12 Racial equality? The Paris Peace Conference, 1919

Fleets in European seas

Japan played a minor, albeit advantageous role, in the First World War, over-running the German colonies in the Pacific Islands and the Concession on China's Shantung Peninsula. The navy patrolled the Pacific and Indian Oceans and, after much persuasion from the allies, extended its sway into the Mediterranean. Ironically, given Australian attitudes towards Japan, it was the Japanese fleet that protected the troopships conveying the Australian and New Zealand armies to the Middle East. The demands of war greatly stimulated Japanese industry and available markets expanded with the temporary eclipse of British and German competitors.

When the world's nations gathered to formalise the peace treaty and create a League of Nations, Japan was accorded the status of one of the great powers alongside the United States, Great Britain, France and Italy, each with two representatives on the Committee. Still virtually invisible to Charles Pearson in 1893, Japan had yet, in a quarter of a century, seemed to fulfil his prophesy about the challenge to the West posed by the rise of the 'yellow races'. The Japanese Empire had been invited into alliances with European powers, was 'represented by fleets in European seas', 'circumscribing the industry of Europeans' and invited to participate as an equal in international conferences.

Japanese race discourse

The long crusade to achieve equality with the Western powers appeared to have been finally successful. But there was still the unresolved question of race. *Jinshuron*, or 'race discourse', had been a feature of public life since the early twentieth century, intensified by well-publicised examples of discrimination by California and the British Dominions. Local interpreters of Western intellectual life were well aware of the salience of

race in America and Australasia. Japanese officials could thus never be sure whether they were accepted as equals or if their status was forever diminished by being deemed 'not-white'. While internationally minded commentators welcomed the prospect of a new world order based on a league of equal nations, others feared that it could perpetuate the dominant position of the Anglo-Saxon countries.

In an article in November 1918, in Tokutomi Soho's *Kokumin*, the main object of the projected League of Nations was defined as the 'equalization of the races of the world'. But its role in the world could not be fully realised 'so long as Japanese and other coloured races are differentially treated in white communities'.[1] In his recent study, *Japan, Race and Equality*, Naoko Shimazu observed that the question of racial equality dominated domestic debate in Japan from November 1918 until May 1919, because of its symbolic importance as an expression of Japan's fears and expectations of the new international order.[2]

Advising the delegation

The appointment of Marquis Saionji, Viscount Chinda and Baron Makino in late November to lead the Japanese delegation to France, and the departure of the main party in December, called forth considerable comment and advice from their countrymen. The editor of *Asahi* put his thoughts in an article 'What Japan Should Demand at Versailles'. After referring to the common expectation that Japan would take over the German possessions in China and the Pacific Ocean, he argued that above all else the delegation must persuade the conference to relinquish the policy of racial discrimination, which, if not curbed, would continue to menace the future peace of the world. 'Fairness and equality', the editor declared confidently, 'must be secured for the coloured races who form sixty two per cent of the whole of mankind'.[3]

As the Japanese leaders departed for France they were farewelled with a united chorus of newspaper commentary. The *Kokumin* hoped the delegation would not betray the trust placed in it by the country. The elimination of racial discrimination was as important an objective as the formation of a League of Nations.[4] *Asahi* agreed. No other question was

[1] Cited by Naoko Shimazu, *Japan, Race and Equality: The Racial Equality Proposal of 1919* (London, Routledge, 2002) p.55.
[2] *Ibid.* p.51. [3] Cited in *Japan Times*, 15 January 1919. [4] *Ibid.* 11 December 1918.

so inseparably and materially interwoven with the permanency of the world's peace as that of unfair and unjust treatment of a large majority of the world's population.

And Japan could not have set forth her views with greater propriety and juster contention than in vindication of the wrong suffered by other races than the white.[5]

The racial discrimination question must be fought to the last, declared the editor of *Yamato*. The elimination of that 'unjust practice' was the 'greatest of Japan's missions'. Discrimination meant the 'usurpation of rights and interests on the part of the white race'. If Japan did not rise to curb them, who would be there to 'check the unbridled selfishness and domination of the white people?'[6] The editor of *Nichi Nichi* expressed hope that the allies would deal with the question of racial equality with 'sincerity and justice'.[7] Referring to US President Woodrow Wilson's talk of universal brotherhood, the *Yorozu* thought it 'unimaginable' that he would retreat from his cherished ideals.[8]

Sixty million souls

In the early months of 1919, public opinion in Japan was mobilised by numerous pressure groups. The Japan–American Association, the Association for Publicists of Peace Issues, the League for People's Diplomacy and the Sun and Stars Association all held public meetings and pressed on government the importance of racial equality. The League to Abolish Racial Discrimination brought together representatives from the major political parties, the bureaucracy, the armed services and thirty-seven other public associations. Following a mass meeting in Tokyo, in February 1919, the League cabled the French President, Georges Clemenceau, expressing its expectation that the Peace Conference would abolish all forms of racial discrimination. At a second mass meeting in March, it was resolved to oppose the establishment of a League of Nations if it were not based on the abolition of racial discrimination.[9] Commenting on the public ferment, the Japanese–American scholar K. K. Kawakami observed that the racial equality question was forced on the government by 'the masses of Japan'. It was 'the proposal of sixty million souls of the Mikado's Empire'.[10]

[5] *Ibid.* 31 January 1919. [6] *Ibid.* 27 March 1919.
[7] *Ibid.* 3 December 1918. [8] *Ibid.*
[9] *Ibid.* 9 February, 11 March 1919; Ian Nish, *Alliance in Decline: a Study of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1908–1923* (London, Athlone Press, 1972) p.269; Shimazu, *Japan, Race and Equality*, pp.51–3.
[10] K. K. Kawakami, *Japan and World Peace* (New York, Macmillan, 1919) p.46.

Whose equality?

Officials in the Japanese Foreign Ministry and members of the prestigious Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs were, however, concerned that racial prejudice might jeopardise Japan's position at the projected League of Nations. Draft guidelines prepared by the Japanese Foreign Office for the delegation in Paris urged that plans for such an organisation be shelved 'in view of the racial prejudices which have not yet entirely been banished from among the nations' and which would produce results 'gravely detrimental to Japan'. If, however, the League became a *fait accompli* Japan could not afford to remain on the outside and the delegates should make efforts to secure suitable guarantees against disadvantage arising from racial prejudice. Only then could Japan be confident that the Western powers would not use the new body to 'freeze the status quo'.[11]

The instructions of both the Cabinet and the Advisory Council were clear that the country's participation in the new international organisation depended on the inclusion of a racial equality clause either in the body or the preface of the planned covenant of the League of Nations. As Naoko Shimazu has noted, the Japanese government was principally concerned with attaining equality with the Western powers, but their focus was on the discrimination suffered by its nationals in other countries. Their demand was a 'highly particularistic and nationalistic' expression of Japan's desire to prevent its nationals, and thereby itself, from suffering the 'humiliation of racial prejudice in the League of Nations'.[12]

