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*Politely Adversarial: Perceptions of Japan in  
New Zealand Print Media, 1895-1942.*

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of

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## **Abstract**

This thesis focuses on how New Zealanders viewed Japan from the turn of the twentieth century to the outbreak of war in the Pacific Theatre in 1941. The research is based primarily on newspaper articles, editorials and letters to the editor. The goals of this research are to ascertain the self-perceptions of New Zealanders based upon how they viewed a significant foreign power in the Pacific, replete with the general vernacular used to describe the Japanese and the racial and political attitudes that such vernacular represented. Existing scholarship tends to focus on New Zealand's official diplomacy with Japan, and this thesis aims to add to this by providing a social history of New Zealand's racial attitudes narrated by civilian New Zealanders in their own voices.

The three focus questions of the thesis are: How far did New Zealanders' attitudes to Japan vary from region to region? How far did racial ideologies impact New Zealanders' views of Japan? And how closely were New Zealand's perceptions of Japan in line with those of New Zealand's First and Second World War allies, as expressed in print media? While New Zealanders' written perspectives on Japan may have also been influenced by genders of those who wrote them, a focused consideration of the influence of gender on such perspectives is beyond the scope of this thesis due to the often anonymous nature of contributions to newspaper letters to the editor.

The main body of the thesis consists of a prologue and five chapters which progress in chronological sequence. The first chapter covers the turn of the twentieth century. The second chapter focuses on New Zealand's reaction to the Russo-Japanese War and the Annexation of Korea to 1910. The third chapter focuses on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in effect to 1921. The fourth chapter covers the ending of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the cooling of relations to 1931. The fifth chapter covers New Zealand's reaction to deepening Japanese

militarism in China. The sixth and final chapter focuses on the attitudes of New Zealanders toward Japan at the outset of the Second World War.

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## Introduction

The inspiration for this thesis arose from a moment of identity crisis when I was working as a teacher of English as a Foreign Language in South Korea. On 9 October 2006, the North Korean regime conducted its first controlled detonation of a nuclear device, resulting in immediate and dramatic reactions in both Korean and English language media. The *New York Times* reported that North Korea was “the eighth country in history, and arguably the most unstable and most dangerous, to proclaim that it has joined the club of nuclear weapons states,”<sup>1</sup> while a columnist for the *Washington Post* argued that the test “marks the culmination of a year of futile international diplomacy aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons to the Korean peninsula.”<sup>2</sup> My friends and family were naturally alarmed and I received many a phone call from concerned loved ones urging me to leave the country for fear of an impending conflagration on the peninsula. Yet interestingly, my friends and colleagues in Korea were unfazed by the news. The usual refrain I would hear from my Korean colleagues was that the North would never destroy the South as all Koreans are essentially ‘one race’, and eventually the two countries would unite peacefully. I was surprised at how common the view was that the Korean people were ethnically homogenous and that such bonds of racial purity superseded national, ideological and economic considerations. Having lived in the shadow of war with the North for the past fifty years, my South Korean friends saw little point in becoming hysterical over a situation they could not directly control. This was not stoic bravery on their part, but rather a faith that racial ties would pull through and that their ‘brothers’ in the North would not do anything to harm their ‘own people’. This idea of a ‘racial nationality’ (which I interpreted as a sort of racial chauvinism) was held by young and old alike, and seemed to stem from a sort of ethnic

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<sup>1</sup> David E. Sanger, “North Koreans Say They Tested Nuclear Device.” *The New York Times*. October 9, 2006. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/09/world/asia/09korea.html>

<sup>2</sup> Jefferson Morely, “North Korea’s Nukes: What Next?” *The Washington Post*. October 10, 2006. Retrieved from [http://blog.washingtonpost.com/worldopinionroundup/2006/10/north\\_koreas\\_nukes\\_what\\_next\\_1.html](http://blog.washingtonpost.com/worldopinionroundup/2006/10/north_koreas_nukes_what_next_1.html)

folklore handed down through generations of war, deprivation and oppression at the hands of foreign powers such as Japan, China, and more recently the United States. The national narrative seemed to rest on an historical subtext of 'Korea vs. The World'. The Koreans I spent my daily life with sincerely believed that North Koreans were not truly their enemies, and that the two countries would eventually reunite in peace once meddling foreign powers (China, Japan and the USA) stepped out of the picture. Public opinion regarding the North contrasted so markedly with what I was hearing from official (predominantly Western) media that it gave me pause to consider the events and opinions that shaped the national character of my own nation.

Upon returning to New Zealand I found myself noticing more of the underlying national and ethnic prejudices in New Zealand politics and media that seemed to pass simply as 'common truths'. In particular was the idea that Asian economies and militaries were an anathema, and perhaps even a threat, to the 'Kiwi' way of life. The Chinese military's occupation of Tibet drew ire in socially liberal circles, with the Green Party protesting the then-incumbent Labour Party's signing of a free trade deal with China in 2008,<sup>3</sup> and even waving a Tibetan flag in the face of the visiting Chinese premier on parliament grounds in 2010.<sup>4</sup> The latter incident in particular divided public opinion in New Zealand as to which was more embarrassing out of the Green Party's 'stunt' or the incumbent Prime Minister John Key's 'brown nosing apology'.<sup>5</sup> The nature of the prime minister's apology is of course open to interpretation (courtesy and manners need not be construed as sycophantry) but such divisions in the media's perspective hinted at the underlying confusion and insecurity of the New Zealand public regarding its diplomatic relationship with the Chinese government. On the one hand, there was (and still is) suspicion of China's heavy handed use of its military to

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<sup>3</sup> "Green MPs to Protest China Deal." *NZ Herald*. April 7, 2008. Retrieved from [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/trade/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=96&objectid=10502519](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/trade/news/article.cfm?c_id=96&objectid=10502519)

<sup>4</sup> Michael Dickison, "Opinions Divided Over MP's Scuffle With Chinese Delegation". *NZ Herald*. June 22, 2010. Retrieved from [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=10653645](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10653645)

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

maintain social order (in essence, its perceived ruthlessness and brutality); and on the other, there was an acceptance of the economic necessity of maintaining good relations with the world's second largest economy.

New Zealand currently finds itself torn between the political and cultural ideals of democracy and Human Rights (replete with Euro-centrist prejudices and insecurities inherited from its British colonial past), and the demands of economic survival. I was fascinated by this dichotomy as it appeared that at the heart of such political protests and apologies rested the values that characterise New Zealand's national identity. I believe that the crux of a nation's character may be revealed in the prejudice, chauvinism and patronisation inherent in its publicly and privately expressed opinions. Therefore, it was to historical rather than contemporary issues that I turned in order to make sense of New Zealand's current insecurities regarding the seemingly relentless economic and military rise of Asia. To gain a better understanding of how history has shaped New Zealand's attitude to Asia I needed look no further than the high drama that unfolded in the Pacific in the first half of the twentieth century.

Arguably the most potent experience of international conflict for New Zealanders was the Pacific theatre of the Second World War. New Zealanders had previously contributed to wars of Empire on numerous occasions such as the Boer War and the First World War, but in such cases the threat of invasion to New Zealand itself was minimal. The Pacific theatre represented the first occasion on which New Zealanders could plausibly consider the prospect of their nation's destruction. The overall topic of this thesis is therefore the nature of public opinion in New Zealand regarding Japan in the first half of the twentieth century.

It would be reasonable to assume that New Zealanders' perceptions of Japan during wartime would largely be negative, but what of the decades prior to the war? What did the average New Zealander think of Japan, if they thought of Japan at all? And how did these

perceptions change over time as war became increasingly likely? I wanted to investigate the aspects of public opinion that changed, and those that stayed the same, from the turn of the twentieth century through to the outbreak of the Second World War. Moreover, the underlying course of investigation will be to determine how far New Zealand's perception of Japan can be said to reflect a 'national character' of New Zealand itself.

With such a goal in mind, the next step was to determine the evidence upon which the study could be based. Newspaper bulletins, editorials and letters to the editor immediately sprang to mind, as these, for the most part, constituted the 'mass media' of the pre-television (and even pre-radio) age. Printed political cartoons and pamphlets would also provide visual material to complement these written sources, providing sources 'from the bottom' of the social discourse, while transcripts of political debates and official political documents would provide perspectives 'from the top'.

This thesis is focused on three key questions:

First, was there any significant difference in perspective regarding Japan among different New Zealand newspapers? Potential lines of inquiry would include whether regionalism and political affiliations affected a paper's outlook, whether isolated, rural communities were more prone to prejudice and generalisation regarding Japan, and whether the populations of larger cities who had more contact with the Japanese had more nuanced opinions. As Giselle Byrnes states in her introduction to *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, the traditional tendency to 'nationalise' New Zealand's history does not take into account the 'plurality and difference' of the peoples that populated the islands in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, in the same publication, Tony Ballantyne suggests that national politics and the pursuit of a unified colony actually provided a forum

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<sup>6</sup> Giselle Byrnes (ed.), *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 7.

for the provinces to voice their rival identities.<sup>7</sup> So, an aspect of this thesis' research will involve exploring the extent to which these regional identities express themselves in how civilians viewed a foreign power such as Japan.

Second, how influential was racial prejudice as a factor in how Japan was viewed during this period? This would include an analysis of the levels of awareness the New Zealand public had regarding ethnic and national differences in Asia at this time, such as whether there was a view of the Japanese people as being separate and distinct from the Chinese. If nuanced perspectives of Asia and Asians existed in the New Zealand public's consciousness at this time, it would be of interest to determine whether Japan's militarism in Asia changed perceptions of other Asian peoples. Also, it would be worthwhile to consider if wars within Asia, among Asian peoples, affected New Zealand's diplomatic sympathies. Examples of this line of inquiry would be how Japan's invasion of Manchuria affected the way New Zealanders saw Japan as a military and diplomatic force in Asia. Another consideration will be the extent to which Maori interactions with Japanese differed greatly from those of Pakeha.

Third, what were the political and diplomatic undertones of New Zealand print media regarding Japan? The focus here shall be on the extent to which the New Zealand public's perceptions of Japan were based upon, or in concordance with, the perceptions held by New Zealand's closest allies (namely Britain, Australia and the USA). Other aspects of this analysis will be to explore whether the opinions expressed in New Zealand print media closely reflected the official policy of the New Zealand government. If not, the ways that they diverged must be considered as well as the possible reasons for such. The ultimate goal will be to ascertain whether there were any viewpoints that could be accurately labelled 'New Zealand' or 'Pacific' in nature.

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<sup>7</sup> Tony Ballantyne, "The State, Politics and Power", in Giselle Byrnes (ed.), *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 112.

The thesis shall be structured in chronological order based on key events in the development of Japan's military, economic and political goals. Its first chapter will focus on the relationship between New Zealand and Japan at the turn of the twentieth century. This will involve an analysis of trade links and cultural awareness between the two nations and the establishment of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Following this will be a chapter covering New Zealand's reaction to the Russo-Japanese War and the Annexation of Korea. The third chapter will then centre on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in effect to 1921, Japan's involvement in the First World War, Japanese warship visits to New Zealand, and Maori visits to Japan. The fourth chapter will regard the ending of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, the cooling of relations and the invasion of Manchuria. The fifth chapter will analyse New Zealand's reaction to deepening Japanese militarism in China and the attacks on Pearl Harbour and Singapore. A sixth and final chapter will subsequently investigate the attitudes of New Zealanders toward Japan during wartime.

