a new international order.

The third principle was elaborated in a supplementary document entitled, "the Government's view on President Wilson's Fourteen Points" which contained Japan's policy towards the League of Nations as below:

(7)The League of Nations This is one of the most important questions. The Japanese Government is in favour of the ultimate aim of the League: but, in view of the racial prejudices which have not yet entirely been banished from among the nations, there is a danger, depending upon the nature of the measures taken to secure the objects of the League, that its establishment will in practice produce results gravely detrimental to Japan.

Further, the question of the relations between the nations joining the League and those not joining it, and their respective treatment, must of necessity be one of the greatest difficulty.

It is accordingly thought desirable to aim at the postponement of any discussion of concrete proposals for the League, and to confine the proceedings to the settlement of a draft of the general desire, leaving the working out in practice of the scheme as an outstanding problem for the nations, to be considered until a future appropriate occasion when the draft of a practicable scheme can be submitted to examination and debate.

Nevertheless, if a League of Nations is to be established, the Japanese Government cannot remain isolated outside the League and should there appear any tendency towards the establishment of a definite scheme, the Delegates will so far as the circumstances allow make efforts to secure suitable guarantees against the disadvantages to Japan which would arise as aforesaid out of racial prejudice.⁶⁴

The above passage reveals a highly ambivalent attitude of the government towards the League of Nations. It shows how confused and uncertain the government felt about the League, questioning the benefit of the new organisation to Japan. What is intriguing is that this passage on the League with a vague reference to racial prejudice

⁶⁴The original Japanese version can be found in doc.538, Nihon gaikô monjo Vol.3 1918. This is an English translation of the original which was found in the British Colonial Office files. It came with the following note: "These excerpts are from a document which is believed to represent the intentions of the Japanese at the Peace Conference". See Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 13th January 1919, PRO CO 532/139, f 2719.

became the basis for the racial equality proposal. Compare the crucial part from the above passage (the first quotation below) to the racial equality proposal which was eventually submitted to the League of Nations Commission at the peace conference on 13th February 1919 (the second quotation below):

Nevertheless, if a League of Nations is to be established, the Japanese Government cannot remain isolated outside the League and should there appear any tendency towards the establishment of a definite scheme, the Delegates will so far as the circumstances allow make efforts to secure suitable guarantees against the disadvantages to Japan which would arise as aforesaid out of racial prejudice.

The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Parties agree to accord as soon as possible to all alien nationals of states, members of the League, equal and just treatment in every respect making no distinction, either in law or in fact, on account of their race or nationality.

It is curious that the enormous leap made from the first quotation which was vague and unspecific, to the second quotation which was concrete and specific, has never been questioned before. In due course, we shall attempt to explain how the vague clause ended up as a proposal with a strong connotation of immigration. However, it must be stressed at this point that the origin of the racial equality proposal was defensive in nature, as a vague response made by the government to the uncertainty of Japan's future in the new international organisation proposed in the Fourteen Points. In this sense, it was very much a reflection of Japan's uncertainty as a non-white great power in the League of Nations and suggests strongly that one of the motivations for the racial equality proposal was to make "secure" Japan's great power status.

For the public, the Hara government's peace policy came to be known as Shantung, the Pacific islands, and racial equality. Since the government only had a few weeks to formulate the peace policy, it naturally did not have enough time to

deliberate fully on some of the key issues, especially the League of Nations. This caused much confusion during the peace conference. A gap in perception began to develop between the decision makers in Tokyo and the plenipotentiaries in Paris, as the case of the racial equality proposal will show. Makino Nobuaki and his entourage finally departed Yokohama on 10th December 1918 for Paris, a broad outline of the peace policy having been agreed in the Diplomatic Advisory Council only two days before.⁶⁵

Hara's League Politics and its Sceptics

Before we examine in detail what the racial equality proposal in its embryonic stage could have implied, it is important to understand why some in the government were so ambivalent or, more precisely, sceptical of the League of Nations. Basically, the government was divided over its policy on the League. On the one hand, Prime Minister Hara with Makino supported the League because they recognised that Japan's support for the League, at least in principle, was a *sine qua non* of Japan's being part of the peace conference.⁶⁶ Hence, it was an important signal of Japan's willingness to cooperate with the West in order to prevent further international isolation of Japan. On the other hand, those who were sceptical of the League, including Itô Miyoji of Diplomatic Advisory Council, were suspicious of the idea of an international organisation, especially one led by the Anglo-Saxons. It is important

⁶⁵Minutes of the Diplomatic Advisory Council, 8th December 1918, Suiusô nikki. However, it was not until the 22nd December that the Diplomatic Council finalised on the instructions to be sent to the plenipotentiaries. Ibid., 22nd December 1918; Diary, 22nd December 1918, Hara Kei nikki, Vol.8.

⁶⁶Makino, op. cit., pp.173-174; Hosoya, op. cit., p.365.

to emphasise that Hara's pro-League position was not supported by everyone because a surprising number of influential government officials, including some at the Foreign Ministry, remained sceptical of the League. This scepticism was also reflected in the public's attitude towards the League as we shall see in Chapter Four. In the light of the circumstances, the consensus which Hara obtained from the foreign policy making machinery, especially the Diplomatic Advisory Council, to support his pro-League policy, was superficial. This suggests that the "racial prejudice" clause which had an important place in the government's peace policy towards the League, could have worked as a domestic justification to appease the sceptics.

However, let us first examine the three factors which underlined scepticism of the League. Firstly, the fact that there was little general information available, compounded by the lack of preparation by the Foreign Ministry on the League of Nations, meant that the majority in the government were desperately ignorant about the substantive aspects of the new organisation.⁶⁷ The failure to grasp the shift in Allied thinking on the basis for peace was a fundamental failure of Japanese diplomacy and left Japan insensitive to the increasing importance given to the League of Nations by the Allied powers.⁶⁸ Although the Foreign Ministry had been aware

⁶⁷Hosoya, *op. cit.*, pp.366-367.

⁶⁸The British government had created the Phillimore Commission to study the idea as early as December 1916. An interim report was produced in May 1918, and the final version in July 1918. This was confidentially communicated to the United States and the British Dominion governments. The French Premier Ribot set up a committee under Léon Bourgeois in July 1917 to study the League which completed the final report in June 1918 and sent it to the allies in July. However, the American government preferred not to appoint commissions to pursue the idea and accordingly, a draft made by Colonel House in the summer of 1918 was used as an initial basis for the covenant. The Italians only considered a study committee as late as mid-January 1919. Final Report by the Committee on the League of Nations, 3rd July 1918, "P" (War) Series, PRO CAB 29/1, pp 439-455; David Stevenson, French War

of the Anglo-American interest in the League of Nations from early 1918,⁶⁹ the only information they had before mid-1918 was a report compiled by the Bryce Commission and a short book by Marburg. This was later supplemented by a draft covenant brought back from Paris by an official who attended the Supreme War Council.⁷⁰ The inefficiency of the Second Peace Preparatory Committee, which was established precisely to deal with such issues, was staggering, as it continued to produce an outdated report entitled, "Issues relating to the League of Nations" in April 1919,⁷¹ two months after the League of Nations Commission had completed the preliminary draft covenant. Basically, the Foreign Ministry did not take the League of Nations seriously until it was almost too late. It was not until mid October 1918 that Ambassador Chinda in London informed Foreign Minister Uchida that the League of Nations might become an important issue at the peace conference and that he would ask the British to pass on the relevant information to Japan.⁷² It is also

Aims against Germany 1914-1919, (Oxford, 1982), p.78, p.109; Drummond to Balfour, 15th November 1917, PRO CAB 24/32, G.T. 2667; D.H.Miller, "Memorandum regarding the Covenant," My Diary: At the Conference of Paris, Vol.1, (New York, 1924), pp.331-369; Orlando to Bonin Longare, 14th January 1919, doc.864, I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani, Vol.1, 6th Series, Italian Foreign Ministry.

⁶⁹Unno, Kokusai remmei to nihon, p.7.

⁷⁰Shidehara, op. cit., p.136.

⁷¹To show how outdated it was, it included the following documents: i) a memorandum by the allied powers on the peace terms issued by Wilson in December 1916; ii) a comment by former Foreign Minister Motono; iii) a record of conversation with Foreign Minister Uchida. See Gaimushô kôwa jumbi iinkai chôsho [Ministry of Foreign Affairs Peace Preparatory Committee Reports], Vol.7, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo.

⁷²Chinda to Uchida, 16th October 1918, doc.542 and 9th November 1918, doc.545, Nihon gaikô monjo Vol.3 1918.

noteworthy that even as late as 14th December 1918, Makino, on his voyage to Paris, felt the need to emphasise the importance of the League as an issue at the peace conference.⁷³ Clearly, the lack of information in Japan regarding the League increased apprehension and anxiety towards the new organisation.

Secondly, there was the view generally expressed in the Foreign Ministry that the League of Nations would most likely infringe Japanese sovereignty. Vice Foreign Minister Shidehara's view that the League of Nations would pose a serious problem if it meant Japan's losing control of its own destiny to an international body, was representative of the ministry.⁷⁴ Even Makino, who became acting chief plenipotentiary and the chief spokesman in favour of the League of Nations within the Diplomatic Advisory Council, was personally apprehensive about the idea of relinquishing state sovereignty to an international organisation.⁷⁵ Moreover, he was concerned that Japan's independence would be restricted if it were to act always in concert with other states, and to have to carry out obligations externally.⁷⁶ Obviously, this general apprehension reflected Japan's confusion about the power the League would have. For a nation which had historically been alien to any concept of collectivism, either internationally or regionally, it was not an easy task to restrict sovereignty voluntarily in favour of a collective body in which Anglo-American domination appeared to be the only certainty.

Thirdly, it cannot be denied that the suspicion of the ultimate purpose of the

⁷³Ibid., Makino to Uchida, 14th December 1918, doc.557.

⁷⁴Unno, Kokusai remmei to nihon, p.8.

⁷⁵Makino, op. cit., p.174.

⁷⁶Ibid., p.179.

League was connected to the general suspicion in which the Anglo-Saxon powers were held. The sudden prominence of the League of Nations on the peace agenda of the Allied powers in 1918 was perceived as being indicative of the Anglo-Saxon powers' vested interest in furthering world dominance. In those who did not ascribe to the *ôbei kyôchô* view, suspicion of Britain and the United States ran deep. They believed that Japan had been unfairly treated by these powers, as seen in the case of the anti-Japanese immigration legislation and the "unfriendly" attitude shown towards Japan during the First World War. This sort of conspiracy view was strongly argued by Itô Miyoji in the Diplomatic Advisory Council who saw the League as simply another form of political alliance for maintaining a *status quo* to the advantage of the West.⁷⁷ There was much doubt as to whether the League would be a truly fair organisation, which benefited both the weak and the powerful.⁷⁸ It is interesting that the government anticipated that Japan would be in an inferior position to the Anglo-Saxon powers in the new organisation. There was also the view that the whole idea of the League seemed too hypothetical and unrealistic to be workable, especially as Wilson, who was its principal advocate, had not yet announced any concrete plan.⁷⁹ Although these were valid criticisms, they did not emerge from a well-informed, well-deliberated position. As a result, they revealed the Japanese government's intuitively suspicious attitude towards the United States and Britain.

⁷⁷Minutes of Diplomatic Advisory Council, 19th November and 8th December 1918, Suiusô nikki.

⁷⁸Ambassador Morris to Secretary of State, 27th November 1918, no.299, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1919, Paris Peace Conference Vol.1.

⁷⁹Minutes of Diplomatic Advisory Council, 2nd and 8th December 1918, Suiusô nikki.

In the light of the above, the consensus to support the League, which Hara had extracted from the Diplomatic Advisory Council, was a fragile one. The question of the League of Nations was first raised in a draft memorandum entitled, "Proposals for comments on Wilson's Fourteen Points"⁸⁰ on 13th November 1918 by Foreign Minister Uchida in the council. Under the relevant section on the League, the government recommended taking appropriate measures concerning possible "racial prejudice" in the new organisation. However, some members of the Diplomatic Advisory Council were not convinced by Uchida's document and continued to be sceptical of the League, bringing the council to a standstill over this issue on 8th December.⁸¹ Because of the urgency of the situation, Hara was forced to conclude at the 8th December meeting that Japan's participation as one of great powers obligated it not only to support the League in order to avoid international suspicion but also to agree to it in principle should it become a major issue at the conference.⁸² The final push given in the Diplomatic Advisory Council to support the League owed much to Makino's determination. In the end, the council compromised on the position that the government would support the League only if absolutely necessary, in which case it would take measures to prevent "racial prejudice" against the Japanese. Otherwise, the plenipotentiaries should try to postpone the drafting or creation of the League until a later date. In practice, the compromise decision was ruthlessly undermined especially by Itô Miyoji. He

⁸⁰This document became the basis for the supplement on the Wilsonian Fourteen Points attached to the three peace principles mentioned above. *Ibid.*, 13th November 1918.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 2nd and 8th December 1918.

⁸²*Ibid.*, 8th December 1918.

repeatedly accused Makino of not abiding by the government's instructions, by giving the false impression at Paris that the Japanese government was more supportive of the League than it actually had agreed to be.⁸³ Itô's attitude reflected a fundamental uneasiness with Makino's liberal internationalist approach. Nevertheless, Hara got what he wanted, which was for Japan to support the establishment of the League at the peace conference, as a means of paying lip service to international cooperation with the great powers.

Having seen the degree of scepticism in the government towards the League, it is not difficult to understand the need felt by Hara and his supporters to justify domestically the decision to support it. It can be plausibly construed that the racial equality demand, by imposing a condition on Japan's acceptance of the League, had the effect of appeasing the sceptics, both in the government and among the public, who might otherwise have resented the idea of Japan's succumbing unconditionally to international (or more precisely Anglo-Saxon) pressure to join the League. The racial equality proposal gave the appearance of government action in the face of the international impetus to create the League of Nations. The proposal had a symbolic role as Japan's response or challenge to an Anglo-Saxon dominated League of Nations.⁸⁴ In practical terms, racial equality could be seen as a condition that would make Japan's inevitable acquiescence to the League at least slightly more tolerable

⁸³Ibid., 19th and 22nd February 1919; Gaimushô no hyakunen, Vol.1, p.710.

⁸⁴Nakanishi says racial equality was Japan's response to "international universalism" (*sekaiteki fuhenshugi*). Nakanishi Hiroshi, "Konoe Fumimaro 'Eibei hon'i no heiwashugi o haisu' rombun no haikai" [Konoe Fumimaro: The Background to the Essay on "Abolish the Anglo-American Based Peace"], Hôgaku ronsô Vol.132 (March 1993), p.240.

to its opponents.⁸⁵ Therefore, it seems possible to suggest that the "racial prejudice" clause could have helped to justify the pro-League policy of Hara in a government which was not totally convinced of the League.

Racial Equality and Great Power Status

Let us look at other possible explanations for the government's inclusion of racial equality in Japan's policy towards the League of Nations. On further probing, two points become clear: first, the racial equality proposal was never intended to have any universal implications; and second, it was designed to ensure racial equality of Japanese nationals in the League of Nations. Whilst the first point effectively rules out the explanation that the racial equality proposal was intended to promote a universal principle, the second point tends to support the explanation that it was intended to make Japan's great power status in the League of Nations more secure.

It seems that the key to explaining the two claims made above can be found in the particular clause below of the "the Government's view on President Wilson's Fourteen Points":

The Japanese Government is in favour of the ultimate aim of the League: but, in view of the racial prejudices which have not yet entirely been banished from among the nations, there is a danger, depending upon the nature of the measures taken to secure the objects of the League, that *its establishment will in practice produce results gravely detrimental to Japan*.⁸⁶

Quite clearly, the principal concern expressed above is that the creation of the League might be "gravely detrimental to Japan" because of racial prejudice. It does not

⁸⁵It must be mentioned that public opinion played an important part in pressuring the government during the peace conference as we shall see in Chapters 3 and 4.

⁸⁶Italics are mine. Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 13th January 1919, PRO CO 532/139, f 2719. Confer footnote 64 for the explanation of this source.

remotely hint that the Japanese government might be concerned with the League having detrimental effects more widely due to racial prejudice. Moreover, the passage which followed the text above is categorical in stating the government's intention:

Nevertheless, if a League of Nations is to be established...the Delegates will so far as the circumstances allow make efforts to secure suitable guarantees against the disadvantages to Japan which would arise as aforesaid out of racial prejudice.⁸⁷

There can be no doubt from the above statement that the government's racial equality demand, if it can be called as such, was a highly particularistic and nationalistic expression of Japan's desire to prevent itself as a state and its nationals from suffering racial discrimination in the League of Nations. More specifically, the Japanese government was apprehensive about being racially discriminated against by the Anglo-Saxon powers in the new international organisation because of its unpleasant historical experience, ranging from anti-Japanese immigration legislation to strong distrust of Japan during the First World War. Hence, the "racial prejudice" clause had much to do with Japan's underlying sense of insecurity vis-a-vis Britain and the United States. It was an attempt by the Japanese, intentionally or unintentionally, to link the two separate issues of race and great power status in order to ensure the safety of their future status in the international organisation. In other words, it was Japan's expression of uncertainty and insecurity concerning the future international order and its position within it, in the light of its minority status as the only non-white great power. The fact that it was so specifically geared towards securing Japan's own position indicates that the proposal could not have been intended to have the altruistic

⁸⁷Ibid.

objective of seeking universal racial equality.

Moreover, the Japanese government's sceptical attitude towards the universality of racial equality as a realisable and realistic objective is another indication that the proposal did not seek to demand a universal principle.⁸⁸ The government's reluctance to be associated with the universal principle was revealed by its uneasiness with being associated with political movements such as the Pan African Congress.⁸⁹ Japan did not appreciate being perceived a champion of the coloured race because such a perception would conflict with its desire to cooperate with the West. For instance, Makino told a Liberian supporter of the racial equality proposal to go and see Clemenceau directly about racial equality.⁹⁰ As the government was not asking for universal racial equality, it saw no hypocrisy in its own position of demanding this proposal on the one hand, whilst continuing to discriminate against Koreans and Chinese on the other. The ironic twist came when the highly specific proposal geared towards ensuring a fair treatment of Japanese people became internationally known at the peace conference as a "racial equality" proposal. Although the government was much alarmed by the universal interpretation attached to their "nationalistic" proposal, it was impossible to disclaim it if Japan were ever to have any credibility as a non-white great power. So Japan had to silently endure

⁸⁸Minutes of Diplomatic Advisory Council, 19th November 1918, Suiusô nikki.

⁸⁹The Pan African Congress with fifty-seven members from fifteen countries was meeting in Paris to coincide with the peace conference on 19th to 21st February. This congress included some influential members such as W.B.Dubois, a black American activist, and Blaise Diagne, a Senegalese member of the Assemblée Nationale in France.

⁹⁰Ishii recounted a similar tale. Shimomura Hironori, Nippon gaikô hiroku [Secret Record of Japanese Diplomacy], (Tokyo, 1934), p.145.

being hailed in some quarters as "the leader of the coloured and oppressed peoples".

It has been pointed out that when Japan submitted this "racial equality" clause, it did not realise how challenging it was to the international order in the long run.⁹¹ Therefore, although the proposal is significant in retrospect, in understanding the evolution of the racial equality principle as an important element of the international order, it would be a misrepresentation to claim that the Japanese government understood its universal implications when they put it forward. The fact was that the Japanese not only lacked the awareness that they were initiating such an important change in the existing international order which incorporated elements of injustice, but also they were themselves guilty of a racially discriminatory attitude towards Chinese and Koreans.⁹²

It was then a great misconception on the part of those at the Paris Peace Conference that the Japanese proposal came to be known as racial equality proposal since its universalist label did not at all reflect its original intention. The most important point, which has been already been mentioned above, is that the original demand formulated by the Japanese government referred specifically to Japanese nationals. Therefore, whatever term it used to describe it must always be understood within this context. The semantic origins of how the racial equality proposal came to be known as such is interesting. The Japanese term used by the Foreign Ministry was *jinshu sabetsu teppai* which literally means "abolition of racial discrimination". Most of the official and unofficial debates used this term rather than "racial equality"

⁹¹Onuma Yasuaki, "Haruka naru jinshu byôdô no risô" [The Distant Ideal of Racial Equality], Yasuaki Onuma ed., Kokusaihô, kokusai rengô to nihon [International Law, the United Nations and Japan], (Tokyo, 1987), pp.431-432.

⁹²Ibid., p.477.

(*jinshu byôdô*). Similarly, the Japanese emphasised "equal treatment" (*byôdô taigû*)⁹³ and "discriminatory treatment" (*sabetsu taigû*) which shifts the focus of the principle substantively from the more open abstract notion of "equality". Hence, the Japanese government at least made no attempt to name its particularistic brand of racial equality in the universalist term.

Conclusions

The racial equality proposal was an important aspect of Japan's peace policy relating to the League of Nations. At this embryonic stage, the racial equality demand remained vague, with no indication that it would materialise in the way it did at Paris. It has been suggested that, there being a strong scepticism within the Japanese government to the formation of the League of Nations, racial equality could have acted as a domestic justification for Prime Minister Hara's determination to support the League. It had the effect of appeasing opponents who might otherwise have perceived the government's willing acceptance of the League as a sign of succumbing to Anglo-Saxon pressure. Evidence also suggested that the proposal was not originally intended to have any universal implications. Instead, it was related to Japan's insecurity about its great power status in the new international organisation. We shall now turn to see how the "racial prejudice" clause was transformed into a concrete proposal and negotiated at Paris.

⁹³The Japanese sources do not necessarily make the categorical distinction between treatment which is equal and treatment which is racially equal. It is often inferred that "equal treatment" meant racially equal treatment to the Japanese people.

CHAPTER 3 NEGOTIATING RACIAL EQUALITY AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE

Having examined the origins of the racial equality proposal as part of Japan's peace policy on the League of Nations, we now turn to the international negotiation of the proposal at the Paris Peace Conference. This covers the period from late January 1919 to late April when the Japanese government made two unsuccessful attempts in the League of Nations Commission¹ to have a racial equality amendment accepted as an insertion into the covenant of the League.² We shall explain how the racial equality demand developed into a concrete proposal and how it was presented and negotiated by the plenipotentiaries at Paris. In the process, the three categories of explanations will be analysed: first, the proposal as an attempt to resolve the anti-Japanese immigration problems in the Anglo-Saxon territories; second, as part of the domestic politics factor, the continuing concern of the Hara government with the impact of domestic opinion; and third, the inapplicability of the peace conference and bargaining argument as one of Japanese motivations. As the primary aim of this chapter is to understand the Japanese perspective on the racial equality negotiation,

¹The League of Nations Commission was established by the Preliminary Peace Conference at the plenary session of 25th January 1919 in order to study the constitution of the League of Nations. It was originally composed of fifteen members but was soon expanded to nineteen: two members from the United States (Wilson, House), the British Empire (Cecil, Smuts), France (Bourgeois, Larnaude), Italy (Orlando, Scialoja), and Japan (Makino, Chinda), and one member each from Belgium, Brazil, China, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Roumania and Serbia. It had fifteen meetings in total from 3rd February to 11th April 1919.

²Broadly, the negotiation went through three phases: the first phase from late January to 13th February when the first attempt to include racial equality as part of Article 21 failed; the second phase from 14th February to 11th April when the proposal was defeated for the second time; and the final phase from 12th April to 28th April when the Japanese made a final speech on the proposal.

what is presented below is constructed largely from the Japanese sources. Finer points of the negotiation from the perspectives of the British Empire³ and American delegations will be dealt with in the respective chapters below.

The Plenipotentiaries' Interpretation of Racial Equality

First of all, how did the racial equality negotiation start at Paris? Its beginnings can be traced back to an incident between the Japanese plenipotentiaries and President Wilson on 22nd January 1919, which exposed how completely out of touch the Japanese government had been about the whole question of the League of Nations.⁴ Wilson was taken aback that the Japanese gave only a measured support for the League at the plenary session which suggests that they had not realised that by accepting the Fourteen Points as the basis for armistice, they had in principle agreed to the creation of the League of Nations. This implied that the general position taken by the Diplomatic Advisory Council hitherto on this issue was obsolete and irrelevant.⁵ Quite unexpectedly, they had to focus right from the beginning on the League of Nations, which meant activating the relevant clause in the peace policy that "...should there appear any tendency towards the establishment of a definite

³The British Empire delegation consisted of Great Britain, Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and India. The British Dominions had attained dual representation firstly as members of the Empire delegation and secondly as lesser powers.

⁴Matsui to Uchida, 23rd January 1919, doc.19, Nihon gaikô monjo [Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy] Part 1 Vol.3 1919; Hankey's Notes of Council of Ten, 22nd January 1919, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.54, (Princeton, 1986).

⁵This prompted Makino to request Tokyo for more discretionary power in the League of Nations negotiation which was duly granted. Diary, 3rd February 1919, Hara Keiichirô ed., Hara Kei nikki [Diary of Hara Kei], Vol.8, (Tokyo, 1950).

scheme [the League], the Delegates will so far as the circumstances allow make efforts to secure suitable guarantees against the disadvantages to Japan which would arise as aforesaid out of racial prejudice."

How was the above clause made into a racial equality proposal? It appears that in the absence of detailed guidelines from Tokyo, the wording of the racial equality proposal reflected the particular perspective of those who had an immediate input in drafting it in Paris. The linkage between the racial equality proposal and immigration was strongly perceived by the Foreign Ministry for historical reasons. Why the ministry should espouse such a view is not too difficult to appreciate since one of the long standing unresolved issues in Japanese diplomacy was the anti-Japanese immigration legislation enacted in the United States and the British Dominions.⁶ Both Makino Nobuaki and Chinda Sutemi, who were the principal negotiators of the racial equality proposal, had painful personal experiences of the row over the Californian Alien Land Law in 1913, Makino as foreign minister and Chinda as ambassador to Washington.⁷ In retrospect, Makino must have had immigration in mind at the 2nd December 1918 meeting of the Diplomatic Advisory Council, when he voiced concern that the race problem should be raised at the peace conference in order to force the Americans to reassess the problem of racial discrimination.⁸ The problem was that he only implicitly referred to immigration through the use of the term "race problem" which, of course, was not necessarily the

⁶Makino Nobuaki, Kaikoroku [Reminiscences], Vol.2, (Tokyo, 1978), p.85.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Minutes of Diplomatic Advisory Council, 2nd December 1918, Kobayashi Tatsuo ed., Suiusô nikki: Itôke monjo [Diary of Suiusô: Papers of the Itô Family], (Tokyo, 1966).

same thing. In any case, as the chief architect of the proposal at the peace conference, his perspective on the issue had important effects. There is enough evidence to suggest that, for Makino, the racial equality proposal as it was initially drafted and negotiated, was to have the implicit objective of redressing the long standing problem of anti-Japanese immigration policy in the United States.⁹

Makino's perspective was widely supported in the Foreign Ministry. It seems that the ministry was particularly sensitive about the anti-immigration legislation because it concerned the national pride of Japan. Hence, its urge to resolve the problem can be understood as the "diplomacy of saving face" (*memmoku gaikô*).¹⁰ Vice Minister Shidehara attested that the "race problem" was the root cause of anti-Japanese problems in the United States and that the ministry had been trying to bring about a satisfactory solution to the problem whenever opportunities arose.¹¹ The Japanese diplomatic machinery was constantly working to resolve this issue as evidenced in Ambassador Ishii's meeting in July 1918 with Colonel House who was special advisor to President Wilson, to express Japan's desire for equal treatment and for calming the anti-Japanese sentiment in the West Coast. Ishii believed also that

⁹Yoshida Shigeru, Kaiko jûnen [Ten Years of Reminiscences], Vol.4, (Tokyo, 1958), pp.97-98. Yoshida, who later became prime minister, was Makino's son-in-law and acted as his personal assistant at the peace conference.

¹⁰Asada Sadao, Nichibei kankei to imin mondai [Japanese-American Relations and the Issue of Immigration], quoted from Nakanishi Hiroshi, "Konoe Fumimaro 'Eibei hon'i no heiwashugi o haisu' rombun no haikai" [Konoe Fumimaro: The Background to the Essay on "Abolish the Anglo-American Based Peace"], Hôgaku ronsô Vol.132 (March 1993), p.239, footnote 39.

¹¹Ishii to Gotô, 16th July 1918, doc.58, 2.4.2.2, Kokusai remmei: Jinshu sabetsu teppai [The League of Nations: Abolition of Racial Discrimination], Vol.1, Diplomatic Record Office, Tokyo; Shidehara Kijûrô heiwa zaidan ed., Shidehara Kijûrô, (Tokyo, 1955), p.142.

discriminatory treatment in immigration was one source of international conflict, and that the immigration problem was simply another form of racial problem.¹² Consequently, the combined evidence from Shidehara, Ishii and Makino underlines the Foreign Ministry's deeply rooted perception of the anti-Japanese immigration policies in the United States and the British Dominions as a major diplomatic problem for Japan.¹³ Both Makino and the Foreign Ministry were not driven by altruism to fight for universal racial equality or universal abolition of racial discrimination. Instead, they saw the government's racial equality demand as an opportunity to resolve, once and for all, the discriminatory treatment of Japanese immigrants in the Anglo-Saxon countries.¹⁴ This is why the first two drafts of the proposal¹⁵ which they showed to the Americans on 4th February suggests that immigration was the main issue.

Having said that, it is important to emphasise that this perspective which equated racial equality with immigration, was not the official line taken by the government as a whole. For instance, there was never a discussion of the racial equality proposal from the perspective of immigration in the Diplomatic Advisory

¹²Ishii Kikujirô, Gaikô yoroku [Diplomatic Anecdotes], (Tokyo, 1930), p.515, p.522.

¹³The biographers of Uchida also state that racial equality surfaced as a means of resolving the immigration problem which worsened after the Russo-Japanese War. See Uchida Yasuya denki hensai iinkai ed., Uchida Yasuya, (Tokyo, 1969), p.237.

¹⁴Yoshida, op. cit., p.98.

¹⁵Out of the two, the one which the Americans showed interest in was as follows: "The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of nations, the High Contracting Parties agree that concerning the treatment of aliens in their territories, they will accord them as far as it lies in their legitimate powers equal treatments and rights in law and in fact without making distinction on account of race or nationality."

Council. Because the council did not know that the League of Nations was going to be such a central issue at the peace conference, the question of racial equality was not discussed at all in late January to early February 1919. Nevertheless, the immigration slant of the original draft by Makino and Chinda was highly significant as it left an indelible mark in the perceptions of the British Dominions and the United States that the Japanese proposal was really about immigration. Hence, the explanation that the racial equality proposal was intended to resolve the anti-Japanese immigration problems is valid as far as Makino and the Foreign Ministry were concerned. However, it was not the only explanation of the proposal as we have already mentioned two other categories of explanations--great power status and domestic politics--in the previous chapter.

The First Attempt with the Racial Equality Proposal

In light of the above, it is understandable that Makino and Chinda should regard the United States as the most likely opponent of the Japanese proposal because of the unresolved problem of anti-Japanese immigration policy.¹⁶ Despite their efforts to see the Americans, it was not till the first meeting of the League of Nations Commission on 2nd February that they were able to brief Colonel House who was President Wilson's special advisor, about their "general position regarding the abolition of racial discrimination".¹⁷ Encouraged by House's sympathetic attitude,

¹⁶Makino, op. cit., p.204.

¹⁷Although the Japanese sources do not elaborate on this point, House's record shows that the Japanese had come to ask advice concerning the race question because of public interest in Japan for the new international organisation to embrace some broad principle of race equality. Charles Seymour ed., The Intimate Papers of Colonel House, Vol.4, (London, 1928), pp.320-321.

Makino and Chinda decided to show him two drafts of the proposal which they intended to submit as an insertion into the covenant of the League. Having expressed interest in one of the proposals, House undertook to confer with Wilson who subsequently agreed to present the preferred proposal¹⁸ as his own amendment to the religious freedom article (Article 21). In this early stage of the negotiation, Wilson and House evidently perceived the Japanese proposal as a reasonable demand in line with the spirit of the covenant and not as a potential threat, possibly because they did not see it as having serious implications for immigration. Therefore, the first attempt by the Japanese to sound out the Americans had produced an unexpectedly encouraging response.

Likewise, the Japanese considered Britain as the other potential stumbling block because of anti-Japanese immigration policies in the British Dominions, particularly in Australia and Canada. However, it seems that the Japanese did not first approach the British because they had expected Britain to support the proposal on the strength of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Moreover, they thought it beneficial to rely on the good offices of House who had offered to discuss the amendment informally with the British.¹⁹ It is highly likely at this point that the Japanese were

¹⁸The text of the proposal read: "The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of nations, the High Contracting Parties agree that concerning the treatment of aliens in their territories, they will accord them as soon and as far as practicable equal treatments and rights in law and in fact without making distinction on account of race or nationality." Interestingly, House claims that Makino and Chinda did not want to submit the proposal as their own, whereas the Japanese sources do not mention this and claim instead that Wilson had offered to propose the amendment as his own. Ibid., p.321; Matsui to Uchida, 15th February 1919, doc.363, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

¹⁹Matsui to Uchida, 16th February 1919, doc.364, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

expecting little or no resistance from Britain, especially as the more onerous task of persuading the Americans was achieved unexpectedly smoothly. What was more, House's initial broaching of the subject with the British seemed to confirm this view that the British, too, might not have any difficulty with supporting the Japanese proposal.

However, it soon became clear that the British were far more sensitive to the opposition from the Dominions than had been previously assumed and had declared their opposition to the Japanese amendment. So Makino and Chinda undertook to negotiate directly with Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour and Robert Cecil.²⁰ Although personally sympathetic to Japan's position, Cecil maintained that questions such as religious freedom and racial equality, which were not directly related to the League, should not be included in the covenant.²¹ It is worth pointing out that Cecil, at this early stage, indicated that such an important issue could not be decided on a simple majority.²² Undoubtedly, he had to take into account the opposition of the Australian premier, William Hughes,²³ who began the protracted battle against the proposal which ended in his victory, as we shall see below. In any case, the Japanese were taken aback by the British attitude which seemed to give primacy to

²⁰Lord Robert Cecil was appointed as peace plenipotentiary to serve specifically on the League of Nations Commission. He was one of the two British representatives on the commission, the other being General Jan Smuts from South Africa.

²¹Matsui to Uchida, 16th February 1919, doc.364, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

²²Ibid.

²³William Morris Hughes (1864-1952) was born in Wales, went to Australia in 1884, entered politics in 1894, became Minister of External Affairs in 1904, Prime Minister 1915-1923, first as head of Labour ministry but later formed a national war government in 1917.

the Dominion interest although it meant them opposing their ally.²⁴

In spite of the British opposition, Makino and Chinda continued to discuss with House several drafts of the amendment until the 12th February.²⁵ Although Wilson previously suggested that he would be interested in submitting the Japanese amendment as one of his own, he was now too preoccupied with wanting to complete a preliminary draft of the covenant before his departure to the United States on the 14th February. Therefore, the Japanese decided to present the proposal independently to the League of Nations Commission on the 13th February as an amendment to Article 21:

The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Parties agree to accord as soon as possible to all alien nationals of states, members of the League, equal and just treatment in every respect making no distinction, either in law or in fact, on account of their race or nationality.

As Wilson's favoured article, the Japanese considered it unlikely to be defeated. The

²⁴Kikuchi Takenori, Hakushaku Chinda Sutemi den [Biography of Viscount Chinda Sutemi], (Tokyo, 1938), pp.207-208.

²⁵These meetings were not recorded in the Japanese sources. On 5th February, the Japanese submitted two amendments, one of which Wilson was willing to take on with a minor adjustment which read, "The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Powers agree that concerning the treatment of aliens in their territories, they will accord them, as soon and as far as practicable, equal treatment and rights, in law and in fact, without making any distinction on account of their race or nationality." On the 6th, the Japanese returned with the third amendment since the one which Wilson had agreed to on the 5th was deemed legally meaningless by their legal advisers. House asked David Hunter Miller to draft another on the 9th which was not shown to the Japanese. On the 10th, the Japanese submitted the fourth proposal which House gave to Miller for consideration but Miller was not forthcoming. Seymour, op. cit., pp.322-324; Binder 15, Series II, Collection Group 466, The Papers of Edward Mandell House (hereafter as House Papers), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University; D.H.Miller, document 362 and 363, Vol.5, and diary, 11th February 1919, Vol.1, My Diary: At the Conference of Paris, (New York, 1924).

speech²⁶ that Makino made on the occasion was deliberately low-key, as his principal concern was not to antagonise those commission members who were sceptical of the Japanese proposal. Makino made remarks to soften the blow such as "That race discrimination still exists, in law and in fact, is undeniable, and it is enough here simply to state the fact of its existence," and "an immediate realization of the ideal equality of treatment between peoples is not proposed" which played down the practical implications of the proposal.

How was the amendment received by the other members of the commission? On the whole, the combined article of religious freedom and racial equality was too risky a formula for most members to support. The British Empire delegation under Cecil claimed that the subject matter had been discussed thoroughly, leading to serious problems for the British Dominions.²⁷ Despite the noble nature of the proposal, he thought it advisable to postpone it to a later date. As for the Greeks, "Mr Veniselos was of the opinion that questions of race and religion would certainly be dealt with in the future by the League of Nations, but that it would be better for the moment not to allude to them."²⁸ Similarly, the French stated that since there was a correlation between race and religious questions, it would be better if both were eliminated.²⁹ Although the Chinese delegate, V.K. Wellington Koo, was "naturally in full sympathy with the spirit of the proposed amendment", he expressed

²⁶For an English text of the speech see Matsui to Uchida, 15th February 1919, doc.363, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

²⁷D.H. Miller, The Drafting of the Covenant, (New York, 1928), Vol.1, p.268.

²⁸Ibid., Vol.2, p.325.

²⁹Matsui to Uchida, 16th February 1919, doc.364, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

reservations pending instructions from his government.³⁰ On the other hand, Roumania, Brazil and Czechoslovakia supported the proposal. However, the majority was in favour of Cecil's proposal to eliminate Article 21 altogether. Although House expressed reservations about deleting the religious article without obtaining confirmation from Wilson, Wilson himself was not hesitant about eliminating it once he realised the degree of opposition which the Japanese amendment had attracted. Consequently, he presented a draft covenant without the religious freedom article at the plenary session on the 14th February 1919. This signified the first defeat of the racial equality proposal.

Analysis of the First Phase of the Negotiation

An analysis of the first phase of the negotiation leads us to three observations. Firstly, there was the problem of the lack of a clearly defined notion within the Japanese government as to what the racial equality proposal entailed. Because of the great haste in which the Hara government had to formulate a comprehensive peace policy, the original instruction on the racial equality demand was never fully developed into a coherent strategy. This was simply a reflection of the greater problem of the government's unpreparedness generally on the question of the League of Nations. Although it has been suggested that Makino and Chinda had an implicit agenda of resolving the anti-Japanese immigration problem, Tokyo never officially endorsed the idea, which implied that the proposal could only be negotiated implicitly as an immigration proposal. The fundamental problem of lack of consensus within the government, especially in the beginning, as to the precise meaning of the

³⁰Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.2, p.325.

proposal, and the absence of strategy in attaining the objective at the conference, made the Japanese negotiating position generally ineffective. In fact, Tokyo did not have any further input into the racial equality proposal after 8th December 1918 until 19th February 1919 when the report that the amendment was defeated on 13th February reached Tokyo.³¹ Significantly, there was no discussion in the Diplomatic Advisory Council concerning the precise nature of the demand during the crucial formative period of late January and early February 1919, which effectively meant that the actual form and substance of the proposal was left entirely in the hands of Makino and Chinda.

This leads to the second point that the lack of input from Tokyo in the negotiations was due to the initial problem experienced by the government in conducting diplomacy from a great distance. The government jealously guarded its power and wanted the plenipotentiaries to refer back all decisions to Tokyo, leaving little bargaining power at the front. However, the pace set at Paris was too fast for Tokyo to respond effectively and efficiently. This was particularly true with the League of Nations, leading to the widening of a gulf between Tokyo's perception of the League and the associated issue of racial equality, and that of the plenipotentiaries based in Paris. This led Makino to make a request to the Diplomatic Advisory Council on 3rd February 1919 for more discretionary power, arguing that the credibility of the Japanese government on such urgent issues was being undermined by its inconvenient, circuitous decision making process.³² This resulted in a role reversal insofar as the question of the League was concerned as the plenipotentiaries

³¹Minutes of the Diplomatic Advisory Council, 19th February 1919, Suiusô nikki.

³²Diary, 3rd February 1919, Hara Kei nikki, Vol.8.

were obliged to make decisions on many detailed issues in the League of Nations Commission without first consulting Tokyo. Inevitably, some members of the Diplomatic Advisory Council resented this discretionary power exercised by Makino in Paris. Itô Miyoji especially was critical of Makino who was criticised for being overzealous in supporting the League to the point of contradicting the government's peace policy, which adopted a more cautious attitude based on the domestic feeling of uncertainty about the organisation.³³ In fact, it developed into a row in the council which necessitated Prime Minister Hara to defend Makino and take responsibility for his choice as one of plenipotentiaries.³⁴ Thus, whilst the Diplomatic Advisory Council had no choice but to accept the decisions passed at Paris, there was much resentment in the council for being "secondary" to the plenipotentiaries. Makino was subjected to harsh criticism of the decisions he took on the racial equality proposal despite the absence of better alternatives proposed by the council. Although it has been suggested that the lack of input made by the government in Tokyo was indicative of its indifference towards the proposal,³⁵ it seems that it had more to do with inefficiency in conducting diplomacy from a distance, as well as the general lack of preparedness on the issue of the League of Nations.

Thirdly, it is important to mention the government's preoccupation with public

³³Minutes of the Diplomatic Advisory Council, 19th and 22nd February 1919, Suiusô nikki.

³⁴Diary, 19th February 1919, Hara kei nikki, Vol.8.

³⁵Onuma Yasuaki, "Haruka naru jinshu byôdô no risô" [The Distant Ideal of Racial Equality], Yasuaki Onuma ed., Kokusaihô, kokusai rengô to nihon [International Law, the United Nations and Japan], (Tokyo, 1987), pp.457-459.

opinion in Japan. Although the impact of pressure groups such as the League to Abolish Racial Discrimination (Jinshuteki sabetsu teppai kisei taikai) will be discussed in the following chapter, their fervent interest in supporting the racial equality demand placed a considerable pressure on the delegates in Paris. Most of all, the delegates were concerned that the activities of these groups would jeopardize the sensitive negotiation at Paris.³⁶ Makino and Chinda often referred to the need to satisfy public opinion as the reason for persisting in the negotiations. This is illustrated by the case below, when Chinda informed House of Japan's decision to submit the amendment on the 13th February:

Viscount Chinda called again to say he could get nothing definite from the British and that he intended to present a resolution himself which would be more drastic than the one the President agreed to accept. His idea is that while it will not be adopted, it will be an explanation to his people in Japan.³⁷

As we shall see later, domestic justification in the form of placating public opinion becomes increasingly significant in understanding why the Japanese persisted with the racial equality negotiations.

The Second Phase of the Proposal

The second phase of the racial equality negotiation started because the Japanese government refused to accept the defeat of the 13th February and it lasted until the 11th April when the proposal faced the second defeat. As mentioned above, the Diplomatic Advisory Council became aware of the defeat of the 13th February

³⁶Nakano Seigô, Kôwa kaigi o mokugeki shite [In Witnessing the Peace Conference], (Tokyo, 1919), pp.123.

³⁷Seymour, op. cit., p.324.

only on the 19th, but lost no time in instructing resubmission of the proposal.³⁸ On the 27th February, the Japanese government instructed the delegates as follows:

The question of abolition of racial discrimination belongs to one of the important demands of the Imperial Government with regards to the League of Nations. Although it has been defeated once at the peace conference, it should not be abandoned because it would affect the future interests of the Empire. Hence, we must give careful consideration on how to accomplish our objective.³⁹

On the 4th March, the government instructed the delegates to negotiate with Balfour or with other suitable officials of the British delegation in order to stress the point that Japan was not demanding to have immediate changes in practical problems related to racial equality but to have it accepted as an important principle of the League of Nations and world peace.⁴⁰ This was based on the realisation that the proposal was rejected because the British government had decided to take into account the position of the Dominions who opposed it on practical grounds.

Meanwhile, as soon as the preliminary draft covenant was adopted in the League of Nations Commission, Wilson left for the United States on the 15th February and did not return to Paris until the 13th March. Generally speaking, Wilson's trip had heightened anxiety in Japan about the mounting American opposition domestically to the League of Nations, and in particular, the criticism which the race proposal was attracting. In the light of Tokyo's concern, Ambassador

³⁸Minutes of Diplomatic Advisory Council, 19th February 1919, Suiusô nikki.

³⁹"Jinshuteki sabetsu teppai ni kansuru mondai" [Issues Related to the Abolition of Racial Discrimination], 2.4.2.2, Kokusai remmei: Jinshu sabetsu teppai [The League of Nations: Abolition of Racial Discrimination], Vol.3, Diplomatic Record Office, Tokyo.

⁴⁰Uchida to Matsui, 4th March 1919, doc.371, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

Ishii delivered an urgent note to Wilson before the latter's departure from the United States on 4th March, expressing Japan's willingness to compromise on the wording of the proposal to suit all parties concerned.⁴¹ In retrospect, it appears that American domestic opposition to the racial equality proposal was fuelled by Ishii's speech at the Japan Society in New York on 14th March which, while conspicuously dissociating immigration from racial equality, inadvertently had the opposite effect of strengthening the perceived connection between the two issues.⁴² Moreover, there was negative public reaction to the speech in Japan because it was perceived by some that the racial equality proposal was intended to have practical effects, such as immigration.⁴³

Gradually, the Japanese realised that the United States could no longer support their proposal in view of the increasingly hostile treatment which both Wilson and the League of Nations were receiving in the United States. A sense of crisis built up in the Diplomatic Advisory Council as Foreign Minister Uchida warned that any further effort to push the racial equality proposal might have the adverse effect of

⁴¹Ibid., Uchida to Ishii, 3rd March 1919, doc.370.