But once publicised, the idea of racial equality ceased to be merely a national concern. In the heady, idealistic moment at the end of the war – the Wilsonian moment – Japan's cause became a universal one.[13] Supporters and opponents alike came to see the proposal for an end to racial discrimination as a universal crusade. In his recent study of the Indian and Chinese response to Wilson's promise of self-determination, Erez Manela has rightly criticised existing scholarship on the Paris Peace Conference for remaining 'rather single-mindedly focussed on Europe', but his focus is on the appeal of 'self-determination' to colonised peoples, such as Indians and Chinese, rather than the campaign for racial

[11] N. Kawamura, 'Wilsonian Idealism and Japanese Claims at the Paris Peace Conference', *Pacific Historical Review*, vol.66, no.4 (1997) p.515; Lesley Connors, *The Emperor's Adviser: Saionji Kinmochi and Pre-war Japanese Politics* (London, Croom Helm, 1987) pp.70, 233.
[12] Shimazu, *Japan, Race and Equality*, pp.113–15.
[13] For the most recent invocation of the optimism unleashed by the 'Wilsonian moment', see Erez Manela, 'Imagining Woodrow Wilson in Asia: Dreams of East-West Harmony and the Revolt against Empire in 1919', *American Historical Review* 111, 5 (December 2006).

equality and the principle of non-discrimination waged by the Japanese Empire.[14]

Dissent in the delegation

Saionji, the leader of the delegation, and his two lieutenants were pro-Western, cosmopolitan thinkers, committed to the creation of a League of Nations and Japan's participation in it. But this determination was not shared by the whole delegation. Prince Konoe Fumimaro, a twenty-seven-year-old aristocrat, wrote an article called 'Reject the Anglo-American-Centred Peace' in the leading nationalist journal *Nihon Oyobi Nihonjin*, which appeared in December 1918, five days after the delegation left for Paris. Konoe took his stand on the 'sense of equality' among men, which he believed was the 'fundamental moral doctrine for the human community'. In his view, Japanese leaders were so enthralled by the 'spectacular pronouncements' of Anglo-American politicians that they failed to see that behind the rhetoric was a large measure of self interest. The proposed peace treaty would maintain the *status quo*, which preserved the dominance of the leading Western nations and their control of the world's resources through shutting out foreigners from their 'colonial areas'. Konoe demanded that the minimum condition for joining the League should be the eradication of economic imperialism and the 'discriminatory treatment of Asian peoples by Caucasians'. 'We must require', Konoe declared:

> all powers to open the doors of their colonies to others, so that all nations will have equal access to the markets and natural resources of the colonial areas. It is also imperative that Japan insist on the eradication of racial discrimination. At the coming peace conference we must demand this in the name of justice and humanity. Indeed the peace conference will provide the opportunity to determine whether or not the human race is capable of reforming the world on those principles.[15]

The initial approach

Aware of likely difficulties with their proposal for a declaration of racial equality, the Japanese delegates Makino and Chinda made preliminary approaches to the Americans, talking in particular to President Wilson's trusted adviser, Colonel Edward Mandell House. Having received an

[14] Manela, 'Imagining Woodrow Wilson', pp.1328–9.

[15] Yoshitake Oka, *Konoe Fumimaro: A Political Biography*, Shumpei Okamoto and Patricia Murray (trans.) (Tokyo, University of Tokyo Press, 1972, 1983 edition translated by S. Okamoto) pp.11–13.

unexpectedly favourable response, they presented the Americans with a tentative draft text to be incorporated in the Covenant of the League of Nations, which read:

> The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Parties agree that concerning the treatment and rights to be accorded to aliens in their territories, they will not discriminate, either in law or in fact, against any person or persons on account of his or their race or nationality.[16]

House rejected the proposal, but accepted a second one, which added the proviso that the nations in question would accord aliens equality, 'as far as it lies in their legitimate powers'.[17] House and Wilson operated as a team. Both were Southern gentlemen, members of the Democratic Party and dedicated Anglo-Saxonists. But whereas House was small, dapper and accommodating, Wilson was tall, lanky and proud. House specialised in the political diplomacy necessary to give effect to Wilson's self-righteous idealism. The American president never ceased to champion the virtue of his New World democratic republic against the decadence and despotism of Old World European monarchies. The United States government, he insisted, was 'contending for nothing less high and sacred than the rights of humanity'.[18]

Colonel House was not a military man: his title was bestowed by the governor of Texas in recognition of his work for the Democratic Party. As a reformer, House was an admirer of Australian democracy. In his earlier political campaigns and through his novel *Philip Dru*, he had enunciated a set of progressive policies that borrowed heavily on the Australian example: the 'Australian ballot', land title reform, old age pensions, industrial arbitration and women's suffrage.[19] His support of the Australian position at Versailles would be crucial in the defeat of the Japanese bid for racial equality.

Before the war, House had devoted much effort in trying to bring about an Anglo-Saxon alliance of Britain, Germany and the United States that would, in his view, prevent the outbreak of military conflict. At talks in Germany, the Kaiser, who had been strongly influenced by Charles Pearson's *National Life and Character*, 'ranted on about the demographic strength of Asia': it was he who coined the phrase 'yellow peril' after

[16] Morinosuke Kajima, *The Diplomacy of Japan, 1894–1922, Vol. III, First World War, Paris Peace Conference, Washington Conference* (Tokyo, Kajima Institute of International Peace, 1980) p.396.

[17] *Ibid.* p.396.

[18] Godfrey Hodgson, *Woodrow Wilson's Right Hand, The Life of Colonel Edward M. House* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006) p.112.

[19] *Ibid.* pp.49–51.

reading Pearson's book. He spoke of the necessity of Anglo-Saxons standing together and the impossibility of forming alliances with Latins (the French) or Slavs (the Russians).[20]

But when the First World War started in August 1914 it was not between the East and West, as so many had predicted, but a conflagration that threw Europeans against other Europeans. With the onset of hostilities, House engaged, with the President's approval, in an extensive round of shuttle diplomacy, crossing dangerous submarine-infested seas, in an attempt to bring about a negotiated peace. He became close to key British advisers, especially their chief intelligence agent, Sir William Wiseman, and Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, and was ably assisted by his son-in-law, Gordon Auchincloss, whose law partner was David Hunter Miller, an author of an early American draft of a constitution of the League of Nations.