Where this thesis differs from others is in its focus on New Zealand-Japanese relations, the time period of the first decade of the twentieth century, and its concentration on public attitudes expressed in print media. Theses that focus on New-Zealand Japanese relations tend to focus on modern interactions, particularly in the business<sup>8</sup> and education<sup>9</sup> sectors. Those with an historical bent concentrate on interactions during the Second World War,<sup>10</sup> whereas the timeline of this thesis concludes with the outbreak of the Pacific conflict. Additionally, theses that concentrate on the New Zealand print media tend to focus on issues

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<sup>8</sup> Yuko Oshika, *Intercultural Conflicts Between New Zealanders and Japanese Under Business Conditions*, Unpublished Masterate Thesis, Auckland: Massey University, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Douglas James Rapley, *Policy and Reality: The Teaching of Oral Communication by Japanese Teachers of English in Public Junior High Schools in Kurashiki City, Japan*, Unpublished Masterate Thesis, Palmerston North: Massey University, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Yasuhiro Ota, *Shooting and Friendship Over Japanese Prisoners of War: Differences Between Featherston, New Zealand and Cowra, Australia in Japanese Connections*, Unpublished Masterate Thesis, Auckland: Massey University, 2013.

related to domestic politics,<sup>11</sup> biculturalism<sup>12</sup> and gender inequality,<sup>13</sup> with little attention paid to historical foreign policy. However, some postgraduate research has been relevant to the material of this thesis, in particular; Carina Hickey's BA Honour's research essay, *My Old Frying Pan is Not Coming Back to Rip the Guts Out of Any New Zealander : New Zealand Responses to the Sino-Japanese War, July 1937-March 1938*,<sup>14</sup> which provided a valuable overview of growing sympathies toward China and away from Japan during the titular conflict. Also, Andrew Duke's Masterate Thesis, *A Country in Which I Have Long Had a Close Interest : New Zealand's Relations with Japan in the 1950s*<sup>15</sup> had similar goals in terms of garnering an appreciation of New Zealand's attitudes toward Japan. However, the timeframe of Duke's research was later than my own, and consequently his focus is more on the remaking of Japan and the re-establishment of economic and diplomatic ties in the Post-War World, whereas my research follows the deterioration of such ties through the lens of public opinion in the decades leading to the Second World War. Patrick Thomson's Masterate Thesis, *Kiwi 'Drivers' and 'Lookers': An Analysis and Examination of the Significant Contribution of New Zealand Fleet Air Arm Aircrew, of the British Fleet, to Allied Naval Operations 1944-1945*<sup>16</sup> also contains a chapter on New Zealand Responses to the Pacific War which proved relevant to the later parts of this thesis, although Thomson's work focuses primarily on the official political reaction to the Pearl Harbour and Singapore attacks rather than the public opinions of everyday New Zealanders.

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<sup>11</sup> David Venables, *Making Politics Go Well Down Under: Public Journalism in New Zealand Daily Newspapers*, Unpublished Masterate Thesis, Wellington: Massey University, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Lachlan Paterson, *Ngā reo o ngā niupepa = Māori Language Newspapers 1855-1863*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Dunedin: University of Otago, 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Catherine Robinson Strong, *Female Journalists in New Zealand Daily Newspapers : From Early Career to Gender Gap in Editorship*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Palmerston North: Massey University, 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Carina Hickey, *My Old Frying Pan is Not Coming Back to Rip the Guts Out of Any New Zealander : New Zealand Responses to the Sino-Japanese War, July 1937-March 1938*, Unpublished Honours Dissertation, Palmerston North: Massey University, 2002.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew Duke, *A Country in Which I Have Long Had a Close Interest : New Zealand's Relations with Japan in the 1950s*, Unpublished Masterate Thesis, Palmerston North: Massey University, 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Patrick Jeremy Lyon Thomson, *Kiwi 'Drivers' and 'Lookers': An Analysis and Examination of the Significant Contribution of New Zealand Fleet Air Arm Aircrew, of the British Fleet, to Allied Naval Operations 1944-1945*, Unpublished Masterate Thesis, Auckland: Massey University, 2012.

## **The Sources**

Since the purpose of this thesis is to provide an overview of how public perceptions of Japan evolved in New Zealand during the first half of the twentieth century, its sources must, as much as possible, reflect the public forums of the day. Analysis shall therefore be based predominantly on primary material such as newspaper articles, editorials and letters to the editor, but case studies of individual New Zealanders' relationships with Japan and vice versa shall provide additional content and context to the contemporary print media sources. The rationale behind this choice of primary material is that the political and military manoeuvrings leading up to the Second World War were based largely on the decisions of the politically and economically enfranchised. So to a large extent the information surrounding the entrenchment of animosities between the war's combatant nations pertains mainly to the attitudes of their respective political, economic and military leaders. Therefore, with a primary focus on the printed opinions of 'common' civilians, an understanding of 'street level' New Zealand views may be gleaned as they reacted to momentous decisions made by politicians and generals. In order to provide an analysis fixed more closely on public opinion rather than official policy, this thesis shall focus as much as possible on primary material stemming from New Zealand's 'ordinary' citizens. Editorials and letters to the editor, supplemented by the information gleaned in news bulletins, form the majority of primary resources consulted in this thesis. These sources, written in the words of everyday New Zealanders, provide a 'vernacular of the age' as it were, and therefore they may provide an overall narrative style regarding how New Zealanders viewed Asia in general, and Japan in particular. This will show itself through the nouns employed, both formal and slang, and the overall turns of phrase that New Zealanders used to make sense of Asia as they knew it. When it comes to ascertaining and analysing such a narrative style; news bulletins, military documents and transcripts of political discussions provide ample data on the development of

hostilities from the top down, but are essentially incapable of providing the view of ‘the man on the street’. However, such documents do, of course, influence such ‘street view’, and so it is imperative to include statements from bulletins and official documents where appropriate in order to illustrate the political context within which citizens were writing to the editors. But overall, the majority of the primary material consulted will have been written by contributors to newspaper editorial sections in a deliberately opinionated fashion.

While contemporary newspapers have long been a staple resource for historians looking for primary data, the technological limitations of print media in the early twentieth century means that historians must of course rely largely on published material that has gone through a formal editorial process,<sup>17</sup> and therefore it is difficult to accurately ascertain the ‘street view’ of this time period. Archives of Facebook and Twitter accounts will prove a boon for social historians and anthropologists in generations to come, but no such luck exists for the historian of the early twentieth century. What the reader sees in the editorials, letters to the editor and news articles of early twentieth century New Zealand newspapers are opinions that have of course been vetted by editors who often have political agendas. For this reason it is crucial to consult a variety of papers that span the regional, political and class landscape of New Zealand. This forms the basis of the aforementioned first line of inquiry pertaining to the differing perspectives of regionalised New Zealand papers.

Much of the primary material consulted in this thesis originates from online digital archives such as the National Library of New Zealand’s *Papers Past* archive and the EBSCO Historical Abstracts catalogue. *Papers Past* provides the majority of primary newspaper articles in this thesis, particularly those from *The Evening Post*, *NZ Truth* and the smaller, provincial papers. Funded as a New Zealand government initiative in association with the National Library of New Zealand, the site operates as an archive of scanned PDF files of

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<sup>17</sup> Mary J Johnson, ‘Historic Newspapers — Before Blogs, Twitter and 24-Hour Cable News’, *School Library Monthly*, Volume XXVII, Number 4, 2011, p.32.

original newspapers which are available for download, allowing for the rapid consultation of vast swathes of primary materials. Similarly, the *Trove* online database offers a similar service regarding Australian newspapers, thus providing a wealth of contemporary material to which the New Zealand sources can be compared. These archives have proved to be invaluable resources as they afford the researcher with instantaneous access to more than one and a half centuries' worth of primary material, allowing for much greater convenience in research. There are caveats to this expediency however. Digital archives can either be monolithic dumping grounds of non-indexed material that are not conducive to nuanced inquiry,<sup>18</sup> or highly specific niche retrieval tools that do not offer a great deal of breadth.<sup>19</sup> Research through digital archives therefore requires the same degree of critical analysis and refinement of search objectives as it would through physical, on-site library research. However, the speed with which the researcher can refine their search focus is greatly increased due to automated online search functions, and as a result, more time is available to the researcher for wide reading and analysis.

The economic pressure that most early twentieth century New Zealand papers were under is significant when evaluating them as sources of popular opinion. As historian Patrick Day states in his study of the early New Zealand newspaper industry, the primary concern of most New Zealand papers in the early days of their publication was economic survival.<sup>20</sup> To stay viable, papers had to print editorials and articles that interested and vindicated public opinion. If readers disagreed with or disapproved of editorials and news coverage in sufficient numbers then the paper risked losing its readership, with potentially disastrous economic consequences. In this sense it may be argued that despite the political biases and formalised editing of contemporary newspapers these papers may still provide a somewhat

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<sup>18</sup> Shafquat Towheed, 'Digital Forum. Reading in the Digital Archive', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 15, No. 1, April, 2010, p. 140.

<sup>19</sup> Towheed, p. 142.

<sup>20</sup> Patrick Day, *The Making of the New Zealand Press: A Study of the Organisational and Political Concerns of New Zealand Newspaper Controllers, 1840-1880*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1990, p. 139.

feasible source of contemporary public opinion in that what was printed needed to align to some extent with what readership wanted to hear. An art-imitates-life circular argument arises in which public opinion was no doubt influenced by what was printed in the papers while papers were in a perpetual state of editing news in order to appeal to public opinion. As with all sources of opinion, contemporary newspapers must of course be viewed with healthy scepticism, but nevertheless when balanced with as wide a variety of sources as possible, newspapers can offer a worthwhile insight into the national *zeitgeist*.

Advertisements, political cartoons and visual propaganda materials also deliver valuable insight into the messages that New Zealanders received about global events. Newspapers themselves are ample sources of such visual media, but published collections such as Ian F. Grant's *Between the Lines: A Cartoon Century of New Zealand Political and Social History, 1906-2005*<sup>21</sup> also offer a convenient, linear narrative of New Zealanders' perspectives on international events in the cartoon format. The National Library of New Zealand, and the Alexander Turnbull Library in particular also contain a wealth of cartoon resources made available in digital format online.

Several secondary works have inspired the methodology and analytical approach of this thesis. John Dower's *War Without Mercy*<sup>22</sup> analyses the role that race played in the war propaganda in both the United States and Japan during the war. The timeframe of Dower's research falls slightly late for the purposes of this thesis, however his effective use of 'popular' materials as the basis of research (such as songs, cartoons and propaganda films) provides a precedent from which my own use of popular materials in the form of editorials and letters may be validated. With that said, the use of popular materials as primary sources has its pitfalls, and proper context must be provided in order to convey the material's messages with due accuracy and integrity. A case in point is Nicholson Baker's *Human*

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<sup>21</sup> Ian Grant, Ian, F. *Between the Lines: A Cartoon Century of New Zealand Political and Social History, 1906-2005*, Wellington: New Zealand Cartoon Archive, 2005.

<sup>22</sup> John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race & Power in the Pacific War*, New York: Random House, 1986.

*Smoke*,<sup>23</sup> which is a non-fiction narrative (Baker being primarily a novelist by trade) that attempts to vindicate pacifism in the Second World War based upon vignettes from contemporary printed sources such as letters, diaries and newspaper articles. Baker's methodology is similar to that of this thesis in that it forms a narrative based predominantly on primary material. However, he largely eschews analysis and leaves the sources to 'speak for themselves' as it were. His selection of material has been criticised for its incomplete focus and pretentious tone, and for taking many quotes drastically out of context.<sup>24</sup> As a reviewer for *The Guardian* put it,

Of course, Baker is an American novelist, not a British historian. But unfortunately this is also reflected in his mode of writing, which is not joined up. He presents us with a disparate sequence of epiphanies, some very striking, rather than a coherent thesis. His book is a diversified mosaic, a tessellated pavement without cement. The reason for this, perhaps, is that fragments of idealism carry more conviction than a systematic justification of pacifism in the age of the dictators.<sup>25</sup>

With such criticisms in mind it is imperative to ensure that due context is allowed for quotations taken from print media. For this purpose, the full transcripts of editorials and letters to the editor have been provided where it is expedient to do so. Also, as David Keymer of the *Library Journal* states in his review of Baker's work, a focus on primary material is by no means a negative feature *per se*, as the cumulative effect of a heavy focus on primary sources makes for compelling and convincing evidence for a thesis.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, many reviewers' criticisms of Baker rest more on their disagreement with his judgements of moral

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<sup>23</sup> Nicholson Baker, *Human Smoke: The Beginnings of World War II, The End of Civilisation*, London: Pocket Books, 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Anne Applebaum, "The Blog of War", *New Republic*, Vol. 238, Issue 9, May 28, 2008, p. 41.