⁴²Ibid., Ishii to Uchida, 14th March 1919, doc.379; for the text of the speech see *ibid.*, Ishii to Uchida, 19th March 1919, doc.385; 16th March 1919, The New York Times. Lord Reading in Washington supported the view that the speech had been seized upon by those opposing the League, in Reading to Curzon, 15th March 1919, PRO FO 608/241, f 4841. Interestingly, Ishii defends his position in his later telegram to Uchida that there had not been a negative reaction to his speech apart from a few senators. Ishii to Uchida, 24th March 1919, doc.391, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

⁴³6th April 1919, Tokyo nichì nichì shimbun; Niizuma Kôdô, "Beikoku no han nihon fû" [An Anti-Japanese Wind in the United States], Nihon oyobi nihonjin no.756 (1st May 1919), pp.35-37; "Sabetsu teppai to kokumin no kakugo" [Abolition of Discrimination and the Preparedness of the Nation], Nihon oyobi nihonjin no.754 (5th April 1919), p.39.

strengthening the Senate's opposition to President Wilson.⁴⁴ This shows that the Japanese government was aware that their proposal was being adopted by the anti-League lobby in the United States as a weapon to discredit Wilson. House advised Makino and Chinda on 18th March to relax their attitude towards the race proposal.⁴⁵ However, Makino and Chinda had reached a different conclusion by then, namely, that if the draft covenant were to be amended, then Japan had no choice but to submit another race proposal. In preparation, they requested further instructions from Tokyo on 20th March on the procedure to be taken should their proposal be rejected for the second time.⁴⁶

As Tokyo was anxious to reach a compromise with the British Empire delegation, the second phase of the negotiations was characterised by an intensive interaction between the two delegations. It was Tokyo's policy to approach the British Empire delegation centrally by negotiating directly with the British government, which controlled the foreign policy of the Dominions.⁴⁷ This underlined the difference in the perception of immigration as an issue: for the Japanese it was an international issue, whereas for the British it was an internal issue. Therefore, Tokyo found it difficult to grasp that the British, once having interpreted the Japanese proposal as implying immigration, regarded it as a Dominion issue. Being in Paris, Makino and Chinda recognised the necessity of dealing directly with

⁴⁴Diary, 12th March 1919, Hara Kei nikki, Vol.8.

⁴⁵Matsui to Uchida, 20th March 1919, doc.387, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid., Uchida to Matsui, 4th March 1919, doc.371.

the Dominions, especially after seeing Cecil. In fact, Chinda saw little benefit in negotiating with Balfour whose attitude seemed to have hardened against it.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Tokyo continued to disapprove of Makino and Chinda's decision to approach the Australians, by reinstating the instruction to negotiate directly with the British government, and to ask for American assistance if necessary.⁴⁹ It seems that Tokyo was indignant at having to negotiate directly with Australia which was only a junior member of the British Empire delegation.⁵⁰

As it became clear that the Australian Premier, William Hughes, was the most persistent opponent of the Japanese proposal, Makino and Chinda saw him on 14th March in order to emphasise the importance of having the principle of racial equality accepted without any practical implications for immigration. The essence of Hughes's reply was that as the proposal touched upon a problem of immense practical importance, he could not ignore Australian public opinion, which was against it.⁵¹ Makino and Chinda requested further meetings with Hughes who avoided seeing them on the pretext of illness.⁵² In the meantime, they met House on 21st March to

⁴⁸Ibid., Matsui to Uchida, 6th March 1919, doc.374.

⁴⁹Ibid., Uchida to Matsui, 16th March 1919, doc.382.

⁵⁰In fact, Australia was generally regarded as a colony which should have been "suppressed" and "tamed" by Britain. 20th April 1919, Tokyo nichu nichu shimbun.

⁵¹Matsui to Uchida, 15th March 1919, doc.381, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919; L.T.Fitzhardinge, William Morris Hughes: A Political Biography, Vol.2, (Sydney, 1979), p.403.

⁵²Matsui to Uchida, 25th March 1919, doc.392, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

discuss a newly amended proposal⁵³ to which the latter agreed, provided that the word "equality" was deleted from the text, and that it would be amended so as to be an insertion into the preamble of the covenant. Nonetheless, House reminded them of the importance of eliminating the British opposition. Finally, Makino and Chinda saw the Australian Attorney General on the 22nd March to present a new proposal which read, "By the endorsement of principle of equality of all nationals of States members of the League". This revised form was so remote from the amendment of the 13th February that it was impossible to claim that the new proposal amounted to Japan's desire for free immigration. Nevertheless, for Hughes, it still conveyed the same message. In desperation, Makino and Chinda met Cecil on the 23rd to seek Britain's approval only to be told that it was Australia's problem and that Britain was not in a position to give any definitive response.⁵⁴ On 24th March, Cecil reiterated to the Japanese that the only solution left to break the deadlock was to negotiate directly with the Dominions to reach a compromise. The fact that Cecil went so far as to suggest this made explicit the British government's refusal to interfere with any questions relating to immigration in the Dominions even at the risk of offending Japan.

By now, the Dominion leaders realised that they held the key to Japan's controversial proposal and many efforts were expended to resolve the crisis in Paris. The South African General, Jan Smuts and the Canadian Prime Minister, Sir Robert

⁵³The proposal read: "Equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Powers agree to endorse principle of equality and just treatment to be accorded to all alien nationals of states, members of the League."

⁵⁴Matsui to Uchida, 25th March 1919, doc.392, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

Borden, played an important role towards the end of March in attempting to place pressure on Hughes to concur with the majority Dominion view which was to accept the amended proposal.⁵⁵ To begin with, Borden arranged a meeting between the Dominion premiers, Cecil, Makino and Chinda on the 25th March to see whether a compromise could be reached. At the meeting, the Dominion premiers objected to the word "equality" because it applied not only to Japanese but to Chinese and Indians who were the main target of restrictive Dominion immigration policies. But the Japanese refused to delete the word because it was so central to the proposal. To break the deadlock, Borden suggested another wording of the proposal which read, "By the endorsement of the principle of equality between nations and just treatment of nationals".⁵⁶ This formula was agreed by all except Hughes who, after defending his position, stormed out of the room. In the end, Hughes's defiant behaviour was seen as a political statement made to his domestic audience in the run up to the general elections in Australia.⁵⁷

The Japanese delegates tried to overcome this deadlock by appealing to Britain again. They asked Smuts on the 26th March to talk to Lloyd George to bring his

⁵⁵The proposal now read, "By the endorsement of principle of equality of all nationals of States members of the League".

⁵⁶According to Borden, two more proposals besides his and that of the Japanese were considered at the meeting: one from Smuts, "By the recognition of the principle of open equal and honourable relations between nations and just treatment of their nations within the territories of other nations" and another from Cecil, "The members of the League agree that they will grant equal treatment to all foreign residents being nationals of other members of the League, within their territories." Fitzhardinge, *op. cit.*, p.404.

⁵⁷Matsui to Uchida, 30th March 1919, doc.396, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919; Maida Minoru, "Jinshu sabetsu teppai hiketsu ni tsuite" [On the Rejection of Abolition of Racial Discrimination], Gaikô jihô Vol.29 no.10 (15th May 1919), p.11.

influence to bear on Hughes.⁵⁸ Because of Hughes's position as a Dominion premier coupled with his difficult personality, Smuts argued that this approach would be counterproductive. Instead, he offered to try himself to moderate Australia's uncompromising position. Smuts's effort at mediation did not yield much fruit except that Hughes no longer pointed the finger at Japanese but Chinese immigration.⁵⁹ Certainly, it did not stop Hughes from threatening to make an inflammatory speech at the plenary session and to refrain from signing the covenant, should the Japanese proposal be inserted into it. Inevitably, the opposition of Australia and New Zealand which was increasingly affected by the former's position, meant that the British government had no choice but to oppose it as well. In exasperation, Smuts suggested to the Japanese that the clause could still be utilized in the form of a convention stipulating equality in trading practices, presently under investigation in the Economic Commission. However, Makino replied that it was impossible to convince Japanese public opinion that Hughes's opposition alone could defeat the proposal which, the public felt, was unconditionally "just". Unusually blunt for Makino, he went on to state that he would not allow his nation's belief in the principle of equality to be treated as a "trifle".⁶⁰ By then, there was a feeling in the Japanese delegation that no other alternative existed but to submit the proposal in the League of Nations Commission and ignore Hughes's threat in the plenary session. On 31st March,

⁵⁸Matsui to Uchida, 30th March 1919, doc.396, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid., Matsui to Uchida, 2nd April 1919, doc.400.

Smuts passed on the news to the Japanese that Hughes might agree to a formula⁶¹ in which immigration and naturalisation laws were mentioned as examples of domestic affairs not to be interfered with by foreign governments. Interestingly, the Japanese rejected it on the grounds that it was impossible to decide on such issues which needed to be discussed eventually in the League, especially in the light of Japan's immigration problems with the United States.⁶² Despite Tokyo's decision to push for the acceptance of the principle *per se*, Makino and Chinda were not prepared to do this at the cost of resolving the immigration problem. Predictably, the rejection heightened Australia's conviction that the Japanese did have ulterior motives.

As the struggle with the Dominions continued, the American stance continued to harden against the Japanese proposal. In his meetings with Makino and Chinda on the 29th and 31st March, House disclosed that the United States would most likely have to support the British position due to the strength of the anti-Japanese lobby in the United States especially on the West Coast.⁶³ Hughes's violent opposition seemed to have had a negative impact on the American position by agitating American public opinion.⁶⁴ In contrast to the British Empire delegation whose Dominion members participated fully in the racial equality negotiation, the American

⁶¹According to Borden, this was either the one proposed by Borden above or another proposed by Smuts which was: "By the recognition of the principle of open equal and honourable relations between nations and just treatment of their nationals within the territories of other nations" in H.Borden ed., Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs, Vol.2, (London, 1938), pp.925-927.

⁶²Matsui to Uchida, 2nd April 1919, doc.400, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Maida, *op. cit.*, p.10.

negotiations were conducted almost single handedly by Colonel House. However, Japan's singular dependence on House eventually weakened its negotiating position as his previously undisputed position as the eye and the ear of Wilson had diminished considerably by late March due to a rift which developed between the two during Wilson's absence from Paris. Nor did Makino and Chinda attempt to approach Wilson directly, possibly because the issue was not deemed to be important enough, and the Japanese delegation did not have enough clout to negotiate directly with Wilson.

As Makino and Chinda fought on the front line in Paris, Tokyo began to despair over the seemingly endless obstacles which the proposal was facing in Paris. On 30th March, Hara asked the Diplomatic Advisory Council to consider the possible course of action in case of the rejection of the proposal.⁶⁵ Personally, Hara believed that "it was not a big enough problem to withdraw from the League of Nations".⁶⁶ Although Itô and Inukai continued to argue about how "just" the proposal was, the council unanimously concluded that the government should not in any event lose face over this issue. Hence, new instructions outlining various options were sent to the delegates on the same day.⁶⁷ The first option was to declare the specified passage⁶⁸

⁶⁵Minutes of Diplomatic Advisory Council, 30th March 1919, Suiusô nikki.

⁶⁶Diary, 30th March 1919, Hara Kei nikki, Vol.8.

⁶⁷Uchida to Matsui, 30th March 1919, doc.395, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

⁶⁸It read as follows: "In proceeding this day to the signature of the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Japanese Plenipotentiaries declare their earnest expectation that having particular regard to the basic principles of the League of Nations, each of the States, Members of the League, will refrain from exercising discriminatory treatment either at law or in fact in respect of nationals of any other State, which is a member of the League, on grounds of race or nationality."

as an appendix to the League covenant, while at the same time to issue a statement declaring its acceptance as *prendre acte* of the conference. The second option was simply to accept the above declaration as an appendix to the covenant without obtaining a statement of full-fledged support from member states. The last option was to register in writing the above declaration in the proceedings of the conference. The plenipotentiaries were to defer signing the covenant if none of the above options was possible. Back in Paris, the first two options were regarded as implausible as they demanded an insertion of the passage in the covenant. However, Makino and Chinda knew that they could avoid the ultimate embarrassment of deferring signature because the final option would be done as a matter of conference protocol.⁶⁹

In the early days of April, the Japanese tirelessly worked on Hughes. On 3rd April, Makino and Chinda met Lloyd George who apparently promised "to do something" about Hughes.⁷⁰ Chinda followed it up with a letter to Lloyd George asking him to exert his influence in order to postpone the last meeting of the League of Nations Commission and to take up the proposal with Wilson.⁷¹ Makino and Chinda continued to negotiate with Borden, Botha and Smuts, but Hughes remained unmoved.⁷² During the period, Makino was able to depend on his friendship with

⁶⁹Matsui to Uchida, 5th April 1919, doc.401, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

⁷⁰Ibid., Matsui to Uchida, 13th April 1919, doc.405.

⁷¹Ibid., Chinda to Lloyd George, 7th April 1919, doc.402.

⁷²Borden records meetings with Cecil and Makino on 7th April, with Botha in the same evening; with Chinda and Makino on 9th April; and with Garran and Botha on 10th April. Borden, op. cit., pp.925-927.

Wickham Steed to prevent The Times from adopting an anti-Japanese tone.⁷³ But the Australian threat of withdrawal from Paris remained firm and even Makino's last attempt to meet Hughes before the final meeting of the League of Nations Commission on 11th April failed. Hughes's determination was such that Botha explained to Makino, "strictly between ourselves, I think he is mad!"⁷⁴ Having tried in vain every available avenue to break the deadlock, there was no alternative left for Makino and Chinda, who were under immense pressure from public opinion in Japan, but to submit the proposal on the 11th April.

The Second Defeat

At the fifteenth and the final meeting of the League of Nations Commission, Japan presented a racial equality amendment in the form of an insertion to the preamble of the covenant which read:

...by the endorsement of the principle of equality of nations and just treatment of their nationals....

In his speech, Makino emphasised the shift from demanding "equality of races" to "equality of nations":

My amendment to the Preamble is simply to lay down a general principle as regards the relationship at least between the nationalities forming the League, just as it prescribes the rules of conduct to be observed between the Governments of the State Members. It is not intended that the amendment should encroach on the internal affairs of any nation. It simply sets forth an

⁷³Matsui to Uchida, 13th April 1919, doc.405, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919. By the end of March 1919, The Times predicted that the Japanese amendment in the revised form would likely be adopted. See 27th March 1919, The Times, London.

⁷⁴Matsui to Uchida, 13th April 1919, doc.405, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

aim in the future international intercourse.⁷⁵

By all accounts, Japan's case sounded reasonable and persuasive. Nevertheless, Cecil had to reject the Japanese amendment on the following grounds:

The British Government realised the importance of the racial question, but its solution could not be attempted by the Commission without encroaching upon the sovereignty of States members of the League. One of two things must be true: either the points which the Japanese Delegation proposed to add to the Preamble were vague and ineffective, or else they were of practical significance. In the latter case, they opened the door to serious controversy and to interference in the domestic affairs of States members of the League.⁷⁶

To this, Chinda retorted that the significance of the amendment lay not in the demand of race equality but of equality of nations; and if the amendment were rejected, Japanese public opinion would regard the League most unfavourably as it would be an indication that the equality of members of the League was not recognized.⁷⁷

Then Wilson as chairman opened the floor for discussion. Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando of Italy spoke in favour of the racial equality proposal:

The equality of nations was a question which perhaps ought not to have been raised; but once having been raised, there was no other solution except that of adopting the amendment. Lord Robert Cecil had spoke of the practical reasons why its application would be difficult. Such an argument would carry weight if the Commission were considering the adoption of an Article in the Covenant which put the members of the League under a definite obligation. All that was now asked, however, was the insertion of a principle in the Preamble. If this principle were rejected, it would give rise to feelings which were hardly in harmony with the new organisation.⁷⁸

Italy's support of racial equality appears to have been based on Orlando's position, generally supported by public opinion, that Italy should support a proposal which was

⁷⁵Ibid., Matsui to Uchida, 14th April 1919, doc.406.

⁷⁶Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.2, p.389.

⁷⁷Ibid., p.390.

⁷⁸Ibid.

in line with the sort of principles and ideals which the League was attempting to enshrine.⁷⁹ The French representative in the commission, Léon Bourgeois, agreed wholeheartedly with Orlando to support the proposal. The French acceptance was based on two factors: first, "it was impossible to vote for the rejection of an amendment which embodied an indisputable principle of justice"⁸⁰; second, as part of the preamble outlining broad basic principles, states were not obliged to strict observance.⁸¹ Even the Chinese who were confronting the Japanese over the Shantung question expressed support as Wellington Koo stated,

...I should be very glad indeed to see the principle itself given recognition in the Covenant, and I hope that the Commission will not find serious difficulties in the way of its acceptance.⁸²

It seems that China's position was complicated by two conflicting factors.⁸³ On the one hand, China naturally wanted racial equality because they were being racially discriminated against by foreigners including the Japanese. On the other hand, Koo

⁷⁹13th April 1919, Corriere della sera, Milan; Extract from Idea Nazionale of 28th April 1919, entitled "The League of Nations is a Fraud", Erskine to Curzon, 6th May 1919, PRO FO 608/241, f 9694. In late April, when the Italians realised that Wilson was being soft to the Japanese by giving them Shantung whilst refusing Fiume to Italy, public opinion in Italy turned against Japan and claimed that the Japanese had been devious in accomplishing their diplomatic triumph at the expense of Italy. See 3rd May 1919, Corriere della sera.

⁸⁰Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.2, p.390.

⁸¹Matsui to Uchida, 13th April 1919, doc.406, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

⁸²Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.2, p.391. The Japanese Foreign Ministry telegraph simply stated that "also the Chinese delegates supported our proposal" in Matsui to Uchida, 13th April 1919, doc.406, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

⁸³This is an analysis based on Chinese position leading up to 11th April voting. See, for instance, diary, 29th March 1919, Add.51131, f.64, The Cecil of Chelwood Papers (hereafter Cecil Papers), British Library; Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.1, p.336.

did not want to antagonise the sensitivities of the British and Americans by appearing to be too enthusiastic because he needed their support for China's claim to Shantung.⁸⁴

The Greek Prime Minister, Veniselos, who had previously opposed the religious freedom article in February now supported the amendment because the nature of the issue had changed completely from the equality of races to that of nations.⁸⁵ Although the Japanese official sources did not give details of Czechoslovakia's support, Kramar stated that the amendment was in complete accordance with the spirit of the preamble especially with the phrase "open, just and honourable relations."⁸⁶ Only the Poles spoke against it on the technical grounds that it seemed impractical to incorporate a principle in the preamble which was not elaborated as an article, though Dmowski personally was entirely sympathetic to the Japanese proposal.⁸⁷

President Wilson's speech is significant because this was the only occasion during the peace conference when he expressed publicly his thoughts on the racial

⁸⁴After the 11th April ruling and during the Shantung negotiation, the Chinese position on the racial equality proposal becomes more complicated because, in spite of Koo's declared support for it, many in the Chinese delegation, especially C.T.Wang, began to circulate the view that the Japanese had used it as a "bargaining chip" to obtain favourable settlement on the Shantung issue. The division seems to reflect the internal political division of the Chinese delegation into those from the North (Koo) and those from the South (Wang). For the Sino-American "bargaining chip" theory, see Chapter 8.

⁸⁵Matsui to Uchida, 13th April 1919, doc.406, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

⁸⁶Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.2, p.391.

⁸⁷Matsui to Uchida, 13th April 1919, doc.406, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

equality issue. Although he did not speak directly against the proposal, it was a circuitous attempt to induce the Japanese as well as the rest of the commission to shelf the issue for the time being in order not to provoke any controversy when the League of Nations was just about to be created:

The trouble is not with our discussions here, but with the discussions which would certainly be raised in the Plenary Council if the words suggested were introduced into this Covenant. My own interest, let me say, is to quiet discussion that raises national differences and racial prejudices. I would wish them, particularly at this juncture in the history of the relations of nations with one another, to be forced as much as possible into the background. ... It is in my own mind for the purpose of quieting these prejudices, of letting them play no part in the discussions connected with the establishment of this League, that I am looking at this whole matter.⁸⁸

He was anxious that this matter would not be raised at the plenary session on the 28th April in order to prevent an open clash between the Japanese and Australians. However, the Japanese were not willing to retreat, especially after hearing the more than favourable general response to their proposal, and asked for a vote to be taken in order to ascertain how the commission stood on the issue. Due to the absence of Smuts and Hysman (Belgium), seventeen out of nineteen members of the commission voted. Those who voted for the amendment were Japan(2), France(2), Italy(2), Brazil(1), China(1), Greece(1), Serbia(1), and Czechoslovakia(1), totalling eleven. No negative vote was taken which meant that votes of the British Empire delegation, United States, Portugal, Poland, and Roumania were not registered. It must be mentioned that the Japanese sources are not accurate on this point: they claim that Portugal voted for and Brazil voted against it.⁸⁹

⁸⁸Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.1, pp.462-463.

⁸⁹Matsui to Uchida, 13th April 1919, doc.406, and Horiguchi (Brazil) to Uchida, 1st May 1919, doc.411, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919. This error nearly caused a diplomatic incident between Brazil and Japan.

At this juncture, Wilson as chairman imposed a unanimity ruling which meant that the proposal was rejected in spite of the majority voting in its favour. This decision was questioned by Makino and also by the French⁹⁰ since majority voting was used to decide on the site of the League.⁹¹ Wilson's justification was as follows:

President Wilson admitted that a majority had so voted, but stated that decisions of the Commission were not valid unless unanimous.... In the present instance there was, certainly, a majority, but strong opposition had manifested itself against the amendment and under these circumstances the resolution could not be considered as adopted.⁹²

By "strong opposition", it referred to the consistently declared position of the British Empire delegation. Hence, the most interesting aspect of this unanimity rule is that it allowed the United States to oppose the Japanese proposal without openly declaring its position, by relying on the strength of the highly publicised opposition of British Empire delegation. In the light of the situation, Makino left open the question of whether or not to raise the issue again at the plenary session by stating that Japan would attempt whenever possible to reiterate this "just" demand.

The Japanese delegates reported back to Tokyo that domestic opposition in the British Empire and the United States had placed Wilson, House and especially Cecil in the extremely difficult position of having to reject an obviously reasonable

⁹⁰To the French, the American position seemed conspicuously contradictory for supporting a league based on the so-called Wilsonian ideals, but turning a blind eye to an obvious principle of universal importance. 14th April 1919, Le Matin, Paris; also see 29th August 1919, Annales de la Chambre des Députés: Débats Parlementaires: 11me Législature.

⁹¹Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.2, p.392.

⁹²Ibid.

proposal.⁹³ As the telegram reporting the proceeding was not despatched from Paris until the 13th April, Tokyo did not hear of the news until the 15th. Consequently, the Diplomatic Advisory Council was finally informed of the unsuccessful result only on 21st April. The council strongly criticised the way in which the racial equality proposal was approached: firstly, for missing an earlier opportunity to raise the issue when the draft covenant was first submitted to the conference; secondly, for ignoring Japan's ally, Britain, and going directly to the United States to open negotiation; and thirdly, for substantially changing the substance of the proposal from equality of treatment eventually to just treatment.⁹⁴ Essentially, the plenipotentiaries were accused of deviating from the government's instructions by presenting an "incomplete" proposal which did not have any practical implications, thereby effectively rendering the whole exercise meaningless.⁹⁵ The defeat of the racial equality proposal hardened the government's determination to "win" the Shantung settlement, instructing the delegates to refuse signing the treaty should the demand on Shantung not be accepted.

Analysis of the Second Attempt

The most important observation to be made about this period is that the emphasis of the Japanese proposal had shifted from "equality of race" to "equality of nations". The final amendment to the preamble--"by the endorsement of the principle

⁹³Matsui to Uchida, 13th April 1919, doc.406, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

⁹⁴Minutes of Diplomatic Advisory Council, 21st April 1919, Suiusô nikki.

⁹⁵Ibid.

of equality of nations and just treatment of their nationals"--simply recognised the equality of nations and nothing more. In terms of the treatment of its nationals, it only referred to "just" treatment and did not at all touch on "equality" or "non-discrimination".⁹⁶ This shift reveals two things about the Japanese negotiating position. First of all, the ultimate success of the proposal became increasingly a matter of "face" to Tokyo as the unsuccessful tale of Makino and Chinda's negotiation with the Dominions began to embarrass the government back home. The shift in the meaning of the proposal occurred from "race" to more generally "equality" because the Diplomatic Advisory Council had emphasised the utmost importance of having the acceptance of the principle *per se* on 4th March.⁹⁷ Therefore, the council's criticism made of the negotiation on the 21st April⁹⁸ could not be justified in the light of both their previous instructions and their lack of coherent strategy for the proposal. Secondly, the Japanese government showed itself to be entirely preoccupied with the Anglo-Saxon opposition, neglecting all the others. The fact that Makino and Chinda were swaying between the Americans and the British (and the Dominions) for encouragement and approval of their draft proposals implied that, for Japan, political acceptance of the proposal by the Anglo-Saxon powers was more important than the actual substance of their proposal. This supports the point made in the previous chapter that the proposal was intended to address Japan's insecurity vis-a-vis the Anglo-Saxon powers in the League of Nations.

⁹⁶Onuma, *op. cit.*, pp.452-453.

⁹⁷Uchida to Matsui, 4th March 1919, doc.371, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

⁹⁸Minutes of Diplomatic Advisory Council, 21st April 1919, Suiusô nikki.

Otherwise, Japan could have made use of an opportunity for free international publicity by mobilising French and Italian support for the proposal, as well as that of the non-western world, to champion its cause.

There is no doubt that Makino's initial drafting of the proposal to reflect his and the Foreign Ministry's desire to resolve the anti-Japanese immigration problem, had pushed precisely the wrong button as far as the United States and the British Dominions were concerned. The initial stigma of immigration attached to the proposal meant that Australia could not ultimately be convinced that it was really all about "equality of nations" and nothing more.

The Final Opportunity

The final phase of the negotiations for racial equality covers the period from the defeat of the proposal on the 11th April until the 28th April when Makino made a final plea at the plenary conference. Tokyo did not send further instructions after the debacle on the 11th April but Makino and Chinda continued with their effort to bring the proposal to an "honourable" conclusion. British sources show that Smuts continued to negotiate with the Japanese in an effort to alleviate the risk of a heated confrontation which Wilson was so anxious to avoid, between Japan and Australia in the plenary session.⁹⁹ House also recorded visits made by Makino and Chinda on 15th and 26th April although these meetings had not been reported back to Tokyo by the Japanese.¹⁰⁰ According to Smuts, the Japanese determination to persist with the

⁹⁹Diary, 26th April 1919, Add.51131, f.75, Cecil Papers.

¹⁰⁰Diary, 15th and 26th April 1919, Binder 15, Series II, Collection Group 466, House Papers.

negotiations stemmed from domestic public pressure:

...the public opinion in Japan was such that the Japanese Representatives could not leave the matter there, and they had proposed to move the amendment in the Plenary Session. It had been pointed out to them, however, that the amendment would be defeated there, and that such an open rebuff would have unfortunate effects; and they had finally agreed to confine themselves simply to a declaration reciting the history of the amendment and its failure, concluding that Japan, for her part, accepted the principle of equality of nationals, and would continue to urge its adoption in the future.¹⁰¹

No doubt, the Japanese government was under immense pressure domestically to succeed at the peace conference. The pressure was mounting particularly as the two territorial settlements which the Japanese had taken for granted had not yet been satisfactorily resolved: the final verdict on the Shantung settlement was not made until 30th April; and the peace conference imposed the mandates system on the Pacific islands north of the equator instead of an outright annexation by Japan.

Another important development was the structural change which took place in the peace conference from 24th March 1919 with the formation of the Council of Four, consisting of Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando, which replaced the Council of Ten.¹⁰² Japan was excluded from the new council despite the fact that it was invited as one of five great powers to the peace conference. Japan's repeated requests to the United States, Britain and France for representation on the council was turned down.¹⁰³ Lloyd George's explanation was as follows:

¹⁰¹British Empire Delegation Minutes 29, 28th April 1919, F126, Lloyd George Papers, Historical Collection 192, House of Lords Record Office.

¹⁰²For details of the organisation and structure of the Paris Peace Conference, consult F.S.Marston, The Peace Conference of 1919: Organisation and Procedure, (London, 1944).

¹⁰³Matsui to Uchida, 10th April 1919, doc.202, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919; Seymour, op. cit., pp.484-485; Minutes of Council of Four, 26th May 1919, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter FRUS) 1919,

We can answer that we four meet together only in order to study purely European questions, and that the Japanese delegates will be welcome whenever we approach any question of interest to them.¹⁰⁴

Undoubtedly, this was an enormous blow to Japanese prestige and underlined the weakness of Japan's great power status. Its impact was felt particularly in Japan. Nagaoka, a Foreign Ministry official, who was involved in the attempts to rectify the situation at Paris remarked that Japan was excluded for two reasons: first, its interests were in East Asia and did not extend to Europe; second, Japan's "silence" in the Council of Ten meant that it was "naturally forgotten and left behind" in the Council of Four.¹⁰⁵ More importantly, as Japan had not taken any part in the battle on the western front, there was a feeling amongst the western great powers that Japan should not share in the discussion of European questions. Confidentially, the military representatives were reporting back to their ministry in Tokyo that the fact of exclusion proved that Japan was not really one of the great powers.¹⁰⁶ Since the Council of Four operated confidentially, it now became very difficult for the Japanese delegates to find out what was being discussed and decided by the Big Four. Not surprisingly, the Hara government was heavily criticised domestically for this exclusion. Political opponents took the opportunity to brandish it as the sign of the

Paris Peace Conference Vol.6.

¹⁰⁴Paul Mantoux, Paris Peace Conference 1919: Proceedings of the Council of Four(March 24 - April 18), (Geneva, 1964), p.85.

¹⁰⁵Nagaoka, Harukazu, Nihon gaikô monjo: Nihon gaikô tsuikairoku 1900-1935 [Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy: Diplomatic Memoirs of Nagaoka Harukazu], p.370, Diplomatic Record Office, Tokyo.

¹⁰⁶Colonel Sato to the Head of Chief of Staff, 19th April 1919, no.541.4, Teikoku (Japan), 2.3.1./1-4, Pari heiwa jôyaku: Rekkoku no taido oyobi seikyô [Paris Peace Treaty: Attitudes and Political Situations of the Powers], Diplomatic Record Office, Tokyo.

failure of Japanese diplomacy as seen in the speech of Katô Kômei, the leader of Kenseikai:

Practically in form only was Japan a participant at the Conference of the Entente Powers. In reality she was placed in the same rank as the other small Powers, which is matter for the keenest disappointment. Abroad the opportunity of a thousand years offered by the Peace Conference has, speaking broadly, been lost, and we have succeeded neither in advancing Japan's position nor yet her reputation.¹⁰⁷

Hence, the "loss of face" over the Council of Four compounded the pressure on the Hara government.

Towards the end of April, the level of tension was high amongst the great powers because of Italy's temporary withdrawal from the conference over Fiume. In the light of the humiliation experienced over racial equality, it became crucial for the Japanese government to succeed in Shantung.¹⁰⁸ Balfour who was appointed by the Council of Four to negotiate with the Japanese on Shantung, claimed that the Japanese were trying to put pressure on the council to reach a favourable conclusion on the Shantung settlement prior to the plenary session. His report to the council on the meeting with Makino and Chinda which took place on the 26th April was as follows:

...Makino came to see him [Balfour] again Sunday evening. With great delicacy but perfect clearness he had indicated that Japan wanted a decision on Japanese claims as a whole. He had pointed out that Japan was asked to agree to the League of Nations although she could not obtain recognition of her claims for equality of treatment. He had said that public opinion in Japan was much concerned on this question, that if Japan was to receive one check as regards Shantung, and another check as regards the League of Nations, the

¹⁰⁷Alston to Curzon, 17th July 1919, PRO FO 410/67, Confidential Print 11580, no 17.

¹⁰⁸Correspondence between Tokyo and the Japanese delegation now concentrated almost exclusively on the Shantung question, leaving very little room for racial equality.

position would be very serious. Consequently, it was very important to obtain a decision on the question of Shantung before the Plenary Session to be held the same afternoon on the subject of the League of Nations. He understood that if Japan received what she wanted in regard to Shantung, her representatives at the Plenary Meeting would content themselves with a survey of the inequality of races and move some abstract resolution which would probably be rejected. Japan then would merely make a protest. If, however, she regarded herself as ill-treated over Shantung, he was unable to say what line the Japanese Delegates might take.¹⁰⁹

Interestingly, Makino and Chinda's telegraph to the Foreign Ministry reporting the same meeting did not at all mention the sort of exchange which Balfour had mentioned. Instead, it reported in detail the clarifications made to Balfour on technical points concerning Japan's intentions in Shantung, as it became clear to the Japanese that Balfour had little understanding of the proposed settlement.¹¹⁰ In any case, the fact that the Shantung negotiation ran parallel to the final phase of the racial equality negotiation led to a number of allegations that the Japanese government was using the rejection of the racial equality proposal as a means of obtaining Shantung.

To everyone's relief, Makino made a "peaceful" speech on racial equality at the plenary session on the 28th April, which was recorded in the protocol as instructed by the Diplomatic Advisory Council. It seems that the Japanese did not whip up a storm on 28th April because it would have most certainly meant a loss of face in front of the international public which would have had an immensely negative impact on domestic public opinion. After the plenary session, Makino realised how problematic this issue had been for the British when he noted the look of relief on

¹⁰⁹Minutes of Council of Four, 28th April 1919, FRUS 1919, Paris Peace Conference Vol.5.

¹¹⁰Matsui to Uchida, 28th April 1919, doc.223, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

Lloyd George who came to congratulate him.¹¹¹ Evidently, the Japanese took the risk that the Council of Four would resolve the Shantung settlement in their favour without having first obtained the final ruling on the 28th, as the Shantung issue remained unresolved until 30th April. Luckily for them, Shantung was settled in Japan's favour.

How did Makino and Chinda justify the risk they took? A few days later, Tokyo learned from their plenipotentiaries that the racial equality amendment was not put to a vote at the plenary session because it was believed that the final amendment was too unsatisfactory in form as a result of countless changes and compromises.¹¹² Moreover, it was argued that some states would be induced to vote against their conscience in fear of endangering the friendship of Britain and the United States. Consequently, it was deemed expedient to simply clarify the position of the Japanese government and to have Makino's speech recorded in the protocol as originally instructed by Tokyo. Admittedly this report sounded more like a self-justification of the plenipotentiaries than the reality of what happened in the closing days of April, but Tokyo was happy to bury the proposal.

Racial Equality and Peace Conference Politics

At this juncture, it is necessary to consider the explanation that the racial equality proposal was part of the politics played by the Japanese government to obtain a favourable settlement on the Shantung question. As mentioned above, the proximity

¹¹¹Makino, op. cit., p.210.

¹¹²Matsui to Uchida, 29th April 1919, doc.410, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

of the two issues in terms of timing did lead some peace conference participants especially the Chinese and Americans to speculate on the existence of such an ulterior motive for the Japanese proposal.¹¹³ However, the existence of the 1917 secret agreement between Japan and Britain indicates that the Japanese demand for Shantung should have seemed secure as far as Japan was concerned.

As mentioned previously, Japan had very promptly occupied the German territories in Shantung and the Pacific after entering the war in August 1914. The initial peace terms prepared by the Japan-Germany Peace Preparatory Committee established in September 1915 in the Japanese Foreign Ministry centred exclusively on the acquisition of the rights to these former German territories.¹¹⁴ On 27th January 1917, the Japanese government made a request to the British government to support its claims to the former German rights in Shantung and the Pacific islands north of the equator. The British position on the issue was as follows:

Japan is already in occupation of the German rights in Shantung, and her officials have been administering for two years the leased territory of Kiaochow and the railway from Tsingtao to Tsinanfu. To give her an assurance that we shall support her claims in an eventual settlement is only to recognise the *fait accompli*. That she would in any circumstances, except before force, evacuate is not thinkable. We have therefore no alternative but to make a virtue of necessity and comply with her request.¹¹⁵

The War Cabinet decided that there was no choice but to accede to the Japanese request and to ask for reciprocal support for British claims to the Pacific islands south

¹¹³This view will be examined in detail in Chapter 8 because it was predominantly a Sino-American interpretation of the Japanese proposal.

¹¹⁴For details, confer footnote 46 in Chapter 2.

¹¹⁵Foreign Office confidential memorandum to the Cabinet, 2nd February 1917, Box 56, Davidson Papers, Historical Collection 187, House of Lords Record Office.

of the equator.¹¹⁶ The British reply to the Japanese government was despatched on 14th February 1917 as follows:

Her Majesty's Government accede with pleasure to the request of the Japanese Government for an assurance that they will support Japan's claim in regard to the disposition of Germany's rights in Shantung and in possessions in Islands North of the Equator, on the occasion of a Peace Conference, it being understood that the Japanese Government will, in the eventual peace settlement, treat in the same spirit Great Britain's claims to the Islands South of the Equator.¹¹⁷

With this note, the Japanese had essentially secured the most important concessions at the peace conference. The Japanese government subsequently successfully concluded a similar agreement with the French government on 1st May 1917 but without a reciprocal request from the French.¹¹⁸ In addition, Japan exchanged a similar note with Italy and Russia.¹¹⁹ Consequently, the Japanese claims to these territories were fairly secure, even in the eventuality of China's entry into war, which

¹¹⁶The War Cabinet decided on the following on 12th February 1917: "The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should give an assurance in the terms suggested in the opening sentences of the original Japanese request of the 27th January, with the proviso that the Japanese Government should give a corresponding assurance of support, in the eventual peace settlement, to our claims to the German islands south of the equator, and in our general policy elsewhere." in War Cabinet 63, Box 63, Law (Bonar Law) Papers, Historical Collection 191, House of Lords Record Office.

¹¹⁷Balfour to Greene, 14th February 1917, PRO FO 410/66, Confidential Print 11301, no 14. Greene communicated this message to the Foreign Minister on the same day (FO 410/66, Confidential Print 11301, no 15) and received acknowledgement on 21st February 1917, declaring reciprocal support for British claims as requested (FO 410/66, Confidential Print 11301, no 18).

¹¹⁸As reported in 21st August 1919, Le Temps, Paris.

¹¹⁹J. Grew (Secretary General, Office of Secretary General, Division of Current, Diplomatic and Political Correspondence, Paris) to Polk, 26th February 1919, SDR 893.77/21A, reel 563, National Archives Microfilm Publication M820.

might otherwise have jeopardized Japan's claims.¹²⁰ Therefore, Japan considered the peace conference's accession to these two demands as a matter of formality.

This seems to provide evidence against the claim that the Japanese government used the racial equality demand as a political instrument to obtain the territorial demands. Only the United States was not party to these secret agreements. This also explains why there was no reference at all to the use of the racial equality proposal as a political instrument by any key Japanese participants during the peace conference.

Conclusions

This chapter has argued that the racial equality proposal as it was initially drafted by the plenipotentiaries in Paris carried an undertone of immigration precisely because it reflected Makino and Chinda's interpretation of the Japanese government's peace policy adopted in the Diplomatic Advisory Council in December 1918. The main problem with the proposal was the lack of consensus within the government as to what it was supposed to imply, which led to the lack of direction in the negotiations at Paris. As a result, the proposal was susceptible to various forms of external pressure, mostly from the British Dominions, and ended up being something different from what the government seemed to have intended at the beginning. However, the stigma of immigration attached to the proposal at the beginning proved to be too powerful for the Australian opposition to overcome. We have established that the proposal was not related to Japan's politics at the peace conference of

¹²⁰Zhang Yongjin, China in the International System, 1918-1920: The Middle Kingdom at the Periphery, (Oxford, 1991), p.58.

obtaining Shantung. Moreover, we have seen that the Hara government was constantly concerned about domestic opinion during the racial equality negotiation. Let us now turn to public opinion in Japan in order to shed further light on the domestic explanation of the racial equality proposal.

CHAPTER 4 JAPANESE PUBLIC OPINION ON THE PROPOSAL

Having examined the international negotiation of the racial equality proposal at Paris, we shall now examine why the Japanese plenipotentiaries consistently referred to public opinion as the reason for persisting with it. Racial equality became a *cause célèbre* for the Japanese public because of its symbolic importance as a perfect concrete manifestation of all of Japan's fears and expectations of the new government and international order. The intense public interest in the issue dominated the domestic debate from November 1918 till May 1919. It will be shown that the views expressed by some sectors of public opinion such as pressure groups and the broadsheets, reflected more closely the view of the League sceptics in the government who remained fundamentally suspicious of the West, than that of Hara and his *ôbei kyôchô* enthusiasts who considered Japan's support for the League as a crucial component of peace diplomacy. Hara's perspective, it will be seen, was closely identified ~~to~~^{with} the liberal intellectuals. This chapter will illustrate further the domestic politics explanation that the Hara government needed to placate public opinion which remained sceptical of the League, but which at the same time, placed unrealistic expectations on the government to succeed at Paris. Since public opinion as an analytical category is too broad and all-encompassing, this study deals specifically with three of its sectors namely, pressure groups, the broadsheets, and intellectuals.

PART I: PRESSURE GROUPS

During the Paris Peace Conference, a number of public associations were

formed with the sole purpose of supporting the government's peace policy, but especially the racial equality proposal. It is remarkable that the racial equality proposal which was the least developed aspect of the government's peace policy attracted so much attention from these pressure groups whose members were drawn from political parties, journalists, and various public associations. In fact, it led the British ambassador, Conyngham Greene, to claim that:

Abolition of race discrimination as a condition of Japan's adherence is, however, put forward outside official circles as principal Japanese plank at Peace Conference.¹

These groups exerted high-profile pressure on the government during the peace conference, and particularly to succeed in the racial equality negotiation.

One of the largest of such pressure groups was the League to Abolish Racial Discrimination (Jinshuteki sabetsu teppai kisei taikai) which started off as a public movement amongst some military and public officials to emphasise the importance of racial equality to Japan's peace policy in late January 1919. It soon developed into the League to Abolish Racial Discrimination which held its first mass public meeting in Tokyo on the 5th February with representatives from the three political parties--Seiyûkai, Kenseikai, and Kokumintô--as well as members of the House of Peers, and twenty-four other public associations, totalling some three hundred participants.² One of its key organisers was Tôyama Mitsuru, the leader of the ultra right-wing Genyôsha (Dark Ocean Association). On the 5th February, they cabled a declaration to President Georges Clemenceau that "The Japanese nation expects of the Peace

¹Greene to Curzon, 5th February 1919, PRO FO 371/3819, f 22242.

²Uchida to Matsui, 31st January 1919, doc.356, and 6th February 1919, doc.360, Nihon gaikô monjo [Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy] Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

Conference the final abolition of all racial discrimination and disqualification."³ Then it took an ominous turn when, on 14th March, they decided that if the government failed to secure racial equality, a new organisation should be created to mobilise public opinion to overthrow the government.⁴ The second mass meeting was held on 23rd March attended by two hundred people representing now some thirty-seven public associations, and debated whether or not Japan should withdraw from the League of Nations if it refused to accept such a fundamental principle as racial equality. They concluded that "The Japanese nation opposes a League of Nations not based on the abolition of racial discrimination."⁵ This resolution was personally delivered to Foreign Minister Uchida on 24th March.⁶ A month later on 24th April, two hundred people again assembled to declare that "The Japanese nation refuses to join a League of Nations which does not acknowledge the abolition of racial discrimination".⁷ Representatives visited Prime Minister Hara and Foreign Minister Uchida on 1st May to insist that the government should persist in pursuing racial equality since Italy's withdrawal from the conference would create a more favourable environment for Japan.⁸ From the frequency of the telegrams reporting the activities of the association to Paris, it is obvious that the government felt much

³Ibid., Uchida to Matsui, 6th February 1919, doc.360, and Uchida to Saionji, 8th February 1919, doc.361.

⁴Ibid., Uchida to Matsui, 15th March 1919, doc.380.

⁵Ibid., Uchida to Matsui, 24th March 1919, doc.391.

⁶Ibid., Uchida to Matsui, 1st April 1919, doc.398.

⁷Ibid., Uchida to Matsui, 25th April 1919, doc.408.

⁸Diary, 1st May 1919, Hara Keiichirô ed., Hara Kei nikki [Diary of Hara Kei], Vol.8, (Tokyo, 1950).

pressure from this group and was particularly concerned about the negative effect this association would have on the peace policy.⁹ Moreover, the fact that the association incorporated some members of Seiyūkai is indicative of the dissatisfaction felt by some in the ruling party of Hara's policy to support the League. What is noteworthy about this particular association was that it tended to be pan-Asian in its orientation.¹⁰ This meant that they were, in fact, taking a stance against the Hara government's *ôbei kyôchô* (pro-western) peace policy.

Although the above association was the most "threatening" to the government, there were others which attempted to influence it. For instance, the government received a memorandum from the League for People's Foreign Policy (Kokumin gaikô dômeikai) on 6th December 1918, demanding an abolition of all racially prejudiced politics in the British and American territories against the Japanese and Chinese.¹¹ It seems that the most respectable of these associations was the Association for Publicists of Peace Issues (Kôwa mondai yûshikai) which included many members from the House of Peers and the Diet. It held a mass meeting on the 24th March with some two hundred people and debated many aspects of the government's peace policy.¹² On racial equality, they argued that there was no

⁹Nakano Seigô, Kôwa kaigi o mokugeki shite [In Witnessing the Peace Conference], (Tokyo, 1919), p.123.