House prided himself on his diplomatic skill, which was nowhere more evident than in his negotiations with the Japanese and the British over the proposed racial equality clause. He intimated to the Japanese that Wilson supported the amended proposal. The British delegates, the Conservative politicians Lord Robert Cecil and Arthur Balfour of the Foreign Office, also gave them some encouragement. But this was not to last. The white Dominions, which had been accorded separate representation at Versailles while simultaneously comprising part of the British delegation, refused to entertain the proposal at all. Its most vociferous opponent was the 'obstreperous' Australian Prime Minister, W. M. Hughes.[21] House noted in his diary on 9 February:

> I had a good many callers today, including Viscount Chinda and Baron Makino, who came again upon the inevitable race question. I have placed them 'on the backs' of the British, for every solution which the Japanese and I have proposed, Hughes of the British delegation objects to.[22]

Before the Commission

The Japanese decided to take their proposal to the League of Nations' Commission, where discussions on the draft Covenant were nearing completion. Makino proposed to add the declaration regarding racial equality to Article 21 of the Covenant, which guaranteed religious freedom. In his speech in support, he observed that racial discrimination still existed in

[20] *Ibid.* pp.96–98; Richard Thompson, quoted in David Walker, *Anxious Nation Australia and the Rise of Asia 1850–1939* (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1999) p.3.
[21] Hodgson, *Woodrow Wilson's Right Hand*, p.207.
[22] Charles Seymour (ed.) *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, 4 vols. (London, Ernest Benn, 1928) vol. 4, p.324.

law and in fact and while he was aware of the difficult circumstances which stood in the way of acting on the principle embodied in the clause, they were not insurmountable if sufficient importance were attached to the matter. He argued that the basic principles of collective action embodied in the Covenant could only be effective if all people felt they were on an equal footing with other nations. He reiterated the ideas commonly expressed in Japan during the war:

> In this war, to attain the common cause, different races have fought together on the battlefield, in the trenches, on the high seas, and they have helped each other and brought succour to the disabled, and have saved the lives of their fellow men irrespective of racial differences, and a common bond of sympathy and gratitude has been established to an extent never before experienced. I think it only just that after this common suffering and deliverance the principle at least of equality among men should be admitted and be made the basis of the future intercourse.[23]

But Makino's appeal to shared wartime experience failed to carry the Commission. Instead, a decision was made to delete the whole of Article 21 along with the Japanese amendment.

Public opinion in Japan was inflamed by the failure to achieve the desired amendment to the Covenant and so remove the 'badge of shame' imposed on Asians and Africans by the white race.[24] Japanese commentators considered they were leading an idealistic crusade; the editor of *Asahi* compared the activity of Makino and Chinda with Britain's insistence in 1815 that the delegates at the Treaty of Vienna condemn the slave trade. Racial discrimination, the newspaper declared, occupied precisely the position in the contemporary world that slavery did one hundred years before. Being the leading coloured power, Japan had the responsibility to fight for the cause of two-thirds of the world's population and the country could not fight for a 'nobler cause'.[25]

In Paris, initial frustration notwithstanding, the Japanese delegation persisted with the cause, spending a considerable amount of time in a series of meetings with the Americans, the British and Dominion politicians and officials. They continued to meet with obfuscation and opposition from a variety of sources. While discussing Japan's draft proposal with Colonel House, British Foreign Secretary Balfour announced that while he sympathised with the Japanese, he could not accept the principle of racial equality. This old Enlightenment idea was now 'outmoded',

[23] Kajima, *The Diplomacy of Japan*, pp.399–400.
[24] P. G. Lauren, 'Human Rights in History: Diplomacy and Racial Equality at the Paris Peace Conference', in M. L. Krenn, *Race and US Foreign Policy from 1900 Through World War II* (New York, Garland Publishing, 1998) p.265.
[25] Cited by Lauren, 'Human Rights in History', p.266.

he said. While all men of a particular nation might be considered to be born free and equal, he was far from convinced that an African 'could be regarded as the equal of a European or an American'.[26]

Wilson's ambivalence

While Colonel House spent many hours talking with the Japanese and always appeared supportive, the United States position was much more complicated than Wilson's public pronouncements had suggested. The President was born and raised in the South and there is little doubt he remained a Southerner in his attitude to race relations, despite his term as President of Princeton University and Governorship of New Jersey. He was opposed to social relations between the black and white races and barred Afro-Americans from enrolling at Princeton while President.[27] He was a Democrat who was dependent on the southern and western states and their senators to guide his legislation through Congress. Wilson's administration introduced a greater degree of segregation in the federal government than had been seen since the Civil War. Even the accommodating Booker T. Washington was moved to remark, in August 1913, that he had never seen 'the coloured people so discouraged and bitter as they are at the present time'.[28] In 1915, the D. W. Griffith film, 'Birth of the Nation', celebrating the Ku Klux Klan, was given a special screening at the White House, where the President endorsed it as 'all so terribly true'.[29]

It was Wilson's political dependence on California, however, that was more directly relevant to events at Versailles. The west coast states had been of major importance in securing Wilson's presidential victories in 1912 and 1916, when his supporters had distributed electoral material emphasising his opposition to Asian immigration. In the 1918 mid-term Congressional elections Wilson's political enemies inflicted a crushing defeat and long-term anti-immigrationist, Henry Cabot Lodge, became Senate Majority Leader and Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee. So even as they dealt with international challenges in Paris, the leaders of the American delegation remained sensitive to the sensibilities of the voters at home. Colonel House sent a copy of Japan's racial equality

[26] S. Bonsal, *Unfinished Business* (London, Michael Joseph, 1944) p.38.
[27] Arthur Stanley Link, *Woodrow Wilson: The Road to the White House* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1947) p.502.
[28] Arthur Stanley Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910–1917* (New York, Harper, 1954) p.249.
[29] Ibid. p. 65; David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. DuBois: Biography of a Race 1868–1919*, vol. 1 (New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1993) p.506.

clause to Senator Elihu Root, formerly Theodore Roosevelt's Secretary of State, asking for his comment. Root, a supporter of the Immigration Restriction League, replied with an emphatic: 'Don't let it in, it will breed trouble'. It would be difficult enough for Wilson to gain support for the League of Nations, but with the racial equality clause attached, he would 'get nowhere in the Senate'. On the Pacific coast, they would certainly think there lurked behind it 'a plan for unlimited yellow immigration'.[30] American ambivalence about the League of Nations also flowed from their attachment to the Monroe Doctrine – the principle of American sovereignty in the Americas – and hostility to European interference in American affairs.

When news of the Japanese proposal reached California, opposition was indeed immediate and vociferous. J. D. Phelan, now a United States Senator, launched a powerful propaganda campaign and besieged the delegation in Paris with angry telegrams. Any declaration on the subject of race equality, 'or just treatment', he warned, could be construed as giving jurisdiction to an international body over immigration, naturalisation, the franchise, land ownership and marriage. Western senators would oppose any measure by which 'Oriental people' would gain equality with the white race in the United States. It was, he declared, in a now familiar vein, 'a vital question of self-preservation'.[31] Thomas F. Millard, in a report from Paris, explained that the Japanese stand in favour of racial equality was simply a pretext, useful to the 'Pan-Asian propaganda which for a number of years Japan has been carrying on in all Asiatic countries' whose current expression was 'race equality'.[32]

Democrats confront aristocrats

But if the white men on the American west coast sought to curtail Wilson's freedom of movement, their counterparts in the British Dominions – Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa – exercised an equally great influence on the British delegation. From the moment he became aware of the Japanese proposal, in February 1919, until its final defeat in April, Australia's W. M. Hughes refused to consider any compromise. He was implacable and vociferous in his opposition. An American official, Colonel Stephen Bonsal, recorded in his diary on 16 March 1919 how Hughes:

[30] Chitoshi Yanaga, *Japan Since Perry* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1949) p.21.
[31] Cited by Shimazu, *Japan, Race and Equality*, p.138.
[32] Thomas F. Millard, 'Japan, "race equality" and the League of Nations', 6 April 1919, Immigration Restriction League papers, Ms Am 2245 (1069), Houghton Library.

morning, noon and night bellows at poor Lloyd George that if race equality is recognized in the preamble or any of the articles of the Covenant, he and his people will leave the Conference bag and baggage.[33]

When pressed by House to accept a compromise, Hughes scribbled a message in reply saying that he would sooner 'walk into the Seine – or the Folies Bergeres with my clothes off'.[34] His graphic threat was inspired by recent experience. Hughes had visited that famous Parisian landmark with some Australian colleagues and friends on his very first night in Paris, keen, like most of those who travelled to Paris that spring, to see the tourist sights.