<sup>25</sup> Brendon, Piers, "In Praise of Pacifism", *The Guardian*. 3 May, 2008. Retrieved from

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2008/may/03/featuresreviews.guardianreview6>

<sup>26</sup> David Keymer, *Library Journal*, Vol. 133, Issue 3, Feb 15, 2008, p. 116.

equivalence between the Third Reich and the Allies rather than his methodology.<sup>27</sup> Therefore the dangers of skewed narrative and quoting out of context can hopefully be minimised without reducing the power of an historical narrative delivered through contemporary voices through careful reference to secondary works, as well as the provision of full quotations of editorials and letters, rather than snippets.

There is a dearth of secondary studies relating specifically to New Zealand-Japanese relations (M.P. Lissington's *New Zealand and Japan 1900-1941*<sup>28</sup> being a notable exception), yet several studies have been conducted on Anglo-Japanese and American-Japanese relations, as well as diplomatic relations in the Asia-Pacific region in general. Ian Nish has published several works relating to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, including a collection of official papers written by British and Japanese professors entitled *Anglo-Japanese Alienation 1919-1952*.<sup>29</sup> This publication in particular provides all-too-rare insights from Japanese perspectives in English.

Another noteworthy secondary source has been Roger Peren's collection of essays from various New Zealand and Japanese historians and sociologists, *New Zealand and Japan – 150 Years*,<sup>30</sup> which offers a variety of scholarly analyses on interactions between New Zealanders and Japanese over the course of New Zealand's history. This collection has been of particular value with regard to lesser known relationships between the two nations, including sporting and maritime links. In particular, Ann Trotter's chapter on New Zealand's deteriorating diplomatic relationship<sup>31</sup> was of interest in that it complemented Lissington's work by

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<sup>27</sup> Jack R. Fischel, 'Questioning the Good War', *Virginia Quarterly Review*, Vol. 84, Issue 3, June 1, 2008, p. 278.

<sup>28</sup> M.P. Lissington, *New Zealand and Japan 1900-1941*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1972.

<sup>29</sup> Ian Nish (ed.), *Anglo-Japanese Alienation 1919-1952: Papers of the Anglo-Japanese Conference on the History of the Second World War*, (pp. 27-56), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

<sup>30</sup> Roger Peren, *Japan and New Zealand – 150 Years*, Palmerston North: Hutcheson, Bowman and Stuart, 1999.

<sup>31</sup> Ann Trotter, "Friend to Foe? New Zealand and Japan, 1900 – 1937", in Roger Peren, *Japan and New Zealand – 150 Years*, Palmerston North: Hutcheson, Bowman and Stuart, 1999.

providing further official diplomatic context to the primary materials that form the basis this thesis.

Nicholas Evan Sarantakes' *Allies Against the Rising Sun; The United States, the British Nations, and the Defeat of Imperial Japan*<sup>32</sup> has also given insight into how New Zealand contributed to the Pacific war effort and how New Zealand's attitudes compared to its allies, and Henry Johnson and Brian Malouhney's *Asia in the Making of New Zealand*<sup>33</sup> has provided valuable context regarding New Zealand's conceptualisation of Asians as a demographic and the use of the term 'Asiatic' as a pejorative ethnic descriptor.

Tony Ballantyne's collection of essays, *Webs of Empire: Locating New Zealand's Colonial Past*<sup>34</sup> contains several chapters on how New Zealanders (including Maori) were educated regarding Asia and the role that people of various Asian ethnicities played in the formation of New Zealand in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His works also provide valuable analysis of the key role that racial ideologies ('Aryanism' in particular) played in cementing Pakeha identity and New Zealand foreign policy. Complementing this, Neville Bennett's article, *White Discrimination Against Japan: Britain, the Dominions and the United States, 1908-1928*<sup>35</sup> has presented valuable content with regard to the differences between New Zealand and Britain in terms of racial attitudes expressed as foreign policy toward Japan, particularly in the context of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

While the aforementioned scholarly works have either covered New Zealand's diplomatic relationship with Japan during this time period, or focused on the interrelations between Europeans and Asians within New Zealand, this thesis adds to such scholarship by

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<sup>32</sup> Nicholas Evan Sarantakes, *Allies Against the Rising Sun; The United States, the British Nations, and the Defeat of Imperial Japan.*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009.

<sup>33</sup> Henry Johnson and Brian Malouhney (eds.), *Asia in the Making of New Zealand*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Tony Ballantyne, *Webs of Empire: Locating New Zealand's Colonial Past*, Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2012.

<sup>35</sup> Neville Bennett, "White Discrimination Against Japan: Britain, the Dominions and the United States, 1908-1928", *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, December 2001, pp.91-105.

focusing primarily on how diplomatic and ethnic perceptions were voiced in public opinion, with Japan as a case study. It contributes further to the movement of ‘history-from-below’ referred to by Ballantyne,<sup>36</sup> yet while similar histories often focus on how different classes and ethnic groups within New Zealand saw each other,<sup>37</sup> this research will focus on how New Zealanders of such diverse groups differed and cohered in their perceptions of foreignness. Japan provides a unique context for such research for a number of reasons; namely that in contrast to other Asian groups such as the Chinese and Indians, Japanese settlers in New Zealand were rare,<sup>38</sup> and also that Japan gained world power status in the twentieth century despite its lack of cultural ties to Europe. Thus, New Zealanders had few first hand encounters with the Japanese, yet heard much of their exploits in the print media they consumed. In this sense, Japan provides an excellent context for examining how those in New Zealand reacted to the machinations of a powerful yet foreign entity. The hope, therefore, is that this thesis will contribute a meaningful social history of how New Zealanders forged their identities, with a focus on both the positive and negative myth-making inherent in the conceptualisation of the foreign and the exotic.

Returning to the primary material of this research and the validity of newspapers themselves as a source of public opinion, to date only marginal research has been done on the history of the New Zealand press itself. The majority of secondary material relating to New Zealand newspapers has been taken from Patrick Day’s *The Making of the New Zealand Press*<sup>39</sup> which focuses mainly on the development of journalism as an industry in New Zealand in the late nineteenth century, as well as Guy Scholefield’s *Newspapers in New Zealand*,<sup>40</sup> which is primarily an expository work explaining the histories of individual papers

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<sup>36</sup> Ballantyne (2009), p.99.

<sup>37</sup> Byrnes, p. 11.

<sup>38</sup> Johnson and Maloughney, p. 15.

<sup>39</sup> Patrick Day, *The Making of the New Zealand Press: A Study of the Organisational and Political Concerns of New Zealand Newspaper Controllers, 1840-1880*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1990.

<sup>40</sup> Guy H. Scholefield, *Newspapers in New Zealand*, Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1958.

in various regions of New Zealand. Neither work is especially recent (Day's book was published in 1990, and Scholefield's is more than fifty years old), yet they offer a glimpse into the general context of New Zealand print media in the early twentieth century which may then be bolstered by the primary editorials and letters.

### **The State of New Zealand Print Media at the Turn of the Twentieth Century**

Before beginning the thesis proper, it is worth considering the socio-political context surrounding the publication of New Zealand papers in the early twentieth century. What follows is an overview of the more prominent New Zealand publications, as well as minor ones that contribute significantly to this thesis.

New Zealand print media became intertwined with politics and nationalism at an early stage. Indeed, early newspapers were often used as mediums for maintaining a sense of British identity and “reinforcing the colonials’ ties with Britain.”<sup>41</sup> During the Crown Colony period, newspapers served overtly as political mouthpieces for wealthy patrons and controllers, many of whom served dual roles as contributors to the newspaper and as public political figures.<sup>42</sup> This intertwining of interests continued even after New Zealand ceased to be a crown colony whereby newspapers adopted a stance on the political spectrum instead of allegiance to individual public figures. In his analysis of the early New Zealand Press, Patrick Day makes his interpretation of the political role of early New Zealand papers clear:

Within the various provinces the political linkages of the newspapers were open and accepted as proper. The linkages were often direct as in the many instances where the same man was a newspaper proprietor and a prominent Provincial politician. Where this was not the case, the linkages were supportive, in that each newspaper was a recognised mouthpiece for a

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<sup>41</sup> Penny Griffith, Ross Harvey and Keith Maslen, *Book & Print in New Zealand: A Guide to Print Culture in Aotearoa*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1997, p.128.

<sup>42</sup> Day, p. 240.

politician. Newspaper growth in the various provinces followed political lines with a Government and an Opposition paper being the normal situation.<sup>43</sup>

Political biases have been an inherent part of the New Zealand media since its inception, and the evolution of these biases is essentially linked to the evolution of New Zealand's nationhood. As the politics and economics of the colony became more sophisticated, so too did the expression of political allegiances in print media. One contributing factor to the growing sophistication of New Zealand newspapers was the establishment of the United Press Association (UPA; later renamed the New Zealand Press Association [NZPA] to avoid confusion with the British United Press Association). The UPA served as guild of sorts for New Zealand's dominant daily papers that reduced competition in an industry that was increasingly driven by profit and distribution concerns, and streamlined news coverage through the shared publication of UPA journalism.<sup>44</sup> This sharing was made possible by the establishment of the electric telegraph as a mainstay of communication from the 1860s onwards. This twofold development in technology and organisation led to more rapid reporting of events, greater access to overseas news bulletins and greater security for larger papers to essentially stake out their claims to their respective distribution centres (delineated usually by the boundaries of major cities) and not overtly encroach on other major papers' territories.<sup>45</sup> The significance of this amalgamation as far as this thesis is concerned lies in the way in which it allowed for a unified, standardised voice in the way global issues were reported to the New Zealand public, meaning that citizens throughout the country had similar access to newsworthy information. Yet regionalism still played a part in New Zealand publications in so far as editorials tended to reflect the values of their respective provincial clientele. Even under the UPA, *The Herald* was very much an 'Auckland' daily reflecting the

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, p. 234.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Scholefield, p.10.

issues facing colonists in the north of the country just as *The Press* was a ‘Christchurch’ paper focusing on industries in the south. New Zealand newspapers therefore provided a uniform standard of reporting via telegraph, yet the readers of regional newspapers gave each publication its own regional ‘flavour’.

Throughout the gradual amalgamation of New Zealand newspapers into standardised, national news providers in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, editorials and letters to the editor remained the true mainstay of personal opinion within an increasingly formalised and streamlined industry. It is primarily for this reason that this thesis shall focus on editorials and letters to the editor as source material for the opinions of New Zealanders by region rather than on the telegraph bulletins from global sources. These telegraph articles form an important part of the available primary material in so far as they provide insight as to what information was informing New Zealanders’ opinions at the time, but in so doing they serve more as resource for contextualising these opinions rather than providing the opinions themselves.

### **Noteworthy Papers Consulted in this Thesis**

*The Herald* of Auckland was one of New Zealand’s earliest newspapers, having been established on 10 July, 1841, just two months after the founding of the Crown Colony. The paper’s prospectus stated that the paper would be conducted on ‘independent principles’ with regard to political leanings. “It shall contain no misrepresentation, exaggeration or abuse, and care shall be taken to avoid any approach to offensive personalities.”<sup>46</sup> However, at its inception it nevertheless served as a vehicle for ‘prodding the Administration’ and advocating for ‘liberal treatment and education’ for Maori.<sup>47</sup> Generally speaking, the biases of *The Herald* favoured right wing political agendas, as the paper served as a supporter the “shifting

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<sup>46</sup> Scholefield, p. 72.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

set of evanescent alliances” that constituted Harry Atkinson’s conservative ‘continuous ministry’ of 1876-1890,<sup>48</sup> while voicing opposition against the Liberal party before its decline in the early twentieth century, and then in opposition to the Labour party.<sup>49</sup>

*The Evening Post* was founded in Wellington 1865 by Dublin émigré Henry Blundell. It aimed to serve a politically neutral agenda, but often provided leftist perspectives in contrast to its main rival; the conservative daily, *The Dominion*.<sup>50</sup> In contrast to Auckland’s *Herald*, the *Evening Post* was an opponent of the continuous ministry, providing de facto support for Liberal causes whilst claiming political impartiality.<sup>51</sup>

*The Press* first went to print on the 25th of May, 1861, and began its life as a self-proclaimed antidote to growing media complicity with government initiatives in the Canterbury region. As founder James Edward Fitzgerald stated in his inaugural editorial:

For a faithful expression of public opinion, and for a fair and impartial, but earnest and truthful criticism upon the acts of the government there is much wanting in the press of Canterbury. If we did not feel this ourselves – if we had not heard it on all sides for months past, the expression iterated everywhere “We want another newspaper” – “The Press” would never have been published.<sup>52</sup>

Such was the sentiment upon which *The Press* was founded and the direction that it would continue to take as an opponent of perceived lavish government spending that had been disguised or abetted by established papers such as *The Lyttelton Times*.<sup>53</sup> In essence, *The Press* began as a means to address single-issue politics (at the time of its inception the issue

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<sup>48</sup> David Hackett Fischer, *Fairness and Freedom: A History of Two Open Societies: New Zealand and the United States*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 299.