¹⁰Nakanishi Hiroshi, "Konoe Fumimaro 'Eibeï hon'i no heiwashugi o haisu' rombun no haikei" [Konoe Fumimaro: The Background to the Essay on "Abolish the Anglo-American Based Peace"], Hôgaku ronsô Vol.132 (March 1993), pp.239-240.

¹¹Kobayashi Tatsuo ed., Suiusô nikki: Itôke monjo [Diary of Suiusô: Papers of the Itô Family], (Tokyo, 1966), pp.790-791.

¹²Uchida to Matsui, 26th March 1919, doc.393, Nihon gaikô monjo Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

reason why any country should reject such an important principle of international justice, but also criticised the government for wanting to separate the principle of racial equality from its practical aspect of immigration. They drew up a resolution expressing their support for the following: the abolition of racial discrimination, acquisition of the right to Shantung and the German islands in the Pacific, preservation of Japan's sphere of influence in China, and establishment of Japan's position of preeminence in East Asia. Moreover, they opposed the abolition of conscription, and international labour laws which might be unsuitable to Japan's national circumstances. This resolution was delivered to the prime minister on 1st April.¹³

Then, there was the Japan-America Association (Nichiboshikai) which was composed of people who had at some point lived in the United States. It attracted four hundred participants to a meeting on the 22nd March specifically to debate the racial equality proposal.¹⁴ Guest speakers included Okuma Shigenobu (former prime minister), representatives from the American Peace Association and the Christian Youth Association, and the editor of The Japan Advertiser which was an influential English language daily in Japan. There was a discussion of the problem of racial discrimination and how the discriminatory treatment of the Japanese could be improved in the United States.

It is interesting how preoccupied the Foreign Ministry was with these pressure groups as the frequency of telegrams to Paris, reporting their movements, has shown. It seems, therefore, that these associations did succeed in putting pressure on the

¹³Ibid., Uchida to Matsui, 2nd April 1919, doc.399.

¹⁴Ibid., Uchida to Matsui, 24th March 1919, doc.391.

government during the peace conference.

PART II: THE BROADSHEETS

Racial equality dominated the national editorials of the leading newspapers, conveying a strong sense of public interest and excitement. In general, the broadsheets supported strongly the government's proposal for racial equality. Racial equality appealed to the nationalistic instinct of the general public because it reflected the public's shared experience of the past¹⁵ and seemed more immediately relevant than the strategic territorial demands in Shantung and the Pacific islands.¹⁶ However, despite their support for racial equality, they were generally sceptical of the League of Nations which reflected their suspicion of the West.¹⁷ Thus, the strength of broadsheet interest in the racial equality proposal no doubt put a fair amount of pressure on the government whose declared support for the League did not gain majority public support. A study of the broadsheets¹⁸ will be made based

¹⁵Professor Carol Gluck in her Storry Memorial Lecture entitled, "Reinvention of the Past: Japan at the end of the century" given on 20th October 1994 at the Nissan Institute, University of Oxford, made an important point about the relevance of "public memory" which congeals over time.

¹⁶The British Embassy in Tokyo viewed the Japanese newspapers as being essentially all "pro-Japanese", being "hypersensitive" about anything which was regarded as tarnishing Japan's prestige. Greene to Balfour, 28th February 1918, PRO FO 410/67, Confidential Print 11580, no 4.

¹⁷Polk to Ammission, 20th March 1919, SDR 185.111/161, reel 321, National Archives Microfilm Publication (hereafter NAMP) M820.

¹⁸Apart from the three mentioned here, references to the other papers namely Hôchi shimbun, Kokumin shimbun, Chûgai shôgyô shimpô, Yamato, Yorozu chôhō, Jiji shimpô have been taken from the following unless otherwise cited. Ibid., "Memorandum: Collection of press clippings from certain Japanese papers to April 26, 1919, regarding Japan and the Peace Conference," SDR 894.9111/3, reel 563.

mainly on the three leading newspapers of the period--Tokyo nichu nichu shimbun, Asahi shimbun and Yomiuri shimbun--predecessors of today's three big dailies.¹⁹ It must be borne in mind that the press coverage was not evenly balanced because Tokyo nichu nichu shimbun had a special correspondent in Paris whereas the other two had to rely on external agencies such as the Associated Press and Kokusai Tsushin, which was a semi-official Japanese press organ set up in Paris to cover the peace conference.

Early Signs of Public Interest in Racial Equality

There is evidence to suggest that in late 1918, the broadsheets had a more clear notion of Japan's need to demand racial equality within the framework of the League of Nations at the peace conference, than the government did. It has been mentioned previously that the government's first reference to the racial equality proposal appeared in a confidential memorandum tabled in the Diplomatic Advisory Council on 13th November 1918.²⁰ We have seen how undeveloped was the government's policy on the League of Nations and specifically on racial equality, which remained untouched in its vague embryonic form until late January 1919 when Makino suddenly had to draft the proposal at Paris. Interestingly, Kokumin shimbun much earlier had a clearer conception of what the government ought to be doing

¹⁹These three papers represented the respectable, middle-of-the-road views; in other words, they were not irresponsible gutter press. The British Embassy had classified Asahi shimbun as pro-ally and anti-Terauchi and Tokyo nichu nichu shimbun as fairly impartial except on the China question where it tended to be jingoistic. Greene to Balfour, 28th February 1918, PRO FO 410/67, Confidential Print 11580, no 4.

²⁰"Proposals for comments on Wilson's Fourteen Points", see footnote 80 in Chapter 2.

concerning the problem of racial discrimination when it published an article entitled, "The League and Racial Discrimination--one impediment to permanent peace" on the 3rd November 1918:

For Japan the most important question in connection with President Wilson's League of Nations is the mode of dealing with the racial discrimination idea. The object of the League's formation will not be fully realised, it would seem, so long as Japanese and other coloured races are differentially treated in white communities. ... The main objects of Mr. Wilson's League are the perpetuation and the freedom and equalization of the races of the world.²¹

Looking at the press coverage more closely, it emerges that by November 1918 the press started treating the racial issue as a potential time bomb.²² Even the Associated Press did not miss out on this excitement as they quoted Ozaki Yukio, former Minister of Justice and a prominent member of the Kenseikai, who stated that Japan should propose to resolve racial and population questions at the upcoming peace conference because "in his opinion, the coloured races which steadily were developing their civilisation would demand finally the same treatment as the white races, and that the result would be an armed collision."²³ On 2nd December, Tokyo nichu nichu shimbun and Yomiuri shimbun launched an all-out offensive on the racial equality issue demanding the government propose a solution at the conference.

It would not have been entirely surprising for the broadsheets to bring the issue of racial equality to the attention of the government. After all, national sensitivity to the questions of race and Japan's great power status had been in much

²¹Greene to Balfour, 12th November 1918, PRO CO 532/139, f 4086.

²²15th and 30th November 1918, Asahi shimbun.

²³"Next War will be a color line fight, says Ozaki," cutting from the New York Tribune from the Associated Press of 20th November 1918, SDR 893.00/15, reel 562, NAMP M820.

evidence in the past. The anti-Japanese immigration problems with the United States and the British Dominions, the fear of international isolation, and the undying public interest in *jinshuron* (racial discourse) all attest to this. The most intriguing aspect of this early stage of the racial equality proposal is that there was a sharp contrast between the public's awareness of the issue and the lack of preparedness on the part of the government. At this stage, the government was clearly trailing behind public opinion which meant that the public had greeted the government's eventual announcement as a matter of course. This raises the question as to who brought up the issue in the first place. This question seems highly relevant because the government's position (in Tokyo) remained so vague until mid-February 1919. In any case, as there is no conclusive evidence to support the argument that the press was responsible for pressuring the government into raising the racial equality proposal, it is only possible to say that the intense interest shown by the broadsheets on the proposal in November and December 1918 undoubtedly put a tremendous pressure on the government.

The Meaning of Racial Equality

In the broadsheets, most discussions of the proposal were couched partly in vague philosophical terms such as justice, humanity and peace. Underneath them, however, the broadsheets had a fairly practical view of what racial equality proposal should imply. The most practical view was expressed by Tokyo nichii nichii shimbun which was categorical that racial equality was a demand of "free immigration".²⁴

²⁴Tokyo nichii nichii shimbun reported that the Japanese government had submitted an amendment which "allows free immigration to all nationals in every state" on 17th February 1919.

It argued that the immigration restrictions and barriers placed on Japan and other non-white states in the British Dominions and the United States denied the necessary precondition for eternal world peace.²⁵ In fact, it strongly attacked the Hara government for trying to separate immigration from racial equality because the whole purpose of having the proposal in the first place was to try to obtain better treatment for Japanese immigrants.²⁶ However, it must be said that the perspective advocated by Tokyo nichu nichu was heavily influenced by the reports from its correspondent at Paris.

On the other hand, Asahi shimbun and Yomiuri shimbun were hesitant about taking such a limited view of the racial equality proposal. Instead, they preferred to perceive the proposal as pertaining to some sort of an "equality" principle, though not going as far as proclaiming ~~a~~ universal principle. Yomiuri, for instance, argued that Japan was not asking for equality of all peoples including the most barbaric or uncivilised peoples but only those who ^{adhere} ~~apply~~ to one of the following criteria: i) states which possess minimally equivalent level of civilisation; ii) countries which have commercial and navigation treaties or agreements between them; iii) countries which are members of League of Nations.²⁷ Similarly, Asahi makes the argument that the government was not asking to solve immigration problems or to bestow non-discriminatory treatment towards any coloured or undeveloped peoples, but to give equal rights of overseas travel and residence to any member of the League of Nations

²⁵Ibid., 25th January and 22nd February 1919.

²⁶Ibid., 28th February, 6th and 20th April 1919.

²⁷23rd February 1919, Yomiuri shimbun.

who is a civilised citizen.²⁸ In fact, the broadsheets were "down-to-earth" about the practical implications of racial equality for improving the conditions for Japanese nationals.

Racial Equality and the League of Nations

It has been stated that the broadsheets remained sceptical of the League whilst supporting racial equality. This seemingly paradoxical position was tenable for the public because the racial equality proposal was perceived to be more important than the creation of the League of Nations.²⁹ Often, the discussion of the League of Nations was subordinated to that of the racial equality proposal; or worse yet, the League of Nations tended to be discussed mainly within the context of the racial equality debate. It was also pointed out that it was Japan's moral duty as a non-white great power to demand racial equality for the sake of greater justice.³⁰ Because the broadsheets generally believed that racial equality was an uncompromisingly "just" demand, the acceptance or non-acceptance of the proposal was considered as the principal determining factor in judging the credibility of the League as an organisation for the promotion of international justice.

The broadsheets expressed widespread scepticism towards the League of Nations for a number of reasons. The fundamental problem with the League was that it was an Anglo-Saxon scheme to promote international justice and peace. Some argued that the League was an attempt by the British and Americans to institutionalise

²⁸31st March 1919, Asahi shimbun.

²⁹9th April 1919, Tokyo nichichi shimbun; 9th April 1919, Yomiuri shimbun.

³⁰12th March 1919, Asahi shimbun.

their superiority.³¹ We have seen how the Japanese regarded the West and the Anglo-Saxons in particular with a high degree of suspicion and distrust, mostly based on the deterioration of Japan's relationship with these countries during the war but also for the reason of racial discrimination. Basically, the Japanese public was sceptical about the sincerity of the worldwide Wilsonian initiative to perpetuate justice when it was the United States which was instituting discriminatory measures against Japanese immigrants.³² Evidently, the "unreasonable" opposition from Australia on the racial equality proposal and the seeming condonation^{ing} of such behaviour by Britain did not help to ease Japan's anxiety. Otherwise, the public expressed scepticism of the League for wanting to attain goals which seemed too idealistic and remote from reality.³³ Moreover, some viewed the League as a Christian conspiracy to produce a two-tiered world where the Christian countries occupied the upper level and the non-Christian coloured countries occupied the lower.³⁴ All in all, racial equality was central to Japan's understanding of the League of Nations, and there was little effort to consider the League on its own merit. Instead, the legitimacy of the League was inextricably linked to the fate of the racial equality proposal.

The Scapegoats

Public opinion was insistent upon finding scapegoats for the difficulties which the racial equality proposal was having in the negotiation. Tokyo nichu nichu shimbun

³¹19th March 1919, Tokyo nichu nichu shimbun.

³²Ibid., 30th January 1919.

³³Ibid., 24th and 30th January 1919.

³⁴27th March 1919, Yomiuri shimbun.

with their own Paris special correspondent was convinced that Australian Premier Billy Hughes was the chief obstacle to the success of the proposal. The initial reason for singling out Hughes can be traced back to the interview he gave to The New York Herald in January 1919 when he revealed that Australia feared the possibility of a Japanese southward invasion arising out of claims to the Marshall and Carolina Islands in the Pacific. This interview greatly offended the sensibilities of the Japanese for its lack of diplomatic tactfulness and for explicitly accusing Japan of harbouring dishonourable intentions.³⁵ Whilst Australia felt threatened by the prospect of Japanese "invasion" southward in the Pacific, the Japanese felt equally threatened by Australia's determination to institute the racially discriminating "White Australia" policy in the mandates in the Pacific.³⁶ Nevertheless, what really puzzled the Japanese public was the general disposition of the peace conference to favour Hughes's argument which was so blatantly "racist" as far as the Japanese were concerned. This resulted in an exaggerated perception of Hughes's ability to influence the great powers.³⁷ There was much speculation before the 11th April meeting that Hughes would again block the Japanese proposal.³⁸ In the end, when the proposal was defeated for the second time, Makino blamed Hughes for fomenting a new crisis in Japanese-Australian relations.³⁹ However, Chûgai shôgyô shimpô gave a surprisingly accurate version of the events by arguing that Hughes was

³⁵25th and 27th January, 5th February 1919, Tokyo nichu nichu shimbun.

³⁶Ibid., 7th February 1919.

³⁷Ibid., 17th and 18th February 1919.

³⁸Ibid., 1st, 3rd and 6th April 1919.

³⁹Ibid., 14th April 1919.

affected by the domestic political situation in Australia and that in the end his opposition did have a material effect on the British and American positions.⁴⁰

As far as the perception of Wilson was concerned, the Japanese considered him to be hypocritical. Although the public did not generally have much faith in the League of Nations, Wilson was initially perceived with some respect as an advocate of universal principles of justice. Therefore, the Japanese had expected Wilson to support fully racial equality as a principle in line with international justice. When the news arrived that Wilson was forced to reconsider his position on the racial equality clause in the light of the mounting opposition in the United States against Japanese immigration, the Japanese felt deeply betrayed.⁴¹ Moreover, the broadsheets argued that his hypocrisy went further in demanding an insertion of the Monroe Doctrine, which was a peculiarly American foreign policy doctrine, in the covenant, whilst rejecting racial equality which was so evidently more fundamental to peace.⁴² In fact, one article criticised the Japanese delegates for not demanding an explanation directly from Wilson for this unashamed contradiction.⁴³ What aggravated the whole situation was the disclosure that Wilson used his position as chairman to impose unanimity voting in order to defeat the proposal.⁴⁴ It doubtless confirmed the underlying suspicion that the Anglo-Saxons were egoistic, pursuing only their own

⁴⁰17th April 1919, Chûgai shôgyô shimpô.

⁴¹29th March, 3rd and 20th April 1919, Tokyo nichichi shimbun.

⁴²Ibid., 20th April 1919; 17th April 1919, Asahi shimbun; 15th April 1919, Hôchi shimbun; 9th April 1919, Jiji shimpô; 16th April 1919, Osaka mainichi shimbun.

⁴³27th June 1919, Tokyo nichichi shimbun.

⁴⁴Ibid., 5th May 1919.

self-interest.⁴⁵ Clearly, the public perception of Wilson's contribution to the demise of the proposal was qualitatively different from that of Hughes's. One editorial aptly summarised the prevailing feeling, "The world had great expectations of Wilson but he has proven to be self-interested and we are getting tired of it all."⁴⁶

Analysis of the Rejection

In the end, how did the broadsheets analyse the failure of the racial equality demand? First of all, the tendency to link inextricably the fate of the racial equality proposal with the equity of the League of Nations meant that the failure of the proposal cast serious doubt on the future of the League as a viable international organisation. This manifested itself in two ways. First, they argued that Japan should not join the League which would not accept racial equality.⁴⁷ This view was spearheaded on 6th April 1919 by Okuma Shigenobu, a populist former prime minister who had contributed frequently to racial discourse (*jinshuron*) in the past two decades.⁴⁸ His public standing and popularity gave much credence to this perspective, which was taken up by the right-wing press. Second, the Anglo-Saxons' role in defeating the proposal was seen as a testimony to their self-interest in wanting to create the League.⁴⁹ For instance, Asahi which was unhesitatingly pro-Britain

⁴⁵Ibid., 27th June 1919.

⁴⁶Ibid., 20th April 1919.

⁴⁷6th, 10th, 15th April 1919, Kokumin shimbun; 24th April 1919, Yamato; 15th, 20th April 1919, Hôchi shimbun; 7th April 1919, Yorozu chôhō.

⁴⁸6th April 1919, Kokumin shimbun.

⁴⁹Ibid., 19th March 1919.

and pro-America in the initial stages of the conference, making remarks such as "one of the great benefits of the great war is the enhancement of American-Japanese friendship", became disillusioned, partly as a result of the failure of the proposal.⁵⁰ One editorial denounced the Anglo-Saxons for their high-handed approach which single-handedly crushed the ideals of the League of Nations.⁵¹ It went on to proclaim that should they continue to abide by the practice of racial prejudice and racial discrimination, it would most certainly increase the likelihood of a racial war in the future.

Denouncing the Anglo-Saxons and the League of Nations, however, had the effect of heightening the sense of international isolation. There were many introspective reflections on why Japan was internationally isolated. First, the Japanese felt isolated from their ally, Britain. They felt betrayed by Britain who supported Australia at their expense over the racial equality proposal. Moreover, this betrayal implied that the British had a more detached attitude toward the Anglo-Japanese Alliance than the Japanese.⁵² Tokyo nichu nichu gave the following reasons for the cooling down of the relationship between the two long standing allies: Japan benefitted the most out of the war and was not very helpful towards its allies; there was a widespread perception that Japan was increasingly pro-German and militaristic; Japan's expansionist policy in China; and the existence of an intense commercial rivalry between Britain and Japan during the war.⁵³

⁵⁰12th January and 17th April 1919, Asahi shimbun.

⁵¹25th April 1919, Tokyo nichu nichu shimbun.

⁵²Ibid., 20th April 1919.

⁵³Ibid., 8th May 1919.

Secondly, the Japanese generally felt disliked by the other powers, especially the United States and China. For instance, Asahi cautioned that Japan was perceived by some as the "Germany of the East" because of its militaristic and expansionist policies. Since it appeared that ~~these~~^{mis} anti-Japanese propaganda were being disseminated by the Chinese, Asahi argued that what Japan had to do was to foster genuine friendship with China and also to stop engaging in activities which could be so misconstrued.⁵⁴ It only made matters worse when reports such as the one claiming that the United States disliked Japan more than Germany appeared.⁵⁵ Particularly striking was the publication of an interview with Senator Phelan of California, the foremost political agitator of the anti-Japanese movement in the United States, when he detailed the reasons why the Americans disliked the Japanese.⁵⁶ In the light of the general sentiment, one right-wing paper argued that Japan should give up its attempts to be identified with the West and accept isolation because, no matter what Japan did, it would be isolated internationally.⁵⁷

The exacerbated sense of isolation not only stemmed from racial equality, as there was an earlier snub when Japan was excluded from the Council of Four. This incident led to comments that the Japanese delegates were increasingly isolated from the great powers.⁵⁸ The official explanation provided by Makino that the Big Four

⁵⁴12th May 1919, Asahi shimbun.

⁵⁵9th June 1919, Tokyo nichichi shimbun.

⁵⁶Ibid., 25th June 1919.

⁵⁷19th April 1919, Yorozu chôhō.

⁵⁸30th March and 3rd April 1919, Tokyo nichichi shimbun; 10th April 1919, Hôchi shimbun.

was formed to discuss purely European matters was rejected because it was obvious that the group would have considerable power over the general postwar settlement and that Japan would not be able to have much effect on these decisions.⁵⁹ In the face of mounting public discontent over the generally unfavourable disposition of the Anglo-Saxons towards Japan, Ogawa Heikichi, a prominent member of the ruling political party, concluded that although Japan's international position seemed certain on the surface, in reality not everyone was favourable to Japan and that Japan needed to work hard in order to maintain that position.⁶⁰ This underlines the extreme sensitivity of public opinion on the question of great power status which, in turn, revealed how fragile Japan's great power status was.

Finally, the broadsheets were critical of the government's failure of diplomacy over the racial equality issue. The Hara government was accused of "weak diplomacy" (*nanjaku gaikô*) testified by their inability to win over the opponents of this obviously "just" demand.⁶¹ It was suggested that the Foreign Ministry should have a "severe shake-up" because of its ineptitude.⁶² Moreover, Yomiuri had been criticising the government since mid-March for submitting the proposal when so many other more important problems were at stake.⁶³ Its view was that Japan should not compromise its position as a great power over this issue.⁶⁴ Later on, the same

⁵⁹3rd April 1919, Tokyo nichichi shimbun.

⁶⁰16th May 1919, Asahi shimbun.

⁶¹22nd February and 6th May 1919, Tokyo nichichi shimbun.

⁶²13th, 16th, 17th April 1919, Kokumin shimbun; 9th April 1919, Yamato.

⁶³16th and 30th March 1919, Yomiuri shimbun.

⁶⁴Ibid., 2nd April 1919.

editorial stated that Japan should not be embarrassed about the defeat of the proposal because it was submitted for the sake not of self-interest but of universal justice. Basically, Japan's failure to obtain racial equality simply implied that its national power was not commensurate with obtaining such a high ideal.⁶⁵

In summary, racial equality became a focus of broadsheet journalism during the Paris Peace Conference. The racial equality proposal became a disproportionately important issue for the public because its fate was directly linked to the equity or inequity of the League of Nations, and by extension, of the Anglo-Saxon powers. The broadsheets' sentiment reflected a more nationalistic and Japan-centric perspective which contrasted with the government's pro-western internationalist perspective. Hence, it seems reasonable to suggest that the government was forced to justify its pro-League position to a public which remained largely sceptical of the League.

PART III: INTELLECTUAL OPINION

Let us now examine the intellectuals who offered a more profound insight into the racial equality debate in Japan. In this section, we shall focus on five intellectuals who made important contributions to this debate. Ishibashi Tanzan and Yoshino Sakuzô will provide the *ôbei kyôchô shugi* (pro-western, internationalist) perspective, whereas Nakano Seigô and Konoe Fumimaro will be representing the *ajia shugi* (pan-Asian) perspective. An exception will be the inclusion of a controversial thinker, Fukuda Tokuzô, who did not neatly fit into any of the two categories and yet whose public prominence disconcerted not a few including the British. On the whole, we

⁶⁵Ibid., 20th April and 23rd May 1919.

shall discover that the intellectuals tended to perceive the racial equality proposal as an issue of principle rather than of policy, and that Hara's position came closest to that of the liberal intellectuals.

Ishibashi Tanzan

Let us begin with *ôbei kyôchô shugi* which we have earlier defined as those who advocated greater cooperation with the West. Although both Ishibashi and Yoshino are defined here as being representative of this group, Ishibashi embraced "radically" progressive liberalism whilst Yoshino was more representative of mainstream liberalism. We shall begin with Ishibashi who represented the most progressive thinking of all.

During the period of the First World War leading up to the Paris Peace Conference, the liberals generally endorsed the somewhat contradictory position of supporting liberal democracy domestically on the one hand, whilst condoning imperialism abroad on the other.⁶⁶ Ishibashi Tanzan (1884-1973) belonged to a small influential group of progressive liberals who were highly critical of the hypocrisy of mainstream liberals. As a journalist, Ishibashi engaged in an endless battle to advocate liberal democracy and the right of individuals to assert political rights. Ishibashi joined Tôyô keizai shimpô where he advocated the concept of "small Japan" espousing as its philosophical foundation "industrialism, liberalism and individualism" in order to denounce the widely prevalent concept of "great Japan"

⁶⁶Kizaka Jun'ichirô, "Taishôki minponshugisha no kokusai ninshiki" [Liberal Democrats' Understanding of the International in the Taishô Period], Kokusai seiji Vol.51 (1974), p.59.

with the corresponding aspects of "militarism, nationalism and despotism".⁶⁷ Domestically, he fought for universal suffrage, representative government and women's rights. Internationally, he saw non-militarism and non-imperialism as the only recipe for a peaceful world.

Ishibashi clearly did not welcome the prospect of Japan's involvement in the First World War which he perceived was a calculated imperialistic move. When Japan captured Shantung, he wrote that Japan should never expand on the continent because it would be the root of future evils, and similarly, it should abandon any expansionist plans in Manchuria.⁶⁸ He argued that an aggressive China policy would only result in an increased Anglo-American suspicion and ultimately push Japan towards further international isolation.⁶⁹ Similarly, the Twenty-One Demands was totally unacceptable because what the government tried to do amounted to "stealing away" the territories in China while the other powers were busily preoccupied in Europe.⁷⁰ He was critical of both the government and the nation whose attitude towards foreign policy blatantly exposed territorial ambitions underlined by a superficial sense of national unity. Ishibashi, who expected a high level of rational, "mature", selfless interaction in international relations, took an early interest in the League of Nations. In October 1915, he praised Roosevelt, Asquith and Grey's ideas

⁶⁷Matsuo Takayoshi ed., Ishibashi Tanzan hyôronshû [Collected Reviews of Ishibashi Tanzan], (Tokyo, 1986), p.298.

⁶⁸Ibid., pp.51-53.

⁶⁹Kizaka, op. cit., p.62.

⁷⁰Matsuo, op. cit., p.56.

on the subject, and introduced two proposals for a peace league.⁷¹ During the Paris Peace Conference, Ishibashi enthusiastically supported the creation of a league of nations as a "democratic international government" with three main tasks: first, as a legislative body making legislation on problems arising internationally; second, as an administrative body with a secretariat; third, as a judicial body with a system analogous to domestic judiciary.⁷²

Nevertheless, Ishibashi strongly criticised the government's attempt to achieve racial equality.⁷³ Ideally, he supported a racial equality demand. In reality, however, he could not tolerate the hypocritical attitude of the government who unashamedly demanded racial equality whilst practising blatant racial discrimination domestically and internationally. First, Japan discriminated against Chinese workers by prohibiting their employment by Japanese employers. Second, the government even discriminated between their own citizens by preventing the institution of universal suffrage.⁷⁴ Third, the Taiwanese and Koreans⁷⁵ were often targets of unnecessary discrimination, both in terms of trade and property rights. In other words, how could the government have any credibility when it was discriminating

⁷¹Kizaka, op. cit., p.75.

⁷²Ishibashi Tanzan, Ishibashi Tanzan zenshû [Collected Works of Ishibashi Tanzan], Vol.3, (Tokyo, 1970), p.126-127.

⁷³Ibid., pp.68-70.

⁷⁴In 1919, those who paid tax of over ten yen had the right to vote which only amounted to 3% of the male working population.

⁷⁵For instance, Ishibashi wrote that the Japanese should show understanding towards the Koreans especially in the aftermath of the Korean nationalist uprising on 1st March 1919. He criticised that forceful suppression of revolts did not at all resolve the fundamental cause of the problem. See Matsuo, op. cit., pp.86-90.

against everybody including its own people? Although he did not make a direct connection between racial equality and immigration, he regarded anti-Japanese immigration policy particularly in the United States as an emotive issue which could not be eradicated by simple legislation.⁷⁶ In 1920, he proposed a radical solution to this problem by suggesting that the United States federal government buy out all Japanese interests and then have all Japanese immigrants return to Japan since the amount of psychological pain inflicted on the nation from the anti-Japanese sentiment was not worth the "economic" advantage of settling some 90,000 Japanese in the United States.⁷⁷

In conclusion, Ishibashi was impatient over the Hara government's hypocritical, half-hearted attempt at racial equality which so clearly belied reality. Moreover, Ishibashi who envisioned a durable international peace based on the League of Nations was further disillusioned by the harshness of the German peace.

Yoshino Sakuzô

How different was the position of Yoshino Sakuzô (1878-1933), a flagship liberal, who led the Taishô democracy movement?⁷⁸ Yoshino's thinking was, on the whole, more in line with popular liberalism than Ishibashi's "radical" progressivism. Yoshino achieved fame with his seminal piece in Chûô kôron in January 1916 where

⁷⁶Ibid., pp.44-46.

⁷⁷Ishibashi, op. cit., p.507, pp.521-522.

⁷⁸For studies of Taishô democracy, consult, for instance, Mitani Taichirô, Taishô demokurashîron [Theories of Taishô Democracy], (Tokyo, 1974).

he advocated popular democracy for ordinary people.⁷⁹ Yoshino's version of democracy (*minponshugi*) characteristically belonged to the *petite bourgeoisie*. It signified a step towards modern democracy, but not too radical as to suggest changing the ruling structure of the military and the bureaucracy.⁸⁰ Unlike Ishibashi, he espoused the popular ideal of "constitutionalism inside, and imperialism outside" and did not condemn the Okuma cabinet's Twenty-One Demands in 1915.⁸¹ As a result of his trip to China in 1916, however, he began to support the Chinese revolutionary youth movement and exposed the reality of Japan's militarist colonial rule in China. Nevertheless, he could not abandon altogether his tendency to condone imperialism, as he continued to believe in the importance of Japanese development in China as a means to ensure Japan's survival, and praised the 1917 Ishii-Lansing Agreement for recognising Japan's special interest in China.⁸² Thus, Yoshino's view was not totally consistent since, on the one hand, he began to recognise the importance of the revolutionary movement in China, a manifestation of his belief in popular democracy; but on the other hand, he also saw Japan's imperialistic manoeuvres in China as necessary to Japan's existence.

Yoshino's view converged with that of Ishibashi over his essentially *ôbei*

⁷⁹"Kensei no hongî o toite sono yûshû no bi o nasuno michi o ronzu" [In Unravelling the True Meaning of Constitutionalism, a Discussion on How to Crown this Glory with Perfection], *Chûô kôron* (January 1916).

⁸⁰Shinobu Seizaburô, "Taishô gaikôshi no kihon mondai" [Fundamental Issues of the Taishô Diplomatic History], *Kokusai seiji* Vol.6 (1958), pp.5-6; Tanaka Sôgorô, *Yoshino Sakuzô: Nihonteki demokurashî no shito* [Yoshino Sakuzô: A Japanese-style Apostle of Democracy], (Tokyo, 1958), p.173.

⁸¹Kizaka, *op. cit.*, pp.63-64.

⁸²*Ibid.*

kyôchô (pro-western) view of the importance of cooperation with Britain and the United States, as evidenced in his support of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance as a basis of peace in East Asia. Wilson's Fourteen Points had a profound impact on Yoshino who immediately adopted Wilsonism as his political and philosophical mantle, giving particular emphasis to the importance of self-determination as a general political principle.⁸³ In January 1919, Yoshino enthusiastically declared that Japan should support the prevailing world trend for greater international justice by consolidating democracy internally and establishing equality externally.⁸⁴ Needless to say, Yoshino was an enthusiastic proponent of international cooperation and, thus, of the League of Nations.⁸⁵

On the racial equality question, Yoshino perceived an inherent problem in making the proposal credible internationally. Admittedly, he considered the timing of the proposal to be appropriate as a reaction to the discriminatory treatment which the Japanese had been receiving in Australia and the United States.⁸⁶ However, he cautioned that a proposal of universal principle must be separated from a proposal that appealed to self-interest. As such, the Japanese proposal would be regarded as emanating from a standpoint of the victim of discrimination and would not gain

⁸³Ibid., p.72.

⁸⁴Yoshino Sakuzô, "Sekai no daishuchô to sono jun'ôsaku oyobi taiôsaku" [Major International Assertions and the Policies of Adaptation and of Response], Chûô kôron no.365 (1st January 1919).

⁸⁵Roger Dingman, "Nihon to Wirusonteki sekai chitsujo" [Japan and the Wilsonian World Order] in Satô Seizaburô and Roger Dingman ed., Kindai nihon no taigai taido [Modern Japan's Attitude to the External World], (Tokyo, 1974), p.100.

⁸⁶Yoshino Sakuzô, "Jinshuteki sabetsu teppai undôsha ni ataeru" [To the Activists of Abolition of Racial Discrimination], Chûô kôron no.367 (1st March 1919), pp.70-72.

significant support at Paris. Thus, he challenged the pressure groups such as the League to Abolish Racial Discrimination to answer the question of whether they were demanding an absolute principle or a relative principle of racial equality. He impatiently demanded that these groups stop discriminating against the Koreans, if they really wanted racial equality. Moreover, he drew attention to the fact that even if the racial equality proposal were adopted, still it would not resolve the anti-Japanese movement in the United States, because the root cause of the immigration problem did not lay in racial discrimination but in other factors as well.⁸⁷ All in all, Yoshino, though fundamentally supportive of racial equality as a principle, was critical of the proposal because it lacked sincerity and credibility coming from a government and activists who blatantly practised discrimination against fellow Asians.

When the Treaty of Versailles was signed, Yoshino failed to criticise the document, which revealed a limitation in his thinking. He was unwilling to acknowledge the inherent weakness of Wilsonism which he avowedly supported.⁸⁸

Nakano Seigô

We shall now turn to the *ajia shugi* (pan-Asian) proponents, Nakano Seigô and Konoe Fumimaro, to see how they perceived the issue as participants at the Paris Peace Conference, Nakano as a journalist and Konoe as personal assistant to Chief Plenipotentiary Saionji. Interestingly, their underlying similarity is their sense of distrust of the West, and specifically the British and Americans.

⁸⁷Yoshino Sakuzô, "Jinshuteki sabetsu teppai mondai ni tsuite" [On the Problem of Abolition of Racial Discrimination], Chûô kôron no.370 (1st June 1919), p.95.

⁸⁸Kizaka, op. cit., p.80.

Nakano Seigô (1886-1943) was an influential political activist. Although he became an acknowledged fascist in the 1930s, Nakano was democratic, pan-Asian and nationalist during the period under this study. In his youth, he was influenced by Genyôsha, an ultra-nationalist and pan-Asian organisation, in his native Fukuoka and during his Waseda University years by another right-wing thinker, Ukita Kazutami. During his Waseda years, Nakano started contributing to Nihon oyobi nihonjin [Japan and the Japanese], an influential nationalist journal. After his graduation, he joined Asahi shimbun and then eventually settled at Tôhō jiron in 1916. During this period, Nakano's political thinking had four characteristics: first, it was imperialistic in stressing the absolute importance of protecting Japan's interest particularly in East Asia; second, it was pan-Asian in promoting an alliance between Japan and China, and on a wider level, an Asian alliance to fight against western powers;⁸⁹ third, his decided opposition to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance⁹⁰ led him to promote a Russo-Japanese alliance as a means of countering the former; fourth, he was critical of the militarist diplomacy, which revealed his strongly anti-clan, anti-military, and anti-bureaucratic sentiment.⁹¹ On the question of race, Nakano wrote that peace and justice seemed applicable only to relationships between the white great powers; and consequently, it was Japan's mission to prevent the coloured race from being

⁸⁹Nakano Yasuo, Seijika: Nakano Seigô [The Politician: Nakano Seigô], Vol.2, (Tokyo, 1971), p.250.

⁹⁰Ibid., pp.249-250; Nakano Seigô, "Teikoku gaikô no kiki" [Crisis in the Imperial Foreign Policy], Nihon oyobi nihonjin no.645 (15th December 1915), p.24.

⁹¹Kizaka, op. cit., p.65.

excluded from the world.⁹²

Nakano attended the Paris Peace Conference full of enthusiasm but decided to return to Japan ^{after} only ~~after~~ a month on 22nd February, as the first casualty of disillusionment. It is noteworthy that one of the revelations of the peace conference for Nakano was that in spite of nearly fifty years of modernisation which had led Japan to economic success, Japan was quite clearly politically inferior to the other great powers.⁹³ This was glaringly evident in the Hara government's diplomacy at Paris which could only be summarised as sheer incompetence.⁹⁴ From the start, the Japanese delegates had the wrong attitude, which was to be grateful to the western great powers for bestowing Japan with great power status at the conference.⁹⁵ They were totally uninterested in taking the initiative to win support on important issues through the use of propaganda, which was effectively used by the Chinese delegates. Japan lacked the will and conviction which were essential components of success in an arena where great power nationalism clashed with small power nationalism. Moreover, he was irritated by the government's blindness to an implicit coalition between Britain and the United States where Britain had tacitly agreed to support

⁹²Nakano Seigô, "Nihon teikoku no shimei" [The Mission of the Japanese Empire], Nihon oyobi nihonjin no.639 (20th September 1914), p.112, p.129.

⁹³Nakano, Seijika, p.266.

⁹⁴Some of the points which Nakano raised were Hara's blank paper policy of "wait and see", the lack of preparation of the Diplomatic Advisory Council, and the pitiful sight of Makino who had to set off to Paris and fight for Japan's national interest with so-called confidential documents, which consisted of bits of old newspaper clippings. See Nakano Seigô, "Kôwa kaigi no shinsô" [The Truth about the Peace Conference], Kensei Vol.2 no.5 (July 1919), pp.16-20.

⁹⁵Nakano especially accuses Chinda for taking this attitude. See Nakano Seigô, Kôwa kaigi o mokugeki shite [In Witnessing the Peace Conference], (Tokyo, 1919), pp.20-21.

American claims in the Far East despite the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.⁹⁶ Nakano's disillusionment peaked when, in late January 1919, he witnessed the eloquent, powerful, and sensational presentation by V.K. Wellington Koo of China's case on Shantung which contrasted sharply with the "pathetic performance" by the Japanese delegates.⁹⁷ It was this event which made him abandon Paris and return home to pour his energy into raising national consciousness because the low standard of the political awareness in Japan was partly responsible for the "pathetic performance" of the government.

Amidst this torrent of dissatisfaction, how did Nakano perceive the government's effort at racial equality? Fundamentally, Nakano supported the idea of promoting racial equality at the peace conference because of its universal significance, guaranteed to win support from China, India and all other oppressed nations in the world.⁹⁸ His view was that immigration only represented a small fraction of this much larger and important issue. However, what Nakano criticised was the tactics of the Hara government in presenting this worthwhile proposal in a manner which lacked the conviction, preparation, and energy necessary to give momentum to issues of this kind.⁹⁹ He claimed that the global importance of racial equality would have made it extremely difficult for Britain and the United States to sustain any opposition. As it was, the Japanese delegates were content to sit back after having gained initial

⁹⁶Of course, Nakano was not totally accurate on this point because Britain did support Japan over the Shantung settlement arising out of the secret treaty of 1917. *Ibid.*, p.35; Nakano, "Kôwa kaigi no shinsô," p.28.

⁹⁷Nakano, *Seijika*, p.268.

⁹⁸Nakano, *Kôwa kaigi o mokugeki shite*, pp.119-120.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, p.120.

sympathy from Colonel House and trust the alliance to bring the British around to agreeing to it. Nakano criticised the inability of the delegation to perceive that the United States was not going to agree to such a proposal, and was only letting Britain do the dirty work of opposing Japan on this issue, since the Americans were already confronting Japan on Shantung and the Pacific islands.¹⁰⁰

On the whole, Nakano's distrust of an Anglo-American "coalition" extended to his perception of the racial equality proposal as being a victim of this "conspiracy". Moreover, he condemned the inadequacy of Japanese diplomacy which exposed Japan's lack of political maturity as a nation.

Konoe Fumimaro

Still with the *ajia shugi* perspective, Konoe Fumimaro (1891-1945) offers an interesting case study as he later became a key figure in the militarist regime of the 1930s and was convicted as a war criminal at the end of the Second World War. As a student, he studied social policy at the University of Kyoto and was much influenced by economists of the German historical school. However, Konoe had inherited his pan-Asian inclination from his father, Konoe Atsumaro¹⁰¹, and became chairman of Tōa dōbunkai [East Asia Common Script Association] in 1926. He wrote possibly his most influential piece, "Eibei hon'i no heiwashugi o haisu" [Abolish the Anglo-American Based Peace], which appeared in Nihon oyobi nihonjin's December 1918 issue immediately before his departure to attend the Paris Peace Conference as one of Saionji's attendants. In the article, Konoe severely

¹⁰⁰Nakano, "Kōwa kaigi no shinsō," p.51.

¹⁰¹Confer Chapter 1, footnote 30 for biographical details.

criticised those Japanese who blindly espoused the Anglo-American notion of peace as being the only legitimately humanitarian and democratic one.¹⁰² According to Konoe, peace as defined by the Anglo-Americans implied the maintenance of a *status quo* based on their national interests, consequently a far cry from justice and humanity. The League of Nations was simply a manifestation of Anglo-American interests in a disguised form. Konoe urged the Japanese nation to become more Japan-centric which entailed the recognition of the rightful existence of Japan and its mission to fight against any force that might impinge on this sovereign right. According to one analysis, Konoe believed that Japan should change the existing international system which favoured only the Anglo-Saxon powers. This belief was based on his espousal of the theory of the right of national existence (*kokumin seizonken*) which considered the principle of equal opportunity of states as the true manifestation of international justice.¹⁰³

One of the major arguments Konoe made in the above article was the demand for racial equality.¹⁰⁴ Although he cited Japan's history of frustrated attempts to overcome numerous restrictions placed on the Japanese and other peoples of the yellow race by Australians and Canadians, his demand for the abolition of racial discrimination ultimately was not based on the economic argument but on a universal

¹⁰²Konoe Fumimaro, "Eibei hon'i no heiwashugi o haisu" [Abolish the Anglo-American based peace]. *Nihon oyobi nihonjin* no.746 (15th December 1918), pp.23-26. For an interesting incisive study of Konoe and this article, consult Nakanishi, op. cit.

¹⁰³Nakanishi, op. cit., pp.230-237.

¹⁰⁴The American government thought that Konoe's thoughts on the race problem was significant. See Morris to Polk, 7th January 1919, SDR 763.72119/3308, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1919, Paris Peace Conference Vol.1.

moralistic argument of "justice and humanity".¹⁰⁵ Konoe's claim for racial equality was pan-Asian insofar as he had identified it with the anti-West attitude.¹⁰⁶ But Konoe falls short of calling for a racial alliance with Asia in order to counter western racism. In the end, Konoe's argument on racial equality, though couched in terms of "justice" and "humanity", ended up being a specific claim to suit Japan's particular national circumstances.¹⁰⁷

How did his attendance at the peace conference change his perspective on the world? For Konoe, the peace conference provided clear and definitive testimony that power reigned supreme where the selfishness of great powers was abundantly obvious. This was best evidenced in the failure of the racial equality proposal, which was singularly a just demand, and the concomitant success of the Monroe Doctrine, which was so clearly antithetical to the League of Nations.¹⁰⁸ However, he did acknowledge the significance of the Wilsonian principle of self-determination as one of the central tenets of the peace conference, disputing that the conference signified the death of Wilsonian idealism. After all, Wilson had to be given credit for his undying efforts to create the League even in its imperfect form. He also recognised the need for Japan to adapt quickly to the methods of the new open diplomacy, and moreover, it was necessary to educate the Japanese to take a broader perspective on

¹⁰⁵Nakanishi, op. cit., p.238.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p.240.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p.244.

¹⁰⁸Konoe Fumimaro, Sengo ôbei kenkenroku [Record of the Trip to the Postwar West], originally published in 1919, (Tokyo, 1981), pp.33-37.

the world.¹⁰⁹ Konoé showed a deeper understanding of the anti-Japanese problems in the United States as he realised that racial prejudice was not something which could be eradicated overnight and required a long term strategy.¹¹⁰ His solution was to improve the government's propaganda efforts in the United States in order to alleviate anti-Japanese sentiment because he realised that the voice of California was echoed loudly in the East Coast.

Fukuda Tokuzô

The problem of defining Fukuda Tokuzô (1874-1930) lies in his highly controversial radical thinking. Fukuda was one of the leaders of the Taishô democratic movement along with Yoshino Sakuzô. He attracted much media attention mostly because of his exuberant personality, and he aggressively participated in public debates on most issues. In his youth, he had studied under Brentano in Munich and was much influenced by the German historical school.¹¹¹ Fukuda advocated "social policy" (*shakai seisaku*) which promoted a progressive reform of society, placing higher value on the human factor (*jinkaku*) rather than the capital (*bukkaku*). Effectively, what he envisioned was a welfare state which could exist independently of socialism or if necessary, coexist with socialism.¹¹²

As a champion of social reform, he was most noted for his virulent opposition

¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp.42-48.

¹¹⁰Ibid., pp.137-139.

¹¹¹Fukuda Tokuzô, Seizonken no shakai seisaku [Social Policy Based on the Right of National Existence]. (Tokyo, 1980), p.197.

¹¹²Ibid., p.4, p.203.

to Anglo-American capitalism but also for his pro-German inclination. He was critical of Britain whose economic expansionism continued to oppress the world purely to satisfy selfish national interest.¹¹³ He accused Britain of adopting a double-standard in its diplomacy, which purported to protect and foster trade, but in reality was simply protecting British capitalists.¹¹⁴ According to Fukuda, socialism became powerful as the only means to defeat Anglo-American capitalism which reached its zenith in the late nineteenth century. However, his argument faltered in the eyes of some when he justified the rise of German militarism as the only possible counterforce to British capitalism because German militarism was a smaller evil in comparison.¹¹⁵ In fact, his intellectual association with Germany had made him seem inappropriately too pro-German, which made him many public enemies.¹¹⁶

Fukuda contributed actively to the debate on the peace conference.¹¹⁷ On the question of the League of Nations, he was convinced that it was ~~as~~ an Anglo-American scheme. Although he admitted that Lord Grey may have originally had higher intentions, Fukuda denounced the League as an organization designed to

¹¹³Fukuda Tokuzô, Reimeiroku [Record of the Dawn], (Tokyo, 1920), pp.282-283.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p.354.