Other Australians in the delegation shared Hughes' anxiety about the Japanese. John Latham, writing to his wife, Ella, told her of the attempt to get 'something' into the Covenant about racial equality. He observed that Hughes was fully aware of the fact that 'no government could live for a day if it tampered with a White Australia'.[35]

As with the United States delegation, the Australians in Paris were inundated with resolutions from home. The Deputy Prime Minister, W. A. Watt, sent a telegram to Hughes on 4 April, following a Cabinet meeting in Melbourne, reaffirming the view of the Government that 'neither people nor Parliament of Australia could agree to principles of racial equality'.[36] Concern to maintain White Australia had also motivated Hughes' attempt to annex the German colony of New Guinea in defiance of Wilson's protestations against perpetuating the spirit of Old World imperialism. Watt urged him to persist, arguing that any 'mandate' should 'specify publicly and definitely' that Australia must control immigration into New Guinea. Surely, Watt urged:

> America must sympathize with a people isolated and adjacent to unnumbered coloured millions, but resolutely facing its duty to keep this fertile continent and its intimately associated island for selected white races.

Hughes cabled back, expressing his doubts as to the outcome, because there was no guarantee of upholding 'our policy of excluding Asiatics'.[37] In the event, however, the creation of the Class C Mandate was designed

[33] S. Bonsal, *Suitors and Supplicants: The Little Nations at Versailles* (New York, Kennikat Press, 1946) p.229.
[34] Margaret McMillan, *Peacemakers: Six Months That Changed the World* (London, John Murray, 2001) p.328.
[35] Papers of Sir John Latham, MSS. 1009, Series 21, folder 22, National Library of Australia.
[36] Watt to Hughes, 4 April 1919, Series CD 290/3, Box 1, no.16, National Archives of Australia.
[37] Watt to Hughes, 1 February 1919, Hughes to Watt, 13 February 1919, C. P. 290/3, *Ibid.*

precisely to meet the concerns of Hughes in the Pacific and Jan Smuts in South West Africa.

Hughes's opposition to the Japanese proposal for a racial equality clause was driven by his certainty that their real objective was to enable their nationals to migrate to any land of their choosing. He feared that the prevailing spirit of internationalism in Paris – the exotic atmosphere of 'the polyglot Conference' as he remembered it in his memoir – might persuade the majority to support a cosmopolitan approach to world affairs. At such a world gathering, he wrote, the representatives of Australia seemed to be 'almost isolated, a tiny patch of white in a great sea of colour'. But despite the unsympathetic attitude of the majority at the Conference, in which were represented 'nearly 1,000 millions of people – 800 million of which were coloured' – the policy of White Australia triumphed.[38]

Born in London, but of Welsh descent, Hughes decided as a young man to try 'the possibilities of adventure' offered by a steamship voyage to the Australian colonies in 1884.[39] Only twenty-two years old when he disembarked in Brisbane, his work experience in Britain had been confined to a short stint as a teacher. Hughes was formed by the advanced democracy of the New World, working as a bush labourer before being elected to office in New South Wales by manhood suffrage, and to the federal parliament by universal suffrage. While his irreverent, larrikin style was seen as being quintessentially Australian, he would have also felt at home in Auckland, Vancouver, San Francisco or Johannesburg. Hughes rapidly became a champion of the white man and, in the manner of the most contemporary policy-makers, declared that his hostility to Asian migration was not motivated by racial superiority, but by Asiatic difference. When one of his most able officials, Major E. L. Piesse, suggested, in a memo written in preparation for the Peace Conference, that when considering the 'greater part of the Japanese nation', there was little reason for applying discrimination which was not thought necessary in regard to the 'less advanced European nations', Hughes crossed the comments out and scrawled 'Rot' in the margin.[40]

The Australian Prime Minister's rude manner, which served him well in trade union affairs and Australian labour politics, evoked both surprise and antagonism in the polite ambience of the Peace Conference. Frederick Eggleston, a young intellectual attached to the Australian

[38] W. M. Hughes, *The Splendid Adventure: a Review of Empire Relations Within and Without the Commonwealth of Britannic Nations* (London, Ernest Benn, 1929) pp.107–8.
[39] L. F. Fitzhardinge, *William Morris Hughes: A Political Biography: That Fiery Particle, 1862–1914* vol.1 (Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1964) p.12.
[40] J. R. Poynter, 'The Yo-yo Variations', *Historical Studies*, vol.14, no.54, April 1970, p.240; E. L. Piesse Papers, MSS. 882/2/42, 118, NLA.

delegation, described Hughes as 'a typical battler' with neither reserve nor reticence. He knew little of European history nor of international diplomacy.[41] The elegant British newspaper correspondent Lord Riddell had tea with Hughes and was bemused when he put his unlit cigarette behind his ear, 'creating a curious contrast to his regal surroundings'.[42] His forthright manner – and class origins – antagonised many people. The British Foreign Secretary, the aristocratic Arthur Balfour, was heard to murmur to a companion 'Que je le déteste' as Hughes rose to speak.[43]

Two American lawyers, David Miller and Gordon Auchincloss (House's secretary and son-in-law), were, on the other hand, interested in learning more about industrial regulation in Australia and the role played by the High Court in striking down the Excise Tariff Act in 1908. 'This was a case that David Miller had used in connection with the argument of the Cotton Futures case that we had several years ago in New York', wrote Auchincloss in his diary. Hughes told him that he had been an Attorney for the government concerned with this case. 'This was quite interesting', wrote Auchincloss, 'I had no idea that Hughes had been in the case'.[44]

For Hughes, the Australian democrat, the niceties and courtesies of aristocratic diplomacy smacked of insincerity and hypocrisy. He wrote of Baron Makino entering his office, 'literally wreathed in smiles, and beslobbering me with genuflexions and obsequious deference'.[45] The Australian official, Eggleston, noted that Hughes 'hated these interviews' with Makino and Chinda, whom he referred to as 'two little fat Japanese noblemen in frock coats and silk hats, neither much more than five feet high'.[46] The aristocratic Japanese delegation found these encounters equally unpleasant. In their report to the Foreign Office in Tokyo, they explained that the fact that they had 'such a person' as Hughes as their adversary had been a great inconvenience. His character was 'completely that of a labour leader' and he lacked the temperament to look at situations as a statesman.[47] Ian Nish, historian of Japanese diplomacy, observed that the leaders of the delegation regarded Hughes as 'a peasant'. That he was a leading politician was 'scarcely comprehensible' to