<sup>49</sup> Day, p. 146.

<sup>50</sup> Evening Post. *Papers Past. The National Library of New Zealand*. Retrieved from <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=CL1.EP&essay=1&e=-----10--1----0-->

<sup>51</sup> Day, p. 163.

<sup>52</sup> *The Press*, May 25, 1861, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> Tim Pankhurst, *It’s in The Press*, Christchurch: The Christchurch Press Co. Ltd, 2001, p.3.

was the seemingly extravagant drilling of a rail tunnel to Lyttelton) and continued in a similar vein as a paper without an overtly-stated political bias, but rather as a vehicle of government opposition. It advocated colonial responsibility for colonial affairs and supported separating the governance of the two islands in order for the South to escape culpability for the expensive Maori Wars in the North.<sup>54</sup> *The Press* was a paper that began in opposition to the continuous ministry and later continued this stance as an opposition paper rather than as an advocate of partisan politics.<sup>55</sup>

As varied as the histories and political biases of the source newspapers are, they are nevertheless uniform in their execution as formal newspapers following an established format of objective journalism (or at least the veneer of such) within the cooperative framework of the United Press Association. *NZ Truth* provides a more populist voice to the thesis. As the National Library of New Zealand states in its description of the paper:

*The Truth* stood out from the other New Zealand newspapers because it was overtly political and reported the unseemly aspects of life in immoderate prose. Under Robert Hogg, editor from 1913 to 1922, the paper was strongly socialist. It supported the revolutionary Industrial Workers of the World during the 1913 general strike, opposed conscription during the World War One and published letters from pacifist Archibald Baxter.<sup>56</sup>

In its unabashed politicism, *NZ Truth* provides an effective juxtaposition to other publications that tried to maintain a semblance of objectivity in their journalism. As far as this thesis is concerned, *NZ Truth* provides a tabloid (almost sensationalist) perspective of historical movements in the twentieth century that is somewhat lacking from the other more formal publications. This of course does not necessarily mean its opinions reflect the street-view

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<sup>54</sup> Scholefield, p. 213.

<sup>55</sup> Pankhurst, p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> NZ Truth. *Papers Past*. The National Library of New Zealand. Retrieved from <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=CL1.NZTR&essay=1&e=-----10--1---0-->

more accurately than formal newspapers, but its populist approach provides colloquial flavour to the primary source base.

Similarly, the *Maoriland Worker*, which was created in 1910, provides brazenly socialist viewpoints. While not intended to be as sensationalist as *NZ Truth*, the left wing agenda of *Maoriland Worker* was nevertheless no secret to its readership. Such readership, of course, was a niche market of workers and trade unionists, and the paper itself pursued a ‘radical’ editorial policy promoting “industrial unionism, international cooperation among unions, and pacifism.”<sup>57</sup>

The establishment of the United Press Association created a degree of uniformity in New Zealand journalism, which both helps and hinders the aims of this thesis. On the one hand, uniformity in reporting solidifies the ‘New Zealand’ perspective, as most newspaper-readers across the country would be exposed to similar information and therefore ruminate on similar issues. On the other hand, such uniformity reduces the subtleties of public ruminations on international issues, which may then increase the propensity for printers and writers to provide ‘standardized’ viewpoints to cater to national interests rather than regionalised, nuanced ones. Therefore, as far as the second line of inquiry of this thesis is concerned it is perhaps the minor publications with limited circulation that can provide truly unique perspectives and independent voices. Some noteworthy source papers that provide perspectives from smaller rural communities outside of the main sphere of influence of the major centre dailies include *The Ellesmere Guardian*, which served the rural Canterbury community as a weekly publication and was launched in 1880.<sup>58</sup> Another was *The Bay of Plenty Times*, which was established as a bi-weekly publication in 1872 and one of the first

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<sup>57</sup> *Maoriland Worker*. *Papers Past*. The National Library of New Zealand. Retrieved from <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=CL1.MW&essay=1&e=-----10--1----0-->

<sup>58</sup> *Ellesmere Guardian*. *Papers Past*. The National Library of New Zealand. Retrieved from <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=CL1.EG&essay=1&e=-----10--1----0-->

papers in New Zealand to include photographs in its publications.<sup>59</sup> *The Hawera and Normanby Star* was established in 1880 as a tri-weekly paper in Taranaki and moved to daily publication after seeing off competition from the short-lived *Hawera Times* and provided perspectives from the rural Taranaki region.<sup>60</sup> *The Otautau Standard* was a relative latecomer in that it was established by Frank Hyde in 1905 as a remedy to the dearth of newspapers available in the rural Otago settlement of Otautau.<sup>61</sup> It was a weekly paper, serving the small farming and milling community of the area and staying afloat despite competition from the *Otautau Farmer*.<sup>62</sup> Ultimately, these four papers are indicative of the style and calibre of lesser-known publications, but are by no means exhaustive in terms of papers consulted in this thesis.

The New Zealand print media in the early twentieth century was both prolific and opinionated, and thus it provides the soundest and richest source of information for garnering a sense of public opinion during this time period. There was a sense of professionalism in the publications of the major centres and a plucky amateurism among the minor papers in the countryside. Both aesthetics lent vitality and cultural texture to the New Zealand approach to international affairs of the day. Just as politicians needed to pay heed to their constituents to garner their votes, so too did newspapers reflect (and through such reflection, influence) the opinions of their readers to maintain their incomes. Official documents, diplomatic discussions and parliamentary discourses of course provide the key context for the international machinations of the early twentieth century, and these will form a crucial aspect

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<sup>59</sup> Bay of Plenty Times. *Papers Past*. The National Library of New Zealand. Retrieved from <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=CL1.BOPT&essay=1&e=-----10--1----0-->

<sup>60</sup> Hawera and Normanby Star. *Papers Past*. The National Library of New Zealand . Retrieved from <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=CL1.HNS&essay=1&e=-----10--1----0-->

<sup>61</sup> Scholefield, p.208.

<sup>62</sup> Otautau Standard and Wallace County Chronicle. *Papers Past*. The National Library of New Zealand. Retrieved from <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=CL1.OSWCC&essay=1&e=-----10--1----0-->

of this thesis' inquiry, but ultimately it was newspapers that provided the public forum for debate of global issues that make the inquiry of this thesis possible.



Figure 1: Far Eastern Hemisphere. E.F. Hiscocks. 1904. Retrieved from <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/ef-hiscocks-cartoon>

## Chapter One

### Islands Apart: New Zealand and Japan at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

At the turn of the twentieth century, New Zealand was very much an active yet subservient member of the British Empire. Only sixty years had passed since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, and New Zealand had already shown its imperial esteem by committing itself with exuberance to such imperial military endeavours as the Boer campaign before hostilities officially began.<sup>63</sup> New Zealand's very existence was facilitated by an arrangement with Britain whereby British naval vessels would patrol Pacific waters and train New Zealand's fledgling military, and New Zealand's produce would be exported almost exclusively to the British Isles.<sup>64</sup> Yet while the New Zealand government essentially deferred the development of its foreign policy to the British parliament, it nevertheless vocally contributed its opinions on how best to manage Pacific affairs.<sup>65</sup> In this fashion, New Zealand's initial diplomatic relationship with Japan was conducted under the umbrella of British imperialism. However, this is not to say that New Zealanders did not have a unique perspective from Britain on how to approach relationships with Japan. Scholarship on the matter suggests that New Zealand and Australia's proximity to Japan led white residents of those countries (more so than those in Britain) to feel a sense of urgency regarding Japan's emergence as a significant economic and military influence at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>66</sup>

At this time, when it came to considerations of foreign policy the foremost issue in the minds of many Pakeha New Zealanders was the seemingly precarious state of British

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<sup>63</sup> Peter Plowman, *Across the Sea to War: Australian and New Zealand Troop Convoys from 1865 through Two World Wars to Korea and Vietnam*, New South Wales: Rosenberg Publishing, 2003, p.23.

<sup>64</sup> Glenn Palmer and T. Clifton Morgan, *A Theory of Foreign Policy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003, p. 83.

<sup>65</sup> Malcolm McKinnon, "Introduction" in Roger Peren, *Japan and New Zealand – 150 Years*, Palmerston North: Huteson, Bowman and Stuart, 1999. p. 17.

<sup>66</sup> Lissington, p. 5.

dominance in the South Pacific in terms of population numbers, economic power and military presence. Mary Lissington's studies on the subject indicate that for most New Zealanders maintaining British hegemony over the Pacific in the face of German and Russian expansion was paramount. This rested predominantly on the upkeep of British naval power and trade routes.<sup>67</sup> New Zealanders were suspicious of the machinations of rival European powers, with the rising naval star of Germany being of particular concern. Germany had made its Pacific colonial intentions apparent through forays into Samoa and New Guinea, and while these German territories did not physically encroach upon British soil, such was the distress of British subjects regarding their continental rivals that their mere presence in the Pacific was construed as a potential threat to British interests.<sup>68</sup> New Zealanders were vocal in their anxiety regarding Germany's naval development in the Pacific, so much so that by 1909 New Zealand was contributing £100,000 annually to the Royal Navy, and offered to bear the entire production costs of the first two battleships of a proposed eight ship order in March of that year.<sup>69</sup>

Yet the security concerns of New Zealanders, despite their vocalisations, did not always match the British Navy's commitment to the region. When New Zealanders viewed British projection of naval power to be less than infallible, many felt no compunction in urging the New Zealand government to invest in its own military. As an anonymous citizen wrote to the editor of the *Evening Post* in 1905:

Sir, — I venture to say that no cablegram that has appeared in the columns of your paper during the last three years portends of greater importance to this fertile and wealthy colony than that which appeared in your issue of yesterday, viz., that the Kaiser has decided to place a premanent [sic]

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<sup>67</sup> Lissington, p. 23.

<sup>68</sup> Herman Hiery, *The Neglected War: The German Pacific and the Influence of World War One*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995, pp.1-10.

<sup>69</sup> Lissington, pp. 10-13.

cruiser squadron in the Pacific, etc., etc. What, I would ask, Sir, are we doing, or rather those in authority doing, to make the defences of this harbour and those of Auckland efficient? Nothing, Sir, nothing; simply dozing on, and our Defence Minister is the sleepest of the whole lot. Poke him with the stick of criticism and he will half wake up and roar, "Haven't we spent nearly a quarter of a million upon the defence of these harbours, and every Commandant I bring out contradicts the other and advises me to do something else — might just as well throw the money into the sea. I'll spend no more (applause from Roads and Bridge members,); let me alone, I'm sick of defence;" dozes off again.

Yes, Mr. Premier, we did spend some quarter of a million, exactly twenty years ago, and we have been frittering money away ever since in attempting to bolster up an obsolete establishment. Ye gods and fishes, if it were not for the terrible seriousness of the whole thing, the history of the Defence Department as written by a casual observer would bring tears of laughter to the eyes of a cast iron dog. Sir, "the writing is upon the wall;" every thinking man whose views go past the pothouse and the village pump has recognised it. I have lived in Germany during part of the last ten years and I know their national hopes and ambitions, and I believe within the next ten years (possibly ten months) the British Empire will be in the very throes for her supremacy.

We shall read in our evening paper of some sudden acute crisis between Great Britain and Germany, and in the sunrise, before the morning paper has circulated with the war cable, we shall see a noble German cruiser lying quietly at anchor with bar guns trained upon the town, while her

Commander knocks at Mr. Seddon's front door and asks for five millions inside an hour, or, as an alternative, turn the City into a brick heap.<sup>70</sup>

Clearly, some New Zealanders were not bashful with regard to criticising the policies of their government. In this instance it was the fear of Germany that motivated the desire for a bolstered military presence in the Pacific, but such fears extended beyond just Germany. Russia had also been a looming spectre in the psyche of the New Zealand and British citizenry since the days of the North Pacific Bering expeditions in the eighteenth century,<sup>71</sup> and a distrust of France, the old colonial rival (Britain having 'pipped France at the post', as it were, by signing the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, thus politically nullifying the French landing at Akaroa<sup>72</sup>) was an additional motivating factor in many New Zealanders' desires to ensure that Britannia continued to rule the waves.