¹¹⁵Ibid., pp.286-287, p.374.

¹¹⁶Fukuda attacked those who accused him of a pro-German tendency, such as Yoshino Sakuzô, The Japan Advertiser, and the British press, by claiming that their criticism amounted to the equivalent of intellectual "lynching". Fukuda Tokuzô, "Shôsha wa dare ka" [Who is the Victor?], Chûô kôron no.364 (1st December 1918), pp.31-38.

¹¹⁷His articles on the peace conference were serialised from 1st to 5th January 1919, entitled, "Against Economic Imperialism" in Tokyo nichichi shimbun.

further British capitalistic expansion.¹¹⁸ Fukuda contended that unless the British and Americans renounced their capitalistic expansionism, the League would have little use as an organ to prevent future wars. He was certainly not sympathetic to Wilson as he believed that only the outcome of the peace conference could justify Wilson's advocacy of liberal democracy.¹¹⁹ Interestingly, he perceived the two great causes of war to be economic greed and racial hatred. Fukuda argued that one of the best uses of the League would be to control the eruption of war as a result of racial oppression. Moreover, he stressed the importance of demanding racial equality and religious freedom to test Wilsonian idealism because he distrusted Wilson's "beautiful" words which did not necessarily translate into practice. He believed that it was fundamentally important to eliminate these discriminations, as the existence of religious discrimination, for instance, meant that only Christians were treated as humans.¹²⁰ Thus he argued that Japan, as representative of the coloured race, should make efforts to bring racial equality to fruition. It appears that Fukuda was supportive of racial equality as long as it stayed within the confines of his anti-capitalistic perspective. However, the defeat of the racial equality clause in the League of Nations Commission at the Peace Conference crushed any little sympathy he felt for the League, as it strengthened his conviction that the League of Nations was an imperialist organ which ignored the seemingly legitimate claim for racial equality of the only non-white great power.

¹¹⁸Fukuda, Remeiroku, pp.304-305.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, p.300.

¹²⁰Fukuda Tokuzô, "Obeikoku ni taisuru shuchô" [A Demand against the Western Countries], 15th November 1918, Asahi shimbun.

As a concluding remark on the intellectuals' contribution to the racial equality debate, it may be noted that they all considered racial equality an issue of fundamental importance.¹²¹ However, beyond this lowest common denominator, there was not much agreement between the *ôbei kyôchô* liberals and *ajia shugi* thinkers. Ishibashi and Yoshino supported the League of Nations as a new international order, based on cooperation with the West; whereas Nakano, Konoe and even Fukuda regarded the League with suspicion especially in light of the fact that it was predominantly Wilsonian in its origin, and therefore, Anglo-Saxon domination in disguise. Although Ishibashi and Yoshino differed considerably on the general points concerning the government's foreign policy, they concurred in their criticism of the government's hypocrisy in demanding racial equality on the one hand, whilst practising racial discrimination on the other. Nakano attacked the government from another angle, criticising the failure of diplomacy in the racial equality negotiation. Konoe saw hypocrisy in the American position which rejected racial equality whilst demanding Monroe Doctrine. Fukuda considered racial equality a litmus test of the sincerity of Wilsonian idealism. Broadly speaking, Prime Minister Hara's support for the League of Nations was closer to the position of the liberal intellectuals, and in opposition to the *ajia shugi* thinkers, whose position was closer to those of the broadsheets and pressure groups. It is particularly interesting that the general public

¹²¹Besides the intellectuals examined above, for instance, see Miyake Setsurei, "Eikyû heiwa no yôken to shiteno jinshu mondai" [Racial Issue as a Condition of Eternal Peace], *Taiyô* Vol.25 no.1 (January 1919); Takahashi Sakue, "Jinshu sabetsu ni tsuite" [On Racial Discrimination], *Kokusaihô gaikô zasshi* Vol.17 no.7 (1919); Nagai Ryûtarô, "Jidai sakugo no gaikô" [Foreign Policy which is not with the Times], 26th June 1919, *Tokyo nichichi shimbun*; Uehara Etsujirô, "Beikoku kinji no tainichi taido" [Recent Attitude of the United States towards Japan], *Taiyô* Vol.25 no.11 (November 1919).

and the *ajia shugi* intellectuals were strongly suspicious of the League of Nations and Wilsonian idealism. This is why the racial equality proposal, which was acceptable to all Japanese, had an important domestic role. It can be suggested that the proposal provided a domestic justification for the Hara government on two levels: on one level in placating public opinion in general, by raising an issue which touched the core of the national consciousness; and on another level, in appeasing the League sceptics in order to secure their acquiescence to Hara's pro-League policy.

Conclusions to the Japanese Section

This first part of the study of the racial equality proposal, which has concentrated on the Japanese side of the story, has yielded some interesting results. In analysing the development of the racial equality proposal in Japan, we have examined the applicability of the five categories of explanations listed in the introduction. First, it has been argued that the predominant interpretation of the existing literature that the proposal was submitted out of the desire to resolve anti-Japanese immigration policies, was not the only explanation, but one part of the whole picture, and mostly represented the view of the Foreign Ministry within the government. Second, the explanation that the Japanese government was the champion of the non-white world by advocating an universal principle of racial equality was quashed by the evidence that it was originally intended to be a nationalistic proposal to protect Japanese nationals from racial prejudice. Third, it has been shown that the racial equality proposal was not a political instrument used by the Japanese government at Paris to obtain Shantung. Instead, Shantung had already been secured in the secret treaties of 1917 as far as Japan was concerned. Fourth, it has been

argued the explanation that the proposal related to Japan's insecurity concerning its great power status had validity especially in explaining the initial motivation of the government in including racial equality as part of its policy on the League of Nations. Fifthly, the explanation of the proposal as a domestic justification for Prime Minister Hara's pro-League *ôbei kyôchô* peace policy, in the face of scepticism within the government and in public opinion, seems highly plausible. We explore next how Britain and the United States responded to the Japanese proposal.

CHAPTER 5 BRITAIN AND THE RACIAL EQUALITY PROPOSAL

Having examined the Japanese motivations for raising the racial equality proposal at the Paris Peace Conference, we shall now start the second part of the thesis with an analysis of the response of the British Empire delegation. The British opposition to the proposal was extremely important in setting the tone for the entire racial equality negotiation. The story of the negotiation became one of how to convince the British and the Dominions to change their position and support the proposal. In order to maintain coherence in the overall approach taken in the thesis, the framework provided by the five categories of explanations will be used in the analysis. In this chapter, three such explanations will be considered. First, Britain did not rule out the possibility that the proposal was relevant to Japan's assertion of its great power status. Second, the British government did not seriously perceive the proposal as a demand of principle of universal racial equality. Third, it did not take the view that the proposal was a political instrument to be used, either by Japan or by itself, to gain other concessions at the peace conference. In Chapter 6, there will be an amalgamated explanation of the role of domestic politics and immigration. These factors combined will argue that the perception of the British Empire delegation of the proposal as demanding "free immigration" of Japanese and other non-white immigrants, left the proposal in the hands of the Dominions. The Dominions were determined to make their case in the proposal which they considered to be a vitally important question to their national existence.

The British Empire Delegation at the Peace Conference

Before starting the analysis, we briefly summarise the general orientation of the British Empire delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, in order to put the British position on the racial equality negotiation into perspective.

The British Empire delegation was composed of five plenipotentiaries: David Lloyd George (Prime Minister), Arthur Balfour (Foreign Secretary), Andrew Bonar Law (Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons), George Barnes (Minister without portfolio), and one representative in rotation from the British Dominions¹ and India whose representation was as follows: i) Canada: Sir Robert Borden (Prime Minister), Sir G.E. Foster (Minister of Finance), A.L. Sifton (Minister of Customs), C.J. Doherty (Minister of Justice); ii) Australia: William Morris Hughes (Prime Minister) and Sir Joseph Cook (Minister of the Navy); iii) South Africa: Louis Botha (Prime Minister) and General Jan Smuts (Minister for Defence); iv) New Zealand: William Massey (Prime Minister); v) India: Maharaja of Bikaner and Lord Sinha (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for India). Although we talk about the "British Empire" delegation, in reality, it was the British government who controlled the foreign policy of the delegation. Notwithstanding the increasing interest expressed by the Dominions in imperial foreign policy, their interest was generally confined to specific issues related to the Dominion in question. They remained marginal and uninterested in the wider spectrum of issues which concerned the British government at Paris.² In the delegation, Lloyd George controlled much of the

¹Newfoundland did not have a separate representation, and was represented by the British government.

²The exception to this will be General Jan Smuts of South Africa who was appointed to the British War Cabinet in June 1917.

decision making.³ In particular, he had a strong distrust of professional diplomats and preferred to consult his close circle of advisers and friends known as the "Garden Suburb".⁴ The Foreign Office was only saved from obscurity because of Balfour, who managed to maintain good personal channel of communications with the prime minister.⁵ Generally speaking, the difference in approach between the Foreign Office and Lloyd George was that the former tended to speak from years of professional expertise whereas the latter was more predisposed to make decisions based on the political expediencies of the moment.

In terms of war aims, Britain's initial objective on entering the war in August 1914 was the restoration of Belgian neutrality; and this remained its core war aim for two and a half years.⁶ This motivational objective incorporated other causes such as the protection of France against aggression, the destruction of "Prussian" military domination, and the defence of the rights of small nations.⁷ Apart from the core interest in maintaining the independence, integrity and unity of the British Empire, the British position at the peace conference was based on three things: first, to guarantee security for France; second, to settle territorial concessions; and third, to support the Wilsonian League of Nations. The first two factors were intrinsically important for Britain whilst the support for the League was a necessary concession

³M.L.Dockrill and Z.Steiner, "The Foreign Office at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919," International History Review Vol.2 no.1 (January 1980), p.83.

⁴Ibid., p.65, p.67; V.H.Rothwell, British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy 1914-1918, (Oxford, 1971), p.9.

⁵Rothwell, op. cit., pp.10-11.

⁶Ibid., p.18.

⁷Max Beloff, Britain's Liberal Empire 1897-1921, Vol.1, (London, 1987), p.203.

to America's role in the war and in the peace.

Let us elaborate a little on Britain's position on the League of Nations. Although the British government's support for the League was a response to a growing domestic sentiment expressed by pacifists and liberals during the war⁸, many members of the British government perceived the intrinsic value of the League more in terms of consolidating Britain's relationship with the United States than for the pursuit of an ideal *per se*. They understood the importance of building a *pax Anglo-Americana* for the future stability of the system, and were willing to cooperate with the Americans as far as possible on the League of Nations if it did not impinge on the more "important" British objectives. This pragmatic approach is best illustrated by Lloyd George who, though never really interested in the League,⁹ "was willing to tolerate the results coming from the League of Nations Commission as long as Wilson did not frustrate the realisation of other, more vital British interests."¹⁰ The British contribution to the creation of the League of Nations was significant both during the war and at the peace conference. The Phillimore Commission was created in December 1916 and produced a comprehensive report in mid-1918.¹¹ At Paris,

⁸Various schemes were proposed for a league by the Bryce group led by Viscount Bryce, the British League of Nations Society, and the Fabian Society, with counterparts in continental Europe and across the Atlantic. Final Report by the Committee on the League of Nations, 3rd July 1918, "P" (War) Series, PRO CAB 29/1, pp 439-455.

⁹Diary, 20th January 1919, Additional Manuscript 51131, f.19, The Cecil of Chelwood Papers (hereafter Cecil Papers), British Library.

¹⁰George W. Egerton, Great Britain and the Creation of the League of Nations: Strategy, Politics, and International Organisation, 1914-1919, (Chapel Hill, 1978), p.203.

¹¹Alfred Zimmern, The League of Nations and the Rule of Law 1918-1935, (London, 1936), p.179. Confer also footnote 8 above.

Lord Robert Cecil and General Jan Smuts, both known for their keen interest in the League, were appointed as British representatives of the League of Nations Commission. The draft covenant submitted to the commission in early February was a result of Anglo-American collaboration for which Cecil and Smuts closely worked with President Wilson before the start of the conference.¹²

In the light of the above, the Japanese proposal certainly was not a high priority for Britain. Basically, it would not have made much difference for Britain whether or not the Japanese proposal was adopted because it was neither complementary nor contrary to core British interests. However, the interpretation of immigration attached to the proposal by the British government meant that the Dominions took over the negotiation to protect their vested interests and became a considerable source of tension within the delegation.

The British Position on the Racial Equality Negotiation

In the League of Nations Commission, Lord Cecil argued that the reason for the British opposition to the racial equality proposal was that it was "encroaching upon the sovereignty of States members of the League" by interfering into domestic affairs of member states.¹³ The British negotiating position at Paris was characterised by the conviction that the proposal was about immigration, and the predominance of the Dominions. Let us examine these points in turn.

¹²Both Cecil and Smuts tell of how little practical ideas Wilson had about the covenant. Diary, 19th January 1919, Add.51131, f.18, Cecil Papers; Smuts to Gillett, 14th January 1919, no.193 and 20th January 1919, no.197, Smuts Papers (microfilm), Vol.22, University of Cambridge Library.

¹³D.H.Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.2, (New York, 1928), p.389.

Firstly, it is important to stress the psychological preparedness of the British government for an "immigration" proposal to emanate from the Japanese at the peace conference. This fixation meant that the British were convinced that the racial equality proposal was nothing other than the "immigration" proposal which they had been expecting. London had received many signals from Ambassador Greene in Tokyo that the Japanese government might table some sort of proposal to redress their immigration problems:

It is therefore unnecessary to do more here than to express my personal impression that the claim which has been put forward most prominently in the papers, possibly by a *mot d'ordre* from High Places, and the one which appears to have the deepest national interest for Japan, is that of the abolition of discrimination against her people in certain countries, and the acceptance of the doctrine of the equality of all races of no matter what colour. A disposition is shown to regard such acceptance as the touchstone of the sincerity of Western advocacy of a League of [N]ations.¹⁴

By January 1919, both the Foreign and Colonial Offices were privy to a highly confidential telegraph which set out the details of Japanese peace terms to be negotiated at Paris.¹⁵ Although the British government were never entirely confident of its authenticity, they made the following comment on the section regarding the racial equality clause:

The Japanese want to shelve the League of Nations, if it tends to perpetuate racial discrimination; but, if this cannot be done will try to secure guarantees against disadvantages arising out of race prejudice. Thus the question of discrimination against Asiatics in British Dominions may come up.¹⁶

London knew how sensitive the Dominion governments were on the question of

¹⁴Greene to Balfour, 2nd December 1918, PRO FO 608/211, f 475; also similar message in Greene to Balfour, 12th November 1918, CO 532/139, f 4086.

¹⁵For details of this telegraph, confer footnote 64, Chapter 2.

¹⁶Ibid.

immigration and decided against informing them of the content of the telegraph. In contrast to the preparedness of the Foreign and Colonial Offices, the Dominions were not informed from London of the possibility that such a proposal might be raised until they reached Paris.

In retrospect, it was a serious tactical error on the part of Makino and Chinda to let the Americans first broach the subject with the British in late January 1919 at the peace conference. It is highly possible that Makino and Chinda thought it best to accept the good offices of Colonel House to open talks informally with the British in the naive belief that Britain would not reject a proposal submitted by its ally and that House could influence the British to agree to it. However, it meant that the Japanese could not directly control the content of the message which House was conveying to the British. From the record of the conversation below between House and Foreign Secretary Balfour on the 10th February 1919, it is clear that Balfour understood House's main message concerning the racial equality proposal as immigration:

Colonel House showed me a sheaf of papers, each one of which embodied an attempt to find *a formula on the subject of Immigration* which would satisfy the Japanese. In the absence of such a formula, the Japanese had intimated that they would find it difficult, or impossible to join the League of Nations.

I observed that this was very much like an attempt at blackmail on the part of our Ally--to which Colonel House assented. But in whatever terms their action deserve to be described, it raised a problem which required solution. He then showed me his last formula, which began with a recitation (quoted from the American Constitution) of the Eighteenth Century doctrine, that "all men were born equal". Colonel H's view was that such a preamble, however little it squared with American practice, would appeal to American sentiment, and would make the rest of the formula more acceptable to American public opinion. He did not give me a copy of it, but, like all its predecessors, it seemed to me to suffer from the defect of indicating a sympathy on the part of the League of Nations with the principle of equal and unrestricted Immigration laws, which it was not the present intention of either the United States or the British Dominions to carry into practical effect. Speaking for myself, I did not believe that any of the English-speaking

communities would tolerate a great Japanese flow of immigration; and if that were so, the insertion of any of the formula into the document establishing the League of Nations would have the triple disadvantage of exciting hopes in the Japanese public which could not be fulfilled; of exciting fears in the English-speaking population in new countries lest they should be fulfilled; and burdening the League of Nations with perpetual controversy incapable of satisfactory solution.¹⁷

Hence, it is evident from the above that House's initial approach to Balfour further confirmed the British perception that the Japanese proposal was the "immigration" proposal which they had been anticipating. The Foreign Office sent a memorandum to Cecil on the same day outlining several points of objection to the proposal, one of which was that questions of immigration were problematic because they concerned not only the Japanese but immigration between the other Allied countries.¹⁸

Secondly, the direct participation in the negotiation by the Dominion governments became a predominant feature after mid-March. In fact, Cecil claimed that he hardly took part in the negotiation which was taken over by General Jan Smuts who was the other representative on the commission, and the Dominion premiers.¹⁹ As this was when the intensive negotiation took place between Japan and the British Dominions, Cecil's conspicuous detachment underlined the British government's resolve to keep out of the Dominion entanglement. When the Japanese continued to press Cecil to intervene in the Dominion negotiation, he firmly maintained that "the question was essentially an Australian one" and suggested that

¹⁷Italics are mine. Note dictated by Balfour on 10th February 1919 on conversation with House, Additional Manuscripts 49751, Balfour Papers, British Library.

¹⁸P.J.Baker to Cecil, 10th February 1919, PRO FO 608/240, file no.1613/1/1.

¹⁹Cecil to Lloyd George, 15th April 1919, F6/6/29, Lloyd George Papers, Historical Collection 192, House of Lords Record Office.

they negotiate directly with Australia.²⁰ Initially, the Dominions as a whole opposed the Japanese proposal. However, after negotiating with the Japanese, Canada and South Africa saw little reason in objecting to the proposal, and subsequently changed their position to accept a compromise formula.²¹ The formula, which was no longer an article but an insertion into the preamble of the covenant, had been amended so many times that its wording could no longer possibly imply immigration. Nevertheless, Hughes alone remained stubbornly obstinate in his opposition. Now it was up to the Dominion premiers to convince Hughes to change his position in line with the other Dominions. So, the Canadian Prime Minister, Robert Borden, and Jan Smuts played an important mediating role in attempting to unify the delegation on racial equality and to bring Hughes to a compromise position.²² The Dominion premiers and Smuts met frequently in late March and early April to persuade Hughes,²³ but the latter remained adamant and continued to register his opposition

²⁰As quoted in Curzon to Milner, 15th April 1919, Additional Milner Papers, MSS Eng. hist. C699, Milner Papers, Bodleian Library.

²¹Four formulas were as follows: 1. Makino: "By the endorsement of the principle of equality of all nationals of states members of the League"; 2. Borden: "By the endorsement of the principle of equality between nations and just treatment of their nationals"; 3. Smuts: "By the recognition of the principle of open equal and honourable relations between nations and just treatment of their nationals within the territories of other nations"; 4. Cecil: "The members of the League agree that they will grant equal treatment to all foreign residents being nationals of other members of the League, within their territories". Henry Borden ed., Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs, Vol.2, (London, 1938), pp.925-927.

²²Ibid.

²³Borden records meetings with other Dominion premiers and the Japanese on the racial equality issue on 25th and 31st March, 7th, 9th and 10th April 1919. Ibid.

at every opportunity.²⁴ Although Hughes came close to accepting one of the formulae on the condition that "it did not confer any right to enter Australia...except as and to the extent that its government might determine", the Japanese by then had been pushed to their limits and rejected Hughes's solution.²⁵ Moreover, Smuts and Borden had to convince New Zealand, which tended to follow closely behind Australia, to agree to a compromise formula.²⁶ In any case, all their concerted effort came to no avail as Hughes refused to compromise, which of course meant that the Dominions had to adopt the united stance of opposing the proposal in the voting on the 11th April. Smuts's effort still continued after the defeat of the proposal on the 11th April, in order to convince the Japanese not to reinstate the proposal at the plenary session on the 28th April.²⁷ The high degree of Dominion involvement in the negotiation is significant because it emphasised the political sensitivity of immigration as an issue in the inter-imperial relations, and the unwillingness of the British government to intervene.²⁸

If it had not been for Hughes's intransigence, the racial equality proposal

²⁴British Empire Delegation Minutes 17, 3rd April 1919, F126, Lloyd George Papers.

²⁵Hughes claims that the Japanese could not accept it on the strength of public opinion in Japan. William Morris Hughes, The Splendid Adventure: A Review of Empire Relations within and without the Commonwealth of Britannic Nations, (London, 1929), p.359.

²⁶M.P.Lissington, New Zealand and Japan 1900-1941, (Wellington, 1972), p.37.

²⁷British Empire Delegation Minutes 29, 28th April 1919, F126, Lloyd George Papers.

²⁸The Cecil Papers do not shed much light on how Cecil regarded the level of Dominion involvement in this issue. In fact, there is a conspicuous absence of the racial equality proposal in his peace conference diaries for most of the period from late March and early April when the Dominion negotiations were taking place.

would have been supported ultimately by the British delegation. Although it is difficult to separate Hughes from Australia, it seems reasonable to say that only Hughes's personality could have stood unwavering in the face of the immense pressure to compromise from the fellow Dominions and the British government, not to mention Japan. His opposition caused endless problems for the British and other Dominion governments, but he was determined to protect Australia's national interest. Moreover, Hughes's statement, made to the Japanese press explaining his position after the defeat of the proposal, nearly caused a diplomatic rift in Anglo-American relations since the Americans interpreted it as an attempt by the British government to throw the blame of the defeat on them.²⁹ Hence, it seems that it was truly Hughes's own victory when he stated:

But in the British Delegation we had a Court strongly sympathetic and ready to look at the question from the Australian point of view. Australia, as a portion of the Empire, was powerful enough to induce the Conference to support its national policy.³⁰

In retrospect, Hughes's strength lay not only in his ability to wreak havoc but in having very little at stake in terms of possible negative repercussions of rejecting the proposal.

In the light of the above, the position of the British government and particularly of Cecil over the racial equality proposal was not by any means an enviable one. The irony of it all was that, despite the predominance of the Dominions in the negotiation, it was still left to Cecil to defend the British Empire's position, which was fast becoming a minority within the League of Nations

²⁹Curzon to Milner, 6th May 1919, Additional Milner Papers, MSS Eng. hist. C699, Milner Papers.

³⁰Hughes, op. cit., p.108.

Commission. It is also evident that Cecil was deeply concerned about the negative impact of opposition to the proposal on Japan as well as on international opinion:

If the amendment is moved by the Japanese and opposed only by the Australian member of the British Delegation, we shall be put in the somewhat difficult position of opposing our Japanese Allies on an issue on which the sentiment of the Conference will be overwhelmingly against us. Possibly Mr. Hughes might reconsider his attitude.³¹

Nevertheless, the British government was unwilling to push back the surge of Dominion determination in wanting to resolve this issue to their satisfaction. In the end, the British accepted that the racial equality proposal might be sacrificed for the sake of imperial unity, especially as they did not perceive it as one of the more important issues at stake at Paris.

The British Perception of Japan as a Great Power

The question which must be asked now is whether or not the issue of Japan's great power status had any role in explaining the British position on the racial equality proposal. There is little doubt that the British government, as Japan's alliance partner, was very much aware of Japan's position as a great power in East Asia. Moreover, it will be shown that the British government did have some notion of the racial equality proposal as an indirect manifestation of Japan's underlying insecurity concerning its great power status. Nonetheless, Britain's general perception of Japan was imbued with suspicion which progressively worsened during the war. We shall analyse very briefly why there was anti-Japanese sentiment in the Foreign Office and how the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was an important cementing agent holding the two countries together.

³¹Cecil to Lloyd George, 15th April 1919, F6/6/29, Lloyd George Papers.

Before we begin, let us say a word about the British Foreign Office in its relations with Japan. In the Foreign Office, Japanese affairs came under the Far Eastern Department which also looked after the British interests in Siam, China and Korea. Japan was the only Asian country to receive ambassadorial rank, albeit the lowest on the scale.³² On the whole, there was remarkable continuity in Britain's policy toward Japan from early in 1900s to 1919, partly due to the fact that there were only three foreign secretaries in the period.³³ In Tokyo, Britain was represented by Sir Claude Macdonald from 1900 to 1912, followed by Sir Conyngham Greene from 1913 to 1919. It is noteworthy that Greene became increasingly anti-Japanese towards the end of his stay in Japan. In April 1919, he retired and was replaced by Chargé d'Affaires Beilby Alston until the arrival of Ambassador Sir Charles Eliot.

Let us begin with how the changing perception of Japan influenced the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. The original reason for the alliance from the British standpoint was to check the Russian advances in northern China and Mongolia. However, a fundamental shift in Britain's perception of Japan occurred when Japan won the war in 1905, an event which neither the then Foreign Secretary Lord Lansdowne nor Sir Ernest Satow³⁴, a renowned expert of Japan in the British diplomatic service, had

³²In 1914, Britain had nine embassies of which Japan was ranked the ninth after Constantinople and Madrid. See Z. Steiner, The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914, (Cambridge, 1969), p.175.

³³Lord Lansdowne from late 1900 until late 1905, then Sir Edward Grey from December 1905 to 1916, then by Arthur Balfour.

³⁴Sir Ernest Mason Satow (1843-1929) first went to Japan in 1862 as student-interpreter with the British Diplomatic Services, and was to remain there on and off for twenty years until 1883. He returned to Japan again in 1895 as Resident Minister until he took up his final posting in Peking in 1900.

foreseen.³⁵ The victory resulted in an immediate revision of the alliance³⁶ which marked a change in the perception of the alliance as a means of containing Japan indirectly as well as Russia in East Asia from encroaching on British commercial interests in China.³⁷ This perception was reinforced in 1911 as a result of a two year survey on imperial defence needs which concluded that apart from Japan, there was no external threat of attack in the Pacific.³⁸ Hence, the notion of a "paper alliance" became a necessary reality and the alliance was renewed in 1911 for another ten years.

There was another angle to the alliance which was the increasing importance of the United States as a future counterweight to Japan in the Pacific. Unlike with Japan, Britain had strong ties with the United States, which made the prospect of *pax Anglo-Americana* attractive.³⁹ However, it was becoming increasingly difficult for Britain to balance its relationship with Japan and with the United States. In the

³⁵Steiner, *op. cit.*, p.64, p.178.

³⁶The 1905 revision stipulated that a partner could ask for military assistance if attacked by any third party as opposed to the 1902 stipulation which only required assistance if attacked by more than one power. Additionally, the geographical scope of the alliance now was extended to cover India for Britain and the rights of full protection to Korea by Japan. I.H.Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires 1894-1907, (London, 1966), p.312, p.320.

³⁷As Balfour said, Britain's sole interest in China was commercial. There was a difference in view between the Foreign Office and the Old China Hands (ie. Jardines and Swires) in the commercial worth of China. The former was not convinced of the claim made by the latter of China's commercial potential, that China would be the second India. N.A.Pelcovits, Old China Hands and the Foreign Office, (New York, 1948), pp.3-4, p.300.

³⁸I.H.Nish, Alliance in Decline: A Study in Anglo-Japanese Relations 1908-1923, (London, 1972), pp.50-51.

³⁹Egerton, *op. cit.*, p.83.

1910s, American and Japanese policies often clashed over China as the United States supported democratic nationalist movements in China whilst the Japanese government began to extend its influence through imperialist means. The Americans resented the alliance which allowed Japan to pursue its expansionist ambitions, such as in the case of the Twenty-One Demands.⁴⁰ On the other hand, the Japanese resented the Americans for interfering with the alliance as seen in the attempt made by the Americans to have an arbitration clause inserted into the 1911 alliance revision which was successfully resisted by Japan.⁴¹

Anglo-Japanese relations deteriorated during the First World War due to a number of actions taken by Japan which increased suspicions held by Britain of its alliance partner. Japan was perceived as an ambitious opportunist which was taking advantage of the European situation to consolidate its foothold in East Asia.⁴² As Balfour allegedly said, "She is the only belligerent country among the Great Powers which, whatever happens, seems likely to come out of the war possessing both more money and more territory than when she entered into the war."⁴³ Initially, it was the way in which the Japanese government appeared to have seized the opportunity

⁴⁰L.C.Gardner, Safe for Democracy: The Anglo-American Response to Revolutions, 1913-1923, (New York, 1984), p.73.

⁴¹In 1913, Britain signed an agreement with the United States which basically provided for a commission to investigate all disputes arising between them, and urged Japan to do the same with the United States. Nish, Alliance in Decline, p.69, p.112.

⁴²Memorandum by the Division of Far Eastern Affairs, State Department, "Points of Contact with Great Britain in the Far East", 29th November 1918, SDR 714.41/24, National Archives Microfilm Publication M581.

⁴³Balfour to Milner, 19th January 1918, MS Milner 46, f.3, Milner Papers. Harold Nicolson was even more critical about it as evident in his diary which said, "Japan and Italy were frankly out for loot" in Peacemaking 1919, (London, 1933), p.88.

to declare war which undermined British trust. Japan declared war on Germany in August 1914 without consulting Britain and within only thirty-six hours of receiving a general note requiring Japanese assistance in the Pacific from the British government. As a result, a swift military operation conveniently placed the German territorial and other rights in China and in the Pacific under Japan's *de facto* control.

Another issue which caused ill will was Japan's alleged reluctance in assisting the European war effort. The British request for naval assistance in the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea in September and November 1914, and for military assistance on the western front were all refused. In fact, the prospect of Japanese military assistance appeared so remote that Grey had ruled it out more or less completely. However, it soon became clear that the Japanese government would only be enticed to assist on a *quid pro quo* basis.⁴⁴ Henceforth, Britain succeeded in obtaining Japanese naval assistance in February 1916 for the Indian Ocean and the Straits of Malacca in exchange for adding Australia and New Zealand to the 1911 Treaty of Commerce and Navigation and removing restrictions on Japanese doctors practising in the Straits Settlements; and in January 1917 for an enlarged general naval cooperation in exchange for British support for Japan's claims to Shantung and the Pacific islands north of the equator which effectively became the secret treaty of 1917.⁴⁵ Notwithstanding the view that Japan made a sizable contribution to the war

⁴⁴The following information was largely drawn from a comprehensive list of Japanese assistance to the Allied war effort in Greene to Balfour, 7th January 1918, PRO FO 371/3233, f 33087.

⁴⁵Balfour to Greene, 14th February 1917, PRO FO 410/66, Confidential Print 11301, no 14.

effort and was unfairly criticised,⁴⁶ there seems to have existed the view that Japan gained more than it gave in the war.

There were two major developments during the war which complicated Britain's relations with Japan, namely the Twenty-One Demands of 1915 and the Siberian troop deployment of 1918. We have explained already in Chapter One the nature of these issues, but it is important to stress here that they underlined the difficulty of balancing Japan on the one hand and the United States on the other, especially as American-Japanese relations deteriorated after the Twenty-One Demands. It seems that the reactions to the Twenty-One Demands in Britain were less conspicuous than those of the British residents in China who vented their anger towards Japan through the English language press such as The Tientsin Times and North China Herald. In fact, The Times in London was surprisingly circumspect by withholding publication of the Twenty-One Demands which became available from a Chinese source, in addition to withholding anti-Japanese articles generally during the war.⁴⁷ Although the British government did not condemn the Japanese action as forthrightly as did the Americans possibly because of British discretion in not wanting to disagree openly with an ally in war, it still found the Japanese government's intentional neglect in not having consulted Britain beforehand as a snub. In fact, the question of China remained a delicate issue in Anglo-Japanese relations, as the British Foreign Office continued to view Japan's objectives with much caution

⁴⁶Nish, Alliance in Decline, p.256.

⁴⁷This could be the fruit of a campaign launched by the Japanese government to alleviate the anti-Japanese tendency of The Times by inviting its editor, Valentine Chirol, to visit Japan in 1909. However, the Twenty-One Demands were subsequently published by the Manchester Guardian. Ibid., pp.9-10.

and suspicion.⁴⁸

The debate over Japanese involvement in the Siberian troop deployment placed Britain in a difficult position. Whilst France was very keen to obtain Japanese assistance,⁴⁹ the Americans were decidedly against it. The British government, not wanting to alienate the United States, whose perceived importance for Britain's future was increasing every day, had had to show restraint despite its natural inclination to support Japanese intervention, and had tried to strike a balance between Japan and the United States.⁵⁰ Balfour's handling of the issue exemplified the delicate balancing act Britain was compelled to perform. In January 1918, Balfour circulated a memorandum to the War Cabinet and the King to the effect that the American distrust of Japan in not leaving Siberia and the possibility of stirring up in Russia the unfortunate memories of the Russo-Japanese War should be seriously considered.⁵¹ Balfour privately wrote to Lord Milner, Secretary of War, a day later:

In your letter, you seem to assume that the main obstacle to giving Japan a free hand is British suspicion; but I think that you will find that the U.S.A. are much more suspicious than we are. When I was in America, I found that the State Department took a profoundly gloomy view of Japanese policy. I did what I could to combat suspicions which seemed to me, on the evidence, somewhat excessive; and the subsequent Japanese mission may have done more. Nevertheless, I think that you will find that Washington (which must clearly be consulted before Japan is invited by the Allies to take solitary

⁴⁸Most secret memorandum, 22nd October 1919, PRO FO 371/3816, f 148769.

⁴⁹Frazier and Page to Wilson, 16th March 1918, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.47, (Princeton, 1986).

⁵⁰S.P.Tillman, Anglo-American Relations at the Peace Conference of 1919, (Princeton, 1961), p.135.

⁵¹Interdepartmental memorandum by Balfour on Russian affairs circulated to the War Cabinet and the King, 19th January 1918, Box 71, Davidson Papers, Historical Collection 187, House of Lords Record Office.

action) would be very hostile to the scheme....⁵²

However, Lloyd George was of the view that Japan should not be treated inferiorly and that it should not be asked for a guarantee which one would not ask from the United States.⁵³ The British continued to wade through the delicate situation by procrastinating on the issue. In the end, the problem was resolved in June 1918 when the United States finally agreed to Japanese intervention as part of the Czech reinforcements. It can be said that the Siberian issue was simply another aspect of the changing allegiance of Britain which perceived the United States as being an increasingly important partner.

Not surprisingly, the Foreign Office did not have a friendly sentiment towards Japan. First of all, the fact that both the British ambassador to Tokyo, Sir Conyngham Greene, and his counterpart in Peking, Sir John Jordan, were unsympathetic to the Japanese implied that much of information and diplomatic analyses coming from these postings tended to project Japan in an unfavourable light. There are many examples of Greene's critical comments of the Japanese, one of which is the following written in 1915:

The Japanese are, however, ambitious, conceited, and to use Baron Kato's own epithet, arrogant. They are bent on making themselves the masters on this side of the Pacific, and they have their eyes fixed on the *post bellum* settlement.⁵⁴

There was also a tendency to view Japan as not fully "grown up" as a great power.

⁵²Balfour to Milner, 19th January 1918, MS Milner 46, ff.3-4, Milner Papers.

⁵³Frazier and Page to Wilson, 16th March 1919, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.47.

⁵⁴Greene to Grey, 16th August 1915, PRO FO 410/64, Confidential Print 11282, no 290.

For instance, Sir William Wiseman made such a remark:

Like other 'young' nations (including America), she prefers playing a 'lone hand'. Her geographical position suits that kind of game; her knowledge of alliance is small and not altogether satisfactory.⁵⁵

However, the most devastating proof of the deep rooted distrust of Japan in the Foreign Office can be seen in the description of the Japanese in its Paris Peace Conference Handbook on Japan:

The pride of the race in its achievements is, like its loyalty and patriotism, exaggerated. The astonishing progress the country has made in the last fifty years, and the victories gained over China and Russia, have to some extent turned the heads of the Japanese, and made them think themselves superior to Western nations, and look down with contempt upon other peoples of the East. They do not perceive their own lack of creative talent; they are apt to forget that in this second borrowing from abroad the things taken from the West were material rather than moral, which was not, to the same extent, the case in the first instance, when China was the model; and they are inclined to overlook the enormous advantage which Japan possessed in the adoption of reforms which were based on Western models. At no cost to herself, without expenditure of time or thought, labour or money, she plucked the fruit of generations of toil in Europe and America. She levied toll on all the world. Profiting at once by the improvements made in the course of centuries in every field of human energy, she began her career of constructive progress at the point which other countries had then reached, and continued her advance in line with them. Such considerations do not occur to the Japanese mind.⁵⁶

⁵⁵Confidential summary of correspondence prepared by Ian Malcolm concerning the Allied intervention in East Russia, 21st June 1918, Box 71, Davidson Papers.

⁵⁶Paris Peace Conference Handbook on Japan, Foreign Office, March 1919, PRO FO 373/4/15. As an interesting contrast, this is what it said about China: "The Chinese are a sober, industrious race, highly endowed with judgment, good sense, and tenacity. Though comprising many types, they are markedly homogeneous, owing to centuries of uniform mental cultivation. The ideals of their intellectual life are not inferior to those in the Western world; and their religion--ancestor worship--tends to bind society together. They are amenable to intercourse; moderation is a virtue with them; and they are accustomed to conduct their own private and local affairs with tact and consideration. By education and temperament they are markedly pacific. They possess the qualities and attributes which entitle a people to independent existence, and if they are not rapidly inoculated with militarism there is no inherent reason why other nations should fear them or exercise a preventive domination." Paris Peace Conference Handbook on China, March 1919, FO 373/4/1.

In spite of the generally negative feeling towards Japan in the Foreign Office, it did not necessarily affect the views of the successive Foreign Secretaries of the period, namely Grey and Balfour. However problematic Japan might have been, both Grey and Balfour recognised the importance of maintaining the alliance. Grey, being a consummate realist, had pointed out that it was natural for Japan to take advantage of the war to strengthen its position in the Pacific and asked who would not have done so in similar circumstances?⁵⁷ As for Balfour, his thinking on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was that a paper alliance was crucially important where there was no natural alliance and that he "never imagined that the Alliance rested on anything beyond narrow self-interest."⁵⁸ As long as Japan remained an ally, it was crucial even on the surface to maintain good relations. One such example was the War Cabinet's decision to send Prince Arthur of Connaught on a goodwill mission to Japan in 1918 to dispel increasing anti-British sentiment in Japan.⁵⁹

Regardless of the increasing anti-Japanese sentiment in the Foreign Office, the British government continued to be cautious in its treatment of Japan as an alliance partner. Indeed, Balfour's belief in the importance of having a paper alliance especially where there was no natural alliance basically summarised the British

⁵⁷Edward Grey, Twenty-Five Years 1892-1916, Vol.1, (London, 1925), p.100.

⁵⁸J.H.Tomes, "A.J.Balfour and British Foreign Policy: the International Thought of a Conservative Statesman," (Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, University of Oxford, 1992), p.303, p.318.

⁵⁹Cecil commented: "I do not think there was ever any idea of raising important political issues with Japan. The idea was rather to take advantage of the presentation of the baton to send out a political personage who could convince the Japanese of the determination of this country to persevere till victory and restore their confidence in us" in Greene to Balfour, 30th March 1918, PRO FO 371/3234, f 56817; Greene to Balfour, 16th July 1918, FO 371/3234, f 162924.

attitude. The only instance when the British government explicitly referred to the racial equality proposal as having relevance to Japan's insecurity as great power was at the League of Nations Commission on 11th April when Cecil stated at the end of his speech rejecting the proposal that:

Furthermore, Japan would be permanently represented on the Executive Council and this fact would place her in a situation of complete equality with the other Great Powers.⁶⁰

Otherwise, we could only infer from the evidence seen of Lloyd George during the Siberian troop deployment crisis and Balfour's general attitude that they did consider the importance of not offending the sensibilities of Japan as a great power. The lack of further evidence during the racial equality negotiation could be interpreted as an indication that because Britain treated Japan as a great power as a matter of fact, due to the alliance partnership, it was not sufficiently aware that Japan might have been wanting further confirmation through the racial equality proposal to that very status which the British had long been recognising. Interestingly, it is noteworthy that Australian Premier Hughes attempted to quell the growing dissatisfaction in Japan about his opposition to the racial equality proposal by using the argument that Japan was a great power regardless of the proposal:

Let me say a few words as to my attitude toward Japan and the Japanese regarding the race question and other questions, and so regarding the policy of Australia. No one doubts that Japan is one of the strong powers of the world, Japan is now represented in the conference of the five big nations. Is her position not on an absolute equality with those of other powers? That means that the world has recognised the equal status of Japan among the powers. It is nothing but a mark of praise for the wonderful progress made during the past half century. That they are not by any means behind other races I can here testify.⁶¹

⁶⁰D.H. Miller, The Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.2, (New York, 1928), p.389.

⁶¹Alston to Munro Ferguson, 29th April 1919, PRO FO 371/3817, f 86355.

For the time being, it can be said that Britain's awareness of Japan's insecurity as a great power was more implicit than explicit. Although Britain and the Dominions were willing to recognise the problem of Japan's great power status, it seems that they were at the same time unwilling to give too much weight to this issue which they regarded as one of national sentiment.

Racial Equality as Universal Principle

The British, on the whole, did not perceive the racial equality proposal as a demand of universal principle. As has been mentioned, the initial motivation of the Japanese in submitting the proposal was nationalistically orientated, and sought to obtain guarantees of racial equality of Japanese nationals. Gradually, the proposal evolved to become more universal in its connotation because many changes were made in order to make it acceptable to the Dominions. It is interesting that the British government, nonetheless, never discussed the racial equality proposal as an issue of universal principle. Why was this the case? This seems even more curious when, contrary to popular assumption, the racial equality principle would not have spelt an end to Britain's expanse of many non-white colonies.

First of all, let us elaborate on the claim that racial equality as universal principle would not have caused problems theoretically for the British government. The Imperial government professed to the imperial principle of equality of subjects as a basis for maintaining imperial unity of all subjects. Accordingly, racial equality as a principle was not at all problematic but, in fact, compatible with the Imperial government's fundamental principle of equality of imperial subjects:

It would have been difficult for the United Kingdom delegates, in view of the established policy throughout the Empire under Imperial administration, to

dissent from this clause, but the interests of the Dominions were, of course, paramount...⁶²

In practice, the British government found the imperial principle difficult and arbitrary to implement as there was an internal tension caused by the Dominions' practice of racially discriminatory immigration policies, especially against Indian immigrants. Moreover, though the imperial principle was not strictly racialist in connotation, the implication was that some races, that is the Anglo-Saxons, were innately more "civilised" and "democratic" because of their capacity of creating a superior political institutional framework in the form of parliamentary self-rule.⁶³ Hypothetically, even if racial equality were to raise problems by awakening the racial awareness of the non-white colonised peoples, the Imperial government could still fall back on its safe and unshakable political principle of self-government as the most crucial defining factor to justify why some colonies (ie. the self-governing Dominions) were more equal than others. Therefore, as the imperial principle of racial equality was fool-proof, the Japanese proposal certainly could not have been perceived by the Imperial government as posing a fundamental threat to British colonialism.

In the light of the above, the question which remains unanswered is why the British government did not discuss the racial equality proposal as a demand of universal principle. It seems that this could be explained as a general reflection of

⁶²H.V.W.Temperley ed., A History of the Peace Conference of Paris, Vol.6, (London, 1924), p.352.

⁶³Paul Rich terms this as "racial Anglo-Saxonism" which is "defined in terms of notions of common Anglo-Saxon racial origins in the colonies of white settlement and the belief that British parliamentary liberties were a product of Anglo-Saxon tribal institutions which had been carried down through centuries and underlay the British imperial mission to spread freedom and justice to other, more backward parts of the world" in Race and Empire in British Politics, (Cambridge, 1986), p.13.

the British empirical tradition. There was an ingrained suspicion or uneasiness in Britain with "ideas" which did not seem to have immediate practical implications.

Cecil summarised succinctly the British attitude:

...it is curious how all the foreigners perpetually harp on principle and right and other abstractions, whereas the Americans and still more the British are only considering what will give the best chance to the League of working properly.⁶⁴

What Cecil found difficult to appreciate was the importance of discussing principles which did not have any direct practical relevance. Cecil, being an ardent advocate of the League, could understand the Americans preaching principles such as self-determination, democracy, open diplomacy, because they were all necessary elements to the practical framework of establishing an international organisation. In fact, an interesting contrast can be seen in the fundamentally different attitude towards "principles" in Britain and France in the racial equality debate in the League of Nations Commission on the 11th April. On the one hand, Cecil rejected the Japanese proposal which underlined the British empirical thinking as he stated, "One of two things must be true: either the points which the Japanese Delegation proposed to add to the Preamble were vague and ineffective, or else they were of practical significance."⁶⁵ Whilst on the other hand, the French representative, Léon Bourgeois, exclaimed his support because "it was impossible to vote for the rejection of an amendment which embodied an indisputable principle of justice."⁶⁶

Another interesting example of this was Balfour's reaction to Colonel House

⁶⁴Diary, 4th February 1919, Add.51131, f.33, Cecil Papers.