[41] F. W. Eggleston Papers, MSS. 423/6/23, 423/6/70, 423/6/84, NLA.
[42] Lord Riddell, *Lord Riddell's Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After, 1918–23* (London, Victor Gollancz, 1933) p.17.
[43] L. F. Fitzhardinge, *William Morris Hughes: A Political Biography: The Little Digger, 1914–1952* vol.2 (Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1979) p.414.
[44] Gordon Auchincloss, Diary, 2 May 1919, Auchincloss Papers, Series 1, box 3, Yale University Archives.
[45] W. M. Hughes, *Policies and Potentates* (Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1950) p.245.
[46] Eggleston Papers, 423/6/23, p.4, NLA.
[47] Fitzhardinge, *William Morris Hughes: The Little Digger*, p.414.

them and it came 'as a staggering revelation' that Britain had not been able to discipline its Dominions or lay down a common policy for them.[48] But, as David Miller observed, 'Australia had more influence with London than did Tokyo'.[49]

Negotiations continued

Having been initially rebuffed in February, the Japanese delegation returned to their task in late March fortified by fresh instructions from Tokyo and news of growing public anger over the question of racial discrimination. Over a four-week period, Makino and Chinda had more meetings with the Americans, the British and the Dominion leaders, including Smuts from South Africa, Sir Robert Borden from Canada and William F. Massey from New Zealand. In an attempt to win wider support, the Japanese drafted a new proposal which read:

> Equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Powers agree to endorse the principle of equal and just treatment to be accorded to all alien nationals of State members of the League.[50]

On 23 March, Makino and Chinda called on the leading British delegate, Sir Robert Cecil, seeking his support. Cecil explained that while he personally favoured the proposal he could not make a definite reply because the question was 'after all an Australian one'.[51] At a meeting the following day, Cecil indicated that Hughes and the other Dominion leaders were maintaining an attitude of absolute opposition and that direct negotiations with them were necessary.

A meeting was arranged on 25 March at Borden's quarters. The Japanese explained that they were under great pressure from the public at home but sought to allay fears about immigration to the Dominions. The Dominion leaders expressed their concern about the difficulties that would be created for them if the provision were applied to the Chinese and the Indians and that they could not agree to it unless the word 'equal' was deleted. The Japanese refused to budge. Borden worked out a compromise proposal which would recognise 'the principle of equality between nations and just treatment of their nationals'. Hughes alone opposed it. Massey was willing to go along with the compromise, but only if Hughes concurred. Hughes declared that as the representative of Australian public opinion, he had no choice but to oppose it absolutely. What mattered was not the wording of the proposal, but the 'underlying idea

[48] Nish, *Alliance in Decline*, p.271. [49] Hodgson, *Woodrow Wilson's Right Hand*, p.210.
[50] Kajima, *The Diplomacy of Japan*, pp.403–4. [51] *Ibid.* p.404.

itself which ninety-five out of a hundred Australians rejected'. Pressed by his colleagues to find a compromise, Hughes walked out of the meeting.[52]

Negotiations were resumed with Smuts, the former Boer general promoted to field marshal in the British Army, playing a key role as mediator. A favourite with both the United States and British delegations, and much sought after as a dinner guest in Paris, Smuts brought to the negotiations his newly acquired prestige as a war hero and author of the original British draft of a proposal for a League of Nations. He had fought alongside Botha in the conquest of South West Africa and then led the allied forces against the Germans in East Africa in a campaign of dash and daring. When he arrived in London in March 1917, he was showered with honours and invitations from the most fashionable hostesses in the capital. Combining the characteristics of the intellectual and man of action, he was called the 'most romantic figure' in Britain, charming men and women in equal measure.[53]

Smuts became a key figure in the war effort and post-war planning – a member of the War Cabinet, a diplomatic emissary and the organiser of the nascent Air Force. He became friends with many of the leading liberal intellectuals in Britain, including economists J. A. Hobson and J. M. Keynes, journalist and lobbyist E. D. Morel and imperial scholar Gilbert Murray, all of whom were engaged in intense debate about the need for a new world order.[54] When asked by the government to prepare a paper on Britain's post-war options, Smuts produced a blueprint for a League of Nations and a system of 'mandates' to be applied to the territories appropriated from the German and Turkish Empires. It was published as a pamphlet, *The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion*, in 1918 and became a bestseller. In London, for the joint United States/British meeting prior to the Paris conference, in December 1918, the Americans were impressed with Smuts' draft document. 'It is a remarkable one', wrote Auchincloss, '. . . & adopts many principles we have been contending for'.[55]

The Wilson entourage was quite smitten by the handsome, manly, South African statesman. They thought he should be the next British Ambassador to the United States, because he 'thinks along the same lines as the President does and it would be a very popular appointment'.[56]

[52] Henry Borden (ed.) *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs* (London, Macmillan, 1938) pp.927–8.
[53] W. K. Hancock, *Smuts, Vol.1, The Sanguine Years 1870–1919* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1962) p.437.
[54] *Ibid.* p.462; see also H. R. Winkler, *The League of Nations Movement in Great Britain 1914–1919* (New Jersey, Scarecrow Reprint, 1967).
[55] Auchincloss Papers, 5801, series 1, box 2, Yale University Archives.
[56] *Ibid.* Diary, 24 January 1919.

In the negotiations between the Japanese, the British and the Americans, Smuts played the role of go-between, explaining that the British couldn't support the proposal because Hughes of Australia had threatened to make a public attack on the whole League of Nations should a clause be inserted in the preamble recognising racial equality.[57] Colonel House warned Makino that if Hughes spoke out against the Japanese proposal, President Wilson would be forced to side with him, because of his concern for public opinion on the west coast of the United States.[58] Makino replied that Japan could not tolerate a situation in which the strong opposition of Hughes alone defeated their proposal.[59] Further discussions between Makino, House, Border and Smuts failed to resolve the matter, so the Japanese decided to put their proposal to the final meeting of the Commission.

Top dogs triumph

Makino presented an eloquent and moving speech in his last bid to have a racial equality clause included in the preamble of the Covenant of the League of Nations. He explained that the subject of racial equality was a matter of great moment and concern for a considerable part of mankind. The idealism which shaped the League had 'quickened the common feelings' of people all over the world and had given birth to hopes and aspirations and strengthened the sense of unmet, but legitimate claims. In close connection with the grievances of oppressed nationalities, there existed the 'wrongs of racial discrimination', which were the subject of 'deep resentment on the part of a large portion of the human race':

> The feeling of being slighted has long been a standing grievance with certain peoples. And the announcement of the principle of justice for peoples and nationalities as the basis of future international relationships has so heightened their legitimate aspirations, that they consider it their right that this wrong should be redressed.