The research of James Ng and Manying Ip shows that there had also been rumblings of anti-Asian sentiment among Pakeha regarding Asian immigration since the influx of Chinese during the 1860s gold rush,<sup>73</sup> resulting in a harsh poll tax of £100 for each Chinese migrant being imposed that would hamstring Chinese migration and settlement in New Zealand<sup>74</sup> (see figures 2, 3 and 4). However, concerns among Pakeha regarding Asia in general (and China in particular) tended to be demographic and economic rather than military; centred on a fear of the mass immigration of cheap labour that would destabilise the economic position of white New Zealanders, as evinced in the 1881 'Chinese Immigrants Act' that restricted the number of Chinese immigrants allowed to travel on transport ships to

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<sup>70</sup> *Evening Post*, 1 July, 1905. P. 15.

<sup>71</sup> Glynn Barratt, *Russia in Pacific Waters, 1715-1825*, University of British Columbia, 1981, p.10.

<sup>72</sup> T. Lindsay Buick, *The French at Akaroa: An Adventure in Colonization*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 75-77.

<sup>73</sup> James Ng, "The Sojourner Experience: The Cantonese Goldseekers in New Zealand, 1865-1901", in Manying Ip (ed.), *Unfolding History, Evolving Identity: The Chinese in New Zealand*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003, p.8.

<sup>74</sup> Manying Ip, "Chinese Immigrants and Transnationals in New Zealand: A Fortress Opened", in Laurence, J.C. Ma and Carolyn Cartier (eds.), *The Chinese Diaspora: Space, Place, Mobility and Identity*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003, p.340.

one Chinese per ten tonnes of cargo.<sup>75</sup> Jacqueline Leckie's research findings also indicate that Indian migrants were treated with similar distaste, and measures were undertaken such as the 1866 Aliens Act and the 1923 British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act to prevent the permanent settlement of 'Asiatics' (including Chinese migrants and Indian Hindus) by nullifying the naturalisation of citizens elsewhere in the Empire from qualifying them naturalisation in New Zealand.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, according to the late sinologist Lucian W. Pye, the term 'Asiatic' was not originally a pejorative term, and was preferred as a descriptor by Chinese and Japanese businesses in the nineteenth century over the word 'Asian', yet it took on connotations of barbarity when adopted into the lexicon of Westerners.<sup>77</sup> And so even when used formally, as it often was in New Zealand print media, usage of the term 'Asiatic' reflected the innate disdain of New Zealand writers toward Asian ethnicities.

When it came to military power paradigms prior to the First World War, Britain (and New Zealand by proxy) believed its most serious rivals for dominance in the Pacific were in Europe, not Asia, as in British eyes only European nations possessed the sophistication and wherewithal to impose their will upon the Pacific.<sup>78</sup> It was therefore logical for Britain to establish alliances with non-European powers in order to offset the influence of its continental rivals if, and only if, such allies would not in turn pose a significant threat to British interests.

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<sup>75</sup> Nigel Murphy, "Joe Lum vs. Attorney General: The Politics of Exclusion", in Manying Ip (ed.), *Unfolding History, Evolving Identity: The Chinese in New Zealand*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003, pp 48-50.

<sup>76</sup> Jacqueline Leckie, *Indian Settlers: The Story of a New Zealand South Asian Community*, Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2007, p.70.

<sup>77</sup> Lucian W. Pye, *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority*, Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985, p.348.

<sup>78</sup> Jane Samson, *Imperial Benevolence: Making British Authority in the Pacific Islands*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998, p.15.



Figure 2: 'Welcoming Chinese Miners.' *Dunedin Punch*. 1865. Alexander Turnbull Library. Reference: PUBL-0189-09-2.3. Retrieved from <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/cartoon/28172/welcoming-chinese-miners-1865>



Figure 3: 'Still They Come!' John Collis Bloomfield. 1905. Alexander Turnbull Library. Reference: A-315-3-042. Retrieved from <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/cartoon/28173/attacking-chinese>

**CERTIFICATE.**

Under Section 7 of "The Chinese Immigrants Act, 1881," and Section 2 of "The Chinese Immigrants Act Amendment Act, 1895."

No. **1615** £100.

Date of issue : 16. 11. 04.

Name : Yee Nam

Born at Canton.

Apparent age : 27.

Former place of residence : Canton.

Arrived by ship Mosaki

From Sydney

[Signature]  
Collector of Customs at Wh.

[This part to be retained in the office of the Collector who issues the Certificate.]

(11 bks./4/1904-322)

**Figure 4: Poll Tax Certificate. 1904. Alexander Turnbull Library. Reference: L, 24-8, Box 1. Retrieved from <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/document/28175/poll-tax-certificate>**

### **Insurance Policies – The Anglo-Japanese Alliance**

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance was a military and economic agreement between Britain and Japan that had significant ramifications for New Zealand's foreign policy and had its roots in

the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1894.<sup>79</sup> It essentially served as New Zealand's first official diplomatic agreement with the Japanese state. Ian Nish extensively analysed the diplomatic nuances of this relationship in his aptly-named work, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*. For the most part, Nish found that Britain's Pacific territories did not share the mother country's enthusiasm for closer military and economic ties with Asia. He states; "Most of these colonies preferred to forego prospects of increased trade for the sake of security as they conceived it. That is, most colonies in the Pacific area had devised immigration legislation to exclude first Chinese and later Japanese labour and feared that, by adhering to the treaty, they might have to withdraw these restrictions."<sup>80</sup> Australia had long taken a stance of exclusion against Japanese immigration, particularly in the areas of shipping, sugar production, mining and pearling.<sup>81</sup> And Canada, too, had sought to curtail immigration from Asia; particularly from China, having disenfranchised Chinese and Indian immigrants in 1875.<sup>82</sup> As is made plain in Figure 2, there was a palpable fear among Pakeha, in line with attitudes in other Pacific dominions, of being overrun by hordes of cunning and ruthless 'others', who would supposedly stop at nothing to circumvent white protectionist policies and potentially destabilise the 'British' way of life (top hats, waistcoats, canes and all) in the South Pacific. And so there was trepidation among New Zealanders with regard to signing, as they saw it, an agreement that might open the gates to Asian immigration.<sup>83</sup>

New Zealand's first official diplomatic relationship with Japan came in the form of its offer from Britain to join the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty in 1895. The economic

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<sup>79</sup> Australia. Prime Minister's Department, *Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty, 1894: Japanese conventional tariff (1894 Treaty); Convention for the reciprocal protection of estates of deceased persons, 1900; Anglo-Japanese Agreement, 1902; Anglo-Japanese Agreement, 1911*. Canberra, 1900.

<sup>80</sup> Ian Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires, 1894-1907*, London: Athlone Press, 1966, p. 76.

<sup>81</sup> Neville Bennett, "Japanese Emigration Policy, 1880,1941", in Christine Inglis, S. Gunasekaran, Gerard Sullivan, Chung-Tong Wu (eds.), *Asians in Australia: The Dynamics of Migration and Settlement*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1992, p.30.

<sup>82</sup> John Price, *Orienteering Canada: Race, Empire and the Transpacific*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2011, p.15.

<sup>83</sup> Akira Iikura *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the Question of Race*, in Phillips O'Brien (ed.), *Anglo-Japanese Alliance 1902, 1922*, New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, p.232.

insecurities of the New Zealand government showed through when it rejected this invitation due to two of its articles allowing the unrestricted immigration of Japanese nationals into New Zealand.<sup>84</sup> An editorial in the *Otago Daily Times* in March of 1897 reported on a meeting of Australasian leaders in which the Anglo-Japanese treaty was up for discussion:

The first subject dealt with was the Anglo-Japanese treaty and it was decided that the colonies should exercise their right of remaining out of that treaty, the reason allegedly being that coming under it “might result in Australasia being inundated with Japanese cheap labour and wares, to the detriment of the working classes.” It is to be hoped that the “working classes” are duly mindful of the consideration of the Premiers who set up this strong barrier against Japanese inundation.<sup>85</sup>

Such a direct appeal for the gratitude of the “working classes” for supposedly defending their interests reveals an underlying middle class fear of social unrest in a society that was apparently becoming increasingly stratified along economic lines. Clearly the government of the day under ‘King’ Richard Seddon had the appeasement of New Zealand workers in mind when it opted out of the agreement, which is telling of public opinion among the working class in New Zealand who feared ‘inundation’ by ‘Asiatic’ workers who would possibly undercut their wages (the term ‘inundation’ would come to occur with thematic frequency in New Zealand letters regarding Asian immigration over the following decades). Seddon himself, while not a socialist, was a believer in greater parliamentary representation for New Zealand workers, whom he deemed to be steadily growing an ‘independent spirit’.<sup>86</sup> Demonstrations of empathy for the Pakeha working class (which could arguably be construed in this case as pandering to its xenophobia) could be seen as both a matter of principle for

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<sup>84</sup> Lissington, p.2.

<sup>85</sup> *Otago Daily Times*. 2 March, 1897, p. 2.

<sup>86</sup> James Drummond, *The Life and Work of Richard John Seddon (Premier of New Zealand 1893-1906)*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907, p.66.

Seddon, as well as of political expedience.<sup>87</sup> Indeed, ‘inundation’, and the fear of it, would become a motif of white Australasian perceptions of Asia in the twentieth century, providing one of the bedrocks for the White Australia Policy,<sup>88</sup> as well as the poll tax policies of New Zealand.<sup>89</sup> Then, as now, a vague yet pervasive fear of demographic inundation by Asian peoples was a political football that could be exploited by politicians for popular support (cf. the 1992 *Sunday Telegraph* article entitled ‘White Australia was Right’ that quoted Labour politicians as emphasising a militant need to restrict Asian immigration).<sup>90</sup> Economic protectionism may have been the official motivating factor in New Zealand’s reluctance to enter the treaty, but it can be inferred that the colonial attitude valued ethnic security over increased trade, as legislation introducing a quota system that limited the migration of Asian workers was enacted in both Australia and New Zealand.<sup>91</sup> New Zealand’s proximity to Asia and its isolation from the perceived security of Britain meant that a key priority for the fledgling white majority in New Zealand was to maintain the sense of security that came from being the dominant population politically, economically and demographically.

The British parliament, being geographically removed from Japan’s immediate sphere of influence, did not feel the same economic and demographic pressures as New Zealand regarding the possible influx of Japan’s formidable population base.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, Britain deemed the most pressing priority in the Pacific to be containment of Russia, for which Japan could play a practical role.<sup>93</sup> Therefore, Britain deemed the military benefits of an alliance with Japan superseded any economic or immigration concerns. Britain had been aware of the necessity to economise on naval spending since the Boer War, which had been paid for by

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<sup>87</sup> James Bryce, *Modern Democracies, Volume II*, New York: Cosimo, 2008, p.275.

<sup>88</sup> John Fitzgerald, *Big White Lie: Chinese Australians in White Australia*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2007, p.2.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Sean Brawley, *The White Peril: Foreign Relations and Asian Immigration to Australasia and North America 1919-78*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1995, p.329.

<sup>91</sup> Nish (1966), p. 77.

<sup>92</sup> Trotter, p. 66.

<sup>93</sup> Marina Soroka, *Britain, Russia and the Road to the First World War: The Fateful Embassy of Count Aleksandr Benckendorff (1903-16)*, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2011, p. 74.

increased income tax and war loans (seen as undesirable by Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Michael Hicks Beach).<sup>94</sup> Military guarantees under the Anglo-Japanese Alliance eased Britain's commitments in the Pacific; simultaneously offsetting the expansion of Germany and Russia while allowing for Britain to redirect military spending to North Atlantic concerns.<sup>95</sup> Japan would patrol the North Pacific against German and Russian expansion, freeing the British navy to bolster its presence closer to home.