⁶⁵Miller, op. cit., p.389.

⁶⁶Ibid., p.390.

in early February 1919 when they were discussing the Japanese proposal which is worth quoting again in part:

He [ie. House] then showed me his last formula, which began with a recitation (quoted from the American Constitution) of the Eighteenth Century doctrine, that "all men were born equal". Colonel H's view was that such a preamble, however little it squared with American practice, would appeal to American sentiment, and would make the rest of the formula more acceptable to American public opinion. He did not give me a copy of it, but, like all its predecessors, it seemed to me to suffer from the defect of indicating a sympathy on the part of the League of Nations with the principle of equal and unrestricted Immigration laws, which it was not the present intention of either the United States or the British Dominions to carry into practical effect.⁶⁷

This text is interesting because Balfour did not seem to register the implication of what House was saying which was that the Americans would be more favourable to supporting the principle if it were to echo the sort of principles which were outlined in the American Constitution. Balfour's response was very pragmatic since it did not occur to him that the proposal should ever be considered in a similar vein as the principles in the American Constitution because it was unquestionably an issue of immigration.

Therefore, both Balfour and Cecil did not seem to have considered the Japanese proposal as a demand of universal principle of racial equality, in spite of the fact that racial equality was theoretically compatible with the imperial policy of equality of all subjects. No doubt, the British empirical tradition in foreign policy generally tended to rule out the possibilities of Britain being sympathetic to proposals which were not practically orientated. However, it still does not explain fully why the British neglected to consider the proposal as demanding universal principle because they could have at least debated it internally on the merits of such an

⁶⁷Note dictated by Balfour on 10th February 1919 on conversation with House, Additional Manuscripts 49751, Balfour Papers.

interpretation. It seems that the most probable explanation for all this is that their fixation in wanting to see the Japanese proposal as the "immigration" proposal which they had been anticipating since late 1918, had excluded the possibility of almost any other interpretation of the proposal. This factor, in conjunction with the British understanding of the tradition of Japanese foreign policy as being primarily imperialistic and national interest orientated, could have made it more difficult for the British government to fathom the idea that Japan was intending to demand a universal principle of racial equality. Indeed, the British were correct in assuming this. As we have discovered in the Japanese analysis, the Japanese were not contemplating universal principle when they first submitted the proposal in February 1919.

Racial Equality as Politics of the Peace Conference

Finally, it is necessary to explore whether the explanation of the racial equality proposal as a political instrument to gain other ends helps to explain the British position on it. There are two sides to this explanation. One is the question of whether the British perceived the Japanese government as having used the proposal to gain other ends, namely Shantung. The other is whether the British government itself used the proposal politically to gain other ends. First of all, there is no evidence to suggest that the British were using the racial equality proposal as a political instrument at the peace conference. Although the British government needed to oppose the racial equality proposal because of the Dominions' opposition, there is no indication to suggest that it was benefitting elsewhere by opposing this proposal. On the contrary, Britain's persistent opposition to the proposal was beginning to have a negative impact on international opinion, as the Japanese proposal ultimately gained

considerable support from other countries at the voting on 11th April.⁶⁸ True enough, Britain was determined to support the United States on the creation of the League of Nations at Paris but it was not willing to do so at the cost of aggravating the Dominions over an issue which the British no doubt considered to be not too significant overall.

As regards the other proposition, there is no evidence to suggest that the British saw the Japanese as using racial equality to obtain Shantung. This is because Britain together with France, Italy and Russia were party to the secret agreements signed with Japan in 1917,⁶⁹ and therefore knew that Shantung and racial equality had nothing to do with each other. At the time, the Japanese requested the British to support their claim to these territories in exchange for giving reciprocal support to the British for their claims to the Pacific islands south of the equator.⁷⁰ Hence, the British government was committed to support the Japanese claims on Shantung in accordance with the secret agreement signed between the two countries in 1917. When the time came to unlock these treaties at Paris, the British government made a concerted effort to support the Japanese claims in the Council of Four.

The British commitment to Japan through the 1917 secret agreement explains

⁶⁸Cecil to Lloyd George, 15th April 1919, F6/6/29, Lloyd George Papers.

⁶⁹Foreign Office confidential memorandum to the Cabinet, 2nd February 1917, Box 56, Davidson Papers.

⁷⁰The War Cabinet decided on the following on 12th February 1917: "The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should give an assurance in the terms suggested in the opening sentences of the original Japanese request of the 27th January, with the proviso that the Japanese Government should give a corresponding assurance of support, in the eventual peace settlement, to our claims to the German islands south of the equator, and in our general policy elsewhere." in War Cabinet 63, Box 67, Law (Bonar Law) Papers, Historical Collection 191, House of Lords Record Office.

why Lloyd George was determined to secure Shantung for Japan. At the Council of Four meetings, Lloyd George repeatedly pushed for the claims on behalf of Japan, as President Wilson who was more sympathetic to China did not look favourably on these claims and was inclined to impose stricter measures on the transfer of Shantung. On 18th April, Lloyd George stated, "I do not know why Kiaochow should not be treated in the same way as all the other overseas German possessions, whose surrender by the Germans to the great Powers has been decided, with the right to deal with them as they see fit."⁷¹ The situation assumed greater urgency when the Japanese delegates attending the Council of Four meeting on 22nd April stated, "The Japanese Delegates were under an express instruction from their Government that unless they were placed in a position to carry out Japan's obligation to China, they were not allowed to sign the Treaty."⁷² This prompted the council to appoint Balfour as a special mediator in order to reach a hasty agreement.⁷³ On 28th April, Balfour reported to the Council of Four that he had been told with "great delicacy but perfect clearness" by the Japanese a few days previously that they wanted a decision on the Japanese claims as a whole, and that the final solution should be made clear to them before the plenary session on the 28th so that Japan could take an appropriate

⁷¹Paul Mantoux, Paris Peace Conference 1919: Proceedings of the Council of Four(March 24 - April 18), (Geneva, 1964), p.218; and similar pronouncements were made by Lloyd George again on 21st April, Minutes of the Council of Four, 21st April 1919, The U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter FRUS) 1919, Paris Peace Conference Vol.5.

⁷²Minutes of the Council of Four, 22nd April 1919, FRUS 1919, Paris Peace Conference Vol.5.

⁷³Lloyd George to Balfour, 26th April 1919, Additional Manuscripts 49692, Balfour Papers.

position concerning racial equality.⁷⁴ Britain continued to pressure the United States with Lloyd George protesting to Colonel House over the unnecessary severity with which Wilson was treating the Japanese claims.⁷⁵ Finally, the Shantung settlement was ruled in favour of the Japanese on 30th April.

In the end, the explanation that the racial equality proposal was a bargaining instrument at the peace conference to obtain some other objectives does not contribute to the understanding of the British position.

Conclusions

It can be said that the British government was not completely unaware of the Japanese demand as relating to the insecurity of their great power status. However, as Japan's alliance partner, its awareness was more implicit than explicit. Interestingly, Britain did not regard the proposal as a demand of universal principle though it was not in contradiction to the imperial principle of equality. Moreover, there was no inclination within the British delegation to perceive the proposal as a political instrument to gain other ends at the peace conference. It appears that Britain's determination to perceive the Japanese proposal as pertaining to immigration had made the other interpretations nearly untenable. Having said this, it is imperative to investigate the Dominions' opposition which had such an impact on the overall British position on the proposal.

⁷⁴Minutes of the Council of Four, 28th April 1919, FRUS 1919, Paris Peace Conference Vol.5.

⁷⁵According to House, "Lloyd-George afterward took me aside and asked if I would not get the President in a more amenable frame of mind. He thought the President was unfair to Japan and so does Balfour [Shantung]...." Charles Seymour ed., The Intimate Papers of Colonel House, Vol.4, (London, 1928), p.467.

CHAPTER 6 THE BRITISH DOMINIONS AND THE "IMMIGRATION" PROPOSAL

Now we turn to the most important explanation for the British position on the racial equality proposal: the amalgamated factor of immigration and domestic politics. The reason for combining the two factors is that immigration within the context of British-Dominion relations was an internal issue of individual Dominions. There are two questions which must be asked in analysing this explanation. First, why did the British government defer to the Dominions on the racial equality proposal in the first place? The second question is why was it so important for the Dominions and especially Australia to oppose the proposal? This will be answered by looking at the importance of the "white" immigration policies espoused by the Dominions and the perceived threat perception of Japan, especially in Australia. Only in understanding the complexity of the British Dominions' position on the issue, is it possible to understand why Britain felt compelled to reject the Japanese proposal.

Complexity of British-Dominion Relations

Before we start the analysis, let us explain the complex nature of the inter-imperial relations by outlining the key elements of the changes which gradually took place throughout the First World War, culminating in the Dominion participation at the Paris Peace Conference.

Fundamental to Britain's advocacy of imperial rule was the principle of imperial unity. As it was explained in the previous chapter, one of the tenets of

British imperial rule was that of "equality of status" of subjects.¹ The ultimate objective of imperial unity was to achieve "organic unity" as envisioned by Joseph Chamberlain, in 1897.² This notion of unity was further developed by Alfred Milner and his "kindergarten"³ who founded the "Round Table movement" to realise the idea of a great empire or "Imperial Commonwealth"⁴, where the imperial council took care of imperial issues whilst the existing local parliaments dealt exclusively with local issues.⁵ Accordingly, imperial unity could only be attained on the basis of "parliamentary liberties", defined as parliamentary sovereignty and ministerial responsibility⁶ which constituted the essential prerequisites for any colony achieving self-rule. Hence, imperial unity was a political principle which was required to accommodate the changing nature of the relationship between Britain and the Dominions as the latter sought increased autonomy. In fact, the British government continued to believe that the emphasis on imperial unity would overcome "immature nationalism" manifested by the Dominions because ultimately imperial nationalism would prevail over Dominion nationalism.⁷ Another important qualification to be made is that imperial unity presupposed the control of imperial foreign and defence

¹Leo Amery to Lloyd George, 24th July 1918, F2/1/28, Lloyd George Papers, Historical Collection 192, House of Lords Record Office.

²W.K.Hancock, Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs, Vol.1, (London, 1937), p.39.

³Its members were Lionel Curtis, Geoffrey Dawson, Leo Amery, Philip Kerr and Robert Brand.

⁴Paul Rich, Race and Empire in British Politics, (Cambridge, 1986), p.54.

⁵Max Beloff, Britain's Liberal Empire 1897-1921, Vol.1, (London, 1987), p.129.

⁶Ibid., p.34.

⁷Hancock, op. cit., p.35, p.41.

policy by the Imperial government. Although nominal measures had been taken by the British government to integrate the self-governing colonies into imperial affairs,⁸ it was ultimately Britain who had to bear the burden of imperial defence as the self-governing colonies were not overly anxious to do more than their share.⁹

As elsewhere, it was the impact of the First World War which precipitated the impetus to change. It was no longer possible for the British government to ignore the political demands made by the Dominions because of their decisive contribution to the British war effort. Out of the whole male populations, 19.35% New Zealanders, 13.48% Canadians, 13.43% Australians, and 11.12% South Africans served in the war.¹⁰ Moreover, the Indian contribution was numerically larger than all Dominions combined, totalling one million men and over £146 million.¹¹ Not only was the Dominion contribution significant in terms of numbers but also in the generosity of the spirit of loyalty towards the British Empire.¹² Consequently, the Dominions felt it their right to be involved more fully in British war policy and to have a say in the

⁸For example, Colonial Conferences were instituted in 1897, the Committee of Imperial Defence in May 1905, the reorganisation of Colonial Office by separating self-governing colonies from crown colonies and protectorates in 1907. Also some cosmetic changes were made as in the renaming of the Colonial Conference to Imperial Conference in 1907, and the substitution of "Colony" by "Dominion". By 1914 "Empire" was replaced by "Commonwealth" and became "British Commonwealth" in 1917.

⁹Beloff, *op. cit.*, p.107.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p.191. Hence, the Dominions were not too impressed with President Wilson moralising about the selfishness of their war aims when there were many more Australians and New Zealanders suffering casualties than Americans.

¹¹S.R.Mehrotra, India and the Commonwealth 1885-1929, (London, 1965), p.65.

¹²G.Greenwood and C.Grimshaw ed., Documents on Australian International Affairs 1901-1918, (Canberra, 1977), p.567.

peace settlement.

Primarily, the Dominions wanted a change in their status. Despite Arthur Balfour's statement in 1914 that "absolute equality as between these great self-governing communities and ourselves was and must remain an essential element of the Empire",¹³ dissatisfaction grew amongst the Dominions with the imperial system which continued to treat them as secondary citizens. For instance, the Dominions resented having to use the same machinery as the Crown Colonies and "the backward populations of all sorts of races" of communicating through the Colonial Office, which seemed incompatible with their status as "partner nations in the Empire".¹⁴ As Premier Borden of Canada reminded Lloyd George in 1917, the Dominions wanted the equality of status principle to be put into practice:

The Dominions have fought in this war upon the principle of equal nationhood. It would be desirable to say that this principle has been consecrated by their efforts and sacrifice and that it must be maintained.¹⁵

By 1918, the problem of equal status had become a public issue when various heads of Dominion governments started openly criticising the inequity in the system.¹⁶ Essentially, the Dominions demanded an immediate reassessment of the two central aspects of British-Dominion relations. First, the existing imperial structure required

¹³J.H.Tomes, "A.J.Balfour and British Foreign Policy: the International Thought of a Conservative Statesman," (D.Phil Thesis, University of Oxford, 1992), pp.86-87.

¹⁴L.S.Amery (Office of the War Cabinet) to Lloyd George, 9th July 1918, F2/1/26, Lloyd George Papers.

¹⁵Ibid., Borden to Lloyd George, 26th April 1917, F5/2/4.

¹⁶Increasingly, the British government was put under pressure as evidenced in the unusual step taken by the government in publishing an open reply to Hughes's complaint about the lack of consultation in the formulation of the peace terms in The Times in November 1918. Note on William Morris Hughes's speech of 8th November 1918, PRO CO 532/118, f 53588.

readjustment to better reflect the changing status of the Dominions. And secondly, there was a need to expand the Dominion "voice" in the common imperial policy in defence and foreign affairs.

As regards the first point, the existing structure did not allow for adequate integration of the Dominions into imperial policy making. One of the problems was that the British government could not accurately gauge how much involvement the Dominions really wanted.¹⁷ Nonetheless, the government made two structural improvements in 1917.¹⁸ Firstly, the Imperial War Cabinet was created, composed of the War Cabinet and the Dominion premiers and later joined by India in 1918. The Imperial War Cabinet convened for the first time on 17th March 1917 and met fourteen times in the following six weeks, followed by another spate of activity in June and July 1918 and then from November 1918 to discuss the peace terms.¹⁹ Secondly, the decision to include General Smuts in the War Cabinet in June 1917 marked a significant departure from the previous policy of keeping the Dominions at bay as subordinate units.²⁰

Another aspect of the change demanded was the enhancement of Dominion contribution in the formulation of common imperial policy on foreign affairs and defence. With growing direct contact with other countries such as Japan and the

¹⁷Beloff, *op. cit.*, p.219.

¹⁸Borden had delivered an address on the wartime imperial structure to the American Historical Association at New Haven, 28th December 1922, Box 112/5/1, Law (Bonar Law) Papers, Historical Collection 191, House of Lords Record Office.

¹⁹The reason for the sporadic nature of the Imperial War Cabinet was logistical as it was not practical for the Dominion premiers to attend meetings regularly in London.

²⁰Beloff, *op. cit.*, p.217, p.220.

United States, arising out of trade and other issues, some Dominions were beginning to feel constrained by imperial policy which tended to exclude them at the policy making level.²¹ However, the problem was that they differed amongst themselves as to the degree of direct involvement or autonomy desired. This can be illustrated in the aborted proposal to set up a special constitutional committee to deal with the problem of foreign policy because Australia thought it better to improve inter-imperial consultations instead of making constitutional changes.²² Moreover, the most flagrant contradiction occurred in the area of defence which left the Dominions divided. On the one hand, they preferred to keep their own defence force to look after their immediate regional security instead of contributing to the imperial defence requirements which were global in nature. On the other hand, they still wanted the benefit of having access to the British naval defence.²³ Admittedly, the Dominions were wary of commitments where the imperial interests recognised were less obvious to the Dominion electorate as in the case of Northwest Indian frontier problem. Nevertheless, the basic contradiction was that the Dominions did not really want to be self-sufficient in defence and it was more a political posture than a sincere proposition. For instance, though the Canadian government wanted to establish an independent navy, it was ironically the Canadian public who vetoed the scheme.²⁴ Another example was Australia, which despite having rattled its sabre over the

²¹This was particularly felt by Canada which had irritated Britain. Hancock, *op. cit.*, pp.28-29.

²²Beloff, *op. cit.*, p.320.

²³Munro Ferguson to the Colonial Office, 16th November 1919, PRO CO 418/178, f 934.

²⁴Beloff, *op. cit.*, pp.156-157.

renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1911, continued to rely on British naval defence in the Pacific in the face of a perceived threat from Japan.²⁵

It can be said that the biggest breakthrough for the Dominions came with the end of the First World War and the question of Dominion participation at the Paris Peace Conference. As a result of unrelenting effort by the Canadian prime minister, Lloyd George agreed finally on 31st December 1918 to a formula of having one Dominion representative in rotation on the British Empire delegation, in addition to giving separate representation to the Dominions and India on equal footing to lesser powers.²⁶ The issue was clarified in the meeting of the British Empire delegation on 13th January 1919:

The Dominions and India would accept a system of representation at the Conference whereby, whenever their special interests are concerned, they would respectively be entitled to a separate representative at the Conference, who should be on precisely the same footing as that proposed for smaller belligerent Powers, such as Belgium, Serbia, etc. Their acceptance is given on the understanding that they will in addition, as members of a panel, be entitled to representation on the British Empire delegation.²⁷

In signing the peace treaties, the British Empire delegation had sub-headings of Dominions which were signed by each Dominion representative, and Britain signed on behalf of all the Empire. Moreover, the Dominions were able to ratify the treaty in their respective parliaments before the final ratification was given by the King. Although Foreign Secretary Balfour expressed impatience with having to delay the ratification of the peace because of the Dominions, Colonial Secretary Milner

²⁵For instance, Australia requested naval protection in October 1919. William Morris Hughes to Lloyd George, 7th October 1919, F28/3/42, Lloyd George Papers.

²⁶Beloff, *op. cit.*, p.217, p.281.

²⁷British Empire Delegation Minutes 1, 13th January 1919, F126, Lloyd George Papers.

considered it appropriate in the light of changing inter-imperial relations.²⁸

As a summary, it can be said that inter-imperial relations were at best highly complex and ambiguous. Although the Dominions had been demanding increased autonomy vis-a-vis London throughout the early part of this century, the real impetus for change came with the First World War when Dominion war effort was considerable enough to impel the British government to take some measures to make the Dominions more equal partners. As such, their participation at the Paris Peace Conference was the culmination of the change.²⁹ This is why the Dominions jealously guarded their right to control immigration policies because it was one area where they could exercise independence of the Imperial government.

The Dominion Jurisdiction over Immigration

As it was established in the previous chapter that the racial equality proposal meant "immigration" for the British government, it is necessary to explain why the government thought it expedient to refer the proposal to the Dominions. Immigration, which belonged exclusively to the Dominions' sphere of jurisdiction, was one of the most contentious issues in British-Dominion relations for historical reasons. Hence, the Dominions were hyper-sensitive to any attempt by the Imperial government to intervene on issues related to immigration.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, the British government encouraged the

²⁸Milner to Balfour, 26th July 1919, Additional Milner Papers, Mss Eng. hist. C705, ff192-194, Milner Papers, Bodleian Library.

²⁹The Dominions gained equal status in 1926. Report of the 1926 conference presented by the Inter-Imperial Relations Committee, in R.M.Dawson ed., The Development of Dominion Status 1900-1936, (London, 1937), p.106.

Dominions to deal directly with the Japanese government on matters relating to immigration so as not to mix them with the more important matters of imperial defence and foreign policy. This division of power was made for practical reasons; each Dominion was considered the best judge of the kind of immigrants it wanted to have in its territory. Once they gained self-rule, immigration became one of the most important spheres of autonomy for the Dominions. In practice, the Foreign Office's official line of treating immigration as a Dominion issue was firmly entrenched. For instance, Foreign Secretary Grey had had to decline Japanese naval assistance in January 1915 when it was revealed that a *quid pro quo* offered by the French and Russians to the Japanese was the solution of the racial problems in the British colonies:

The third condition (ie. solution to racial problems) was one on which I could not say any thing without consulting the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Cabinet, and about which, even so, we could not say any thing without consulting the Self-Governing Dominions. This would, in any case, take a long time, and there would be difficulties with regard to it. It was a matter in which the Self-Governing Dominions had hitherto made their own arrangements. Canada, for instance, had made her own special arrangement with Japan.³⁰

The Foreign Office's anxiety prior to the peace conference that the Dominion governments should not find out about the possibility of the Japanese government bringing up "the question of discrimination against the Japanese in America, Canada and Australia... at the Conference as arising out of the proposal for a League of Nations"³¹ reveals how concerned Whitehall was about the Dominions negatively

³⁰Bracket insertion mine. Grey to Bertie (Paris) and to Buchanan (Petrograd), 14th January 1915, PRO FO 371/2381, f 5241.

³¹Copy of telegram from Greene to Balfour, 12th November 1918, PRO CO 532/139, f 4086; Greene to Balfour, 2nd December 1918, FO 608/211, f 475.

influencing the general position of the British government.³² By the time of the Paris Peace Conference, the Dominions had practised at least two decades of independent immigration policies with little intervention from the Imperial government. And as such, it was inevitable that the Dominions would guard jealously the one issue which was of crucial importance and of direct relevance to them at Paris.

In this light, the British government's conviction that the racial equality proposal was an "immigration" proposal became a crucial factor determining how the Japanese proposal was to be treated within the delegation. By acknowledging it an "immigration" proposal, the British government had effectively signalled to the Dominions that it would take the back seat in the negotiation. Contrary to what the Japanese government had expected, the British government did not have much control over the immigration policies of the Dominions, and was, moreover, very unwilling to enforce its "imperial" prerogative over the Dominions on these matters. The difficulty of understanding these delicate internal politics of immigration explains why the Japanese were taken aback by the British government's adoption of such a hardened stance against the proposal.³³ In fact, the British government was frank

³²Besides, the Foreign Office was concerned about resolving the problem of Indians in the Dominions prior to making any definitive arrangements with the Japanese, and had asked the Colonial Office to take appropriate initiative in setting up meetings at the peace conference. Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 13th January 1919, PRO CO 532/139, f 2719; India Office to Foreign Office, 13th January 1919, FO 371/3817, f 6579.

³³According to D.H.Miller who was at the crucial meeting on 11th April 1919, "Regardless of any question of procedure, it was clear that the objection of the British Delegation was of such a character that, notwithstanding the view of the United States or of any other delegations, the Japanese proposal could not become part of the Covenant." D.H.Miller, The Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.1, (New York, 1928), p.464.

about the primary role of the Dominions in issues of immigration since Cecil, having given the official reason as an infringement of sovereignty, privately conceded to the Japanese that it was because of the Dominions' opposition on the basis of immigration.³⁴ Cecil remained uninvolved despite repeated requests from Makino and Chinda to intervene to smooth out Dominion opposition, and insisted throughout that it was a Dominion issue, eventually to conclude that "the question was essentially an Australian one".³⁵

In a sense, the Dominion opposition can be understood as a political position taken against the Imperial government by reinforcing the primacy of their rights over immigration. Essentially, the Dominions appeared to have been saying that the ultimate decision on the racial equality proposal would be made according to their own timetable and prerogative, and not under any pressure from London. This seems a viable hypothesis in the light of the fact that the Dominions had a unique formula of representation at the peace conference which was as close as they could possibly get namely that ~~to applying what Smuts said in 1917 that~~ "We are one and we are many". Therefore, it may be appropriate to say that the Dominions opposed the racial equality proposal on two fronts: first, as a political signal against the British government, and second, as part of an external struggle against the Japanese government.

More specifically, immigration was a highly political issue for the chief opponent, Australia. The efforts made by Canada and South Africa in late March to

³⁴Matsui to Uchida, 15th February 1919, doc.363, Nihon gaikô monjo [Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy] Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

³⁵Curzon to Milner, 15th April 1919, Additional Milner Papers, MSS Eng. hist. C699, Milner Papers.

persuade Hughes to a compromise formula came to no avail because they had underestimated his determination, backed by the Labour Party, to turn this proposal into a political vote winner back home in Australia.³⁶ Hughes made rejection of the racial equality proposal a symbol of resistance to the British government, demonstrating to the Australian public his personal resolve to protect Australia's vested interest, and also deftly manipulating the strength of anti-Japanese sentiment in Australia in order to increase his domestic support.³⁷ Moreover, Hughes from the beginning had made his opposition into a very high profile campaign which made it politically costly for him to be seen as compromising or acquiescing to Japan's demand. In the end, Hughes had very little to lose by rejecting the proposal as it would certainly guarantee him a domestic ovation.

The Dominions and the "White" Immigration Policies

Having explained immigration as a highly sensitive issue for the Dominions, it is necessary to analyse why the Dominions but particularly Australia were determined to defeat the "immigration" proposal. Evidently, the espousal of the "white" immigration policies by the Dominions played an important role in building up a position against the Japanese proposal which was perceived to mean "free immigration". Historically, the Dominions had devised a variety of ingenious forms of "white" immigration policy from 1850s onwards. There was much anti-Oriental sentiment in the Dominions which had initially imported Asian immigrants--the

³⁶L.F.Fitzhardinge, William Morris Hughes: A Political Biography, Vol.2, (Sydney, 1964, 1979), p.12.

³⁷W.M.Hughes, Policies and Potentates, (Sydney, 1950), pp.246-247.

Chinese, Indians and Japanese--as a means of coping with a lack of cheap labour. As the relative number of these immigrants increased, they became a target of discriminatory sentiment because of the fear that they were destabilising the white settler societies economically and racially. As we shall see, it seems that the general threat felt by the Dominions regarding the racial equality proposal related more to the open-ended implications of such a proposal for their respective "white" immigration policies rather than specifically to the threat posed by Japanese immigrants. In this section, we shall attempt to outline briefly what was meant by "white" immigration policies and examine the historical background to the anti-Asian immigration practices in the Dominion territories. This will demonstrate that the historically controversial issue of non-white immigration was bound to lead the Dominions to oppose the Japanese proposal especially as it was perceived to imply measures to correct anti-Japanese immigration practices.

Historically, the Dominions had been practising openly a "white" immigration policy which was targeted against Asian immigration, involving the Chinese, Indian, and subsequently, Japanese immigrants. Before 1890, the Dominions had been unable to devise an effective formula which would exclude Asian immigration without impinging on imperial interests. Anti-Asian immigration was problematic for the British government on two grounds. First, a racially discriminatory policy went against the imperial principle of equality of imperial subjects. This was particularly applicable to Indian immigrants and British Chinese subjects, and its sensitivity cannot be underestimated as a cause of inter-imperial tension between India and the Dominion governments especially South Africa. Second, there was the problem of Dominion immigration policies negatively affecting the greater imperial policy of

defence and foreign affairs. This was particularly apparent in Britain's relationship with its ally, Japan.

However, the breakthrough came with the introduction of the "Natal formula" which appeared to meet satisfactorily the concerns of the British government. The Natal formula was an important and ingenious method which originated in South Africa in 1897 and later adopted by the Australasian colonies to overcome imperial sensitivity.³⁸ The central tenet of it was the application of non-racial criteria for discriminating against immigrants. Essentially, it entailed the use of a language test on incoming immigrants who were weeded out if they failed to pass the test:

Any person who when asked to do so by an officer fails to write out at diction and sign in the presence of the officer a passage of fifty words in length in a European language dictated by the officer.³⁹

This act was further modified to perfection in 1905 when "a European language" was replaced by "any prescribed language," which meant that not only the Japanese but any other undesirable immigrant could be excluded.⁴⁰ It was an ingenious device which served the implicit objective of excluding Asian immigrants without directly referring to their racial origins. This was markedly different from the immigration policy practised in Canada which was based on a quota system and tended to be more racially based, excluding "any specified class of immigrants" or "immigrants belonging to any race deemed unsuitable to the climate or requirements of

³⁸Hancock, op. cit., p.173.

³⁹Act 17 of 1901. In fact, the Australians thought that they were making a concession in agreeing to this formula because what they really wanted was to specify "coloured persons". R.A.Huttenback, Racism and Empire, (London, 1976), p.280.

⁴⁰Act 17 of 1905. Ibid., pp.308-309.

Canada".⁴¹ The Colonial Office which had been wary of not offending Japan could now be assured that the British government would not be singled out for racially discriminatory immigration legislation practised by the Dominions. In any case, the British government were at least for the time being appeased by the Natal formula and reduced their pressure on the Dominions to put into practice the imperial policy of recognising at least nominal equality of British subjects.⁴²

It seems that the reason why the Dominions developed and sustained the "white" immigration policies was the perception of economic and racial threats posed by non-white immigrants. The economic threat was tangible since it referred to the socio-economic indicators which were perceived to be threatened by the Asian immigrants. For instance, the lower standard of living of these immigrants, their more competitive attitude, or their increased economic wealth, could disrupt the *status quo* created by the white society. The racial threat was intangible, and often went hand in hand with economic threat, but sometimes took a distinct tone. It was a double-edged sword: on the one hand, there was the racial superiority complex of the whites; on the other hand, this racial arrogance was paradoxical and fragile because it was inseparable from the fear of the non-white race "contaminating" the white settler societies by racial miscegenation. It is important not to underestimate the perceived threat. Even with the "white" immigration policy firmly entrenched Billy Hughes stated, "We have lifted up on our topmost minaret the badge of white Australia, but we are, as it were, a drop in a coloured ocean ringed around with a

⁴¹Hancock, op. cit., p.173.

⁴²Huttenback, op. cit., p.167, p.282.

thousand million of the coloured races. How are we to be saved?"⁴³

Let us examine the history of anti-Asian immigration in individual Dominions and how it affected the respective position taken within the British Empire delegation over the racial equality negotiation. First of all, Australia started implementing restrictive immigration measures to curtail Asian immigration, mainly Chinese coolie and Indian indentured labourers, as early as 1855, in Victoria.⁴⁴ The imposition of successive restriction acts meant that by 1881, Chinese immigration no longer posed a problem as testified in the 1888 census of New South Wales which registered only 10,205 (1.36%) Chinese.⁴⁵ In terms of Japanese immigration, the first threat was felt in 1894 in Queensland over pearl shell fisheries. But the problem was swiftly resolved by the Japanese government who had agreed to control the immigrant population in the region.⁴⁶ The earlier success of checking Chinese immigration had hardened the Australian resolve to control its own immigration policy to such an extent that by 1888, it became clear to the Colonial Office that it could no longer influence the Australasian colonies on the problem of Chinese immigration.⁴⁷

⁴³Fitzhardinge, op. cit., pp.166-167.

⁴⁴The Victoria Act 39 of 1855 stipulated i) a vessel must not carry immigrant in excess of ratio of one immigrant to every ten ton; ii) £10 landing fee from every immigrant; iii) Governor empowered to impose further fees; iv) definition of immigrant was "any male adult native of China or of an island in the Chinese seas or any person born of Chinese parents." Since this failed to reduce the number of Chinese in the gold mines, Victoria Act 41 of 1857 which made each alien Chinese to obtain licence for residence every month, was legislated followed by Victoria Act 80 of 1859 which together with the act of 1855 and the South Australia law (Act 3) of 1857 finally halted the Chinese flow into Victoria. Huttenback, op. cit., p.62.

⁴⁵Ibid., p.87.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp.156-160.

⁴⁷Ibid., p.121.

It was the "White Australia" policy of 1901 (Immigration Restriction Act) which made both Australia and the "white" immigration policy notorious.⁴⁸ The White Australia policy was modelled on the Natal formula, its main feature being the "education test" of any European language at the discretion of immigration officers, which by default placed any non-European immigrant at an immediate disadvantage; and hence, it served its implicit objective of discriminating against Asian immigrants.⁴⁹ At the time, Premier Barton was concerned about reconciling imperial policy with the immigration policy through the implementation of the Natal formula, and desired racial homogeneity of the whites.⁵⁰ Certainly, Hughes saw the racial connotation in the "white" Australia policy:

The ideal of a 'White Australia', and one peopled in the main by men and women of British stock, reflects the traditions and achievements of our race. Racial purity pays in the long run. [In] Australia a certain percentage of the people of some European countries can be absorbed into our community, but we cannot assimilate these coloured peoples; their ways are not ours. The racial and economic barriers between us and them are insuperable. We cannot marry their women nor they ours without producing a race of half-castes at which both races would spit contempt.⁵¹

The "white" Australia policy became so fundamental to Australian life that sustaining it was perceived to be a *sine qua non* of national survival. As such it worked as a

⁴⁸Subsequent legislations adopted to the effect were Immigration Restriction Amendment Act 1905, Contract Immigrants Act 1905, Immigration Restriction Act 1908, Immigration Restriction Act 1910, Immigration Act 1912.

⁴⁹Foreign Office memorandum by E.Parkes, 11th December 1920, PRO FO 371/5367, f F3200.

⁵⁰A.T.Yarwood, Asian Migration to Australia: The Background to Exclusion 1896-1923, (Melbourne, 1964), p.91, p.155.

⁵¹W.M.Hughes, The Splendid Adventure: A Review of Empire Relations within and without the Commonwealth of Britannic Nations, (London, 1929), p.366.

defensive mechanism though inherently contradictory.⁵²

The 'White Australia' policy...is an integral part of the national life of the Australian people, and although the subject of much hostile criticism, the geographical, racial and economic circumstances of the Commonwealth amply justify it. Australia, by her attitude towards Eastern peoples, does not arrogantly assert her superiority over other races: it is dictated by the instinct of self-preservation. The 'White Australia' policy is a gesture of defence, not of defiance. We do not regard Asiatics as inferiors, but as different from ourselves, believing that the ideals, traditions, and standards of living in the East are so incompatible with our own that we could never live with them as fellow-citizens.⁵³

The threat was also perceived to be economic. Governor-General Munro Ferguson concluded in 1918 that coloured immigration spelt disaster for Australia since the influx of coloured labour would reduce the white population to idleness by further changes in the labour structure of the country.⁵⁴ In spite of numerous restriction acts, Australia remained extremely sensitive to the nightmarish scenario of Orientals invading the country and the fear of non-white immigrants was exaggerated out of proportion to the actual numerical evidence.⁵⁵ To put everything into perspective, the non-European origins of residents in Australia in 1911 were 0.82% Asians, 0.11% Africans, and 0.08% Polynesians.⁵⁶ Incidentally, the actual number of Japanese residents in 1911 was 3,489, less than the 1901 figure of 3,554.⁵⁷

What was Australia's attitude towards Japanese immigrants? Although Barton

⁵²"White Australia," Round Table Vol.11 no.42 (March 1921), p.320.

⁵³Hughes, Splendid Adventure, p.357.

⁵⁴Munro Ferguson to the Colonial Office, 13th March 1918, PRO CO 418/169, f 20420.

⁵⁵Huttenback, op. cit., p.312.

⁵⁶Greenwood and Grimshaw, op. cit., p.417.

⁵⁷Yarwood, op. cit., p.78.

was unconcerned about the effects of the White Australia policy towards Japan, his successor, Alfred Deakin, took a more conciliatory approach towards the Japanese.⁵⁸ He attempted to avoid confrontation over the immigration question despite the fact that the Australian policy was still based on the assumption that the Japanese should not permanently reside in Australia. Japanese immigration was very tightly controlled mainly by the Passport Agreement of 1904 which ensured that the Japanese had no right of entry for permanent residence. Australia had no increase in Japanese nationals which was largely composed of temporary resident pearlers (special exemption gained in 1902 at Thursday Island and Broome to employ cheap Japanese pearlers) who averaged 416 per annum between 1902 and 1922, and passport holders who averaged 44 per annum from 1904 to 1920.⁵⁹ It was this minuscule number of Japanese immigrants which caused the anti-Japanese movement to flourish in Australia.

Generally, the argument used against Asian immigration was that the influx of cheap Asian labourers tended to destabilize economic conditions by lowering the standard of living.⁶⁰ The Japanese were particularly disliked because of the threat of educated immigrants taking over the economy:

...it is the educated Japanese that we fear....There is no conceivable method by which the Japanese, if they once got a fair hold in competition with our own people, could be coped with. There is no social legislation by which we could sufficiently handicap them.⁶¹

⁵⁸Ibid., pp.91-92.

⁵⁹Ibid., pp.98-99.

⁶⁰Fitzhardinge, op. cit., Vol.1, pp.134-136.

⁶¹This was according to Hughes. Ibid., p.136.

Due to the extremely tightly regulated flow of Japanese nationals to Australia, it seems that anti-Japanese sentiment was mostly fuelled by the growing anti-Japanese hysteria sweeping across the West Coast of the United States.⁶² As we shall see in the American section, the anti-Japanese lobby in the United States used the economic argument because the number of Japanese immigrants there was incomparably larger than it was in Australia. Nevertheless, Hughes and his Labour Party made political capital out of the threat posed by Japan.⁶³ Therefore, it is not difficult to understand the apprehension with which Hughes must have encountered the Japanese "immigration" proposal because it was perceived as a means by which Japan could legally force Australia through the League of Nations to loosen its grip on the tightly controlled immigration quota.

Canada's treatment of Asian immigration was different in two respects from that of Australia. Firstly, the Canadian immigration policies were not based on the Natal formula, but on a quota system which tended to be racially discriminatory against non-white immigrants.⁶⁴ For instance, the Immigration Act of 1910 denied entry "of immigrants belonging to any race deemed unsuited to the climate or

⁶²Ibid., p.194.

⁶³Ibid., Vol.2, p.12, p.147.

⁶⁴British Columbia practised legal discrimination based on race in order to "to emphasise the desire to exclude, to prevent further immigration, to treat the presence of Asiatics as temporary even if they have acquired Canadian nationality, and to accord protection to certain favoured groups against types of competition which may lower their incomes and, therefore, their standards of living." Canadian Institute of International Affairs (hereafter CIIA), Minorities of Oriental Race in Canada (8th Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations, 1942), pp.15-17.

requirements of Canada".⁶⁵ Secondly, the problem of non-white immigration was a regional one, concentrated in the Pacific province of British Columbia where the provincial legislature adopted racially discriminatory measures. Discriminated immigrants were prohibited from voting in provincial elections and subjected to occupational discrimination in areas such as fishing and public service sector.⁶⁶ The first recorded instance of anti-Chinese agitation occurred around 1878 when the Chinese were accused of degrading moral and social conditions, lacking in ability to assimilate, and introducing unfair coolie labour competition.⁶⁷ This was followed by more regularised discriminatory legislation starting with the anti-Chinese law in 1885 when a poll tax of \$50 was imposed on Chinese immigrants, and ships were restricted to bringing in one Chinese per tonne of cargo.⁶⁸ This does not mean, however, that economic expediency did not get the better of discriminatory tendencies from time to time as shown in the case where the need to have Oriental immigrants build the transcontinental railway managed to reduce anti-Chinese sentiment amongst the employers.⁶⁹ However, such respites were not the norm, and the Asiatic Exclusion League was formed in Vancouver in March 1907 as a precursor to the

⁶⁵Paul Gordon Lauren, Power and Prejudice: The Politics and Diplomacy of Racial Discrimination, (Boulder, 1988), p.54.

⁶⁶CIIA, op. cit., pp.15-17.

⁶⁷This involved passing of a resolution forbidding employment of Chinese for provincial public works. See C.J.Woodsworth, Canada and the Orient: A Study in International Relations, (Toronto, 1941), pp.26-27.

⁶⁸The poll tax faced an increase in 1901 to \$100, and then again in 1904 to \$500. K.K. Kawakami, "Canada as a 'White Man's Country'," Current History Vol.19 no.5 (February 1924), p.829.

⁶⁹Huttenback, op. cit., pp.126-127.

racial riots in September of that year.⁷⁰

Canada practised selective discrimination against its immigrants. Out of Asian immigrants, the Chinese and Indians fared much worse than did the Japanese. Part of the reason for the difference lay in Ottawa's political consideration towards Japan as a great power, putting pressure on British Columbia to act reasonably. Indian immigration was a bone of contention within the British Dominions; whilst the self-governing Dominions were unwilling to accord equal treatment to non-white immigrants, they faced a dilemma of maltreating fellow imperial subjects. In fact, the Imperial War Cabinet recommended the institution of reciprocity of treatment of subjects between India and the Dominions in 1917 but did not get a favourable reply. The problem was that even in 1919, Canada continued to treat Indians who were British subjects less favourably than the Japanese and other non-Empire Asians.⁷¹

How different was the treatment of Japanese immigrants? Historically, Japanese immigration to Canada started in 1884⁷², and peaked in 1908 when 7,985 Japanese entered the country.⁷³ At this point, the Japanese government agreed on voluntary restriction of immigration through the Lemieux Agreement of 1908 which was subsequently enforced by Canada's Immigration Act of 1910.⁷⁴ Thus, the Japanese population in Canada was tightly controlled, recording 17,700 in 1924 (out

⁷⁰T.Ferguson, A White Man's Country: An Exercise in Canadian Prejudice, (Toronto, 1975), pp.4-5.

⁷¹Devonshire to Colonial Secretary, 14th April 1919, PRO FO 371/3817, f 86898.

⁷²Woodsworth, *op. cit.*, p.48.

⁷³CIIA, *op. cit.*, p.7.

⁷⁴Foreign Office memorandum by E.Parkes, 11th December 1920, PRO FO 371/5367, f F3200.

of which 16,000 lived in British Columbia) as opposed to a figure of 60,000 for the Chinese⁷⁵, and the cumulative figure for all categories of Japanese immigrants was kept well-below 1,000 annually, averaging around 600.⁷⁶ It seems that the Canadian government was not as stringent on Japanese immigrants for two reasons.⁷⁷ First, the Japanese government voluntarily restricted immigration which kept the Japanese immigrant population in Canada very small. Second, Japan was treated differently because of its status as an ally of Britain. On the whole, it appears that Ottawa respected the Japanese government's desire not to be named explicitly in the discriminatory immigration policy which would discredit Japan's international status.⁷⁸ Moreover, the fact that Asian immigration remained a predominantly regional problem meant that Ottawa might not have appreciated the extent of anti-Japanese sentiment in British Columbia. Whatever special allowances the Canadian government made towards Japan were symbolic token gestures to a great power. Prime Minister Borden's attitude towards the Japanese during the racial equality negotiation also reflected such a sentiment because he saw the expediency of reaching a compromise with Japan in order not to destabilise the British-Dominions relations and Anglo-Japanese relations over this issue. Interestingly, the Canadian press was supportive of the Japanese proposal at the Paris Peace Conference, claiming that it

⁷⁵Kawakami, *op. cit.*, p.832.

⁷⁶Incidentally, the figure for 1919 was 1,181. CIIA, *op. cit.*, p.7.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, p.4, p.7.

⁷⁸Kawakami, *op. cit.*, p.832. Sydney Fisher, who was Minister of Agriculture, in 1903 stated after attending the Osaka Japan Exhibition that "The Japanese are proud and rather sensitive....They resent extremely the idea of being classed with the barbarian Chinese, and of having any special legislation against them in any country with which they are asked to trade...." See Woodsworth, *op. cit.*, p.67.

was a just demand and as such its refusal would sow seeds of discontent for the future.⁷⁹

In South Africa, the problem of Indian immigrants was serious.⁸⁰ Problems started in the 1880s, when the "free" Indians, as opposed to indentured Indian labourers, came to Natal to compete commercially with the whites. Although the indentured Indians were protected by law, these "free" Indians were not. This prompted the rise of the Natal formula as Act 14 of 1897 which placed restriction on entry based on property (£25) and knowledge of a European language which was left to the discretion of immigration officers.⁸¹ Discrimination against Indian immigrants put Whitehall in a difficult position as they were placed between the loyalties to white colonists and to Indian subjects, when their natural inclination was to sympathise with the former:

The whole subject is perhaps the most difficult we have had to deal with. The Colonies wish to exclude the Indians from spreading themselves all over the Empire. If we agree, we are liable to forfeit the loyalty of the Indians. If we

⁷⁹In The Citizen, 29th March 1919 and Montreal Gazette, 3rd April 1919. Furuya to Uchida, 5th April 1919, 2.4.2.2, Kokusai remmei: Jinshu sabetsu teppai [The League of Nations: Abolition of Racial Discrimination], Vol.2, Diplomatic Record Office, Tokyo.

⁸⁰We shall not be touching the native African problem in South Africa as our interest is the Dominions' attitude towards Asian immigration to gain insight into their attitude towards Japan. South Africa had an opposite racial composition from the other Dominions whose white populations outnumbered the non-white; thus, as a Dominion with an indigenous white ruling minority there was a genuine problem of the racial balance in favour of the non-whites. In the 1921 census, there were 4,699,433 natives, 545,548 mixed and other coloureds, 163,896 Asiatics, and 1,519,488 Europeans in South Africa which demonstrate the extent of the "colour" problem. Patrick Duncan, "Race Questions in South Africa," Foreign Affairs Vol.5 no.2 (January 1927), p.293.