Makino observed that if the reasonable and just claim embodied in the Japanese proposal were to be denied, it would, in the eyes of many people in the world, cast a lasting reflection on their status. Such a contingency had to be borne in mind, 'for pride is one of the most forceful and sometimes uncontrollable causes of human action'.[60]

David Miller thought the Japanese presentation very admirably done and secured the sympathy of almost everyone present.[61] Writing to Lloyd

[57] *Ibid.* Diary, 29 March 1919. [58] Kajima, *The Diplomacy of Japan*, p.407.
[59] *Ibid.* pp.411–12. [60] *Ibid.* p.412.
[61] D. H. Miller, *The Drafting of the Convention*, 2 vols. (New York, Putman, 1928), vol.1 p.461.

George a few days later, Cecil observed that the Japanese had made speeches of great moderation and he, too, thought that practically every member of the Commission supported them.[62] In the ensuing debate they were backed by some of the most prominent personalities at the Conference – Orlando of Italy, Bourgeois of France, Venizolos of Greece and even Wellington Koo of China, who was in conflict with Japan over the future of the German concession in Shantung. Cecil, nevertheless, refused to accept the amendment acting, as he said, under instructions from his government. House's secretary, Auchincloss, reported on the vote in a telegram on 13 April to the US Under-Secretary of State, Frank Polk:

> League of Nations draft of Covenant completed this morning at one o'clock... The Japanese offered amendment to preamble recognising equality of nations and just treatment of their nationals. Their proposals which were ably presented by Baron Makino and Viscount Chinda, were discussed without any bitterness whatever. They received support from more than the majority of the members of the Commission. Lord Robert Cecil on behalf of Great Britain flatly opposed them, and the President made a very conciliatory speech, urging that the matter not be pressed on account of the bitter discussion which might arise at the plenary session... Inasmuch as the inclusion of a clause in the draft covenant required the unanimous consent of the members of the Commission, the Japanese proposal was rejected. Lord Robert Cecil's flat objection made it unnecessary for us to vote on the question.[63]

Observing this scene, Miller thought that Cecil behaved as though he were performing a difficult and disagreeable task. After making his statement, he sat with his eyes fixed on the table and took no further part in the debate.[64]

Cecil had been Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs under Grey and now under Balfour. Described as 'tall and thin, with the manner of a highly intellectual monk (he was a committed Anglican layman)',[65] Cecil was the son of the Conservative Prime Minister, the Marquis of Salisbury, who had dressed down Alfred Deakin in 1887, at the first colonial conference in London, for his impertinence in speaking out of turn about the role of the French in the Pacific. Cecil's discomfort in Paris was an indication of how the imperial balance of power had shifted over twenty years in favour of the white Dominions.

In 1897, at the conference on the occasion of the Queen's Jubilee, which brought together the leaders of the self-governing colonies,

[62] Cecil to Lloyd George, 15 April 1919, Lloyd George Papers, House of Lords, F6/6.
[63] Auchincloss Papers, diary, telegram, No. 80, 13 April 1919.
[64] Miller, *The Drafting of the Convention*, 1, p.461.
[65] Hodgson, *Woodrow Wilson's Right Hand*, p.200.

Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain had been able to impose his will in relation to immigration restriction by persuading the colonial premiers to adopt an educational test, to preserve at least the appearance of the equality of imperial subjects. In Paris in 1919, the Dominion leaders, and more particularly Hughes, had been able to impose their will on the British government. Rather than take a stand on the question of racial equality, Cecil told the Japanese it was an Australian matter and not an issue of fundamental importance for the Empire as a whole. The tables had been turned in favour of the white men of the English-speaking New World. Eggleston noted, with satisfaction, that at meetings of imperial leaders in Paris, the Dominions were 'top dogs'.[66]

Lifting the load of responsibility

The Americans, it seemed, were happy to let the British, and in particular Hughes, take responsibility for the defeat of the racial equality clause. Though a majority of the Commission supported the Japanese proposal, Wilson, as chairman, declared that a unanimous vote was required (although on an earlier occasion he had permitted a mere majority vote prevail). He observed that none of those present wished to deny the principles of the equality of nations or the just treatment of nationals. But the discussion had already lit 'burning flames of prejudice' which it would be very unwise to allow to flare in public view. He may have been responding to Colonel House's note handed to him as discussion proceeded, which read: 'The trouble is that if this Commission should pass it, it would surely raise the race issue throughout the world'.[67]

In his study of Anglo-American relations in Paris, Seth Tillman concluded that Wilson, fearing an outburst of hostile opinion in the western states, submitted to the threats of Hughes, rather than stand up for his principles.[68] But what were his principles? Clearly his commitment to Anglo-Saxon solidarity and white supremacy were all important, but so were his national political interests. His personal physician, Dr Grayson, observed in his diary that concealed in the apparently simple Japanese request was the nucleus of serious trouble in the United States, in as much as it would allow Asians to demand the repeal of discriminatory laws in California and other western states.[69] The Californian politicians

[66] Eggleston Papers, 423/6/68, p.11, NLA.
[67] Miller, *The Drafting of the Convention*, pp. 461, 3.
[68] S. Tillman, *Anglo-American Relations at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1961) p.304.
[69] Arthur Stanley Link (ed.) *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol.57 (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981) p. 239.

and newspapers had made their opposition to the Japanese proposals absolutely clear.

In his memoir, *Policies and Potentates*, published in 1950, Hughes claimed that on the night before the vote was taken, he met American reporters from the western states and urged them to protest against 'this evil, this wicked clause', which would bring disaster to the people of the Pacific Slope and gravely imperil those in adjoining states.[70] In a subsequent meeting with the Japanese press in Paris, Hughes pointed to the role of the United States in defeating racial equality. Australia had no vote at the Commission and the Japanese shouldn't take at face value Wilson's avowed support for their position. Alarmed at the prospect of growing anti-American feeling in Japan, House responded to Hughes' press conference by immediately sending a cable to the United States Ambassador in Japan, asking him to make an appropriate reply in the Japanese press.[71]

In her recent study *Peacemakers*, Margaret Macmillan has questioned the sincerity of American support for the Japanese position. While Makino and Chinda repeatedly appealed to House, she suggests that they were looking in the wrong quarter. Wilson was not prepared to fight for a policy that he did not support and which was unpopular in the United States. Privately, he was delighted that the British were forced by Hughes to oppose the racial equality clause. 'It has', wrote Wilson's right hand man, 'taken considerable finesse to lift the load from our shoulders and place it upon the British, but happily it has been done'.[72] Dr Grayson made a similar note in his diary:

> However, it was not necessary for the US openly to oppose the suggested amendment because Australia and New Zealand, through the British representatives, had taken the position of positive opposition.[73]

Smuts, too, benefitted from Hughes' truculence, because it enabled him to play the suave international statesman, all the while certain that the proposal for racial equality – a principle he had opposed throughout his political career – would be defeated. He, too, was able to deftly place the blame on Hughes and the White Australia policy. But when the Dominion leaders met again at the Imperial Conference in London in 1921, it was Smuts alone who stood out against the policy of granting equal rights to Indian immigrant communities across the Empire.[74]

[70] Hughes, *Policies and Potentates*, p.247.
[71] Auchincloss Papers, series 1, box 3, folder 3.
[72] McMillan, *Peacemakers*, pp.328–9.
[73] Link, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 57, p.239.
[74] W. K. Hancock, *Smuts, vol.2, The Field of Force* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1962–68) p.149.