Neville Bennett's research into both the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance reveals that Britain's efforts at negotiating diplomatic relations with Japan were strained and embarrassed somewhat by the anti-Japanese sentiments of the Pacific Dominions (namely Canada, Australia and New Zealand). And indeed, Japanese officials in 1896 conveyed to Lord Salisbury that they felt "impressed with the outrage" of New Zealand legislators specifically excluding Japanese from immigrating even though there were not yet any resident in the country.<sup>96</sup> Indeed, so blatant had official antipathy toward Japan become in the Dominions that Britain, in order to secure a renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, felt the need to consult them all and assure them that Japanese migrants would not flood their shores.<sup>97</sup>

Yet in light of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance's perceived military benefits for Britain, some New Zealanders were also aware of the economic opportunities that closer ties to Japan presented. Despite fears of 'inundation' with regards to Japanese immigration the rapid industrialisation of Japan's economy meant that its potential as a trading partner entered the considerations of New Zealand businesspeople, both as a source of imported goods and as an

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<sup>94</sup> Trotter, p. 175.

<sup>95</sup> Lissington, p. 23.

<sup>96</sup> Bennett (2001), p. 94.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, p.95.

export market.<sup>98</sup> This economic interest pertained to the region of East Asia in general, and Japan in particular. As Orang Laut wrote to the editor of the *Evening Post* in 1897:

Sir — There appears to be in New Zealand a feeling against encouraging commercial relations with Japan, and a tendency to oppose the introduction of anything from that country, and also to decry any prospect of building up a trade with the East. I do not think that New Zealand has anything to fear from Japan, not even cheap labour, but this latter is a question which it is not at present necessary to discuss.

I think it was Sir Julius Vogel who some years ago ventured to remark that there was a market for some of our produce in the Arafura Sea, and was laughed at for his pains, and yet there was a great deal of truth in his remark... I spent some time in the East, and when there went to considerable trouble to prepare lists of articles which could be produced in New Zealand, and which would find a ready market there. The result was surprising, not only as to the number and variety, but also the apparently enormous margin of profit to be derived. Upon making further enquiries, however, the latter was swallowed up by the prohibitive freights, the almost certain opposition of established companies and European firms, difficulties and primary cost of introducing our goods into the channels of distribution— the latter most perfect in their way, but at present entirely in the hands of those who would make every effort to oppose the encroachment of our trade into their markets.

In the experience of this businessman at least, established European trading companies were the greater hindrance to New Zealand's economic prosperity than Asian labour and cheaply

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<sup>98</sup> Kiyoshi Kojima, *Japan and a Pacific Free Trade Area*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971, p. 10.

manufactured goods - notwithstanding the sense from this letter that the Japanese were just as protective of their economy as Pakeha New Zealanders were of theirs. He concludes:

Has anyone yet gone into the question of what a commercial union, or practically Free Trade, with Japan would mean? Certainly no better medium for introducing our products could possibly be obtained. We are constantly talking of the necessity for opening up new markets for our products, yet it may so happen that we overlook the opportunities presented for doing so, blinded, perhaps, by prejudice arising from a superficial knowledge, or may be ignorance.<sup>99</sup>

Such ‘prejudice’, ‘superficial knowledge’ and ‘ignorance’ alluded to here are indicative of the lack of contact between New Zealand and Japan at the end of the nineteenth century. Indeed, diplomatic and economic relations between the two nations at this point in history were threadbare at best, consisting primarily of exchanges of technical experts such as civil engineer Alfred Aldrich who was recruited by Japanese firms to assist in arranging logistics as they rapidly modernised.<sup>100</sup> It would be New Zealand’s eventual acquiescence to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance that would pave the way for closer familiarity between the two nations, as a sense of the two nations having a shared enemy in Russia would overcome apprehensions of ‘otherness’.<sup>101</sup>

If New Zealanders were reluctant to allow the immigration of Japanese workers, the feeling was seemingly mutual in Japan with regards to Westerners. The few New Zealand entrepreneurs that operated in Japan complained of the difficulties of doing business there due to cultural factors and imperial monetary policy, as well as the lack of access to Japanese

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<sup>99</sup> *Evening Post*, 5 August, 1897, p. 2.

<sup>100</sup> Ken McNeil, “Encounters, 1860s to 1940s”, in Roger Peren, *Japan and New Zealand – 150 Years*, Palmerston North: Hutchison, Bowman and Stuart, 1999, p.26.

<sup>101</sup> Trotter, p. 69.

markets.<sup>102</sup> The economic protectionism of the Antipodean colonies that kept them out of the treaty seemed justified when it became clear that Japan itself made foreign workers feel unwelcome.<sup>103</sup> Yet not all commentators were indignant. Some New Zealand contributors viewed this homogeneity in employment within a global context of each nation looking out for its own development. As A.S. Aldritch wrote in a letter to the editor of the *Evening Post*:

Sir,— In your issue of 11th inst. there appeared a telegram from Brisbane giving the substance of the remarks of a Mr. John Chartress, who is on his way back to New Zealand after paying a visit to Japan, and the following sentence was included therein :— “Even now the Japanese Government does not employ foreigners. There is not a single one (probably all married) to be found in the service, and all the larger businesses are managed and worked solely by Japanese.” Mr. Chartress reminds me of the traveller who, when he made his first visit to France, was so astonished to find even the little gamins in the streets of Boulogne able to speak French.

... If Mr. Chartress should visit France or Germany, or any other country, he would probably find the same peculiar state of things existing, and the people of those countries generally managing their own affairs without finding it necessary to come to New Zealand for advice and assistance.

Mr. Chartress is an illustration of that extraordinary mental obliquity which, characteristic of the British people, is so extremely pronounced in this country, where it seems to be supposed that New Zealand leads the world, that the British people own the earth and all that therein is, and there is no balm anywhere except in Gilead.

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<sup>102</sup> McNeil, p.23.

<sup>103</sup> McNeil, p. 26.

Mr. Chartress might have added that the army and navy of Japan are also being managed and worked solely by Japanese.<sup>104</sup>

The cosmopolitan tone of the letter provides a contrast to the usual Pakeha perspective at this time of suspicion and derision toward Asia. There is a sense that the bemoaning of white New Zealanders of seemingly unfair treatment with regard to finding employment in Japan was hypocritical. New Zealanders could hardly expect to be welcomed with open arms in positions of significant influence in Japan when New Zealand had taken pains to exclude all Asian people from mere immigration, let alone from employment as government officials. This letter draws attention to the sense of entitlement felt by many white New Zealanders at this time in that they believed that non-Europeans should recognise them as inherently superior and offer employment whenever it was sought. The colonial mentality of white supremacy clearly held strong influence over how New Zealanders viewed Japan. Yet while the writer generally lampoons the ignorance of overly-privileged Pakeha, he nevertheless concludes his letter with a reference to Japan's burgeoning military. While such a mention does not evoke a sense of impending threat, such parting references alluded strongly to the growing influence of Japan's military in the Pacific, and the insecurity this created in the minds of British subjects who had heretofore considered the threat of non-Western militaries to be insubstantial. There was clearly a growing sense that New Zealanders felt they had more to fear from Japan than just 'inundation' of migrant workers, as they felt they did with China. There was also the growing sense that Japan (an oriental nation seen to be of the ilk of the Huns, Turks and Mongols as according to David James' pseudo-eugenicist publication in 1951)<sup>105</sup> was growing in its capacity for armed enforcement of its will. If the assumption of Japanese benignity was increasingly questioned at the turn of the twentieth century, it would well and truly evaporate in 1905 as a result of the Russo-Japanese War.

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<sup>104</sup> *Evening Post*, 22 October, 1904, p. 15.

<sup>105</sup> David H James, *The Rise and Fall of the Japanese Empire*, Volume 35, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1951, "Ethnography", pp. 18-21.

## Chapter Two

### A New Sun Rises: The Russo-Japanese War in the New Zealand Consciousness

New Zealand has taken an avid interest in foreign policy pertaining to the Pacific region since the early days of its colonial status, with special attention being paid to the demographic, economic and military expansion of non-British entities in the region. The rise of both Russian and Japanese influence in the Pacific became of particular concern to New Zealanders as the new century dawned, and articles detailing the military and economic ventures of these nations appeared more frequently in New Zealand papers. For the most part it was Russia's activity in the Pacific that received the majority of negative publicity, with Japan being seen as the lesser of two evils.<sup>106</sup> Both nations were essentially characterised as oriental (and therefore inherently uncivilised and to no small degree contrary to Western interests and sensibilities) in the Western consciousness.<sup>107</sup> Yet Japan was sufficiently enthusiastic in its support of Britain to be seen as a useful ally whose military exploits in the region could serve to benefit British economic interests by opening up the Northeast Asian region (long closed to Western influences) to British trade.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, the Japanese based much of their economic reforms and expansion on a 'neo-colonial' British model,<sup>109</sup> becoming somewhat of an imperialist protégé of Britain in the Pacific and earning the 'Brown Briton' moniker for their prowess in offsetting German and Russian expansion.<sup>110</sup>

Japan's rise to political and military eminence also coincided with New Zealand's gradual development as a British Pacific outpost. For the most part, the vernacular used by

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<sup>106</sup> Robert Harvey, *The Undeclared – The Rise, Fall & Rise of Greater Japan*, London: Macmillan, 1994. p.120.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, p. 118.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 120-121.

<sup>109</sup> Pekka Korhonen, *Japan and the Pacific Free Trade Area*, New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 11.

<sup>110</sup> Peter Boston, "Brown Britons or Yellow Peril? New Zealand and the Rise of Japan, 1905-1911", in Roger Peren, *Japan and New Zealand – 150 Years*, Palmerston North: Hutchison, Bowman and Stuart, 1999, p.61.

New Zealanders when describing their views of Japan's burgeoning international standing reflected a sense of condescending approval. Japan's opening of diplomatic and economic ties with Western powers in the latter nineteenth century, and its subsequent vanquishing of British rivals in China and Russia earned it a reputation among British subjects (New Zealanders included) as a 'plucky little country' that punched above its weight and amusingly thwarted Britain's Russian rivals.<sup>111</sup> As the *New Zealand Herald* stated, "The development of Japan has opened the eyes of the world to the fact that a new Power has risen strong enough to upset calculations in Europe's dealings with Eastern Asia."<sup>112</sup> Such positivity towards Japan's rising fortunes stemmed from New Zealand's confidence in the power and security of the British Empire coupled with satisfaction in seeing the Empire's European rivals defeated. Britain, and by extension New Zealand, were not opposed to Japanese imperialist ambitions in the Pacific per se, provided such ambitions did not impinge upon British interests.<sup>113</sup>

Britain (and therefore New Zealand) remained neutral following the outbreak of war between Russia and Japan in 1905 over territorial disputes in Korea and Manchuria. Britain's obligations under the terms of the Anglo-Japanese alliance were to try and prevent other powers from joining the hostilities, and Japan for its part would not request military assistance from Britain unless 'special circumstances' arose.<sup>114</sup> As the conflict unfolded it soon became evident that no such circumstances were likely to arise. Britain maintained its neutrality throughout the conflict, but provided tacit support to Japan through bank loans<sup>115</sup> and by denying the Russian fleet access to British ports (although other 'neutrals' such as France and Germany turned a blind eye to Russian fleet movements).<sup>116</sup> Yet despite non-military support from Britain, the Japanese were more or less on their own in their conflict

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> *New Zealand Herald*. 28 September, 1905, p.4.

<sup>113</sup> Boston, p. 62.