⁸¹Huttenback, op. cit., p.141.

do not agree we forfeit the loyalty of the Colonists.⁸²

Several bills were passed in 1902, 1903, 1904, and 1906 to restrict Asian immigration.⁸³ When the discrimination against the Indians became so severe, the Government of India had no alternative but to terminate indentured Indian immigration in July 1911. It was only in 1914 with Gandhi's leadership that Act 22 (Indian Relief Act) was passed which guaranteed resident Indians the right to gain admission to South Africa of one wife and her minor children.⁸⁴ In 1921, South Africa caused a rift in British-Dominion relations by refusing to grant equality to Indian subjects.⁸⁵ In fact, the relationship between India and South Africa continued to be sensitive because of the latter's refusal to recognise equality of Indians.⁸⁶

In terms of Oriental immigration, both the British and Dutch Afrikaner settlers supported the importation of unskilled Chinese workers to Transvaal to work in the gold mines around 1904.⁸⁷ However, Japanese immigration remained a non-existent problem, since even by September 1918, only eight permits had been issued to Japanese immigrants allowing temporary entry.⁸⁸ In fact, the restrictions imposed

⁸²Ibid., pp.143-144.

⁸³Cape Colony introduced the Assembly Bill 57 in 1902, Bill to Prevent Introduction of [non-British] Chinese in 1904, and another to amend the law placing restrictions on immigration and providing for the removal from the colony of prohibited immigrants in 1906; Natal produced Act 30 of 1903 to prohibit free Indians. Ibid., pp.150-152.

⁸⁴Ibid., pp.238-239.

⁸⁵"The Colour Question in Politics," Round Table Vol.13 (December 1922), p.47.

⁸⁶Beloff, op. cit., pp.312-313.

⁸⁷MS Milner 341/2, 341/11, 341/9, 341/7, 341/6, 341/3, Milner Papers.

⁸⁸Buxton (Governor-General of South Africa) to Long, 6th December 1918, PRO FO 371/3817, f 26706.

on Japanese immigrants were so severe that only officials were allowed to enter.⁸⁹ Hence, Japan remained a distant land for most South Africans and only in late 1920, was there any inclination to perceive Japan as a potential threat in East Asia.⁹⁰ Therefore, South Africa's position on the racial equality proposal was that it was very much perceived as a Pacific problem rather than having any direct implication for the Dominion.

New Zealand effectively had a "White New Zealand" policy which Joseph Ward had endorsed during his premiership.⁹¹ Primarily, it was concerned with Chinese immigrants, followed by the Indians. The Japanese threat was a threat in perception only as the number of Japanese settlers in New Zealand was negligible. The first rush of Chinese came to work in the gold mines from Victoria in Australia in 1866, and a year later there were some 1,219 Chinese in New Zealand.⁹² An interesting example of how seriously New Zealand felt threatened by Oriental immigrants can be seen in the creation of an anti-Chinese league in Nelson in 1857 even though there was no Chinese in the town.⁹³ In the 1850s, 4% of the population was Chinese but the ratio decreased to 1.02% (5,004 Chinese) in the 1881 census.⁹⁴ In July 1880, a bill restricting Chinese immigrants was passed in the parliament

⁸⁹Greene to Balfour, 27th January 1917, PRO FO 371/2952, f 54930.

⁹⁰From an article entitled, "The Rise of Japan," 2nd October 1920, in The Cape Argus. American Consul-General (Cape Town) to Secretary of State, 5th October 1920, SDR 894.00/173, National Archives Microfilm Publication M422.

⁹¹P.S. O'Connor, "Keeping New Zealand White, 1908-1920," New Zealand Journal of History Vol.2 no.1 (April 1968), p.44.

⁹²Hancock, op. cit., p.72.

⁹³Ibid., p.72.

⁹⁴O'Connor, op. cit., p.42.

which had set up a committee specifically to investigate Chinese immigration in the country.⁹⁵ This was followed by two acts (Act 47 of 1881 and Act 34 of 1888) which reflected similar acts passed in Australia.⁹⁶ Although Chinese immigration no longer posed a real threat to the country, various measures to discourage Chinese immigration were taken from 1881 onwards when the first series of poll tax was imposed on Chinese settlers.⁹⁷ Such measures continued to be taken and became more stringent when a series of Immigration Restriction Amendment Acts were adopted in 1907, 1908, 1910, and 1920. In fact, the level of anti-Oriental sentiment in New Zealand was high enough to concern the Foreign Office in London which was apprehensive lest New Zealand should interfere with the already delicate diplomacy with Japan by naming the latter in their numerous immigration restriction acts.⁹⁸ New Zealand became anxious over the racial equality proposal because it would mean the end of discrimination against Asian immigrants as well as the possibility of a wave of Japanese immigrants entering New Zealand.

It has been shown that the Indians, despite being fellow imperial subjects,

⁹⁵Hancock, *op. cit.*, p.72, p.81.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, p.93.

⁹⁷In 1881, £10 poll tax was imposed and only one Chinese was allowed to be carried for every ten tonnes of cargo entering New Zealand; in 1885 the tonnage was increased to one Chinese per every 100 tonnes; and in 1896, this was increased to every 200 tonnes and the poll tax went up to £100. The 1899 Immigration Restriction Act prohibited the entry of those who could not write out the application form in any European language. See O'Connor, *op. cit.*, p.42.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, p.44. The Imperial government expressed concern that British subjects would face reciprocal treatment in the former German islands in the Pacific should New Zealand decide to explicitly restrict settlement of Japanese as they had intended to do in Samoa. Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Office to Under-Secretary of State for Colonial Office, 13th March 1918, PRO CO 209/299, f 12886.

were heavily discriminated against everywhere in the British Dominions. The British government was sensitive about the Indian immigration for three reasons: first, it raised unwanted tension between the British and Indian governments as reforms were about to be implemented through the Montagu-Chelmsford Agreement of 1919; second, Indian immigration remained an unresolved point of contention with the Dominions; and third, the discriminatory treatment of Indians was not commensurate with the Indian membership in the British Empire delegation. India was discriminated against by the Dominions who imposed severely restrictive measures, which were often more onerous than those placed on the outsiders such as the Japanese. Moreover, British rule in Kenya had shown that discrimination was not simply a Dominion problem but also the British government's which, despite paying lip service to imperial unity and equality of all subjects, had not managed to practise it in Kenya.⁹⁹ It must be mentioned that the reciprocity of treatment between India and the Dominions over immigration had been on the agenda for some time. The Imperial government through the efforts of the Government of India had asked the Dominions in 1911 to adopt a more "considerate and friendly" attitude towards Indians as fellow subjects of the Crown but without success.¹⁰⁰ With India's enormous war contribution, it finally received reciprocal treatment theoretically with the Dominions as outlined in the Resolution 22 at the Imperial War Conference on 24th July 1918, including amongst other things the provision for Indians already permanently domiciled in the other British territories to bring in their wives and minor children. Even then, the battle had just begun since South Africa continued

⁹⁹Hancock, *op. cit.*, p.209.

¹⁰⁰Imperial Conference Minutes, 19th June 1911, MS Milner 410, Milner Papers.

to pose problems by dissenting from successive imperial resolutions in 1921 and 1923.

The Indian government's frustration with the self-governing Dominions can be witnessed in the statement made by Lord Sinha who was Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for India, in the meeting of the British Empire delegation on the morning of the plenary session on 28th April. Sinha would be obliged to come forward in the plenary session in support of the Japanese, should Hughes answer back to the Japanese on the racial equality proposal that afternoon.¹⁰¹ This would have caused great embarrassment and damage for the British government as the delegation would be openly split along racial lines.

It seems that the "white" immigration policies of the Dominions helped to shape their perception of the Japanese proposal as a threat to their national existence. Because the Dominions had managed so effectively to restrict the inflow of Japanese immigrants, the actual number of Japanese in these territories was surprisingly small. For most of the Dominions except Canada, the problem of anti-Japanese sentiment was one of emotionalism rather than actual economics because the small number of Japanese immigrants could not possibly have had significant economic effects in the system. Thus the anti-Japanese immigration attitude was a highly sensitive political position taken by these Dominions. Moreover, it sheds light on the reason why the Dominions were at first opposed to the Japanese proposal as it stood at the 13th February meeting of the League of Nations Commission. The insertion of the article would prevent them from practising such restrictive immigration policies against the Japanese and other coloured immigrants. Fear of future Japanese and other coloured

¹⁰¹British Empire Delegation Minutes 29, 28th April 1919, F126, Lloyd George Papers.

immigrants, rather than fact of having to improve the treatment of existing Japanese residents, led the Dominions to oppose the Japanese proposal. When it was amended beyond recognition into an innocuous insertion to the preamble of the covenant, Canada and South Africa were induced to support it because there was no further fear of it being interpreted as demanding "free" immigration. The reason why Australia remained adamant regardless of the change was partly because the anti-Japanese immigration stance had become politically very important for Hughes who used it to his advantage at the peace conference.

Perception of Japan as a Threat

In probing further the Australian position, it becomes evident that there was another reason for its unmovable opposition to the racial equality proposal. Australia and, to some extent, New Zealand were particularly fearful of the "immigration" proposal precisely because it originated from Japan. In a sense, this emanated from Japan's position as a military power capable of being a threat in the Pacific. Only Japan, in the discriminated category of immigrant countries, had any capability to reverse the "white" immigration policies either militarily or diplomatically.¹⁰² Therefore, there was a direct correlation between immigration and defence as the case of Australia will show.¹⁰³ This perception played an implicit role in Australia's rejection of the proposal.

As much as they loathed Japanese immigrants, Australia and New Zealand felt

¹⁰²Fitzhardinge, op. cit., Vol.2, pp.416-417.

¹⁰³Yarwood, op. cit., p.93.

threatened by Japan as a militarily viable great power in the Pacific.¹⁰⁴ Their historical perception of Japan as a potential enemy dated back to the Russo-Japanese War.¹⁰⁵ Such a perception was mainly a reflection of their geostrategic position, situated in the southern hemisphere remote from any other white power. For instance, Canada did not feel the same degree of external threat from Japan because of its proximity to both the United States and to Britain. Similarly, South Africa did not have a "Japan" on its doorstep. Australia's fear was made worse by some exaggerated claims made by the Japanese during the war that the South Pacific belonged to the Japanese sphere of influence.¹⁰⁶ Although Australia relied very heavily on the British Navy for protection, it remained uneasy with the geographical proximity of Japan. In fact, Hughes felt threatened enough to ask Lloyd George for British protection from Japanese naval fleet in the Pacific in October 1919.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, it was psychologically difficult for the Japanese as victims of racial discrimination to realise that Australia might actually feel very threatened by Japan's expanding presence in the region.¹⁰⁸ In the end, however, even the Japanese had come round to recognising the Australians' deep rooted fear of them when the

¹⁰⁴Lauren makes the point that the only difference between the Japanese and other racially discriminated immigrants was that Japan possessed power. Lauren, *op. cit.*, p.57.

¹⁰⁵Yarwood, *op. cit.*, p.92.

¹⁰⁶For example, the "South Sea Association" had an aim "to promote an interest in and study of the countries of the South Sea and to cultivate a friendly understanding between them and the peoples of Japan" which included as its activities, amongst other things, "the training of men for work in the South Seas". Greene to the Colonial Office, 24th July 1918, PRO CO 532/120, f 36093.

¹⁰⁷Hughes to Lloyd George, 7th October 1919, F28/3/42, Lloyd George Papers.

¹⁰⁸Greene to Grey, 15th May 1915, PRO FO 371/2382, f 46334.

Japanese Foreign Ministry in 1923 concluded that there was a political connection between the fundamentals of the White Australia immigration policy and Australia's insecurity aggravated by Japanese encroachment in the South Pacific.¹⁰⁹

Apart from the perceived threat of Japan, there was also a practical reason for Australia's mounting concerns about the Japanese military activity which increased in the Pacific as a result of the First World War. Basically, Australia had assumed that it would occupy the German islands to the north of the equator including the Marshall, Carolinas and Marianas, as evidenced in an "emphatic protest on behalf of the Commonwealth against Japan's right or even claim to the islands in the Pacific North of the Equator". In November 1918, Billy Hughes reminded Lloyd George of Australia's interests:

It only remains to remind you once more that Australia profoundly distrusts Japan, that its national welfare and its trade are alike seriously menaced by Japan. The recognition of Japan's claims to these islands will enable her to pursue much more effectively her policy which is directed towards securing for herself the trade which Britain and Australia have built up.¹¹⁰

However, there was much confusion over these islands and Hughes was reminded by Lloyd George of his acceptance of the 1917 secret agreement with Japan which promised Japan's support for British claims to the south of the equator.¹¹¹ At the peace conference, Hughes was decidedly against the imposition of the mandates system for these islands and made a strong case for the annexation of New Guinea

¹⁰⁹Foreign Ministry memorandum on "The White Australia Policy", 9th February 1923, Eiryô gôshu no bu (British Australia), 1.6.3./2-23, Kakkoku naisei kankei zassan [Miscellaneous Collection of Domestic Political Relations of Individual Countries], Vol.3, Diplomatic Record Office, Tokyo.

¹¹⁰Hughes to Lloyd George, 4th November 1918, F33/1/44a, Lloyd George Papers.

¹¹¹Ibid., Lloyd George to Hughes, 30th December 1918, F28/2/20.

in the British Empire delegation meeting in February 1919.¹¹² No doubt, this "haggling" over the former German islands and the British determination to honour the 1917 secret agreement with Japan had made Australia resentful towards Britain.¹¹³

New Zealand had a perception of Japan as a threat similar to that of Australia. It began to perceive a Japanese military threat from the time of the Russo-Japanese War, exacerbated by Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910.¹¹⁴ Evidently, New Zealand did not feel comfortable with the Anglo-Japanese Alliance which was perceived as "short term expediency." Joseph Ward, who was prime minister before William Massey, criticised Britain's attitude towards Japan which was singularly based on great power interests:

...fears of the yellow peril that threatened to overwhelm the white races in the Pacific; while the British policy towards these countries was determined largely by the strategic needs of its European and Indian interests.¹¹⁵

Instead, the ideal security pact was perceived to be an Anglo-American alliance as the United States seemed more of a natural partner due to historical and cultural links than Japan. Nevertheless, such a dream was not to materialise as Britain continued to be the sole Pacific protector until 1941.

As an illustration of how crucial the perception of Japan as a threat differed

¹¹²"Memorandum regarding the Pacific Islands" by W.M.Hughes for the British Empire delegation, 8th February 1919, W.C.P.116, MS Milner 389, Milner Papers.

¹¹³I.H.Nish, Alliance in Decline: A Study in Anglo-Japanese Relations 1908-1923, (London, 1972), pp.144-146.

¹¹⁴M.P.Lissington, New Zealand and Japan 1900-1941, (Wellington, 1972), p.13.

¹¹⁵G.P.Taylor, "New Zealand, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the 1908 Visit of the American Fleet," Australian Journal of Politics and History Vol.15 no.1 (April 1969), p.59.

between the Dominions, the discussion of the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1920-1921 revealed the complex reasoning behind the respective positions taken by Australia and Canada to the renewal. Initially, both Australia and Canada opposed it. However, Australia soon dropped its opposition after having received confirmation that the alliance would not affect immigration because it was, in reality, in Australia's interest to maintain protection through Britain's alliance with Japan. The major opposition came from Canada whose principal concern had been the United States, who was already feeling the weight of this alliance against its desire to become the major partner in the Pacific. An interesting turn of events occurred at the 1921 Imperial Conference. On the one hand, Canada opposed the alliance based on the view that it had a negative effect on Anglo-American relations. On the other hand, Australia would not support termination of the alliance unless the United States gave explicit guarantees to protect Australia against Japan. The British cabinet on the whole supported renewal more than the Foreign Office whose more restricted ministerial interests deemed the renewal not to be beneficial. In the end, the alliance was terminated as a result of the Washington Conferences of 1921-1922, when Lloyd George's wish to submit the alliance to a Pacific conference was realised.¹¹⁶

Hence, the fact that the racial equality proposal had originated from Japan had deepened the sense of apprehension felt by Australia and New Zealand. As far as they were concerned, the proposal became an extremely sensitive issue because it combined the two worst fears of these Dominions--that of Japan as a military power and that of Japanese immigration. This also explains why Australia was the one who adamantly rejected the proposal to its very end because Australia, in a sense, felt the

¹¹⁶Nish, *op. cit.*, pp.332-337.

greatest military threat from Japan.

Conclusions to the British Response

We have seen that the British government did not respond as if the racial equality proposal were a demand of universal principle or a political instrument to gain other ends at the peace conference. Nevertheless, it was aware to a certain extent that the proposal could have emanated from Japan's insecurity about its great power status. The most important factor in the British response was the combination of immigration and domestic politics. As soon as the British government had identified the Japanese proposal as an "immigration" proposal, it became a highly sensitive internal issue in the British-Dominion relations with a political dimension. The Dominions jealously guarded their rights over immigration at the peace conference and the British government did not have much choice but to let the Dominions deal directly with Japan. The history of anti-Asian immigration as manifested in the form of the "white" immigration policies of the Dominions made it extremely difficult for them to accept the Japanese proposal once it had been given the label of a "free immigration" proposal. The racial equality saga was a story of the victory of the Dominions over the British government, and moreover the victory of Australia over the British Empire delegation. It is interesting that the Dominions perceived and segregated the two categories of equality as far as the Japanese were concerned; in other words, Japan's great power status did not guarantee racial equality. Moreover, this reflected the extent to which the Dominions were indifferent to great power diplomacy except insofar as it directly affected their interests. Immigration was also the issue which linked the British response to that of the

Americans as we shall see in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 7 THE AMERICAN RESPONSE TO THE RACIAL EQUALITY PROPOSAL

In this chapter and the next, we shall analyse the American opposition to the racial equality proposal by using the five categories of explanations as a framework in common with the preceding chapters. The American position on the racial equality proposal was complex and multi-dimensional, as there was no single unifying voice which represented it. The proposal had both domestic and international implications and affected the United States in many ways. In this chapter, four categories of explanations--great power status, immigration, domestic politics and universal principle--will be analysed. It will be shown that despite the American perception of Japan as an ambitious, expansionist power, the Americans did recognise Japan's insecurity about its great power status. The historical sensitivity surrounding the anti-Japanese immigration legislation meant that the American public became particularly apprehensive of the Japanese proposal which was seen to be a demand for free immigration. Interestingly, this perception had a serious impact on domestic partisan politics against the Wilsonian League and Wilsonian peace. It will become clear that the weakest explanation, by far, was the one of universal principle. In Chapter 8, we shall see that the explanation of the proposal as a political instrument used to gain other ends at the peace conference offered the most convincing argument in explaining the American position. In this light, we shall discover how crucial Wilson's perspective was to understanding the American opposition.

The American delegation at the Peace Conference

Very briefly, who constituted the American delegation and what was its peace

policy at the Paris Peace Conference? The American Delegation to Negotiate Peace was composed of five plenipotentiaries--President Woodrow Wilson, Colonel Edward House (special advisor to the president), Secretary of State Robert Lansing, General Tasker Bliss and Henry White (a Republican retired diplomat). President Wilson, by then, was so revered internationally that his arrival in war torn Europe was hailed as the coming of the saviour. However, there was much controversy surrounding Wilson's unilateral decision to attend the peace conference because both Lansing and House believed that it would weaken his international stature as the prophet of peace.¹ Moreover, Wilson's autocratic method of decision making at Paris made the presence of the other peace commissioners redundant.² Hence, the American delegation, though huge and well-manned, was internally very divided.

In terms of the United States' peace policy, the American position became the implementation of the Fourteen Points enunciated by Wilson in January 1918. The strength of Wilson's moral position derived from the fact that the United States did not have vested interests in territorial possessions in the way that the other great powers had. Yet the American position as victor was more as an arbiter and thus it was unique, according to one observer:

The position of the United States in the Conference was peculiar. It had no interest of its own to serve, but it had interest in the questions of all countries. Other countries, however, had very substantial interests and were naturally desirous of promoting them. The role of the United States would therefore be to readjust the conflicting interests of the different powers by concession and compromise as was done in the case of the federal constitution of the

¹Robert Lansing, The Peace Negotiations: A Personal Narrative, (London, 1921), p.14; Inga Floto, Colonel House in Paris: A Study of American Policy at the Paris Peace Conference 1919, (Princeton, 1980), p.70.

²Even House eventually fell out of Wilson's favour after mid-March. All this will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

United States. It was probable that the result would be satisfactory to none.³ In practical terms, the priority of the United States became the creation of the League of Nations, the embodiment of all the democratic ideals, which Wilson personally took over by being chairman of the League of Nations Commission with House as the other American representative.⁴

Another noteworthy point was the close working relationship which was established between the American and Chinese delegations at Paris.⁵ Essentially, China played the role of the protégé of the United States at the peace conference.⁶ For instance, the Americans tended to consider the most important of China's interests, the Shantung settlement, as though it were one of their own interests at Paris. This was reflected in the fact that, with the exception of Colonel House, the delegation tended to be sympathetic to China.⁷ This seems to have had a material effect on how the Americans generally viewed Japan and its racial equality demand.

The American Negotiation on Racial Equality at Paris

³Parts of the Memorandum of a Conversation between Robert Lansing and Hu Weide, Alfred Sze, and Koo, 18th December 1918, Box 1, Wellington Koo Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

⁴R.S.Baker, Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement, Vol.1, (London, 1923), p.239. The importance of League for Wilson will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

⁵R.H.Fifield, Woodrow Wilson and the Far East: The Diplomacy of the Shantung Question, (New York, 1952), pp.192-193.

⁶Lu Tseng-Tsiang, the chief Chinese plenipotentiary, recalled that the "policy of friendship" of the United States was very important for China in his Ways of Confucius and of Christ, (London, 1948), p.40.

⁷Fifield, op. cit., p.226; A.Nevins, Henry White: Thirty Years of American Diplomacy, (New York, 1930), p.441.

We shall highlight the two key aspects which characterised the American negotiation on the racial equality proposal. They were the prominence of Colonel House as the chief negotiator and the significance of unanimity voting imposed by Wilson on 11th April.

Colonel House played a key role in the day-to-day negotiation of the racial equality proposal. This reflected the generally low level of involvement of President Wilson until 11th April. Admittedly, Wilson initially did offer to present the Japanese amendment as one of his own when it was first tabled informally to the Americans by the Japanese in early February 1919. Wilson made few attempts at drafting the amendment but both he and House were unable to arrive at a formula which was satisfactory to both Japan and Britain. The Japanese eventually decided to present the proposal without Wilson's help as part of his article on religious freedom. On the whole, however, Wilson's personal commitment to racial equality was not significant as he showed no qualms about dropping his religious freedom article when he realised that the opposition to the article especially with the Japanese amendment attached, was too substantial.⁸ His priority at this point was to have a complete draft covenant which he could take back to the United States on 15th February in order to convince his domestic public of the absolute importance of the League of Nations. In this period, there is hardly any record of how Wilson personally thought about the Japanese proposal. The only evidence uncovered was that during a conversation which Wilson had with Ray Stannard Baker about the League in early March, Wilson apparently called the Japanese proposal as an

⁸D.H.Miller, The Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.1, (New York, 1928), p.269.

"absurdly mild" recognition of racial equality.⁹ Hence, it can be said that Wilson's interest in the proposal was marginal; it was one of those proposals which he could have supported if it did not impinge on his other interests.

As the racial equality proposal was not Wilson's primary interest, Colonel House was entrusted with the negotiation. In negotiating with the Japanese, House's talent as conciliator and mediator¹⁰ was put to good use. His non abrasive, indirect approach favourably impressed Baron Makino and Viscount Chinda.¹¹ The Japanese approached him because he was considered in the government to be "pro-Japanese" in sentiment as reported by Ambassador Ishii on his visit to House's retreat in Magnolia in July 1918.¹² As the Americans were considered to be the most likely stumbling block, Makino and Chinda first approached House for advice on "the race question" for the reason that public interest in Japan demanded the new international organisation to embrace some broad principle of race equality. House, accordingly, made all the right noises for the Japanese:

I took occasion to tell them how much I deprecated race, religious, or other kinds of prejudices. It was not confined, however, to any one country or against any particular class of people; prejudice exists among the Western peoples against one another as well as against Eastern peoples. One can cite the contempt which so many Anglo-Saxons have for the Latins, and vice versa. This is one of the serious causes of international trouble, and should

⁹Diary of Ray Stannard Baker, 8th March 1919, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.55, (Princeton, 1986).

¹⁰In fact, he was praised by his friends and condemned by his critics for these qualities. See Nevins, *op. cit.*, p.385; Paul Birdsall, Versailles Twenty Years After, (Hamden, 1962), p.20; G.Clemenceau, Grandeur and Misery of Victory, (London, 1930), p.139.

¹¹Charles Seymour ed., The Intimate Papers of Colonel House, Vol.4, (London 1928), p.324.

¹²House to Wilson, 6th July 1918, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.48.

in some way be met.¹³

What is noteworthy about this stage in the negotiation was the extent to which House was involved in the day-to-day negotiation with the Japanese to come up with a satisfactory amendment. Makino and Chinda submitted four different draft amendments to House between the 5th and 12th February, and House himself consulted Wilson at least twice, on the 5th and 7th.¹⁴ It was also left to House to approach the British whom he initially thought could be persuaded to accept the amendment¹⁵ but he became increasingly pessimistic by 9th February due to the rising Dominion opposition.¹⁶ By 13th February when the proposal faced its first defeat, House was quite clear about what the stumbling block was:

Makino agreed upon a form the other day which the President accepted and which was as mild and inoffensive as possible, but even that the British refused. It has taken considerable finesse to lift the load from our shoulders and place it upon the British, but happily, it has been done. This ought to make for better relations between Japan and the United States. I understand that all the British Delegation were willing to accept the form the President, Makino, Chinda and I agreed on excepting Hughes of Australia. He has been the stumbling block.¹⁷

The above shows House's preoccupation with setting the record straight, that it was not the Americans but the British who were opposing the proposal, since he was concerned about the negative publicity which the Americans were beginning to attract

¹³Seymour, op. cit., pp.320-321.

¹⁴For details, confer footnote 25, Chapter 3.

¹⁵Seymour, op. cit., p.323.

¹⁶9th February 1919, Binder 15, Series II, Collection Group 466, The Papers of Edward Mandell House (hereafter as House Papers), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

¹⁷Ibid., 13th February 1919.

in Japan. In this period, House was sympathetic to the Japanese proposal despite the fact that he perceived it essentially as an immigration question:

Colonel House said that he did not see how the policy toward the Japanese could be continued. The world said that they could not go to Africa; they could not go to any white country; they could not go to China, and they could not go to Siberia; and yet they were a growing nation, having a country where all the land was tilled; but they had to go somewhere.¹⁸

This position contrasted with that of British Foreign Secretary Balfour who, though agreeing in principle, could not separate the proposal from the practical implications it would have on the British Dominions.¹⁹

It is interesting that House's attitude to the racial equality proposal changed in March when he began to focus more on the practical implications. He began to recognise that immigration did present an enormous obstacle especially for the British Dominions as well as the increasingly vociferous opposition from the American West Coast. By then, he had come to the conclusion that the adoption of racial equality in the way the Japanese had proposed was neither possible nor desirable. Thus, his energy was now focused on trying to dissuade the Japanese from pursuing what he considered to be an unrealistic amendment. Makino and Chinda's routine visits to House resumed in mid-March²⁰ as the Japanese continued to fight for their amendment in a substantially abridged form, as an insertion into the preamble of the covenant. House felt increasingly frustrated with Hughes's stubbornness on the one

¹⁸Miller, *op. cit.*, pp.183-184.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰House records in his diary of the visits taking place on 21st, 27th, 29th March and 3rd April. See Binder 15, Series II, Collection Group 466, House Papers. According to the Japanese sources, Makino and Chinda also visited House on 31st March. See Matsui to Uchida, 2nd April 1919, doc.400, Nihon gaikô monjo [Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy] Part 1 Vol.3 1919.

hand,²¹ and with the dogged determination of the Japanese on the other. Furthermore, House indicated informally to the Japanese on a number of occasions that he could not support their proposal should Hughes insist on opposing it:

I told Makino frankly that while we would agree to the pallid formula they desired, yet unless Hughes promised not to make trouble we would be against putting it in. Smuts took the same position. I urged Makino to let the matter drop for the moment.²²

However, in spite of House's clearly expressed opposition to the proposal, the official American position continued to be non-committal.

As a final point on House, his record of the 11th April meeting when the Japanese proposal was defeated is worth analysing:

The Japanese brought up their amendment to the Preamble. The President was for accepting it, but Cecil, under instructions from his Government, could not, and since I knew that Hughes would fight it and make an inflammatory speech in the Plenary Session, I urged the President to stay with the British, which he did, and in a speech made the argument I gave him.²³

This diary entry is significant on two points. First, House states that Wilson was in support of the proposal even as late as 11th April. Second, House takes the credit for ultimately persuading Wilson to side with the British as he allegedly pushed a note at the crucial moment in the League of Nations Commission meeting which read, "The trouble is that if this Commission should pass it it would surely raise the race

²¹Bonsal, who was House's private assistant, had a comical account of the last attempt made by House to reason with Hughes on 5th April when Hughes apparently came out of the meeting mumbling, "We 'Ossies' are going to fetch away from Paris what we came here to git." House lamented to Bonsal, "I have just had my Waterloo. I may as well admit it. What a man! What a man!" See diary, 5th April 1919, Container 19, Stephen Bonsal Papers, Library of Congress.

²²For instance, 29th March 1919, Binder 15, Series II, Collection Group 466, House Papers.

²³*Ibid.*, 12th April 1919.

issue throughout the world."²⁴ However, both of these points are somewhat contentious. For instance, no further evidence is available to suggest that Wilson was sympathetic to the racial equality proposal long after his initial interest in early February. On the contrary, Wilson had already sacrificed without much difficulty his preferred religious freedom article in the light of the opposition to Japan's insistence on including racial equality as part of it. We must also bear in mind that by April, House's ability to influence Wilson had diminished considerably as the relationship between him and the president had deteriorated irretrievably.²⁵ It seems highly unlikely under the circumstances that Wilson would have simply followed House's advice, against his own inclination, to support the proposal. Instead, if Wilson had decided not to support it, it was most likely because he had an alternative agenda in mind. Therefore, House's testimony should be treated with some caution as he seemed to be making an exaggerated claim in influencing Wilson on the crucial voting on the 11th April.

The other characteristic of the American negotiating position was the instrumental role played by President Wilson in defeating the Japanese amendment at the 15th meeting of the League of Nations Commission on 11th April 1919. This will be examined in detail in Chapter 8, but it is necessary to point out that the Americans were reluctant throughout the negotiation to affirm officially their opposition to the racial equality clause. We have seen in House's negotiation record that more explicitly contrary views were expressed in informal discussions with the

²⁴D.H. Miller, document 767, My Diary: At the Conference of Paris, Vol. 8, (New York, 1924).

²⁵Diary of Grayson, 15th March 1919, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol. 55.

Japanese, with allusions to immigration as the greatest source of domestic nervousness. However, Wilson managed somehow to maintain an ambiguous official position on the 11th April as testified by David Hunter Miller who recollected, "The President spoke on the subject but did not speak directly against it, and as the negative vote was not taken the American delegation was not recorded."²⁶ From the tone of speech made on the occasion, it is evident that his primary concern was to prevent a public row in the plenary session on the 28th April over the issue.²⁷ Wilson perceived a great risk to the future of the League should the racial equality issue become unmanageable by creating divisions in the plenary session. He tried to calm Japanese nerves by reiterating the importance of equality of nations in the League of Nations.²⁸ Essentially, what Wilson managed to do through unanimity voting was to place the onus of rejecting the proposal on Britain by insisting that "At least one objection is insisted upon by one of the Governments concerned".²⁹ Every member in the commission knew that it referred to the British Empire delegation. The British representative, Lord Cecil, was not impressed by Wilson's performance as he recalled, "he[Wilson] did not show quite as much courage as I could have hoped in resisting the amendment."³⁰

Thus, the Americans had managed to defeat the racial equality proposal by the

²⁶Miller, diary, 11th April 1919, My Diary, Vol.1.

²⁷Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.1, pp.462-463.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., pp.464-465.

³⁰Diary, 11th April 1919, Add.51131, f.71, The Cecil of Chelwood Papers (hereafter as Cecil Papers), British Library.

imposition of unanimity ruling in the League of Nations Commission without ever having to make their opposition official. It seems that the breakdown of the relationship between House and Wilson meant that there were two parallel thoughts on the proposal: one was held by House who was increasingly concerned both about the domestic implications of racial equality in the United States and about the British Dominions' staunch opposition to the proposal; the other was held by Wilson whose interest in the proposal appeared marginal initially but later he seemed determined to defeat the proposal.

The American Perception of Japan as Great Power

As we have seen, one of the motivations of the Japanese government in proposing racial equality was Japan's insecurity regarding its status as a great power. It is necessary now to analyse whether or not this factor helps to explain the American position. Even a brief historical analysis of American-Japanese relations in the First World War will help to demonstrate that the Americans were highly concerned about Japan's position in East Asia, to the extent of feeling distrustful of Japan as an ambitious, expansionist power. It seems that this negative perception of Japan as an East Asian great power greatly influenced the American attitude towards Japan at the peace conference. Nevertheless, the Americans were aware of Japanese sensibilities regarding its "fragile" great power confidence, which led some at Paris to regard the proposal as essentially one of national pride.

In order to illustrate the representative attitude held by the Americans of Japan as a great power, we shall analyse the American perception of Japan's China policy and of the Siberian troop deployment in 1918. Firstly, the primary importance of

China in the American Far East policy clashed with Japan's China policy. There was a fundamental incompatibility in their respective China policies which exacerbated the mutual distrust. Historically, China had always been Japan's principal preoccupation in foreign policy. However, the United States had carved out for itself a different role in China, part of which was to act as China's moral tutor by encouraging its fledgling democratic nationalist movement and shielding it from the grabbing hands of the other great powers. Evidently, the Americans considered a new democratic nationalist China as a more compatible future partner for them in the Pacific. They were generally critical of Japan's interventionist policy, for instance, of supposedly preventing China from entering the war until August 1917 in order to protect its captured rights in Shantung.³¹ Notwithstanding the difficulty in assessing the balance of the American position, between moralistic aspirations in foreign policy such as defending China and more practical vested interests in areas like trade,³² there was an unmistakable underlying tone of morality in the American policy in China.³³ This meant that the Americans generally regarded the imperialistic

³¹Jordan to Curzon, 22nd April 1919, PRO FO 405/226, Confidential Print 11604, no.47; 19th April 1919, North China Herald Vol.CXXXI, no.2697.

³²For instance, Gardner points out that the American Ambassador, Paul Reinsch, launched a crusade of proclaiming America's concern for China's "integrity" which, concurrently, had a practical beneficial aspect of enabling American businessmen to seek opportunities in all parts of China as opposed to restricted spheres of influence. See L.C.Gardner, Safe for Democracy: The Anglo-American Response to Revolutions, 1913-1923, (New York, 1984), p.76.

³³For example, Secretary of State Lansing when evaluating the Council of Ten at the peace conference said, "I know that the United States means to be just and generous and is entirely unselfish in its policies, but I cannot say the same of the other four great powers." See "Review of the present condition of the peace conference," 22nd January 1919, Box 2, Vol.2, Robert Lansing Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University Archives.

concerns of the European great powers in China with disdain, and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance especially was perceived as giving Japan a free hand in East Asia.³⁴ Therefore, there was a fundamental clash of approach between Japan and the United States over China. Japan wanted to exert influence in overtly imperialistic ways, whereas the United States preferred to do so through moralistic support for the nationalist movement:

...the American interest in China, in the final analysis, was more ideological than commercial, though more commercial than strategic...the United States had only a clear commitment to China, but not a clear policy toward China....³⁵

Although the underlying American sentiment could be broadly categorised as anti-Japanese, the reality of the American perception of Japan was not so simplistic. It has been mentioned that the Twenty-One Demands of 1915 imposed by the Japanese government on China turned the tide of opinion definitively against Japan in the United States. However, whatever moral indignation the Americans expressed at the effrontery of the Japanese government, the American government stopped short of taking any punitive measures against the Japanese.³⁶ It seems that the failure of the United States to respond in a manner other than verbal condemnation revealed a

³⁴Gardner, *op. cit.*, p.73.

³⁵Zhang Yongjin, China in the International System, 1918-1920: The Middle Kingdom at the Periphery, (Oxford, 1991), p.122. This is an excellent work on China's participation at the Paris Peace Conference.

³⁶A. Walworth, Woodrow Wilson: 2 World Prophet, (New York, 1958), p.126, p.129. In fact, Wilson was sufficiently concerned about the deteriorating relationship with Japan that he appointed Roland Morris, his Princeton friend, as ambassador to Tokyo in October 1917.

division within the administration on how to handle Japan.³⁷ The hardliners in the State Department such as one of China experts, E.T. Williams, and the American minister in Peking, Paul Reinsch, were ideologically sympathetic to China. But the politicians, namely Wilson and Lansing, though sympathetic to China, remained wary of what Japan might do if the United States supported China at the risk of endangering Japanese-American relations.³⁸ The sense of caution expressed by Wilson and Lansing was understandable in light of the fact that the Terauchi government which succeeded the Okuma government continued to pursue an interventionist policy in China through economic and financial means as evidenced in the Nishihara Loans. Another example of the cautious attitude towards Japan can be seen in the Ishii-Lansing Agreement of November 1917. This innocuous agreement had satisfied the Japanese because it stipulated that "the Government of the United States recognises that Japan has special interests in China."³⁹ Similarly, Lansing claimed a minor diplomatic triumph:

...the Governments of Japan and the United States deny that they have any purpose to infringe in any way the independence or territorial integrity of China, and they declare furthermore that they always adhere to the principle of the so-called 'open-door' or equal opportunity of commerce and industry in China.

³⁷For instance, it was believed that Bryan was seeking a compromise between Japan and China whilst Lansing and Wilson favoured lodging a complaint but decided against it if Japan contained its interests to Mongolia and Manchuria. Gardner, op. cit., p.84. Hosoya contends that Bryan and Lansing were more accommodating to the Japanese, whereas Wilson became highly suspicious of Japan. Hosoya Chihiro, Ryô taisenki no nihon gaikô, 1914-1945 [Japanese Foreign Policy in the Interwar Years, 1914-1945], (Tokyo, 1988), pp.30-35.

³⁸Gardner, op. cit., pp.91-93.

³⁹Lansing conceded privately to Wilson that Ishii had insisted on the inclusion of Japan's "special interest in China" in the text as an appeasement to the Japanese public. Lansing to Wilson, 25th September 1917, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.44.

It is difficult to conceive of any agreement incorporating such contradictory clauses but its only logic was that it seemed to conform to Lansing's idea of enlisting Japan's support to break up the European spheres of influence in China.⁴⁰ Consequently, the agreement was ineffective and its sole objective seemed to be to placate domestic opinion in the respective countries.⁴¹

Another example which underlined the degree of American suspicion towards Japan was the Siberian troop deployment issue in late 1917-1918. As the details have already been recounted in Chapter 1, it is enough here to underline its psychological significance. The basic position of the Americans was to oppose repeatedly the French and British requests for Japanese troops to be deployed in Siberia. Their official reasons for the American opposition were two-fold: first, the Russians might misunderstand the Allied intentions of sending Japanese troops which might make them turn towards Germany;⁴² and second, it would arouse strong opposition in the United States because of the strength of anti-Japanese sentiment.⁴³ The first reason does not seem convincing since it was simply a matter of reassuring the Russians about the nature of the operation and its limited military objectives. Besides, it was clear from the British and French that military expediency overshadowed whatever

⁴⁰Gardner, *op. cit.*, p.84.

⁴¹Japanese Ambassador to Balfour, 7th November 1917, PRO FO 371/2954, f 212689.

⁴²D.E.Cronton, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels: 1913-1921, (Lincoln, 1963), p.288, p.295; "Memorandum on the proposed Japanese military expedition into Siberia," 18th March 1918, Box 2, Vol.1, Robert Lansing Papers, Seely G. Mudd Manuscript Library. Balfour suggested that the Americans were concerned about reviving the memories of the Russo-Japanese War.

⁴³Lansing to Wilson, 27th February 1918, National Archives Microfilm Publication (hereafter NAMP) M743.

political sensibilities the Russians might have had. It seems that the crux of the American opposition lay in the second reason which unofficially meant, according to House, as follows:

The race question in particular will be sharply emphasised and attempts made to show that we are using a yellow race to destroy a white one. This may result in the American Press and public getting out of hand and adopting attitude which will be resented in Japan and cause serious friction between the two peoples.⁴⁴

In fact, even the British were taken aback by the American distrust of the "yellow race". As Sir William Wiseman who intimately knew House wrote in March 1918:

The American hatred of all yellow races is thinly, if at all, disguised; the very thought of the yellows being brought in to redress the balance of the whites is repugnant to them, especially when it may involve the consequent loss of commercial advantages in the new and lucrative market of East Russia.⁴⁵

Thus, the American government was principally concerned about the effects of Japanese troop deployment on the American domestic opinion which was unsympathetic towards Japan at this point. What the Siberian troop issue demonstrated was the depth of distrust felt by the Americans towards the Japanese which not only derived from military-strategic reasons but also from underlying racial tension.

At the Paris Peace Conference, the fact that the United States took China under its wing meant that the American attitude in general remained sympathetic to China whilst being wary of Japan. Public opinion in the United States was also

⁴⁴House to Balfour, 4th March 1918, F60/2/45, Lloyd George Papers, Historical Collection 192, House of Lords Record Office.

⁴⁵Confidential summary of correspondence by Ian Malcolm concerning the Allied intervention in East Russia 21st June 1918, Box 71, Davidson Papers, Historical Collection 187, House of Lords Record Office.

antagonistic towards Japan.⁴⁶ Evidently, the crux of American distrust of Japan centred on the contested claim over the Shantung settlement.⁴⁷ This was compounded by rumours which circulated in February 1919 that the Japanese government was unduly pressuring the Chinese to concur with the Japanese position on Shantung at the peace conference.⁴⁸ On the whole, the view expressed by Lansing below was representative of the American delegation:

Mr Lansing observed that the attitude of the Japanese was extremely disquieting, particularly in its relation to China, and that he felt that this was the time for us to have it out once and for all with Japan.... He also stated that it was America's duty to support China.⁴⁹

The moral imperative to help their *protégé* compounded by their innate suspicion of

⁴⁶In this study, The New York Times, The San Francisco Chronicle, and The Los Angeles Times were surveyed, all of which portrayed an interesting general tendency to view Japan in a negative light during the Paris Peace Conference.

⁴⁷A brief history of the Shantung problem is as follows: In November 1897, the Germans landed at Tsingtao in the province of Shantung, and concluded a treaty with China in the following year which bestowed on Germany the lease of Kiaochou and certain associated privileges in the province. When the war broke out in Europe, Japan lost no time in declaring war against Germany and subsequently captured the leased territories in November 1914. The Japanese claimed that they should first have rights and privileges to Shantung which would then be transferred to Chinese sovereignty at a future date. However, the Chinese contended that their involvement in the war had nullified the necessity of an initial transfer to the Japanese. However, the Council of Four, after acrimonious discussions, had ruled in favour of the Japanese. Subsequently, the Chinese dissatisfaction with the Treaty of Versailles resulted in the Chinese abstention from signature. For a discussion of the American involvement in the Shantung settlement, consult Fifield, *op. cit.*

⁴⁸Zhang, *op. cit.*, p.56; 15th February 1919, North China Herald Vol.CXXX, no.2688; Macleay to Hardinge, 15th February 1919, PRO FO 608/209, f 634/1/4 (no.1638). The Japanese foreign minister denied this report when asked by Greene. See 15th February 1919, FO 608/209, f 634/1/1 (no.2172); Wilson to Lansing, 7th February 1919, Container 41, p.7195, Ray Stannard Baker Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁹Minutes of daily meetings of the Commissioners Plenipotentiary, 5th and 6th February 1919, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter FRUS) 1919, Paris Peace Conference Vol.11.

Japan produced a hard core of anti-Japanese sentiment amongst the "pro-China" Americans.

Notwithstanding the strong sense of distrust felt towards the Japanese, there was a feeling in the American delegation that the racial equality proposal was essentially a symbolic request to confirm Japan's great power status. For instance, the State Department's China expert, E.T. Williams, was of the opinion that racial equality should be regarded a "concession to her pride of race" which was a cheap price to pay in order to get Japan to be more accommodating on the Shantung settlement.⁵⁰ Thomas Millard who was editor of the Shanghai based Millard Review, saw the proposal as principally having a propaganda value for the Japanese and that the United States had nothing to fear from it as it was merely "a placation of Japan and Asiatic peoples".⁵¹ Even Ray Stannard Baker who was press officer in the delegation and a fierce opponent of giving Shantung to Japan, gave his assessment of the American interpretation of Japanese objectives at the peace conference which included two items, one of which was Japan's rights in China and the other:

...a more complete recognition of her status as a great Power, equal to any other. ... This desire was also expressed in her demand that the Covenant of the League of Nations provide for 'the equality of the nations and the just treatment of their nationals.'⁵²

Moreover, even as early as 6th February 1919, House noted that he had hoped to arrive at a formula which would not "weaken the American or British Dominions'

⁵⁰E.T. Williams to the Commission, 19th March 1919, Container 42, p.7289, Robert Lansing Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵¹Ibid., Thomas Millard, 6th April 1919, pp.7337-7339.