National shame

Events in Paris were followed closely in Japan. The defeat of the racial equality clause was a profound disappointment, the import of which was thought to be not 'properly understood in the West'.[75] Liberal, internationally minded Japanese were dismayed. They had played the game and had shown themselves ready to participate in the international community on its terms. The rebuff was an important factor in turning the country towards more aggressive nationalist policies at home.[76] To Tokuromi in the *Kokumin*, failure in Paris was a 'disgrace to the country' and disproved Japan's confidence that it had been accepted as a great power. Even more humiliating, Japan had been betrayed by its own wartime allies.[77] The Anglo-American delegates had defied humanity in the 'most outrageous manner to go down in history' and thus invited the ill feeling of one billion coloured people all over the world.[78] The editor of the *Yorozu* remarked that the nation's attention was centred on the failure of the racial equality proposal, which made a mockery of President Wilson's 'contentions for humanity'.[79] *Nichi Nichi* believed that the spirit of the League Covenant was dead due to 'Anglo-Saxon dominance in defiance of racial equality'. The defeat was due to the prejudices of America, England, Canada and Australia, and the paper could not 'suppress its anger' at the Anglo-Saxons, who thought they could control the wealth of the world and subjugate all other races.[80]

Perhaps the most significant comments were made in a long editorial in *Japan Times*. The failure of Japan to achieve the acceptance of racial equality had caused the 'sorest disappointment'. When the motion had been detached from any reference to immigration, the government had been attacked by the nationalists, but moderate thinkers were convinced that there would be no difficulty in having accepted 'a purely academic principle'. The paper observed:

> A most careful and comprehensive survey of the feelings of typical and leading thinkers shows that they learnt of the fact with the profoundest regret. All agree in feeling that rejection of a demand formally made by a nation is tantamount to a snub and humiliation.

But some observers, the editor suggested, felt that the Japanese failure had served the purpose of exposing and placing on record the real truth concerning the attitude of whites towards non-whites. The vote in

[75] P. J. Treat, *Japan and the United States 1853–1921* (second edition, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1928) p.242.
[76] McMillan, *Peacemakers*, p.329.
[77] Cited in *Japan Times*, 16 April 1919.
[78] *Ibid.* 20 April 1919.
[79] *Ibid.*
[80] *Ibid.* 26 April 1919.

the Commission would probably result in erecting a perpetual barrier between two groups of people, 'irreconcilable in their respective aspirations'. Japan's admission into the group of the Five Great Powers had been merely a matter of convenience for the allies. The present situation was:

> exactly that of a Negro preacher asked to speak in a church because of his oratorical power. To speak from the pulpit is by no means to be identified with an admission of equality from a racial standpoint on the part of the white congregation. It is well for Japan to remember this point.[81]

Japanese commentators continued to discuss the racial equality question after the Peace Conference concluded. In an essay 'My Impressions of the Paris Peace Conference', Konoe Fumimaro argued that he was fully justified in believing that power alone determined the course of international affairs. The racial equality proposal had been defeated because Japan, a lesser power, had proposed it. As a result the hope to reform the world upon principles of justice and equality had been dashed.[82] In 1921, Tokutomi Soho published a book on *Japanese American Relations* (translated in 1922), which sold 300,000 copies and went through twelve editions in a few months. It stressed the disappointment and disillusionment felt by Japan about American racial hostility, that seemed now to be universal in that country. Japan had yet to win the equal treatment that was accorded the human race in general.[83]

But the most authoritative commentary was provided by the eighty-three-year-old former Prime Minister, Marquis Okuma, in an article in *Asian Review*, entitled 'Illusions of the White Race'. Okuma argued that if the Japanese were to see racial equality prevail in the world, the nation must devote itself to the cause with unswerving determination. 'The whites', he observed, 'were obsessed with the mistaken theory that they are superior to all other races'. Such a belief was based neither on science nor evidence of any kind. It was 'mere superstition, backed by historical prejudices', but it was the most serious obstacle in the way of the realisation of racial equality. Some whites, Okuma declared, regarded the development of Japan as an unjustifiable encroachment upon their own rights and aimed to organise a 'league of white nations to perpetuate white supremacy in the world'. Most Asian nations were

[81] *Ibid.* 19 April 1919. [82] Yoshitake Oka, *Konoe Fumimaro*, pp.14–15.
[83] I. Tokutomi [Soho], *Japanese-American Relations*, S. Yanagiwara (trans.) (New York, Macmillan, 1922) pp.138, 154.

> fully peers of European nations, yet they are discriminated against because of the colour of their skin. The root of it lies in the perverted feeling of racial superiority entertained by the whites. If things are allowed to proceed in the present way, there is every likelihood that the peace of the world will be endangered.[84]

All well-wishers of mankind, he urged, should do everything possible to remove the gross injustice of racial inequality without delay.

Global disillusion

The struggle for the racial equality clause was closely watched in other parts of the non-European world. The Chinese delegate, Wellington Koo, told the American foreign correspondent, Patrick Gallagher, that he had received letters and telegrams of support from Chinese in all parts of the world including the major American cities, Java, South Africa and Australia.[85] Koo and his fellow Chinese delegate, C. T. Wang, were American-educated cosmopolitans, who published a pamphlet in Paris to put the Chinese case for 'a new order of things which would ensure universal peace'.[86] When the conference decided in late April, in an attempt to assuage Japanese humiliation, to award the former German concession in Shantung to Japan, Chinese disillusionment with the peace conference was complete. Their sense of betrayal fuelled the 4 May protests, that galvanised a larger political and social movement, marking a defining moment in the history of the modern Chinese nation, leading to the downfall of the Chinese liberal republic and its replacement by a Leninist party state.[87]

The Bantu doctor and African National Congress activist S. M. Molema also commented on the outcome of Versailles in his book on the deteriorating position of blacks in South Africa, published in 1920. He pointed to the seething discontent in many parts of the world and his belief that Western liberalism and morality were hollow promises and egregious tricks. Western liberalism was:

> an astounding platitude. Its hollowness must have surprised the outside thinking world recently when after four years of hard struggle side by side, after four years of suffering, mutual exchanges of sympathy and help, mutual protestation

[84] Cited in K. K. Kawakami (ed.) *What Japan Thinks* (New York, Macmillan, 1921) pp. 6–7, 161, 170.
[85] P. Gallagher, *America's Aims and Asia's Aspirations* (New York, The Century Co., 1920) p.322.
[86] Manela, 'Imagining Woodrow Wilson' p.1348.
[87] John Fitzgerald, *Big White Lie: Chinese Australians in White Australia* (Sydney, University of New South Wales Press, 2007) p.230.

of friendship, formations and renewals of alliances, after all this and victory, the Western world went to the Peace Table at Versailles with professions of 'Morality', 'Liberalism', 'Justice', 'Making the World Free for Democracy' and so forth, and there at the Peace Table, the Western World made a blot which will go down into history as a fine example of Western Liberalism and Altruism and their idea of 'Brotherhood of Nations'. This was done by making a pointed distinction between the East and the West, and that in spite of all that Baron Makino – Japan's delegate – might say about this being a race question and one that may become acute if not seen to.[88]