<sup>114</sup> Nish (1966), p. 283.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, p.288.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, p.292.

with the much larger Russian fleet. As a consequence, Japan's victory greatly increased its international prestige, with the Japanese emperor himself being awarded the British Order of the Garter by the Duke of Connaught in February 1906.<sup>117</sup> This heightened international clout gave Japan increased leverage when it came to renewing the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, tying Britain further into its commitments in Northern China such as the retention and maintenance of the Waiheiwei naval base which had heretofore been allowed to stagnate.<sup>118</sup>

Japan's victory was won predominantly on its own merits without armed assistance from European powers, and some New Zealanders had misgivings as to the emigration trends that might eventuate resulting from an increase in Japanese military power. As one George Robertson put it in a letter to the editor in the *Evening Post* with regards to Japan's rising fortunes in the Russo-Japanese War:

Sir, — The attention of the whole civilised world is at present concentrated on the mighty struggle which is going on between Russ and Jap [*sic*] in the Far East and, as far as Britishers are concerned, the majority appear to favour the “little brown man.” What the ultimate result of the war will be it is very hard to say; but you have, on several occasions, pointed out some of the dangers which might arise in the event of Japan having it all her own way with Russia. The probable influx of Japanese into these colonies, to the serious detriment of the workers, has been hinted at more than once in your columns, and I may remark that in British Columbia, where there are from twenty to thirty thousand Japanese, not to mention Chinamen, the white man has a very poor chance in the struggle for existence. True, a danger of this kind might possibly be met in the colonies by special legislation, although the £100 poll-

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<sup>117</sup> T.G. Otte, “The Fragmenting of the Old World Order: Britain, the Great Powers and the War”, in Rotem Kowner (ed.), *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War*, New York: Routledge, 2007, p.100.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

tax does not seem to deter John Chinaman from coming here and prospering.<sup>119</sup>

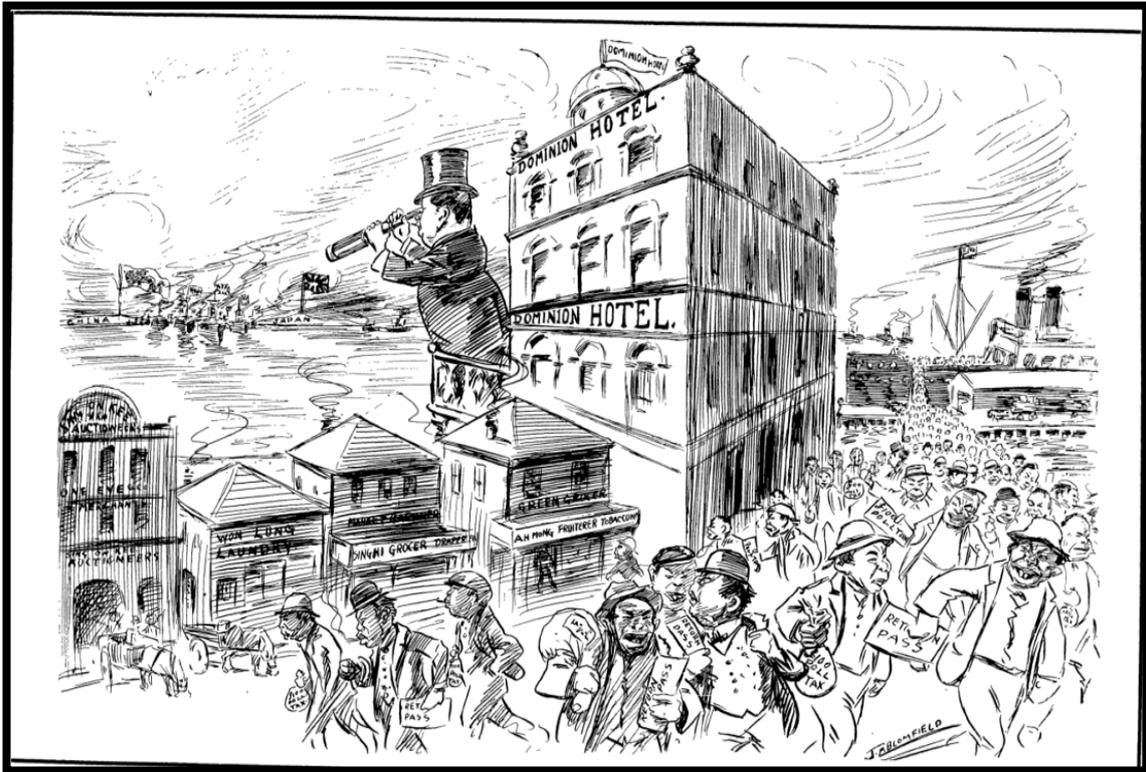
The racial distinctions drawn between the Chinese and Japanese by Pakeha were clearly muddy at this time. While it is clear that the writer was aware of the national distinction between China and Japan, he nevertheless clearly equated both nationalities in negative racial terms, sentiments which are in line with the ‘yellow peril’ fears of the nineteenth century.<sup>120</sup> Indeed, it would appear that in the eyes of the writer the ‘Jap’ was more or less of the same race of ‘little brown men’ as ‘John Chinaman’. Race thusly played a derogatory part in the New Zealand mindset regarding Japan’s rising fortunes. Indeed, Japan was often equated with China as a ‘Yellow Peril’ nation.<sup>121</sup> In figure 5, a cartoon published by the *New Zealand Free Lance* in 1908 portrays New Zealand prime minister Sir Joseph Ward gazing across the Pacific toward Japan and China exclaiming “Ah, I see that the real danger to these countries is the Yellow Peril. We must begin to look to our defences.” All the while, the prime minister is oblivious to the gleeful (and unfortunately caricatured) masses of Chinese and Japanese who have entered New Zealand right under his nose. The obvious inferences made by the cartoon, as well by citizens such as George Robertson, were that New Zealand had plenty to fear from an influx of newly emboldened Japanese, who were on par with the Chinese in their otherness and just as voracious in their cunning and will to inundate the Pacific territories of the Empire from British Columbia in the north to New Zealand in the south.

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<sup>119</sup> *Evening Post*, 5 November, 1904, p. 14.

<sup>120</sup> Iikura, p. 226.

<sup>121</sup> Jing Tsu, *Failure, Nationalism and Literature: The Making of Modern Chinese Identity 1895-1937*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005, p.86.



**Figure 5: Yellow Peril. *New Zealand Free Lance*. 1908. National Library of New Zealand. Retrieved from**

<http://natlib.govt.nz/records/3544113?search%5Bpath%5D=photos&search%5Btext%5D=yellow+peril>

The significance of the Russo-Japanese war on the psychology of New Zealanders was such that even in the lead up to the First World War, when German naval expansion was the foremost worry of British subjects worldwide regarding foreign militaries,<sup>122</sup> Japan's explosion onto the Pacific military landscape had become of major concern for New Zealand

<sup>122</sup> Marc Mulholland, *Bourgeois Liberty and the Politics of Fear: From Absolutism to Neo-Conservatism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, p.117.

commentators. Such sentiments were echoed by other white Pacific Rim societies. The Washington Post published a cartoon in 1905 entitled ‘Eastern Monroe Doctrine’, which portrayed caricatures of a Chinese boxer and a Japanese military officer standing arm in arm in front of a vanquished Russia as they stamp their mark defiantly on the Pacific while holding a placard stating ‘Asia for the Asiatics’ (see figure 6). Clearly, Japan was largely considered an ‘Asiatic’ nation in the eyes of white Pacific powers insofar as its demographic similarities with China were concerned. The areas where Japan differed from China in the public consciousness were to do with its military might. Japan was fast becoming what white New Zealanders, Australians and Americans feared: a militarily-developed Asian nation on the doorstep of the Pacific.<sup>123</sup>

Fears of Japan wove their way into New Zealanders’ attitudes toward other rivals as well. The dreadnought arms race between Britain and Germany in the early twentieth century drew the ire of New Zealand commentators, and received a scathing lambast in a *NZ Truth* article titled ‘The Dreadnought Idiocy’. The main point of the article was to draw attention to the unlikelihood of a German invasion of New Zealand compared to the relatively high probability of an attack by the Japanese.

Now, the Christchurch rag<sup>124</sup> is one of the many miserable, unpatriotic publications that have repeatedly made the assertion that New Zealand is such a mean and contemptible country that it cannot defend itself, and that if the good old Motherland is beaten we might as well hand our marble to Germany or Japan.

The valued correspondent closes his letter with the pungent sentence :— “You will recognise that the point of all this is that New Zealand should, as far as possible put herself in such a position that in six or eight years’ time,

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<sup>123</sup> Lissington, p. 94.

<sup>124</sup> The ‘Christchurch rag’ in this instance refers to the *Lyttelton Times*, which strongly advocated for reduced spending on defence and increased dependency on the British military.

should the British Fleet be smashed by Germany, she could still to some extent maintain her independence. It is a far cry from Hamburg to New Zealand, and a comparatively small body of well-trained men might be very effective at such a distance from the German supply base.” The valued correspondent might have, added that the distance between Japan and New Zealand is much shorter.<sup>125</sup>

Despite Germany being the focus of the author’s threatened sense of security, he nevertheless concludes the article with an ominously prophetic statement. Tellingly, some New Zealanders were already beginning to associate Japan with Britain’s avowed rivals, despite the Anglo-Japanese Alliance being in full effect. As flippant as the writer may have intended final sentence to be, it was close to the historical mark. Indeed, one generation later New Zealand would be at war with Japan, yet at the time of writing the two nations were officially allies and as such there was no overt indication of potential hostilities between them.<sup>126</sup> Regardless, at the time of writing, many Pakeha New Zealanders appear to have had deep-seated reservations regarding the rise of a Pacific military power whose cultural pedigree was considered well and truly foreign to that of the English-speaking nations, and who operated outside of said nations’ direct sphere of control.<sup>127</sup>

Yet not all commentators offered thinly-veiled indictments of Japan. If Pakeha saw Japan’s challenge to white dominance in the Pacific as a negative, Maori offered a contrasting perspective. Maori and Japanese had a history of contact extending back to 1884, when the Japanese naval training vessel *Tsukuba* visited Auckland harbour. The Japanese identified with Maori via their shared experience as non-whites in a geopolitical world dominated by Europeans, but they more often viewed Maori as an indigenous ‘native’ people

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<sup>125</sup> *NZ Truth*, 3 July, 1909, p. 4.

<sup>126</sup> Keith Neilson, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and British Strategic Foreign Policy, 1902-1914*, in Phillips O’Brien (ed.), *Anglo-Japanese Alliance 1902, 1922*, New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004 p.50.

<sup>127</sup> Gerald Horne, *Race War: White Supremacy and the Japanese Attack on the British Empire*, New York: New York University Press, 2004, p.4.

in common with Taiwanese aborigines and the Ainu of Hokkaido.<sup>128</sup> Maori in turn appear to have felt a degree of affinity for the Japanese. One Tomati Patini wrote an extensive letter to the *Otago Witness* in 1905 defending Japanese expansion and extolling the virtues of the Japanese people as wholesome, agrarian folk. He put forth his rationalisation as to why Japanese military expansion beyond ‘The Chinese Empire’ would be unlikely:

Sir, - The unbroken record of success of the Japanese arms from February 8, 1904, to the present date has induced a flood of literature bearing upon the future prospects, the aspirations, and intentions of the Japanese in the event of the war terminating in their favour, which now seems all but assured. Some writers picture Japan as a country with a population highly congested, and, flushed with success, will of necessity force expansion by encroaching on other nations. The horrors portrayed as following in the wake of their invading chariot wheels has been pictured in language calculated to inspire with fear the timid and unthinking. Russia we know, has done all she could to stimulate and encourage the wretched and misleading literary outflow. Germany, too, has not been much less suggestive, though the unquestioned result of the cruelly-provoked war now nearing finality is causing her to trim in view of her changing prospects in the East. Just recently we were advised that the Emperor did not allude to the Japanese as a “scourge of God.” Perhaps not, but the denial was long in coming. Japan has never hinted, so far as I am aware, that she desires or dreams of expansion outside her present field of action or that she has any fear or misgivings as to the efficiency or sufficiency of her island empire to sustain her present or future population.

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<sup>128</sup> Ken McNeil, ‘Encounters, 1860s to 1940s’, in Peren, Roger, *Japan and New Zealand – 150 Years*, Palmerston North: Hutchison, Bowman and Stuart, 1999, p.37.