⁵²Baker, op. cit., pp.225-226.

position and yet will satisfy the *amour-propre* of the Japanese."⁵³ House continued trying to convince Makino and Chinda throughout March that the racial equality of the Japanese nationals was implicit in their recognition as a great power.⁵⁴ The awareness of Japan as a fledgling great power was deeply ingrained as even Lansing claimed that Japan's eventual threat of withdrawal from the peace conference over Shantung would never have materialised because:

The superior international position which she held as one of the Five Great Powers in the Conference, and which she would hold in the League of Nations as one of the Principal Powers in the constitution of the Executive Council would never have been abandoned by the Tokio Government.⁵⁵

All this evidence points to the fact that many Americans were aware of Japan's insecurity concerning its great power status and that those who recognised it were willing, at least, on the surface to concede to Japan on that point. This meant that at least some Americans at Paris interpreted the Japanese proposal as having a symbolic value rather than an outright demand of unrestricted immigration. However, as in the case of Britain, this recognition did not work in favour of the Japanese proposal.

Racial Equality and Immigration

The question of immigration is an important factor in explaining why the Americans agitated so much over the racial equality proposal. The American sensitivity to Japanese immigration is historically evident as a cause of bilateral

⁵³Seymour, *op. cit.*, p.323.

⁵⁴Stephen Bonsal, Unfinished Business, (London, 1944), pp.142-143.

⁵⁵Lansing, *op. cit.*, pp.219-220.

diplomatic tension between Japan and the United States. In the light of this, there was a strong tendency domestically in the United States to view the racial equality proposal generally as demanding free immigration of Japanese and other non-white immigrants. The problem was particularly acute in California where the fear of Japanese immigration was exaggerated out of proportion to the actual number of Japanese immigrants. Moreover, the issue was highly politicised and sensitised due to its use as a political instrument by many politicians. However, it will be argued that the immigration explanation worked more as a background factor. Let us start with a brief historical overview of Japanese immigration in the United States to underline the importance of the issue.

The earliest record of Japanese immigration to the United States goes back to 1868 when 148 labourers went to work on sugar plantations in Hawaii.⁵⁶ This expedition encountered many problems which led the Japanese government to refuse all further requests for contract labourers until 1885. Then the Japanese Foreign Minister, Kaoru Inoue, signed a convention in January 1886 with R.W.Irwin, who was an American national appointed as consul-general for Japan in Hawaii which sent 30,000 Japanese into Hawaii between 1885 and 1894. In this period, the primary concern of the Japanese government was that the lower class immigrants such as coolie labourers, not to mention pimps and prostitutes, would damage Japan's national prestige as evidenced in the report sent to Tokyo in 1888 by a Foreign Ministry official:

...the shameless activities of...undesirable Japanese will no doubt impair

⁵⁶H.Conroy, The Japanese Frontier in Hawaii, 1868-1898, (Berkeley, 1953), p.15.

Japan's national honour and dignity.⁵⁷

With the Hawaiian revolution in 1893, the controlled immigration system set up by Inoue and Irwin collapsed, resulting in a flood of Japanese immigrants who mostly settled on the West Coast in California. The route of Japanese immigrant workers to the United States was thus established and the anti-Japanese immigration problem became largely a Californian issue.

Before we elaborate on the rise of the anti-Japanese movement in California, let us put the so-called Japanese problem into perspective. According to the United States census, the Japanese population was as follows:⁵⁸

<u>Year</u>	<u>Japanese in U.S.</u>	<u>Japanese in Pacific Coast</u>	<u>Japanese in California</u>
1900	24,326(.03%)	18,269(.7%)	10,151(.6%)
1910	72,157(.08%)	57,703(1.4%)	41,356(1.7%)
1920	111,010(.1%)	94,490(1.7%)	71,952(2.1%)

It is important to bear in mind these numbers in order to appreciate fully the exaggerated nature of the anti-Japanese movement relative to the population in question and its destructive impact on U.S.-Japanese relations in the early part of the century. Historically speaking, the American West Coast had a strong anti-Oriental attitude, dating back to at least the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. It appears that the subsequent initial anti-Japanese movement was simply a continuation of the anti-Chinese movement.⁵⁹ There were beginnings of the movement in the late 1890s

⁵⁷R. Daniels, Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850, (Seattle, 1988), pp.103-105.

⁵⁸Ibid., p.115.

⁵⁹R. Daniels, The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion, (Berkeley, 1962), p.16.

culminating in the first reported anti-Japanese meeting taking place in April 1900 in Seattle, followed by another in May 1900 in San Francisco.⁶⁰ As in the case of the British Dominions, Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War precipitated the revival of the idea of the yellow peril. From the end of March 1905 The San Francisco Chronicle ran a year long anti-Japanese campaign which, as it was the most influential West Coast paper, doubtless had a great impact in turning popular opinion against the Japanese.⁶¹ In May 1905, the Asian Exclusion League was formed, initially as an extension of San Francisco labour unions.⁶² These domestic movements made diplomatic relations very sensitive. For example, President Roosevelt was obliged to make a distinction between the Japanese and the Chinese in order not to offend the sensibilities of Japan whose rising global status could no longer be ignored.⁶³ The Japanese government responded to the anti-Japanese movement by agreeing in 1907 to restrict voluntarily Japanese labourers by stopping the issue of passports, which turned out to be an effective mechanism for keeping the

⁶⁰Daniels, Asian America, p.112.

⁶¹The paper offered a politically orthodox perspective, owned by a Republican by the name of M.H. de Young. See Daniels, Politics of Prejudice, p.25.

⁶²As a matter of interest, listed below are the objections raised by the League against the Japanese: "i) We cannot assimilate them without injury to ourselves; ii) no large community of foreigners, so cocky, with such distinct racial, social and religious prejudices, can abide long in this country without serious friction; iii) we cannot compete with a people having a low standard of civilisation, living and wages; iv) it should be against public policy to permit our women to intermarry with Asiatics; v) we cannot extend citizenship to Asiatics; vi) if we permit the Jap to come in, what will...become of our Exclusion with China?" Ibid., p.28.

⁶³Though Roosevelt was theoretically against Japanese immigration, he continued to pay lip service to Japan as seen in his address in December 1905. Ibid., pp.35-36.

number of immigrants to a fairly low and steady level for many years.⁶⁴

The historical importance of the Californian Alien Land Law of 1913 cannot be underestimated as it had a long term negative effect on Japanese-American relations. It was specifically targeted against Japanese immigrants, limiting leases of agricultural land to maximum terms of three years and barring further land purchases by Japanese aliens. The justification given by Washington was that it was based purely on economic and not political or racial reason.⁶⁵ In one of many official protests from the Japanese government, Ambassador Chinda wrote to Secretary of State Bryan:

The provisions of law, under which it is held that Japanese people are not eligible to American citizenship, are mortifying to the Government and people of Japan, since the racial distinction inferable from those provisions is hurtful to their just national susceptibility.⁶⁶

Not only did the Japanese argue that the legislation contravened the 1911 commercial and navigation treaty, but objected emphatically to discrimination only against the Japanese, its not being applicable to other immigrants.⁶⁷ Under pressure from the Japanese,⁶⁸ Wilson appealed to the Californian Governor, Hiram Johnson, not to embarrass the federal government in its relations with Japan.⁶⁹ However, Wilson's

⁶⁴"Japanese immigration into the US: recommendations as to the handling of this problem," document no.465, reel 25, NAMP M1107; David Starr Jordan (Stanford University) to Wilson, 14th April 1913, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.27.

⁶⁵Bryan to Chinda, around 19th May 1913, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.27.

⁶⁶Chinda to Bryan, 4th June 1913, FRUS 1913.

⁶⁷"Japanese immigration into the US: recommendations as to the handling of this problem," document no.465, reel 25, NAMP M1107.

⁶⁸Chinda to Makino, 16th April 1913, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.27.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, Wilson to Hiram Warren Johnson and others, 22nd April 1913.

plea fell on deaf ears, leaving the situation to deteriorate substantially to the point where Wilson and the cabinet discussed mobilisation of the fleet in the Pacific against Japan.⁷⁰ During the height of the tension, Wilson spelt out his thoughts on why the legislation offended the Japanese so much:

It arises out of the implication in that we do not want to have intimate association in our life with the Japanese, which is but an implication--a suggestion--of feeling on our part that they are not on the same plane with us. That, of course, is something that diplomacy itself cannot handle. It is a fundamental, subtle, delicate, and yet radical thing. It touches a man's pride; he cannot tell you just where you touched it, but you have touched the sorest spot in him.⁷¹

It should be mentioned that Wilson dared not publicly criticise the Japanese government for not giving the same rights to Americans in Japan as he was apprehensive it would only excite jingoistic elements in Japan and worsen the situation.⁷²

Primarily, as in the case of the British Dominions, the reasons for the anti-Japanese movement were two-fold--economic and racial. Officially, the Japanese immigrants were "aliens ineligible for citizenship" for economic reasons. Theodore Roosevelt claimed that Oriental labourers were a threat to the American labour class because of cheap competitive labour.⁷³ In fact, it was a classic "catch-22" situation in which the earlier Japanese immigrants were discriminated against for lowering the standard of living of white American workers; whilst the later immigrants who

⁷⁰Ibid., diary of Josephus Daniels, 13th and 16th May 1913.

⁷¹Ibid., Press Conference, 19th May 1913.

⁷²Ibid., confer footnote of Press Conference, 11th April 1913.

⁷³Roosevelt to Ray Stannard Baker, 10th November 1911, Box 2, Ray Stannard Baker Papers, Seely G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University Archives.

attempted to aspire to better social status were equally condemned for their "Protestant ethic" which challenged white businesses and professions.⁷⁴ In vain, Wilson tried to convince Chinda that the 1913 law was legislated in California because of the "industrial ascendancy" of Japan and "The Californians...never meant to humiliate the Japanese from a racial standpoint."⁷⁵

Notwithstanding the economic justifications, it could not be denied that there was a strong racial undertone in the anti-Japanese legislation. Racist arguments were frequently regurgitated by many politicians such as the California Democratic leader, Senator James Duval Phelan⁷⁶:

The fundamental objection to the coming of these people is their non-assimilability. They cannot become a part of our composite Nation. They remain foreign. Where there has been intermarriage, the issue is degenerate and the vices of both strains are exaggerated in the offspring. We do not believe that they can, by any stretch of imagination, become a part of the American people, and, that ultimately, the same race question, which arose in the South--will arise, a possibility, which certainly should be avoided.⁷⁷

By "non-assimilability", Phelan is referring to racial and, concomitantly, social non-assimilability which arose from a perception that the Japanese were such a distinct racial group that no amount of acculturation could ever mask their foreignness.⁷⁸

⁷⁴Daniels, Politics of Prejudice, p.106.

⁷⁵Chinda to Makino, 6th June 1913, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.27.

⁷⁶James Duval Phelan was a wealthy banker and real estate dealer of San Francisco, the Mayor of San Francisco 1897-1902, the Wilson leader in California in 1912, the United States Senator for California 1915-1921.

⁷⁷Phelan to Wilson, 20th April 1912, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.24.

⁷⁸Daniels, Politics of Prejudice, p.106.

However, "non-assimilability" was refuted by the Inquiry Commission⁷⁹ which explicitly pointed out that the argument that the Japanese were non-assimilable overlooked their remarkable ability to adopt and adapt to the western civilisation in a short period.⁸⁰ Thus, there was an inherent contradiction in the argument of exclusionists who, on the one hand, objected to Japanese settlement because of fear that "a Jap was a Jap" and on the other hand, were alarmed by the rate of americanization of Japanese immigrants, especially of the second generation.⁸¹ Although the anti-Japanese movement eased slightly during the First World War due to Japanese participation in the Allied war effort, it nonetheless remained high on the bilateral diplomatic agenda as seen in the 1917 discussions between Ambassador Satô and Colonel House on the treatment of Japanese residents in United States.⁸²

Hence, the problem of anti-Japanese immigration included the essential mixture of economics and race needed to make it into an explosive political weapon which was exactly what happened in the United States during the Paris Peace Conference. Interestingly, the Japanese government regarded the true nature of anti-

⁷⁹This was the preparatory commission set up by Colonel House which produced reports on subjects likely to be raised at the Paris Peace Conference.

⁸⁰"Japanese immigration into the US: recommendations as to the handling of this problem," document no.465, reel 25, NAMP M1107.

⁸¹R.Daniels and H.Kitano, American Racism: Exploration of the Nature of Prejudice, (New Jersey, 1970), p.46.

⁸²Satô entreated that Japan had only wanted the treatment of most favoured nation, offering suggestions to improve the present situation by: 1) concluding independent treaty for mutual guarantee of most favoured nation treatment or by revising the existing commercial treaty; or 2) American legislation, for instance, constitutional amendment which would restrain any state from discriminating against aliens especially the provision for racial distinction in the federal naturalisation law. House to Wilson, 11th May 1917, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.42.

Japanese problems in the United States as having more to do with the politics than with the economics of immigration.⁸³ As mentioned above, immigration had always been a politically sensitive issue in the United States as Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, who had been concerned about the possibility of free oriental immigration being granted by the League since February 1917,⁸⁴ succinctly summarised:

I cannot personally accede to the proposition that other nations, that a body of men in executive council where we as a nation have but one vote, shall have any power, unanimous or otherwise, to say who shall come into the United States. There should be no possible jurisdiction over the power which defends this country from a flood of Japanese, Chinese and Hindu labour.⁸⁵

In fact, immigration as a political instrument had long been used in California which was the province which bore the brunt of Oriental immigration. It seems that Phelan was determined to make political capital out of the Japanese proposal. He launched a propaganda campaign against the racial equality proposal as soon as he had learnt about it in early March 1919 by sending messages to Paris:

Any declaration in constitution of race equality or just treatment may be construed to give jurisdiction to League over immigration naturalisation elective franchise land ownership and marriage and should be avoided. An affirmative declaration that these are domestic question should be made in consonance--with established American policy. Believe Western senators and others will oppose any loop hole by which Oriental people will possess equally with white race in United States. It is vital question of self-preservation.⁸⁶

⁸³Ambassador Guthrie(Tokyo) to Secretary of State, 19th June 1916, SDR 711.94/237, NAMP M423.

⁸⁴Extracts from a Speech delivered by Senator Lodge in the Senate at Washington on 1st February 1917, "P" (War) Series, P.-20, PRO CAB 29/1, pp 375-376.

⁸⁵"Joint Debate on the Covenant of Paris: Henry Cabot Lodge and A.Lawrence Lowell," League of Nations Vol.2 No.2 (April 1919), p.11.

⁸⁶Lansing to House, enclosing a cable from Phelan dated 2nd March 1919, Folder 2278, Box 69, Series I, Collection Group 466, House Papers; Phelan to Ammission, 24th March 1919, SDR 185.111/191, reel 321, NAMP M820.

Notwithstanding Phelan's bid to monopolise the anti-Japanese platform, the Republicans moved in to frustrate his efforts in the Californian Senate.⁸⁷ Phelan's objective in this campaign was to claim the credit for blocking the American adoption of the racial equality clause by implying that the cablegrams sent to Paris were strategically crucial in formulating the American position.⁸⁸ In reality, Phelan's political manipulation of anti-Japanese sentiment was a well known fact in the Wilson administration which implies that it was highly unlikely that Phelan had the sort of influence which he claimed to have had on the American decision on the Japanese proposal.⁸⁹

Interestingly, the impact that the domestic anti-Japanese immigration lobby had on the American position at Paris was mixed. On the one hand, it did eventually have the desired effect on Colonel House's perception of the immigration issue. House had considered the Japanese proposal principally as implying immigration.⁹⁰ Basically, he viewed the proposal as a problem of trying to solve the expanding

⁸⁷Essentially what happened was that on the 4th April 1919, the Californian Senate had voted against a resolution to introduce two anti-Japanese bills by Democrat Senator Inman and had decided to defer to President Wilson on the timeliness of introducing these bills. This was an extraordinary feat by Republican senators who were determined to prevent the Democrats from getting all the credit for anti-Japanese immigration legislation. Tumulty to Newton Diehl Baker with enclosure of letter from Phelan dated 4th April 1919, 5th April 1919, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.57.

⁸⁸Speech of Senator James D. Phelan of California in the Senate of the United States, 20th February 1920, SDR 894.00/164-2, NAMP M422.

⁸⁹R.E.Hennings, "James D.Phelan and the Woodrow Wilson Anti-Oriental Statement of May 3, 1912," California Historical Society Quarterly Vol.42 (December 1963): 291-300.

⁹⁰Seymour, op. cit., p.323.

population.⁹¹ His tendency was perhaps indicative of the general recommendation given by the Inquiry Commission on the question of immigration:

Although it is conceivable that Japan may not raise the question at the peace conference, yet it is likely that she will have something to say about it, and some assurance of fair treatment on this point would be of inestimable value in freeing the hands of the United States that it may the more effectively deal with the far bigger and more pressing problem of Japan in the Far East.⁹²

However, his attitude gradually changed around mid-March 1919 when he realised that the strength of the Dominion opposition was such that the proposal could never be accepted by Britain. Furthermore, he became increasingly aware of anti-Japanese agitation in California which was fast consolidating domestic opinion against the Japanese proposal. Notwithstanding the fact that House seemed more influenced by the strength of British opposition than with the domestic anti-Japanese immigration lobby, it is still significant that House claimed to have influenced Wilson in the 11th April meeting to stand against the Japanese proposal on the basis of his advice. It would appear on the surface that the anti-Japanese immigration lobby had a success in defeating the Japanese proposal because Wilson did, in fact, impose unanimity ruling on the 11th April as we have already seen.

On the other hand, there is very little indication that Wilson was much affected by the anti-Japanese immigration lobby in California in this period. In fact, there is no circumstantial evidence to show that he considered domestic anti-Japanese immigration movement as a significant factor in the racial equality proposal. Although Wilson was aware of the domestic situation, he essentially considered

⁹¹Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.1, pp.183-184.

⁹²"Japanese immigration into the US: recommendations as to the handling of this problem," document no.465, reel 25, NAMP M1107.

immigration as a domestic issue and as such it was obvious that the League would not intervene in the domestic affairs of states.⁹³ In this sense, the effect of Phelan and co. on Wilson seems questionable especially in the light of the discussion in the next chapter that Wilson had opposed the proposal for some other reason.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the explanation that the racial equality proposal implied immigration was applicable to the American position on it but with a qualification. Although the domestic anti-Japanese lobby did affect the perspective of House, it worked more as a background consideration for the American decision makers at Paris rather than as a *prima facie* reason for their opposing the proposal.

American Domestic Politics and Racial Equality

Let us now analyse whether or not American domestic politics had any influence on the American position on the racial equality proposal. By domestic politics is meant the partisan anti-Wilson and bipartisan anti-League movements which adopted the Japanese proposal as one of their platforms in the United States during the peace conference. There exists the interpretation that the American opposition to the racial equality proposal was caused by the strength of the domestic anti-Wilson lobby.⁹⁴ However, it seems that Wilson's hierarchical structure of decision making and his personal agenda of creating the League of Nations at Paris implied that the influence of anti-Wilson, anti-League movements on the racial equality proposal was

⁹³H.Foley, compiled by, Woodrow Wilson's Case for the League of Nations, (Princeton, 1923), pp.93-94.

⁹⁴Onuma Yasuaki, "Haruka naru jinshu byôdô no risô" [The Distant Ideal of Racial Equality], Yasuaki Onuma ed., Kokusaihô, kokusai rengô to nihon [International Law, the United Nations and Japan], (Tokyo, 1987), pp.450-451.

not as great as it seemed on the surface; in fact, it worked more as a background consideration. As American domestic political opposition to the peace treaty was such a complex phenomenon, an attempt will be made here simply to extrapolate the aspects which were relevant to understanding the racial equality proposal.

President Wilson's approach to the Paris Peace Conference created a sizable anti-Wilson and anti-League lobby among the domestic politicians. Regardless of political affiliation, their defining feature was their total commitment to the denunciation of what they perceived to be a peculiarly Wilsonian conception of the League of Nations; either to obliterate it or to introduce changes to the covenant in order to reflect better American prerogatives. Broadly speaking, the predominantly Republican opposition⁹⁵ was divided into the "strong reservationists"⁹⁶, the "irreconcilables"⁹⁷ and "mild reservationists"⁹⁸. At the fundamental level, what motivated the Republican opponents to stage such a unified opposition against Wilson was their dissatisfaction with the way in which Wilson had turned the peace

⁹⁵It is well known that these two groups were not at all cohesive and had several sub-groupings. For a detailed analysis of these groups, consult R.Stone, The Irreconcilables: The Fight against the League of Nations, (Lexington, 1970).

⁹⁶A group of about thirty Republicans who did not completely oppose the treaty and the League but had strong reservations about the present form as it stood. Their leader was Henry Cabot Lodge.

⁹⁷The "irreconcilables" who were also known as the "bitter-enders" or the "battalion of death" consisted of the following members: William Borah (Idaho), Frank B. Brandegee (Connecticut), Albert B.Fall (New Mexico), Bert M.Fernald (Maine), Joseph France (Maryland), Asle J.Gronna (North Dakota), Hiram W.Johnson (California), Philander C.Knox (Pennsylvania), Joseph Medill McCormick (Illinois), George H.Moses (New Hampshire), George W.Norris (Nebraska), Miles Poindexter (Washington), James A.Reed (Missouri-Democrat), Lawrence Y.Sherman (Illinois), Charles S.Thomas (Colorado-Democrat). See Stone, op. cit., p.1.

⁹⁸This group very much wanted the League but not in the form advanced by Wilson.

conference into a partisan and personal issue. Once having adopted a partisan tone in discussing peace in 1918, it was impossible for Wilson to keep domestic politics and the peace separate especially as the success of the peace treaty would be a decisive factor in the presidential elections in 1920.⁹⁹ Moreover, Wilson's autocratic method of decision making and his cavalier attitude towards the Congress aggravated the tension. By failing consistently to consult the Congress on matters relating to the peace, Wilson was circumventing the political machinery which supposedly represented the interests of the nation. Marginalisation of the Congress would cost him dearly in the end and his method which was based on a zealous personal conviction that he was acting in the best interest of the country worsened the anti-Wilson sentiment.¹⁰⁰ Quite clearly, Wilson's great weakness lay in his underestimation of the importance of domestic political forces, as he had assumed too much power directly from the popular mandate given to him to make the peace.¹⁰¹ Wilson's high-handed and exclusionary approach to decision making at Paris led to criticism that "It is Wilson's League not an American League".¹⁰²

Specifically, domestic opponents had identified the racial equality proposal, the Monroe Doctrine and the Shantung settlement as bulwarks of the anti-Wilson platform. Moreover, the Republican opponents soon broadened the base of their

⁹⁹Stone, op. cit., p.27.

¹⁰⁰Statement of the President, 19th August 1919, Part 5, Volume 13, Section 1, Unit 4, Bernard Baruch Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University Archives.

¹⁰¹A.L.George and J.L.George, Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study, (New York, 1964), p.149.

¹⁰²J.E.Ingham of Idaho Congregational Conference to Borah, 5th August 1919, Container 768, William E. Borah Papers, Library of Congress.

political support by converting their anti-Wilson crusade into an anti-League movement which enabled the Democratic League sceptics to join their cause.¹⁰³ The hardliner irreconcilables decided that the best tactic to defeat the Wilsonian peace was to vote in favour of adopting amendments to the covenant by joining hands with reservationists and Democratic opponents of the League. Firstly, the Monroe Doctrine¹⁰⁴, a traditional American foreign policy doctrine, was considered most crucial for American national interest.¹⁰⁵ Secondly, the racial equality proposal was seen as a demand of free immigration. It was argued that since immigration belonged to domestic affairs of states, it should not be made part of the constitution for any international organisation. The United States should refuse to be part of an organisation which allowed its members to intervene in the domestic affairs of other member states. This became an important part of the anti-League platform because of the power it had to manipulate anti-Japanese sentiment, as well as domestic sensitivity to non-white immigration. Essentially, it was a convenient political weapon used to manipulate the isolationist anti-foreign tendency domestically in the United States against Wilsonian internationalism. As such, the racial equality proposal brought the Republican opponents together with the likes of Democratic

¹⁰³Stone, op. cit., p.116, p.133.

¹⁰⁴Intrinsically, the doctrine was isolationist which saw no reason for indiscriminate American involvement in affairs of member states of the League if they were not of direct interest to the United States. Conversely, it dictated the undesirability of others to interfere in the Western Hemisphere, which was considered to be an exclusively American sphere of influence.

¹⁰⁵See, for instance, Borah's speech on "Americanism" which extols the virtues of an isolationist policy, urges the United States not to entangle in the European affairs. Speech in the U.S. Senate, 21st February 1919, Container 779, William E. Borah Papers.

Senator Phelan of California who wanted to capitalise on the anti-Japanese immigration ticket.¹⁰⁶

The importance of these two issues was such that William Howard Taft who was a strong Republican League supporter had repeatedly advised Wilson that a provision for the Monroe Doctrine in Article 10 of the covenant together with some provision to be inserted in Article 15 to prevent Japanese immigration would almost guarantee the ratification of the treaty.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, Elihu Root warned House not to include the racial amendment in late March:

Don't let it in, it will breed trouble. In any event, you're going to have hard sledding, with the racial provision, you will get nowhere in the Senate. And the people....? On the Pacific coast, at least, they would think there lurked behind it a plan for unlimited yellow immigration.¹⁰⁸

In any case, it will be incorrect to say that Wilson was completely oblivious to the strength of domestic opposition to the proposal. When he returned from his trip to the United States in mid-March, Wilson noted during an internal discussion on the Japanese proposal that the American Senate would never ratify the covenant which gave treaty powers the power to override internal state laws.¹⁰⁹

One only needs to follow the unfortunate fate of the peace treaty in the United

¹⁰⁶25th and 26th March 1919, The New York Times. Democratic Senator Reed continued to use a racist argument even after the proposal was defeated as a weapon against the League and "declared that the League would place the destinies of the white race in the hands of ignorant and superstitious nations of black and yellow populations, and charged that many Democrats were supporting it for partisan reasons." 27th May 1919, San Francisco Chronicle.

¹⁰⁷Tumulty to Wilson, 18th, 21st and 28th March, 13th April 1919, Container 49, Joseph Patrick Tumulty Papers, Library of Congress.

¹⁰⁸Bonsal, op. cit., pp.142-143.

¹⁰⁹Miller, diary, 18th March 1919, My Diary, Vol.1.

States to recognise the scope of the problem which Wilson had had to confront. In the light of domestic anti-League politics, the racial equality proposal provided an ideal weapon for those waging a protracted battle to bring down Wilson and his peace plan regardless of the cost and its external implications. The strength of the domestic anti-League lobby put enormous pressure on Wilson to succeed in achieving the establishment of the League of Nations at Paris. Although Wilson did rule against the Japanese proposal in the League of Nations Commission, it will be seen later that it was not principally because he had succumbed to the pressure from his domestic opponents but because it was a price he had to pay to ensure the survival of the League at Paris.

Racial Equality as Universal Principle

We must now ask whether the explanation of the racial equality proposal as a universal principle had an important role in American thinking. There were a few instances when Wilson and House could have regarded the proposal as implying a universal principle of racial equality. Otherwise, there is not enough evidence to suggest that this explanation held much ground in the American position. This was due to the overwhelming tendency generally to view the proposal as implying immigration. It seems that Wilson's understanding of the racial equality proposal as universal principle was a limited one and did not in any way correspond to the importance he attributed to his principle of self-determination.

First of all, let us analyse House's position as the chief negotiator of the racial equality proposal. As has already been mentioned, House generally tended to perceive the Japanese proposal as implying immigration. However, on the 9th

February, he instructed Miller to draft an amendment which reflected the "Equality of Man" clause in the American Constitution, the outcome of which read as follows:

Recognising that all men are created equal, the High Contracting Parties agree that the Executive Council may consider any external grievance affecting nationals of any of the High Contracting Parties, and may make such recommendations in respect thereof as are deemed equitable.¹¹⁰

This amendment was shown to Balfour on the 10th for discussion, but was aborted and not even shown to the Japanese after Balfour rejected it on the grounds that it would cause endless problems with the Dominions because of immigration.¹¹¹

Another instance when it could be construed that House had universal principle in mind was when he passed a note to Wilson at the critical moment in the League of Nations Commission on 11th April which read, "The trouble is that if this Commission should pass it it would surely raise the race issue throughout the world."¹¹² It seems that this could be seen as an attempt to remind Wilson of the potential seriousness of the proposal by emphasising the other side of the coin which was the universal implication of the proposal despite the fact that the proposal had been discussed as an immigration proposal.

Wilson's position is more difficult to ascertain. It is true that Wilson at any rate did not object to the racial equality proposal when it was first raised by Makino and Chinda in early February. He even suggested that it should be included as part of his religious freedom article and presented by himself. This indicates that at this stage Wilson saw racial equality as being compatible with his religious freedom.

¹¹⁰Miller, document no.362 and 363, My Diary, Vol.5.

¹¹¹Note dictated by Balfour on 10th February 1919 on conversation with House, Additional Manuscripts 49751, Balfour Papers, British Library.

¹¹²Miller, document 767, My Diary, Vol.8.

However, the problem for the Japanese was that Wilson's support was not based on a strong personal commitment to the principle, and subsequently he quite readily discarded his religious freedom article together with the racial equality amendment in the light of the opposition from some members, most notably Britain, in the League of Nations Commission. The incident showed that neither religious freedom nor racial equality for Wilson was an essential component of the League; they were principles which would have been compatible with the general notion of the League, but dispensable all the same. Due to the lack of any significant evidence on Wilson's thoughts on the proposal in this period, it is only possible to say that he was not averse to the proposal as it originally stood.

In discussing issues of principle at the Paris Peace Conference, it is important to make the distinction between principles *per se* and the application of such principles in practice. The best example of this can be seen in the contradiction between Wilson's professed principle of self-determination and the actual application of this principle at Paris. It has been said that Wilson in promoting the self-determination principle did not realise the significance behind the theory which for him meant the embodiment of the democratic ideals of "popular sovereignty" and "national sovereignty".¹¹³ Basically, he failed "to realise how indeterminate a criterion nationality might be, and how little assistance it might sometimes give in deciding actual frontiers."¹¹⁴ It was clear to all that Wilson could in practice only implement national self-determination in the limited context of Central and Eastern

¹¹³Alfred Cobban, The Nation State and National Self-Determination, (New York, 1969), pp.62-64.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p.65.

Europe. For instance, the mandates system was applied in the non-European settlements, and many petitions from minority nationalities within the Allied territories were ignored. Wilson defended his contradiction as follows:

It was not within the privilege of the conference of peace to act upon the right of self-determination of any peoples except those which had been included in the territories of the defeated empires.¹¹⁵

There seemed to have been an implicit understanding among the great powers that the principle of self-determination, just as any other principles discussed at the Paris Peace Conference, would have to be contextualised; that is, its applicability was "universal" only within strict confines determined by the great powers who were deciding the rules of the game. Hence, issues of principle were subjected to much hypocrisy as their applicability, in practice, was strictly limited.

In addition, there was a strict demarkation between the "internal" and "external" implications of universal principles. For instance, Wilson did not seem to consider the possible implications of the racial equality proposal for domestic racial problems in the United States. Basically, his views on race reflected those held by the majority of the white Americans of the time, which took the view that racial problems were not relevant to the fundamental equality or inequality of men.¹¹⁶ To be fair, Wilson did recognise the enormity of the racial problem in the United States but was resigned to the fact that he was not the one to change the situation, as evidenced in his rejection of a recommendation given by Oswald Garrison Villard in 1913 to create a National Race Commission with the objective of promoting better

¹¹⁵Ibid., p.66.

¹¹⁶H.Blumenthal, "Woodrow Wilson and the Race Question," Journal of Negro History Vol.48 no.1 (January 1963), p.21.

race relations:

I say it with shame and humiliation, I have thought about this thing for twenty years and I see no way out. It will take a very big man to solve [it].¹¹⁷

It is not at all surprising that Wilson did not conceive of racial equality as having any "universal" implications for the domestic racial situation in the United States, as the most important underlying assumption was that universal principles would not interfere with domestic affairs of states. This is why the claim made that Wilson regarded the Japanese proposal as a "human rights" proposal demanding the equality of whites, yellows and blacks in the United States,¹¹⁸ does not hold ground. The proposal was never discussed at Paris with reference to domestic racial equality. The determination of the great powers to distinguish clearly between the internal and the external was a defining feature of their understanding of what was acceptable as universal. All in all, Wilson's understanding of the racial equality proposal as implying universal principle was limited in many respects. Certainly, he did not regard racial equality as a principle of the same importance as self-determination.

Conclusions

It has been shown that the categories of explanations analysed in this chapter, with the exception of universal principle, all had some role in explaining the American position, though their influence differed considerably. The Americans were aware that part of the reason for the Japanese proposal stemmed from Japan's insecurity of its status as great power. The immigration factor was relevant insofar

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp.9-10.

¹¹⁸Paul Gordon Lauren, Power and Prejudice: The Politics and Diplomacy of Racial Discrimination, (Boulder, 1988), pp.83-84.

as it affected the domestic perception which eventually had an effect on how House came to view the proposal. Moreover, the domestic anti-League lobby placed pressure on Wilson at the peace conference by making racial equality one of its main objections. Of the four, the universal principle explanation was the least important, largely because Wilson did not view racial equality as an important principle on a par with the principle of self-determination. However, it will become clear in the following chapter that these explanations worked in the background. The key to the American position lies in understanding Wilson's perspective which was heavily influenced by the expediencies of politics of the peace conference at Paris.

CHAPTER 8 THE UNITED STATES AND THE POLITICS OF THE PEACE CONFERENCE

Now we turn to an analysis of the final explanation that the racial equality proposal had an important role in the politics of bargaining played at the peace conference. There are two aspects to this explanation within the American context. First, there is the widely known "bargaining chip" theory expounded by the "pro-China" sympathisers in the American delegation. Second, there is the role played by Wilson in the final phase of the negotiation. This introduces an interesting new proposition that it was possibly Wilson who was using the racial equality proposal as a political instrument to gain other ends. This will be examined through an analysis of his unanimity decision made at the 11th April meeting of the League of Nations Commission, and the connection he made between the proposal and the Shantung settlement. For Wilson, his unanimity decision on the 11th April and his subsequent decision to rule on Shantung in Japan's favour were all a result of a rational calculation made to achieve his ultimate goal.

The "Bargaining Chip" Theory

Let us first explore the "bargaining chip" theory which attracted considerable attention in the American delegation. The basic idea behind the theory was simple. It claimed that the Japanese government had intentionally concocted the racial equality proposal as a political instrument in order to defend its vested interest in Shantung. It works on the assumption that the proposal was a "bargaining chip" held by the Japanese whose objective was not really to have the proposal adopted but to embarrass the American government and to gain leverage on the Shantung

negotiation.

The beginnings of the idea that the racial equality proposal could be traded in for Shantung came from the State Department in March 1919. As in the case of the British Foreign Office, the State Department, too, had been aware that the Japanese government was contemplating submission of a race equality proposal at the peace conference since November 1918.¹ When the racial equality proposal began to face serious problems from the British Dominions because of its association with immigration, one of the China specialists, E.T. Williams, began to consider that the racial equality proposal was a cheap price to pay in order to buy Japan's goodwill in the upcoming Shantung negotiation. Hence, Williams attempted in March 1919 to persuade the peace commissioners, namely, Secretary of State Robert Lansing, General Tasker Bliss, and Henry White, to accept racial equality for the following reason:

If now we surrender to Japan our claims in those islands (ie.the Pacific Islands) and further grant Japan our approval of the proposed amendment, a concession to her pride of race which she will highly appreciate, we are entitled to ask Japan to be equally conciliatory and to do justice in Shantung.²

Unlike the hardliner peace commissioners, Williams realised that Japan could not be denied everything. In China's best interest, he proposed a trade-off of the two lesser demands made by Japan--racial equality and the Pacific islands--for Shantung. On the 26th March, Williams showed impatience with the commissioners who failed to see the light:

¹Ambassador Morris to Lansing, 15th November 1918, SDR 763.72119/2636, reel 387, National Archives Microfilm Publication (hereafter NAMP) M367.

²E.T. Williams to the Commission, 19th March 1919, Container 42, p.7289, Robert Lansing Papers, Library of Congress.

...the recognition in the League Constitution of a principle of racial equality does not necessarily imply a right to free immigration, or land ownership. Restriction in these matters can be advocated on economic grounds. The Japanese themselves have protested against this misinterpretation of their proposal.³

As far as Williams was concerned, it would be more practical and concomitantly less costly to cede to Japan a principle of racial equality which was a matter of national honour to them than to give them Shantung which would have a far more injurious effect on China.⁴

However, when the racial equality proposal was defeated on 11th April and as the Shantung negotiation began in earnest, Lansing, Bliss and White began to suspect that the racial equality proposal was a political weapon contrived by the Japanese government to obtain their real objective, Shantung. This thinking stemmed from their strongly "pro-China" inclination which coloured their entire understanding of the Far Eastern question and made it into a simplistic black and white struggle of Japan versus China, with the United States supporting the latter. Thus, the emergence of the "bargaining chip" theory coincided with the increasing difficulty which the Chinese were having over the Shantung negotiation in the Council of Four from mid-April onwards. For instance, Lansing who was its most ardent supporter, used the bargaining chip theory as an argument against giving Shantung to Japan during the most intensive stage of the Shantung negotiation:

I concluded that Japs were promised satisfactory settlement if they would not press their 'race equality' amendment to Covenant. If this is so it was all

³E.T. Williams to the Commissioners, 26th March 1919, SDR 185.111/206, reel 321, NAMP M820.

⁴Williams's view was shared by Thomas Millard, editor of the Shanghai based Millard Review, who considered the Japanese proposal as being too vaguely worded to have any effective threat value. "Japan, 'race equality' and the League of Nations," Thomas Millard, 6th April 1919, Container 42, Robert Lansing Papers.

immoral bargaining away of principle and of the right of China.⁵

Interestingly, for the Chinese delegation, the greatest attraction of the bargaining chip theory seemed to lie in its propaganda value. This can be evidenced in the paradoxical position of the Chinese delegation in which their official support for the racial equality proposal⁶ was balanced by their retrospective contention after the defeat over the Shantung settlement that the Japanese had used it as a bargaining chip to obtain favourable concessions in Shantung. As such, C.T. Wang who played an influential role in the Chinese delegation used the theory frequently to explain why China did not win the Shantung settlement:

China knows that equality of races forms the foundation of the League of Nations. Japan's demand to include such a phrase in the Covenant was pure camouflage. It was a smoke-screen to cover a real objective. The idea was to press this hard, knowing that President Wilson would refuse it; but after he had refused it the Japanese then pointed to Kiao-chow, and said, 'Well, give us that anyhow.' And President Wilson said, 'Well, I guess we'll have to give those Japanese something.'⁷

In order to explain why Wilson, in whom the Chinese had so much confidence, had failed to deliver the promised goods, Wang argued that Wilson was "bamboozled" in allowing Japan to have its way on Shantung in exchange for the racial equality clause.⁸

It can be said that the "bargaining chip" theory exists as an explanation *ex post*

⁵Ibid., Meeting with Bliss and White on Kiao-chow, 29th April 1919, desk diaries of Lansing, reel 2, DM 15,347.

⁶The Chinese delegate in the League of Nations Commission, Wellington Koo, supported the racial equality proposal. D.H. Miller, The Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.2, (New York, 1928), p.325, p.391.

⁷6th September 1919, North China Herald, Vol.CXXXII, no.2717.

⁸Ibid.

facto, and consequently, its worth lies in its revealing the interpretation which the Chinese and the "pro-China" American peace commissioners placed upon the racial equality proposal. Although it plays an important role in understanding the American position, the theory has two major problems. The first problem is that it was based on the assumption that Japan did, indeed, intend to use the racial equality proposal as a bargaining chip for Shantung and subsequently, that Japan had the power to control the course of events at Paris. It was apparently the perfect timing of the Shantung negotiation taking place after the defeat of the racial equality proposal on 11th April which gave rise to the sudden popularity of the theory.⁹ However, there is a lack of evidence on the Japanese side to prove that the Japanese government had any such intention in the first place. The second problem is that the bargaining chip theory takes the Shantung settlement and the racial equality negotiation out of the general context in which they were being discussed at Paris. Instead, the proponents simply compartmentalise the issues by concentrating on the plausible linkage between the racial equality proposal and Shantung, without taking into account other considerations which could have influenced the course of events. In any case, the peace commissioners' version of the "bargaining chip" theory did not seem to have affected Wilson who operated on an entirely different set of assumptions as we shall see below.

The Structure of Wilson's Decision Making at Paris

In order to analyse the second aspect of the explanation which entails Wilson's

⁹W.King, Woodrow Wilson, Wellington Koo and the China Question at the Paris Peace Conference, (Leyden, 1959), p.22.

use of the racial equality proposal as a political instrument, it is first necessary to understand the nature of his role in the American delegation at Paris. Generally speaking, Wilson exercised an overwhelming control over the course of the American peace negotiation at Paris, especially with regards to the League of Nations. The main internal characteristic of the American delegation was his autocratic and highly centralised method of decision making which caused two major rifts between him and Colonel House and another separately with Secretary of State Lansing. His preferred structure of decision making meant that his own agenda at the top of which was the creation of the League of Nations, became the most important goal for the United States at the peace conference.

Wilson's highly complex personality is often argued as being an important factor in understanding his politics. Wilson was both an idealist and a realist. This was not antithetical as he was essentially an idealist in conviction and vision, but a realist in tactics.¹⁰ His highly centralised decision making in Paris was not a result of any formal institution of such a structure but a natural outcome of his tendency to weed out the people who did not agree with his views.¹¹ Consequently, the decision making in the American delegation largely reflected his personal inclination to rely heavily on a small number of advisors, excluding everybody else. This was aggravated by his conviction, derived from his immense popularity on his first arrival

¹⁰"No man ever wanted greater publicity than he for the general statements of his position: and few leaders are more secretive when it comes to the discussion of the specific problem. He speaks to the masses in terms of new diplomacy, but he deals with the leaders by the methods of the old." Diary of R.S.Baker, 8th March 1919, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.55, (Princeton, 1986).

¹¹A.L. George and J.L. George, Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study, (New York, 1964), p.31.

in Europe after the war, of having a moral mandate from the international public to create a better world.¹²

Let us elaborate on the nature of his exclusive executive control by briefly looking at the personal clashes he had with House and Lansing. House initially held the highly coveted position as special advisor to the president until Wilson's brief trip to the United States from mid-February to mid-March 1919. This was a result of a very close friendship, bonding them from the time of their first meeting in November 1911.¹³ In fact, Wilson regarded House as *de facto* head of the delegation during his absence which caused much resentment in the American delegation especially on the part of Lansing who felt "surprised and humiliated" as the official deputy head of the delegation.¹⁴ As such, whatever claims House made, to have influenced Wilson in this period, is generally reliable. The rift between the two friends originated from House "overstepping the mark" in agreeing with Balfour and Clemenceau during Wilson's absence to speed up the peace by separating the treaty from the covenant. The other leaders were getting impatient with the League which was blamed as slowing down the peace process.¹⁵ For Wilson, House's flirtation

¹²Wilson said in 1918, "It frightens me when I think of what the people of the civilised world are expecting as a result of the Peace Conference." Diary of Raymond Blaine Fosdick, 12th December 1918, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.53.

¹³According to House, almost as soon as they had first met, "We found ourselves in such complete sympathy, in so many ways, that we soon learned to know what each was thinking without either having expressed himself." in George and George, *op. cit.*, p.93.

¹⁴"Colonel House as the President's substitute on the Council of Four," 8th April 1919, Box 2, Vol.2, Robert Lansing Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University Archives.

¹⁵Inga Floto, Colonel House in Paris: A Study of American Policy at the Paris Peace Conference 1919, (Princeton, 1980), p.163; Balfour to Lloyd George, 20th

with such an idea was tantamount to a great betrayal and culminated in the gradual disintegration of the special relationship between them.

The rift between Wilson and Lansing developed earlier and was an established fact by the time of the peace conference, even acknowledged by other delegations.¹⁶ Lansing was fundamentally at odds with Wilson's attitude to peace.¹⁷ On the other hand, it appears that Wilson had a strong dislike of lawyers (Lansing being one) and the State Department generally, and only stopped short of sacking Lansing in the middle of the conference in fear of endangering America's credibility.¹⁸ Wilson's alienation of Lansing extended to the other peace commissioners, namely, Tasker

February 1919, no.341, F3/4/13, Lloyd George Papers, Historical Collection 192, House of Lords Record Office.

¹⁶Wilson's dislike of Lansing was blatant as even the private secretary of Mrs Wilson wrote in her diary that "...I think P. heartily dislikes Mr. L. and I am sorry to say he seems to show it in rather a petty way..." in diary of Edith Benham, 8th April 1919, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.57, and E.B.Wilson, Memoirs of Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, (London, 1939), p.282. This has been noted much earlier by the British. See Wiseman to Drummond, 20th December 1918, Additional Manuscripts 49741, f.124, Balfour Papers, British Library; and Harold Nicolson, Peacemaking 1919, (London, 1933), p.245.

¹⁷"The principal subjects, concerning which President Wilson and I were in marked disagreement, were the following: His presence in Paris during the peace negotiations and especially his presence there as a delegate to the Peace Conference; the fundamental principles of the constitution and functions of a League of Nations as proposed or advocated by him; the form of the organic act, known as the 'Covenant', its elaborate character and its inclusion in the treaty restoring a state of peace; the treaty of defensive alliance with France; the necessity for a definite programme which American Commissioners could follow in carrying on the negotiations; the employment of private interviews and confidential agreements in reaching settlements, a practice which gave colour to the charge of 'secret diplomacy'; and lastly, the admission of the Japanese claims to possession of German treaty rights at Kiao-Chau and in the Province of Shantung." Robert Lansing, The Peace Negotiations: A Personal Narrative, (London, 1921), p.8.

¹⁸This was the reason for preferring to use House rather than the State Department route. Floto, op. cit., p.63; A.S.Link, Wilson the Diplomatist: A Look at his Major Foreign Policies, (Baltimore, 1957), pp.26-27.