W. E. B. DuBois also deplored the refusal to adopt the race equality amendment, but it simply confirmed his view of the arrogance of whiteness and underlined the need for a world congress in which black and white and yellow would sit and speak to curb the 'selfish nations of white civilization'.[89] DuBois elaborated this view in the essays in *Darkwater*, also published in 1920, which included the revised but still prescient 'Souls of White Folk', first published in 1910. The recent war, he declared, a white civil war in Europe, was nothing to compare with the fight for freedom which the 'black and brown and yellow men must make and will make unless their oppression and humiliation and insult at the hands of the White World ceases'.[90]

DuBois had arrived in Paris with accreditation as a newspaper correspondent to cover the peace talks and the formation of the League of Nations. He undertook this journey, he told readers of *Crisis*, because 'the destiny of mankind' was being decided in the French capital.[91] He relished the atmosphere of Paris, with its relaxed attitudes to race and where, he reported, seven Africans sat in the Chamber of Deputies. He looked to the creation of the League of Nations with great hope: it was 'absolutely necessary to the salvation of the Negro race'. He believed 'the organised Public Opinion of the World' would exert an overwhelming influence to counter the doctrine of racial inferiority and antagonism.[92]

DuBois' greatest achievement in Paris was to convene a second Pan-African Congress. He had attempted to win support for this event from Woodrow Wilson, but only got as far as the president's gate-keeper, House, who gave him a 'sympathetic but non-committal hearing', which was more, however, than other activists and nationalists received. The young Vietnamese, Ho Chi Minh, a kitchen hand at the Ritz, sent a

[88] S. M. Molema, *The Bantu* (Edinburgh, W. Green, 1920), p.352.
[89] W. E. B. DuBois, 'The League of Nations', *Crisis*, May 1919.
[90] W. E. B. DuBois, *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920) pp. 49–50, 60.
[91] *Crisis*, May 1919. [92] *Ibid.*

petition seeking Vietnamese independence from France, but he was 'too obscure' to even receive an answer.[93] DuBois' cause was greatly enhanced by the support of Blaise Diagne, a Deputy from Senegal, and grandly titled 'High Commissioner for the Republic with Special Authority for French West Africa', who sought and received permission for the meeting from Clemenceau, after a wait of two discouraging months.[94] He was assisted in organisation and publicity by the suffragist and widow of a well-known publisher, Madame Calman-Levy, and Ida Hunt, a well-connected and Oberlin-educated American friend, who would serve as assistant secretary to the Congress.[95]

The Pan-African Congress brought together fifty seven delegates from the United States, the Caribbean and Africa on 22 February 1919. With both Britain and the United States denying prospective participants passports, it had been difficult to gather together even that small number. According to the New York *Evening Globe*, there were 'negroes in trim uniforms of American Army officers', other American coloured men in 'frock coats or business suits' and polished French negroes who held public office, including the Senegalese who sat in the Chamber of Deputies.[96] The Congress called on the League of Nations to ensure that all Africans received education, adequate medical care and protection of the rights to traditional lands. There was a demand as well for the abolition of slavery and corporal punishment and the right to participate in government and administration, 'to the end that, in time, Africa be ruled by the consent of the Africans'.[97] The final clause of the manifesto, signed by DuBois and Diagne, declared:

> Whenever it is proven that African natives are not receiving just treatment at the hands of any State or that any State deliberately excludes its civilized citizens from its body politic and cultural, it shall be the duty of the League of Nations to bring the matter to the attention of the civilized world.[98]

But, as DuBois reiterated in *Darkwater* in 1920, at that moment in world history, the 'new religion' of whiteness showed no signs of losing its sway. Indeed, in the United States, what became known as the 'Red Summer' of 1919 saw an upsurge of racial hostility – as a tidal wave of arson, murder, riot and rape swept across the country. The murderers and rioters really feared that 'the Negro is breaking his shell', declared *Whip*, a

[93] McMillan, *Peacemakers*, p.67.
[94] W. E. B. DuBois, *The World and Africa* (New York, International Publishers, [1946] 1978) p.8.
[95] Lewis, *W. E. B. DuBois*, pp.568–9. [96] DuBois, *The World and Africa*, p.9.
[97] *Ibid.* pp.11–12. [98] *Crisis*, April 1919.

militant Chicago paper, and 'beginning to bask in the sunlight of real manhood'.[99]

In Australia, Prime Minister Hughes, one of the leading proselytisers of whiteness, was basking in his triumph. Returning home as a self-proclaimed national saviour, he celebrated his political victory in Paris. At Fremantle, his first landfall, the local branch of the Returned Servicemen's League congratulated him on the 'brilliant fight' he had put up for Australia, particularly in regard to the White Australia policy.[100] 'May you long be successful', declared the returned soldiers, 'in keeping Australia white'. In his address to the federal parliament, Hughes was pleased to announce:

> White Australia is yours. You may do with it what you please; but, at any rate, the soldiers have achieved the victory, and my colleagues and I have brought that great principle back to you from the Conference. Here it is, at least as safe as it was on the day when it was first adopted by this Parliament.[101]

In similar vein, in the United States Congress, Senator Phelan declared that he was 'very glad' that the President, 'standing with representatives of Australia and New Zealand', had stemmed the 'insidious movements of the Japanese' to establish the principle of race equality, 'under which they would have flooded this land'.[102]

The humiliating diplomatic defeat was not easily forgotten in Japan. Naoko Shimazu has concluded that it had deeper psychological effects than has generally been understood. It indicated that the Western powers were unwilling to acknowledge the country as an equal and left an indelible mark on its foreign policy.[103] In 1946, following the Second World War, the Emperor set down his thoughts on 'The Background Causes to the Greater East Asia War'. As a preamble to the document he declared:

> If we ask the reason for this war, it lies in the contents of the peace treaty signed at the end of the First World War. The racial equality proposal demanded by Japan was not accepted by the powers. The discriminatory sentiment between the white and yellow remains as always. And the rejections of immigrants in California. These were enough to anger the Japanese people.[104]

[99] Lewis, *W. E. B. DuBois*, p.579.
[100] Hughes Papers, MSS. 1538, Series 16/3, Folder 18, NLA.
[101] Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, vol.LXXXIX (1919) p.12175.
[102] Phelan speech in the Senate, 20 February 1920, p.181, cited by Rubin F. Weston, *Racism in US Imperialism: the Influence of Racial Assumptions on American Foreign Policy, 1893–1946* (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1972) p.33.
[103] Shimazu, *Japan, Race and Equality*, p.181. [104] *Ibid.*

Although the racial equality proposal began its life as a means to achieve equal treatment of Japanese nationals overseas, it came to represent a human rights initiative of global significance. Memory of its defeat weighed heavily on many of those who gathered at San Francisco, in 1945, to draft a Charter for the planned United Nations, with its strong emphasis of human rights for all, regardless of race, nationality, ethnicity, religion or sex.