Bliss and Henry White as well. Wilson was criticised for not appointing a more respected Republican figure in the peace commission such as William Howard Taft or Elihu Root instead of a token Republican diplomat, Henry White.¹⁹ Hence, the American delegation internally was divisive and factional, with only a restricted number of delegates ever having access to the president.

In the light of the above, after his special relationship with House ended in mid-March 1919, Wilson stood more or less alone in the delegation without any influential advisers or colleagues. By April, House was firmly excluded from Wilson's immediate entourage. The Japanese plenipotentiaries, of course, continued to consult House throughout the conference most possibly due to a lack of alternative access to Wilson. Effectively, the position of Lansing and the rest of the peace commissioners was so marginal in Wilson's perspective that their very presence in Paris seemed meaningless. For example, other members tried to convince Wilson not to give Shantung to Japanese, a concession which they believed to be fundamentally against the American interest, fell on deaf ears.²⁰ It must be noted that Wilson's neglect of the other peace commissioners who tended to be more representative of the views espoused by domestic opinion, though short-sighted, was very demonstrative of his singular attitude and the nature of his priorities which were more personal than American. The internal dynamics of the delegation leads us to understand why

¹⁹Thomas J. Knock, To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order, (New York, 1992), pp.189-190.

²⁰Bliss, for instance, wrote a memorandum on behalf of the American Commissioners Plenipotentiary to reason with Wilson on 29th April not to support the Japanese demand for Shantung. See Minutes of the daily meetings of the Commissioners Plenipotentiary, 29th April 1919, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter FRUS) 1919, Paris Peace Conference Vol.11.

Wilson's perception of issues, including that of the racial equality proposal, was so crucial to the overall American position at Paris. In the case of the racial equality negotiation, despite his low level of involvement in the day-to-day negotiation, his influence at the critical moments was decisive.

Wilson, the League of Nations and Racial Equality

In order to explain why Wilson was motivated to impose unanimity ruling in the 11th April meeting of the League of Nations Commission, it is necessary to understand the centrality of the League for Wilson. Just like other issues at the peace conference, it seems that Wilson assessed the importance of the proposal in relation to achieving his primary objective.

Let us substantiate the claim made that the League of Nations was Wilson's *raison d'être* at Paris. Ever since his open commitment made in the Fourteen Points in January 1918, the League of Nations had been perceived internationally as President Wilson's project. Wilson became synonymous with the League of Nations not only because of the external expectations but also out of his personal determination to pursue the creation of a league as his ultimate goal.²¹ According to Baker who was the press officer of the delegation:

The League of Nations is a matter of faith: and the President is first of all a man of faith. He believes in the L. of N. as an organisation that will save the world.²²

Interestingly, Wilson's prominent identification with the League was not reflected in

²¹Seth P. Tillman, Anglo-American Relations at the Peace Conference of 1919, (Princeton, 1961), p.108.

²²Diary of R.S. Baker, 30th April 1919, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.58.

the American government's preparatory work undertaken before the peace conference, which was overshadowed by Britain's Phillimore Commission reports finalised in July 1918. In fact, Wilson maintained a curiously secretive and vague stance about the structure of the League as shown in his successful intervention to prevent the British from publishing the Phillimore Report before the peace conference. He did this for the following reasons: first, publication would commit each country's stance on the League too early; second, it would "be regarded as a sort of Holy Alliance against Germany"; and third, it might compromise his position domestically.²³ Wilson's position on the League before the peace conference remained abstract as he insisted on "Two main principles; there must be a League of Nations, and this must be virile, a reality, not a paper League of Nations."²⁴ Lloyd George was vexed that Wilson should get credit for something to which he did not contribute substantively.²⁵ Nonetheless, Lloyd George was concerned that Britain should not be seen as acting independently of Wilson on the League issue, as he saw the League as an important means of guaranteeing American involvement in the peace process.²⁶

There is contradictory evidence concerning Wilson's contribution to the drafting of the League in Paris in January 1919. On the one hand, those such as Cecil and Smuts who were closely involved in the initial joint drafting of the covenant between the British and Americans in January 1919 claimed that Wilson did not have

²³Wiseman to Reading, (circulated to Milner and the Foreign Office), 19th August 1918, F43/1/14, Lloyd George Papers.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵David Lloyd George, War Memoirs, Vol. 4, (London, 1934), p.1755.

²⁶Lloyd George to Bonar Law, 20th August 1918, F30/2/41, Lloyd George Papers.

many concrete notions about the League.²⁷ On the other hand, Wilson claimed that he withheld his personal programme for the League in order to let the British feel that their views were being incorporated.²⁸ Whatever the truth might have been, the point remains that Wilson was regarded by the world at large to be the incarnation of the League ideal as he stated in London in December 1918:

A League of Nations seems to me to be a necessity of the whole settlement. I accept it as a key to the whole settlement.²⁹

It is important to bear in mind that Wilson's "obsession" with the League was not necessarily shared by the rest of the American peace commission. In fact, it was acknowledged that Wilson was often acting against American interests by persisting with the League, and that he was paying a very high price to gain concurrence on the League from the other powers, as Lansing and White respectively testified below:

He was clearly convinced that the drafting and acceptance of the Covenant was superior to every other task imposed on the Conference, that it must be done before any other settlement was reached and that it ought to have precedence in the negotiations. His course of action was conclusive evidence of this conviction.³⁰

The fact is...that the League of Nations, in which he has been more deeply interested than anything else from the beginning, believing it to be the best if not the only means of avoiding war in the future, has been played to the limit by France and Japan in extracting concessions from him; to a certain extent

²⁷Derby to Balfour, 10th January 1919, Additional Manuscripts 49744, f.238, Balfour Papers; Smuts to Gillett, 14th January 1919, no.193, Smuts Papers (microfilm), Vol.22, University of Cambridge; Diary, 19th January 1919, Add.51131, f.18, The Cecil of Chelwood Papers (hereafter Cecil Papers), British Library.

²⁸Diary of Grayson, 6th January 1919, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.53.

²⁹R.S.Baker, Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement, Vol.1, (London, 1923), p.235.

³⁰Lansing, op. cit., p.151.

by the British too, and the Treaty as it stands is the result.³¹

Moreover, the fact that the League was in reality more Wilson's personal objective than that of the United States generally was revealed by House and Lansing who confided as such to Cecil before the peace conference convened in early January 1919.³² Hence, the situation was that Wilson himself was convinced about his personal crusade to create the League, whilst other peace commissioners were highly concerned that such a personal crusade would leave the United States vulnerable to manipulation by other powers. Subsequently, Britain and France did recognise the importance of appeasing Wilson over the League to extract specific concessions as well as to obtain overall peace terms.³³ Smuts best summarised the British government's attitude towards Wilson and the League:

I suggest that we could best signalise that cooperation by supporting President Wilson's policy of a League of nations, and indeed by going further and giving form and substance to his rather nebulous ideas. President Wilson has repeatedly and solemnly declared that America wants nothing for herself in this war, that she only desires to serve the great causes and ideals of humanity. In his mind the League of Nations is the root of the whole matter. If he could score a victory there, if he could go back to America with the League of nations realised--not merely a formula, but a real substantive part of our future international system--I believe he will be satisfied, and will be prepared to drop some of the other contentious points he has unfortunately raised. My suggestion is that we should tell him quite frankly at the beginning that we are going to support him most fully on the League of Nations, and that in our opinion the League will be valuable not only from the

³¹Quoted from Floto, op. cit., p.84.

³²Diary, 8th January 1919, Add. 51131, f.7, Cecil Papers.

³³For instance, Clemenceau certainly saw the French support for the League as an important political instrument to secure France's primary objective which was a permanent military guarantee against Germany within the framework of the League. David Stevenson, French War Aims against Germany 1914-1919, (Oxford, 1982), p.100. Similarly, Lloyd George exploited the American determination to have the Monroe Doctrine to extract concessions on naval armaments. Tillman, op. cit., p.280.

point of view of future world peace but from the way it will enable us to solve some of the most difficult territorial and economic questions arising out of this war.³⁴

At the peace conference, therefore, Wilson's personal resoluteness on the League of Nations had a material effect on the peace programme.

Having emphasised the crucial importance of the League for Wilson, it becomes evident that the racial equality proposal, too, was affected throughout the negotiation whenever Wilson intervened by his tendency to view issues in terms of their relative importance in promoting its cause. Wilson's tendency can be illustrated by the three instances in which he intervened in the racial equality negotiation, namely in the initial rejection of the religious article amendment, secondly at the unanimity ruling on the 11th April, and thirdly in the final phase of the negotiation from mid-April to the 30th April when the Shantung settlement was made. First, it was established in the discussion above that Wilson was not averse to the racial equality proposal as shown by his initial offer to assist in drafting and submitting it as part of his religious freedom article in early February. However, his religious freedom article was voted against in the League of Nations Commission, especially by the British whose opposition to the racial equality amendment part of the article began to be widely known.³⁵ Wilson's immediate reaction was to drop the controversial article. The only plausible reason for his decision is that he was not willing to stall the commission at this early stage over an article which, though he personally perceived it to be compatible with the League, was not an important

³⁴Smuts, "On Policy at the Peace Conference" circulated to the War Cabinet and the King, 3rd December 1918, Additional Manuscripts 51076, ff.79-81, Cecil Papers.

³⁵In fact, the religious article was unpopular generally and only gained support from Brazil, China and Roumania. Miller, *op. cit.*, Vol.1, p.268.

enough issue over which to upset the majority including Britain. It must be noted that Wilson was keenly aware of the necessity of courting Britain's support on the League³⁶ which was ironic, given the British desire to keep Wilson happy by abiding as much as possible to his wish to create the League in exchange for his generally favourable understanding of other interests at Paris. Therefore, it can be said that for Wilson to realise his primary objective, it was imperative for him to have British backing as he was convinced that only with an Anglo-Saxon consensus could the League deliver the promises made of a new international order:

The League of Nations will, I confidently hope, be dominated by us Anglo-Saxons; it will be for the unquestionable benefit of the world. The discharge of our duties in the maintenance of peace and as a just mediatory in international disputes will redound to our lasting prestige. But it is of paramount importance that we Anglo-Saxons succeed in keeping in step with one another.³⁷

In turn, this underlined his distrust of the French and Italians as being fundamentally incapable of sharing his vision of the League.³⁸

The case of the unanimity ruling imposed by Wilson as chairman of the League of Nations Commission on the 11th April over the racial equality proposal is even more interesting. It has been shown above that Wilson was not overly influenced by domestic agitation over the impact of the proposal on Japanese

³⁶Diary of Grayson, 6th January 1919, Vol.53, and diary of House, 3rd February 1919, Vol.54, Woodrow Wilson Papers.

³⁷A.Walworth, Wilson and his Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919, (New York, 1986), p.313.

³⁸Italy in particular had antagonistic relations with the United States, Britain, and France mainly due to the uncompromising nature of their demands. J.Blatt, "France and Italy at the Paris Peace Conference," International History Review Vol.8 no.1 (February 1986), p.37; R.Albrecht-Carrie, Italy at the Paris Peace Conference, (Hamden, 1966), p.67.

immigration, nor was he personally committed to racial equality as a universal principle. He was not even involved in the racial equality negotiation after his initial interest faded in early February. In other words, it is a fair proposition to make that Wilson was in the final analysis fairly indifferent about the racial equality clause as it stood. In the light of the above, it is intriguing that he should impose a unanimity ruling on the racial equality amendment on the 11th April even when the majority of the members (eleven out of seventeen) voted for its adoption. Since House's claim that he was the one responsible for influencing Wilson's decision was not entirely reliable due to the rift in the personal relationship between him and the president, the only explanation is that Wilson himself had reasons for wanting to reject the proposal. Although Wilson was aware of the strength of domestic opposition to the proposal and to his version of the League, it is unlikely from his past record of dealing with the opposition that he would have relented under the pressure.³⁹ Instead, it was more likely that the opposition would have hardened his resolve to push through the League.

However, even Wilson could not ignore the Australian opposition which was having a decisive impact on the overall British position on the racial equality proposal. Wilson had realised by then that a racial equality proposal in any form was totally unacceptable to the Australians, in spite of the efforts made by other Dominions to achieve a compromise. It must be borne in mind that Hughes's opposition was so virulent that it was conceivable to all concerned that he would carry out his threat of disrupting the peace conference if necessary. Moreover, it had been clear from the 13th February meeting that Britain would have no choice but to oppose

³⁹George and George, *op. cit.*, pp.250-256.

the racial equality amendment if Australia continued to oppose to it in order to maintain unity of the delegation. Wilson, by then, was well aware that without Britain's support, it was not possible to create the League of Nations since the French and Italians clearly had a more pragmatic understanding of it as a means to manipulate him. In the light of the circumstances, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Wilson considered the option of supporting the British position on the racial equality proposal as a relatively cheap gesture of Anglo-American solidarity if it meant that Britain would continue to show general support for Wilson's League.⁴⁰ There is no reason to suppose that Britain would not have continued its support for the League had the racial equality proposal been adopted.⁴¹ However, the possibility of damage from Hughes's threat to disrupt the plenary session over the racial equality issue, exposing not only an inner division within the British Empire delegation and thus humiliating Britain, but questioning the moral value of League in the eyes of the world, was incalculable. In any case, it seems that Wilson was not willing to take the risk of offending and alienating Britain whose commitment to the League was essential to its success, over a racial equality proposal which he doubtless regarded as a dispensable issue.

Nevertheless, Wilson was not straightforward in his support for the British position as he decided to impose unanimity without declaring American opposition to

⁴⁰As seen in his defence of the unanimity ruling of the 11th April. Miller, *op. cit.*, Vol.1, p.464.

⁴¹Britain did not threaten to withdraw over this matter in the speech. *Ibid.*, Vol.2, p.389.

the proposal.⁴² It can be construed that Wilson was simply being politically manipulative in not declaring American opposition and in imposing a unanimity ruling. There was little need for the United States to declare its opposition to the racial equality proposal when the British had already been identified as the chief opponent to the proposal.⁴³ It made little political sense for Wilson to side officially with the British at this stage and be branded as one of the objectors to the principle of racial equality which was increasingly gaining support from the other powers including France and Italy, when he could defeat the proposal effortlessly by imposing unanimity. Diplomatically, the Japanese would not be able to blame the United States for the defeat of the proposal if the Americans were perceived as playing the role of an arbiter, which Wilson was effectively able to do as chairman.⁴⁴ This disappointed Cecil because effectively, the British Empire delegation was singled out as the source of opposition to the racial equality proposal.⁴⁵

It can be said that Wilson's decision in the League of Nations Commission on the 11th April was not determined by his perception of the proposal *per se* as implying immigration or universal principle, but by his *realpolitik* concerns of sustaining Britain's support for the League by acting in such a way that the British

⁴²D.H.Miller, diary, 11th April 1919, My Diary: At the Conference of Paris, Vol.1, (New York, 1924).

⁴³Diary of Grayson, 11th April 1919, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.57.

⁴⁴It must be noted that Wilson did command considerable respect as chairman as D.H.Miller commented, "to his final opinions there was an unmistakable deference...." in his Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.1, p.126.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp.464-465; Diary, 11th April 1919, Add.51131, f.71, Cecil Papers.

opposition would prevail in the commission. This was characteristic of the decisions he took at the peace conference, and demonstrates the difficulty he had in dissociating any given issue from the implication it might have for the prospect of realising the League. In this sense, it is true that Wilson was influenced by the British position, and by extension, the Australian opposition to the racial equality proposal. As we shall see below, Wilson was personally much affected by the unanimity ruling he imposed on the 11th April, as he became consciously aware of humiliating the Japanese over the issue, and this had a profound effect on how he conducted his Shantung settlement.

Wilson, Racial Equality and Shantung

It seems that in his own mind Wilson made a trade-off between the racial equality proposal and the Shantung settlement as a means of maintaining Japan's support for the League. As previously mentioned, Shantung was the most contentious issue between Japan and China at the peace conference. The contention involved certain rights over the railway, police, and other properties in the Shantung province which were formerly held by the Germans but subsequently taken over by the Japanese during the war.⁴⁶ It is widely known that the Americans took an extraordinary interest in the Shantung settlement and overwhelmingly backed the Chinese position.⁴⁷ By April 1919, however, there was increasing disillusionment

⁴⁶Confer footnote 47 in Chapter 7 for a brief summary of the Shantung settlement.

⁴⁷"It was generally felt that from the legal point of view the Japanese could make a powerful argument, but that from the point of view of political and moral principles the Chinese had presented a strong case." in H.V.W. Temperley ed., A History of the Peace Conference of Paris, Vol.4, (London, 1924), p.379.

on the American side that the promise of a new international order was being overshadowed by the reality of great power diplomacy at Paris.⁴⁸ This disillusionment was compounded when Wilson ruled Shantung in Japan's favour on 30th April.

In retrospect, it appears that Wilson himself was the person most affected by the decision to impose a unanimity ruling on 11th April 1919. It has been argued that Wilson's reason for the ruling was to maintain British support for the League which was done at the cost of humiliating the Japanese. When the Shantung negotiation took place, he remained conscious of the negative effect his racial equality ruling must have had on the Japanese government, whose determination to obtain Shantung had hardened.⁴⁹ In the circumstances, Wilson perceived three interrelated problems which needed to be resolved urgently. First, there was the Japanese threat of withdrawal from the peace conference over Shantung.⁵⁰ Second, the Japanese had already lost face over racial equality. Third, without Japan and Italy, the League of Nations might have to be aborted altogether. Thus, it became a question of how to resolve the Shantung settlement without damaging the League of Nations which, to his mind, was more fundamental to the stability of the international order than giving Shantung back to China and, in the process, aggravating Japan. This thinking was

⁴⁸Baker was aware of such discrepancy much earlier as he succinctly summarised that "He[Wilson] speaks to the masses in terms of new diplomacy, but he deals with the leaders by the methods of the old" in diary of R.S.Baker, 8th March 1919, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.55.

⁴⁹Minutes of the Council of Four, 21st April 1919, FRUS 1919, Paris Peace Conference Vol.5.

⁵⁰Henry Cabot Lodge, The Senate and the League of Nations, (London, 1925), pp.343-344.

reinforced by the underlying reproach that Japan had been "wronged" once over racial equality. Inadvertently, the earlier defeat of the racial equality proposal had an indirect but causal effect on his decision on Shantung.

In spite of his decision to favour the Japanese claim, Wilson was thoroughly "pro-China" in sentiment.⁵¹ What made him distinct from the other "pro-China" sympathisers was his belief in the credibility of the Japanese threat of withdrawal over Shantung. He believed that the Japanese could not be marginalised in every issue as they had already been humiliated with the rejection of the racial equality clause.⁵² He was anxious not to alienate them because he believed that a crucial component in an effective League of Nations was great power cooperation. Just as he had had to first appease the British by imposing unanimity voting on the racial equality proposal, he now felt obliged to give concessions to Japan, since the Japanese threat of withdrawal coupled with Italian departure from the conference over Fiume would most certainly spell the end of the League.⁵³ Evidently, Wilson was aware of logical inconsistency in his decision to hand over Shantung to the Japanese when he

⁵¹According to Lloyd George, Wilson's attitude was in fact strongly anti-Japanese. See Floto, *op. cit.*, p.88. Also House attests that "Both he [Wilson] and Lansing lean toward China..." in his diary, 26th April 1919, Charles Seymour ed., The Intimate Papers of Colonel House, Vol.4, (London, 1928), p.467.

⁵²For instance, Wilson tried to soften the blow of the defeat of racial equality by preparing an explanatory statement on behalf of the Japanese. Of course, he was also concerned about the negative impact this rejection would have on the image of the League. See Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.1, p.465.

⁵³Harold Nicolson wrote, "...the Japanese had timed their stand upon the Shantung settlement with exquisite cunning. They had chosen the very moment when Italy had abandoned the Peace Conference because of the alleged intransigence of President Wilson." in Nicolson, *op. cit.*, p.146; Lansing, *op. cit.*, p.219.

had so doggedly opposed giving Fiume to Italy.⁵⁴ But the deadlock over Fiume probably precipitated his desire to resolve the Shantung question without further complication which benefitted Japan:

Concerning Japan, it is necessary to do everything to assure that she joins the League of Nations. If she stands aside, she would do all that she could want to do in the Far East. You heard them this morning saying clearly that they will not sign the treaty if the obligations contracted vis-a-vis them are not respected.⁵⁵

The Shantung decision presented a moral dilemma for Wilson as he saw the situation as choosing between the two extremes⁵⁶: on the one hand, the choice of giving Shantung to China which he would naturally have liked to do; and on the other hand, the need to obtain Japanese adherence to the League of Nations.

Essentially, Wilson acted much against his advisers on the Shantung question. His private secretary, Joseph Tumulty, cabled him frequently from Washington urging him not to yield to Japan.⁵⁷ Ray Stannard Baker, who by then had become disillusioned by the conference, made a final plea to Wilson in a memorandum dated

⁵⁴Hankey and Mantoux's notes on Council of Four, 22nd April 1919, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.57.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶As we see in Lansing's note, "Mr.---(a Chinese delegate) also said that Mr. Baker stated that the President desired him to say that the President was very sorry that he had not been able to do more for China, but that he had been compelled to accede to Japan's demand 'in order to save the League of Nations'." in Lansing, op. cit., p.234. Similarly, Wilson said, "I am not going to discuss the merits of that question, because it had not merits. The whole thing was bad. ... We could not ask them(Great Britain and France) to disregard those promises (ie. the secret treaties with Japan)." in H.Foley, Woodrow Wilson's Case for the League of Nations, (Princeton, 1923). p.108.

⁵⁷Tumulty to Wilson, 26th April 1919, Container 49, Joseph Patrick Tumulty Papers, Library of Congress; Tumulty to Wilson, 28th April 1919, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.58.

29th April, that "The Japanese proposal amount to 'offering China the shell and securing for Japan the oyster'."⁵⁸ Interestingly, Wilson was dissatisfied with the advice given by his experts which only allowed him the option of abiding by the principles, being completely unappreciative of the reality of the situation in which the decision had to be made.⁵⁹ As Wilson's alienation from his staff increased, so too did his conviction that Shantung must be given to Japan if the League of Nations were to be salvaged regardless of the intensity of opposition. He justified his case by appealing to greater "international" justice through the creation of the League of Nations as opposed to "immediate" justice of granting Shantung to China:

If Japan went home there was a real danger of Japanese-Russian-German alliance--and a return to the old 'balance of power' system in the world--only a greater scale than ever. He[Wilson] knew that his decision would be unpopular in America, that the Chinese would be bitterly disappointed, that the avaricious Japanese would feel triumphant, that he would be accused of violating his own principles--but never-the-less he must work for world order and organisation against anarchy and a return to the old unilateralism.⁶⁰

His decision, though taken out of the necessity of attaining a higher ideal, was a devastating blow to China.⁶¹ In the event, Wilson's single handed decision, taken against the majority view of the American delegation as well as domestic opposition, had cost him his most highly prized object when the American Senate refused to

⁵⁸Baker was first the press officer, and then after Wilson's fall out with House became one of his closest confidants. Baker to Wilson, "Notes on the Japanese-Chinese Question", 29th April 1919, Container 30 (reel 29), Ray Stannard Baker Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵⁹Diary of Grayson, 25th April 1919, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.58.

⁶⁰Ibid., diary of R.S.Baker, 30th April 1919.

⁶¹Wilson himself admits to this in his Senate Hearings on the Treaty of Peace. See Statement of the President, 19th August 1919, Part 5, Volume 13, Section 1, Unit 4, Bernard Baruch Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Library, Princeton University Archives.

ratify the peace treaty.⁶²

It must be said that the environment in which the decision was made, the Council of Four consisting of Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and Orlando (whose attendance was interrupted with the dispute over Fiume), did have a psychological effect on Wilson. Minutes of the Council of Four suggest that Wilson was under pressure from Lloyd George and Clemenceau, but in particular from the former, to support the Japanese claims.⁶³ Effectively, Wilson's resistance to the Japanese claims ran against the interests of Lloyd George and Clemenceau as both Britain and France were party to secret treaties which recognised Japan's right to Shantung, and in Britain's case, in exchange for similar assurances for territorial claims to the Pacific islands to the south of the equator.⁶⁴ Thus Wilson faced another dilemma: whilst a territorial concession to Japan over Shantung touched a raw American nerve, it was nevertheless acceptable to Britain and France. In the end, Wilson acquiesced to great power pressure, and concluded that "we thought it was the best that could be got, in view of the definite engagements of Great Britain and France, and the necessity of a unanimous decision, which we held to be necessary in every case we have decided."⁶⁵ Even Makino concluded later that Shantung was the

⁶²Makino Nobuaki, Kaikoroku [Reminiscences], Vol.2, (Tokyo, 1978), p.137.

⁶³Minutes of the Council of Four, FRUS 1919, Paris Peace Conference Vol.5; also Seymour. *op. cit.*, p.467.

⁶⁴In fact, Wilson was convinced that the British would side with the Japanese on Shantung. See diary of Grayson, 25th April 1919, and also diary of R.S.Baker, 29th April 1919, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Vol.58.

⁶⁵Statement of the President, 19th August 1919, Part 5, Volume 13, Section 1, Unit 4, Bernard Baruch Papers.

price paid by China for Wilson's obsession with the League.⁶⁶

Clearly, Wilson was first and foremost motivated by his personal desire to create the League. Having appeased the British over the racial equality proposal, Wilson now had to appease the Japanese over Shantung, in order to maintain token great power solidarity behind the League. This he felt he had to do despite going against the general American position on the issue, as well as against China's vested interest which the United States was supposedly protecting at Paris. Admittedly, it would have been very difficult for any American president to ignore the secret treaties in 1917 made by France, Italy, Britain and Japan. However, Wilson's overriding priority made him seem like a victim rather than the manipulator of peace conference politics. At least one participant thought highly of his conduct over Shantung:

Some people have depicted President Wilson as a headstrong, uncompromising idealist; others, as a wavering idealist, easily turned away from his purpose by the Machiavellis of the Old World: on the occasion of the Adriatic problem, we shall find him making his appeal to the Italian nation, against the advice of his French and British partners and with most ill-advised obstinacy; but we shall also find him anxious to learn and to understand, taking carefully into account what he had learnt, and evincing a tenaciousness combined with a sense of practical possibilities for which he has not been given enough credit: an instance of this was his attitude in the course of the negotiations with the Japanese over Shantung.⁶⁷

Conclusions to the American Response

In the final analysis, the American response to the racial equality proposal had many different dimensions. Firstly, the universal principle factor failed to explain the American position. Secondly, although the Americans were aware that the proposal

⁶⁶Makino, *op. cit.*, p.198.

⁶⁷Paul Mantoux, Paris Peace Conference 1919: Proceedings of the Council of Four (March 24-April 18), (Geneva, 1964), p.xvii.

could have been motivated by the uncertainty which the Japanese felt about their great power status, this did not induce them to support it. Thirdly, due to the history of anti-Japanese immigration policy in the United States, the Americans generally perceived the racial equality as a demand of free immigration. Fourthly, this led the proposal to be adopted as one of the chief planks of the anti-League, anti-Wilson movement in American domestic politics. However, although there was an indication that Wilson had been aware of domestic opposition to racial equality and other aspects of the League, this did not have a material effect on his determination to achieve his objective, the League of Nations. Fifthly, the well-known "bargaining chip" theory was found not to hold ground, although it helped to explain how some Americans perceived the proposal. Instead, the explanation that Wilson had used the racial equality proposal as a political instrument to ensure the survival of his final objective seemed most tenable. In a sense, the extent to which Wilson was determined to ignore the "American" position consisting of his domestic opponents as well as everyone else in the American delegation was a remarkable contrast to both the Japanese and British governments whose positions on the racial equality proposal were very much affected by the respective "domestic" considerations.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has made a detailed analysis of the racial equality proposal at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. At the beginning, five categories of explanations were identified as a framework of analysis to explain not only the Japanese motivations but the responses of the British and American delegations. The explanations were as follows: Japan's great power status, anti-Japanese immigration problems, domestic political considerations in the respective states, the universal principle of racial equality, and bargaining instrument used as part of the politics of the peace conference. The analysis of Japanese motivations and the Anglo-American responses using this framework has shown that internal mechanisms for determining the position taken by each country was not as one-dimensional or straightforward as it appeared on the surface. The summary of the analysis is as follows.

In the analysis of the Japanese motivations, the three explanations of great power status, immigration and domestic politics were of approximately equal importance. Interestingly, the other explanations of universal principle and peace conference politics did not help to explain the Japanese position. Firstly, the explanation of great power status which referred to Japan's insecurity as a non-white power has not been given enough attention previously. Japan's experience as a rising great power in East Asia through the first two decades of this century, as well as public interest in foreign policy debates as evidenced in the continuing existence of the *ajia shugi* (pan-Asian) versus *datsu-A ron* (escape Asia) debate from mid-Meiji period onwards, testified to the importance and awareness of the problem of Japan's international position from its early modern days. The experience of the First World

War had heightened Japan's sense of isolation internationally as seen in the deterioration of its relations with both Britain and the United States. These provided the general understanding of the fragility of Japan's perception of its great power status. Importantly, there was an inclination domestically to connect this insecurity to the racial aspect of Japan's identity as seen in the prominence of *jinshuron* (racial discourse). This insecurity was reflected in the Hara government's peace policy towards the League of Nations which specified that Japan should secure measures to prevent itself from being racially discriminated against in the new organisation. Thus, the origins of the racial equality proposal can be construed to be associated with Japan's insecurity as a non-white great power in the League which was to be dominated by the western powers.

Secondly, the explanation of domestic politics suggested that the racial equality proposal, as Japan's condition for accepting the League of Nations, played the role of justifying the pro-League policy of Prime Minister Hara and his close supporters. The League was considered to be an important signal of Japan's willingness to cooperate with the West in order to prevent the further international isolation of Japan, underlining the *ôbei kyôchô* (pro-western, internationalist) attitude of Hara's foreign policy.¹ Hara and his *ôbei kyôchô* supporters had to contend with two groups which were sceptical of the League. Firstly, there existed a number of sceptics, within the government and the Diplomatic Advisory Council, who had an ingrained

¹It can be construed that the Foreign Ministry supported the League of Nations officially in spite of their privately expressed scepticism of it, because it was keen to support Prime Minister Hara's policy of cooperating with the United States and Britain. Hara wanted to do this by supporting the League, so the ministry had to support it also without sharing his enthusiasm for it. It must be remembered also that the ministry was anxious to reclaim its place at the centre of foreign policy making, having being marginalised under the Terauchi government.

suspicion that the League was simply another form of political alliance to maintain the *status quo* to the advantage of the West, or more to the point, the Anglo-Saxons. In the light of the urgency of the situation, Hara managed to extract a compromise from the sceptics. The condition was that if Japan were to join the League then it would do so by securing some means of protecting itself from being racially discriminated against in the organisation. The second type of sceptics which the pro-League supporters of Hara had to appease was public opinion in Japan. There was much pressure put on the government by the wider public to succeed at the peace conference, and especially over the question of the racial equality proposal which was regarded to be the *sine qua non* of Japan's joining the League. The public was sceptical of the League for the similar reasons expressed by the sceptics within the government. Only the liberal intellectuals shared Hara's pro-League perspective. In the light of the above, racial equality could be seen as a condition that would make Japan's inevitable acquiescence to the League at least slightly more tolerable to its opponents.

Thirdly, the explanation which has been predominant hitherto, that the proposal was a means of resolving the long standing anti-Japanese immigration problems in the Anglo-Saxon territories, has remained important but only as one of the three explanations. It has become clear that this was the view predominantly espoused by the Foreign Ministry but not necessarily endorsed by the government as a whole. In the absence of a detailed guideline from Tokyo, the racial equality proposal was worded evidently to reflect the particular perspective espoused by those who had an immediate input in drafting it in Paris. The substance of the proposal reflected the bureaucratic priorities of the Foreign Ministry, which for historical

reasons was anxious to resolve, once and for all, the issue of anti-Japanese immigration practices in the United States and the British Dominions. It can be said that immigration was such an important issue for the Foreign Ministry which tended to perceive it, not only as a practical problem, but also as a symbolic manifestation of Japan's "unequal" status. In this sense, immigration was connected with great power status.

The other two explanations of the proposal as universal principle and as a political instrument at the peace conference were found not to hold ground. It was clear from the original clause relating to "racial prejudice" in the peace policy that the intention was to secure racial equality for Japanese nationals. There was no discussion of it ever as a universal principle in the official record. Moreover, the Japanese continued to practise discrimination against the Chinese and Koreans. The explanation that the proposal was intended as a political instrument to gain Shantung and the Pacific islands at the peace conference seemed to be ruled out by the secret agreements of 1917. With the prospect of Chinese participation in the First World War, Japan took steps to ensure before hand that it would have the support of the other great powers for its claims to Shantung and the Pacific islands north of the equator by signing secret agreements with Britain, France, Italy and Russia. This meant that Japan did not need to invent racial equality to press these claims, because it generally did not expect any difficulties at the peace conference in obtaining these demands.

In explaining the British Empire delegation's position on the racial equality proposal, it was argued that the combined explanation of anti-Japanese immigration problems and the internal politics of the British-Dominion relations outweighed every

other factor. Because the British government interpreted the racial equality proposal as a demand for improved immigration practices towards Japanese nationals in the Dominions, it became a Dominion issue. This was because immigration historically belonged to the Dominions' sphere of influence in British-Dominion relations. In practice, the British government did not have much control over the immigration policies of the Dominions, and was, moreover, very unwilling to enforce its "imperial" prerogative over the Dominions. Having said this, the Dominions and especially Australia opposed the proposal partly because of the "white" immigration policies which were designed specifically to restrict the flow of non-white immigrants into white settler economies. The Dominions were concerned that the Japanese proposal would prevent them further from practising these policies. The fear of Japanese immigrants was also related to the issue of defence. Australia and New Zealand felt threatened by the military strength of Japan as a power in the Pacific. It seems that Billy Hughes's stubborn opposition was a reflection of how important the anti-Japanese immigration problem had become in the Australian political agenda. Hughes had made rejection of the proposal into a symbol of resistance to the British government, demonstrating to the Australian public his personal resolve to protect Australia's vested interests, as well as deftly manipulating strong anti-Japanese sentiment in Australia, so as to increase his domestic support.

Both Britain and the Dominions implicitly seemed to have recognised that the Japanese proposal could have been an attempt at addressing Japan's insecurity as a non-white great power. Although the sense of mutual distrust increased during the First World War, the British government continued to be cautious in its treatment of Japan as an alliance partner. However, their willingness to recognise the problem of

Japan's great power status did not result in their support for the proposal.

In terms of the other two explanations, the British government did not at all seem to have considered the possibility that the racial equality proposal was a demand for a universal principle of racial equality. It was the strength of conviction held by the British that the proposal was without any doubt about immigration which basically determined how the proposal was to be treated within the British Empire delegation. Although it has been argued by some that the British had had to oppose the proposal because of its universal implications for the British Empire with its many non-white colonised peoples, this is not a correct assumption to make because the principle of racial equality was, in fact, theoretically compatible with the imperial principle of equality of subjects. Therefore, the fact that the British had completely neglected the universal aspect of the proposal could only be explained by their avowed conviction that it had nothing to do with it.

It has been shown that the explanation that the proposal was a political instrument used to gain other ends at the peace conference, applied to the British context, is not plausible on two accounts. Firstly, the British did not interpret the Japanese proposal as a means to gain Shantung because they were party to the 1917 secret agreement with Japan which bound them to support Japanese claims at the peace conference in exchange for a similar support from the Japanese for British claims to the former German territories in the Pacific south of the equator. Hence, Britain knew that Japan did not have to resort to such measures to ensure the acquisition of these territorial claims. Secondly, the British themselves did not use their opposition to the Japanese proposal as a means of achieving some other objective at Paris. In fact, the British government's interpretation of the proposal as

an immigration measure had effectively made the proposal an "internal" problem within the British Empire delegation. If anything, their publicly declared opposition throughout the racial equality negotiation, even in the light of the fact that most of the other states in the League of Nations Commission including France and Italy started supporting the proposal, worked to their disadvantage.

The American position was just as complex because the four explanations identified, namely Japan's great power status, anti-Japanese immigration lobby, American domestic politics, and American peace conference politics and bargaining, all operated simultaneously at different political levels. The explanation of peace conference politics and bargaining provides the key to understanding why President Wilson ultimately defeated the racial equality proposal with the imposition of a unanimity ruling on 11th April. However, the other three factors were important insofar as they helped to understand the general American position.

First of all, even more explicitly than in the case of Britain, the Americans were aware that the racial equality proposal could have been implicitly related to Japan's insecurity as a non-white great power. This was so in spite of the fact that there was a marked deterioration in the relationship between Japan and the United States during the First World War. Although some such as E.T. Williams, the State Department's China expert, thought that the proposal was a cheap price to pay to buy Japan's goodwill, others such as Secretary of State Lansing did not share this view. The American response on this explanation was in this sense very similar to that shown by Britain in that the recognition of the issue did not result in the positive action towards the proposal.

Secondly, the immigration explanation demonstrated why there was so much

American domestic agitation over the proposal. The history of antagonistic anti-Japanese immigration policies in the United States resulted in a strong tendency domestically to view the proposal as demanding free immigration of Japanese and other non-white immigrants. The problem was particularly acute in California where the fear of Japanese immigration became an important political issue extensively manipulated by politicians such as Senator Phelan. The American anti-Japanese immigration lobby managed to stir up much heated debate in the United States with the desired effect of influencing Colonel House who became concerned about the domestic implications of the Japanese proposal. This explanation was important in understanding why the American domestic public responded so strongly against the proposal but its ultimate impact on the decision making at Paris was not as effective as it was in the case of Britain.

Thirdly, the explanation of American domestic politics was not as effective as it has been previously argued. Basically, the racial equality proposal was adopted by the anti-Wilson and anti-League movement in the United States as one of their main platforms alongside the Monroe Doctrine and the Shantung settlement. The Republican opponents mounted unified opposition to Wilson as a result of their dissatisfaction with the way in which Wilson had turned the peace conference into a partisan and personal issue. Interestingly, what happened was that the racial equality proposal got caught in the American domestic imbroglio because it provided an ideal weapon for those waging a protracted battle to bring down Wilson and his peace plan regardless of the cost and its external implications, with the added benefit of manipulating anti-Japanese sentiment. However, just as in the case of immigration, its effect on influencing the decision making of Wilson was questionable because

Wilson had his own agenda.

Undoubtedly, the most important explanation of the American position was the one of the proposal as a bargaining instrument to gain other ends at the peace conference, which had two dimensions. First, there was the well-known "bargaining chip" theory expounded by the "pro-China" commissioners, namely, Secretary of State Lansing, General Tasker Bliss and Henry White, backed by domestic public opinion that Japan had intentionally concocted the racial equality proposal as a political instrument to obtain a favourable settlement over Shantung. This view was shared by some of the Chinese delegates who attempted to explain Wilson's failure to support them over Shantung in terms of Wilson's being "bamboozled" by the Japanese. However, this explanation was made *ex post facto* and did not seem to influence what Wilson thought about the proposal.

The second aspect of the explanation was the most intriguing as it suggested that Wilson had used the racial equality proposal as a political instrument to gain other ends, namely the establishment of the League of Nations. Wilson's *raison d'être* at Paris was to create the League of Nations and everything else was subordinated to achieve this end. In order to attain his objective, Wilson was keenly aware of the necessity of courting Britain to support him on the League as he was convinced that only with an Anglo-Saxon consensus could the League deliver the promises made of a new international order. When Wilson realised the irrevocable nature of British opposition to the proposal due to Australia, he considered that supporting the British position on the racial equality proposal was a relatively cheap gesture of Anglo-American solidarity if it meant that Britain would continue to give general support for Wilson's League. So he imposed a unanimity ruling on the 11th

April meeting without declaring American opposition, and managed to defeat the proposal. It must be mentioned that Wilson, in his capacity as chairman of the League of Nations Commission, was entitled to insist on a unanimity ruling. Indirectly, Wilson's decision was affected by Hughes's stubborn opposition. Wilson's fixation with creating the League affected the vital decision over the Shantung settlement as he was forced to take into account Japan's threat of withdrawal from the conference. To his mind, it was more important to save the League, which would secure a safer world, than to secure Shantung for China even if it meant going against the wishes of the American public.

Finally, the explanation which did not play a big role in understanding the American position was that of universal principle. Apart from House who flirted with the idea for a day or two, the American delegation did not seriously consider the Japanese proposal as a demand for a universal principle. This was interesting because one of the main reasons given by the Japanese public for supporting the racial equality proposal was that it was compatible with the Wilsonian international order. However, such thinking had hardly any effect on the Americans. Although Wilson initially was sympathetic to the proposal, his interest was marginal and, he certainly did not regard it to be in the same league as his principle of self-determination.

What can this analysis of the racial equality proposal tell us about its broader implications? Why was the racial equality proposal important for our understanding of Japan and the West in the early part of the twentieth century? For one, it was important in illuminating Japan's understanding of the world. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, it brought to the fore the significance of the idea of race in Japanese thinking on foreign policy in the early modern Japan. Particularly noteworthy is the

fact that the proposal revealed the intimate link between the two seemingly distinct categories of race and great power status. This duality was shown to be crucial to understanding Japan's self-perception as a non-white great power in an international society dominated by white great powers. However, the western great powers did not realise enough that Japan's insecurity in terms of its international position derived partly from this fundamentally unchangeable aspect of race. The racial aspect of Japan's identity and its influence on its perception of international society needs to be given more emphasis as an underlying force in the understanding of Japan as it moved into the 1920s and 1930s.

Secondly, the racial equality proposal revealed the fundamental uncertainty which the Japanese had about the League of Nations, and more widely, international society, which was perceived to be dominated by the Anglo-Saxon powers. This factor has a direct relevance in understanding the failure of Japan's League diplomacy during the 1920s, and why it led to Japan's eventual withdrawal from the League of Nations in March 1933. It shows that Japan's effort through the Shidehara diplomacy in the 1920s to cooperate and further integrate with the western powers was perhaps the result not of national consensus but rather of the convictions held by a select group of internationalists in the government. Japan's attitude to the League was an important barometer of how Japan perceived international society and its role within it. This was much affected by its perception of the representative western powers, Britain and the United States.

This last claim leads to another important observation that for cultural, religious, and historical reasons, Japan's understanding of international relations was different from that of the western powers. It is important not to underestimate the

fact that Japan was coming from a completely different tradition. In spite of the seemingly smooth process of integration which Japan went through in the Meiji and Taishô periods, it is simplistic to assume that Japan as a new member of international society, understood all the assumptions of how western great powers operated. In this sense, it seems that the idea of smooth transformation argued by the English School of international relations presents a limited perspective of the process of expansion of international society.² The problem with it is that too much emphasis is given to the process of integration *per se* of non-western members into the Eurocentric system, thereby assuming that the most important agenda for these members was to be integrated into the western world. It plays down, or even sometimes, neglects the idea that these non-western members might have had a different agenda. The racial equality case has shown that Japan had a fairly distinct agenda and a highly problematic perception of its position in the world which did not always agree with the Eurocentric perspective. Japan, as a non-western great power, posed a new challenge to the western standard of international relations by attempting to impose albeit unsuccessfully, a new agenda by putting forward the racial equality proposal. What Britain and the United States did not understand was that by welcoming the non-western, non-white great power, Japan, they were unwittingly introducing a new element in the previously western-based group.³

²Hedley Bull and Adam Watson ed., The Expansion of International Society, (Oxford, 1984).

³Osiander makes an important point about shared assumptions which form the basis of consensus in the international system. It can be suggested that Japan's entry posed the problem of partially disrupting this basis of consensus. Andreas Osiander, The States System of Europe, 1640-1990: Peacemaking and the Conditions of International Stability, (Oxford, 1994), Chapter One.

Finally, the study has shown that all three powers had a limited understanding of the principle of racial equality. Japan was not motivated by the desire to promote universal racial equality for the good of all peoples, despite its desire to be treated more equally by the western powers. Britain did not even consider the possibility that the proposal might have had universal implications despite its imperial principle of equality. Most surprisingly, Wilson gave so little attention to the proposal as a principle that it cast a shadow over the definition of Wilsonian idealism. This limited conception of what constituted the universal stood in contrast to the Franco-Italian understanding of the principle. The French, in particular, had the most universal interpretation of the principle of any country involved, by declaring it to be "an indisputable principle of justice".⁴ Therefore, it seems unfair to say that the western powers were against the principle because clearly the French and Italians at least, on the surface, were not. Instead, it seems to show the limits of Wilsonian idealism. Perhaps, the problem was that the racial equality principle was too abstract as a principle because its possible implications, both in terms of the internal and the external, were too universal for some of the key members of international society to be considered as an acceptable principle of international justice.

It seems appropriate to end with a quote from what Konoe Fumimaro, who attended the Paris Peace Conference as an enthusiastic young attendant of Marquis Saionji Kimmochi, prophetically wrote in February 1933 one month before Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations:

⁴D.H. Miller, The Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.2 (New York, 1928), p.390. Of course, one could argue that France did not have self-governing Dominions, like the British did. However, this still does not justify Wilson's position as the United States did not have the equivalent of the Dominions.

In thinking about it, the Paris Peace Conference was the ideal opportunity to correct the existing irrationalities in the world and to establish a true world peace. This conference was held immediately after the war and the politicians who attended it had all experienced much pain with the horrors of the war. *However, the Paris conference did not recognise the blatant irrationality of discriminating against people by skin colour.*⁵

⁵Italics are mine. Konoe Fumimaro, "Sekai no genjô o kaizô seyo" [Reform the *status quo* of the world], in Seidanroku, (Tokyo, 1936), p.253.

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