The soil of Japan is not so rich as that of the Chinese Empire, neither is the proportion of its available productive area so favourable. The productiveness of Japan is chiefly accounted for by the great industry of its people. Their method of husbandry is primitive in the extreme. With modern appliances and methods the productiveness of their country is capable of vast improvements. They like a simple, frugal, and industrious life, and are cheerful, happy, and contented under the conditions which obtain in their loved island home.<sup>129</sup>

Interestingly, Patini then asserts with emotive and dramatic flourish that the Japanese victory over the Russians provided evidence as to the hypocrisy (or at the very least the ineffectuality) of the Christian religion as a civilising force, and by extension of the inherent weaknesses of European civilisation:

The present war teaches us, as no book can teach, the utter uselessness of Christianity as a humanising factor. We now know full well that the least success on the part of Christian Russia would be followed by the most pitiless and ruthless crimes on her crushed victims. Their country would be devastated, their homes plundered, and the chastity of their loved ones violated. The cry of the youthful innocents and the imploring appeals of their aged would afford no protection against Christian Russia. Russia is not alone in the debasing crimes that follow success. It is but recently that journalists cited instances of similar criminal barbarity following the success of the German soldier, and what was their Emperor's reply? In effect he coolly admitted the impossibility of restraining the brutal excesses of his conquering army in times of war. What a damning admission of the ineffectiveness of the

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<sup>129</sup> *The Otago Witness*, 30 August, 1905, p. 14.

humanising influence of Christianity. What a contrast we have following the continuous and overwhelming success of the Japanese arms. Here we have an army and navy flushed with the most complete success, exercising in their hour of victory every virtue that the mind of man upholds as an attribute flowing from a divine influence. Is it cause for comfort and consolation to be told that a few misguided Japanese are seceding from a religion that teaches such ennobling and all-reaching humanity and joining Christianity as exemplified by Russia? If so, decadence, not the uprise of Japan, has set in.<sup>130</sup>

While Patini's letter demonstrates an inherent empathy and admiration for the Japanese, it even more readily communicates a general dissatisfaction with European culture. Patini seems only to have a passing knowledge of Japanese culture, referring only to the Japanese 'religion' (presumably Shintoism or Buddhism) in a vague sense as a means of criticising Christianity by contrast. It appears as though the rise of an alternative power of non-European extraction provided a sense of empowerment for disaffected Maori in the early twentieth century. Regardless of how much Maori and Japanese actually had in common (indeed, the Japanese 'Yamato Race' never truly saw Pacific peoples as equals when it came to instituting a 'harmonious' society of co-prosperity,<sup>131</sup> and history would generally prove the alarmists correct in their assertions of Japan's expansionist goals beyond China), Japan's defeat of Russia proved that imperial power was not the exclusive domain of Europeans, and offered the tantalising prospect to a disempowered indigenous people that, sooner or later, all European empires might indeed fall.<sup>132</sup>

Ken McNeil's research into Maori-Japanese relations reveals that the Japanese had a keen interest in Maori culture from early in the twentieth century, predominantly with regards

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Dower, p. 265.

<sup>132</sup> Jon Davidann, "Citadels of Civilisation: U.S. and Japanese Views of World Order in the Interwar Period", in Richard Jensen, Jon Davidann and Yoneyuki Sugita (eds.), *Trans-Pacific Relations: America, Europe and Asia in the Twentieth Century*, Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2003, p. 38.

to their relationship with British colonists and the seeming inevitability of the Maori ethnicity's decline.<sup>133</sup> Early twentieth century Japanese ethnologists such as Kawase Imasu, Yoshino Sakuzo and Shiga Shigetaka admired the Maori adoption of Western mores insofar as they reflected an attitude that the Japanese believed that subject peoples should show their masters,<sup>134</sup> but also made much of a supposed Japanese-Maori shared ancestry based on philological similarities.<sup>135</sup> Such similarities also provided the basis upon ideals that would later form the moral bedrock of the Co-Prosperity Sphere, which would essentially constitute 'a Japanese empire made up of a plurality of ethnic peoples, joined together by a common destiny.'<sup>136</sup> Some amateur Pakeha philologists took these claims seriously, as one John Horne expounded to the *Taranaki Herald* in 1905:

Sir, - In common with some other Taranaki residents, I have for some time held the opinion that our fellow-countrymen, the Maoris, are a more or less remote offshoot of the Japanese race. Your reprint of the Japanese National Anthem in last Friday's issue more than ever convinces me of that fact. Many of your readers may have noticed the similarity between the Japanese and Maori languages when written in English characters, and the most significant fact of all is that every word of the Japanese anthem ends with a vowel, just as every Maori word does. In other respects, except by the vowel termination, there may be some differences in the Japanese and Maori languages of to-day, but that may easily be accounted for by the fact that possibly nine or ten centuries may have elapsed since the Maori left Japan, and no communication having been kept up with the motherland.

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<sup>133</sup> Ken McNeil, "New Zealand Through a Japanese Glass 1869-1944", *Japan Forum*, Vol. 18, Issue 1, March 2006, p. 37.

<sup>134</sup> McNeil (2006), p. 38.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*, p. 37.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*.

And such ties were not limited merely to linguistic similarities, but also to perceived resemblances in culture as well:

That the Maori has similar warlike qualities to the Japanese was amply evinced in the series of engagements with our own people prior to 1868. The superior physical development of the Maori over the Jap may be accounted for under the following headings - Firstly, that in the main he has lived a healthful out-of-doors life, untrammelled by civilized customs, in a mild and salubrious climate; secondly, he has lived a more natural or less artificial life than the people of Japan, and has had more room for development; thirdly, their inter-tribal wars prior to the advent of the European colonists naturally tended towards the elimination of the weaklings, or, in other words, the law of the survival of the fittest was tested by them to the utmost. The extraordinary obesity of the Maori woman may be accounted for by the fact that they have led a more easy and indolent life than their Japanese sisters could possibly have done,- I could say much more in proof of the Japanese origin of the Maori, but I have already intruded too much on your valuable space.<sup>137</sup>

The letter provides a rich vein of Pakeha stereotypes and sweeping amateur racial theories that reveal much of the ethnological prejudices that contributed to Pakeha identity, at least pertains to ‘Taranaki residents’. As was thematic for the time, a perception comes through strongly of both Maori and the Japanese being lazy, violent and inherently uncivilised, and therefore all the more likely to be genetically related. However, others were sceptical of such ancestral ties. Dr Thomas Hocken of Dunedin, reputedly ‘one of the best authorities on Maori and Maori customs in the South Island’ (despite being primarily trained as a medical doctor), was reported by several papers to have dismissed such links:

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<sup>137</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 17 April, 1905, p. 5.

Dr Hocken, who has always taken a great interest in the matter, states that he has made very careful investigations during his recent tour, both in Japan and elsewhere, and was to the conclusion that the Japanese and Maoris were not of the same race. He had long noted the resemblance between certain Maori and Japanese words, but had found that they had invariably differed widely in meaning, and after consultation with professors in the University in Japan it had become evident to him that the words could not be traced to a common source.<sup>138</sup>

Interestingly, the same report mentions that the matter of shared Maori-Japanese ancestry was raised by an interpreter accompanying a group of Japanese (presumably sumo) wrestlers performing in Otago, which provides evidence as to the degree of cultural exposure that Southern Pakeha had to Japanese people and customs in this period. The Japanese were largely a sort of foreign ‘museum people’ whose more intriguing cultural rituals (such as their marital arts) were at times on display to white audiences, but who remained largely a foreign enigma. These discussions about ethnic links between Maori and the Japanese would become increasingly central to the Japanese perception of themselves as natural leaders of the Pacific.<sup>139</sup> By contrast, these notions of shared ancestry would be increasingly dismissed or criticised by Pakeha as they realised their inherent political implications: that by characterising themselves as the ethnic relatives of Pacific peoples, the Japanese might claim a stronger mandate to govern the Pacific than that of the truly foreign Europeans.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> ‘Japanese and Maoris: Are They the Same Race?’ in *Timaru Herald*, 7 January, 1905, p. 3.

<sup>139</sup> Christopher Goto-Jones, *Political Philosophy in Japan: Nishida, the Kyoto School and Co-Prosperity*, New York: Routledge, 2005, p.99.

<sup>140</sup> Horne, p. 130.

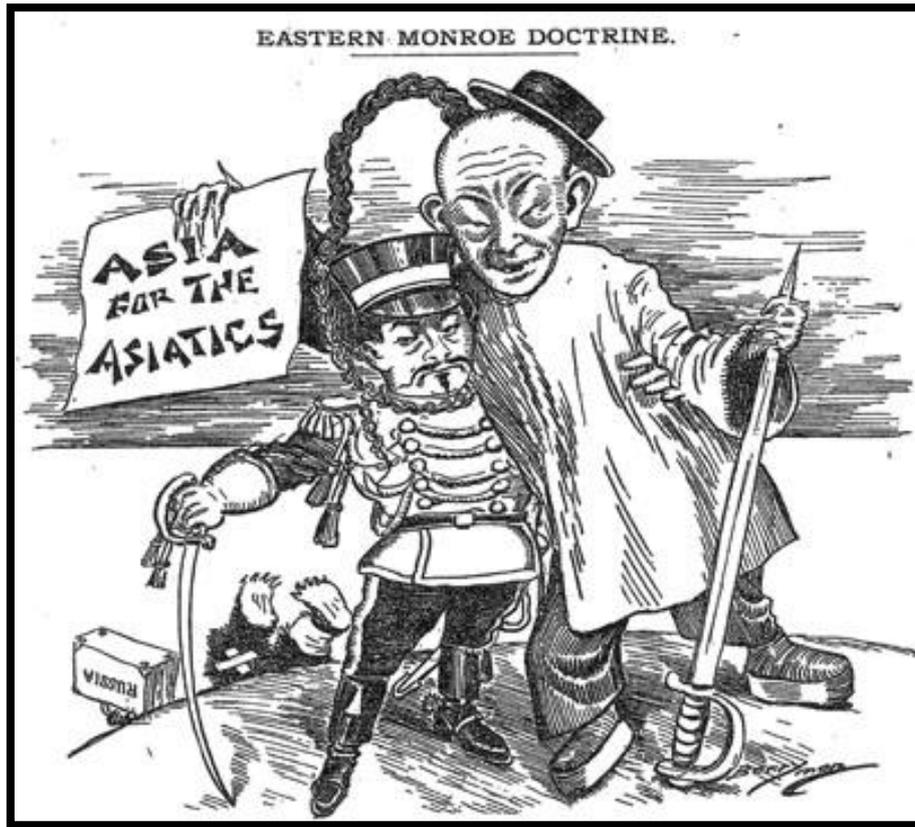


Figure 6: 'Eastern Monroe Doctrine'. *Washington Post*. July 24. 1905. Indiana University. Retrieved from <http://www.indiana.edu/~jia1915/war/doctrine29.html>

### The Annexation of Korea

The outcome of the Russo-Japanese war was convenient for New Zealand and Britain in many ways. Not only was a serious Pacific rival essentially eliminated as a naval force, but it was done so at no military and minimal financial cost to the British Empire.<sup>141</sup> However, it also consolidated Japan's naval position in the North Pacific and opened the door to imperialist expansion, the first country to bear the brunt of which being Korea.<sup>142</sup>

The Imperial Government of Japan officially annexed Korea on 22 August, 1910. The annexation was the culmination of a gradual erosion of Korean sovereignty that had been

<sup>141</sup> Otte, p.91.

<sup>142</sup> Alexis Dudden, *Japan's Colonisation of Korea: Discourse and Power*, University of Hawai'i Press, 2005, p.2.

playing out for almost three decades prior.<sup>143</sup> Korea had been an occupied Japanese protectorate since 1905 as a result of the Russo-Japanese war and had been under increasing Japanese economic influence since the Gangwha Treaty of 1876 (signed by the contemporary Joseon Kingdom of Korea).<sup>144</sup> For New Zealanders, insofar as they actually concerned themselves about goings-on in Asia, Korea's annexation served as a clarification to the New Zealand public that Japan had imperial ambitions. The Russo-Japanese war awakened Western societies to the significance of the Japanese military, and the annexation of Korea further signalled Japan's imperialist goals to the European empires that already jealously guarded their international territories. An editorial in the *Marlborough Express* condemned Japan's annexation of Korea in no uncertain terms:

If Japan really has made up her mind to annex Korea as we have been informed by cable that it is her intention to do, it is hardly likely that any other Power, or even combination of Powers, will push their opposition to such a project further than by making a diplomatic protest. Korea is at present nominally a Japanese protectorate; but the Japanese practically occupy and rule the country. The "protectorate" differs only in name from an actual possession. The methods adopted by the Japanese in the so-called "pacification" of Korea have been worthy of the Turk in his worst period. Naturally a peaceful, almost timid race, the hapless Koreans have been ruthlessly ill-treated by the Japanese police, and this despite frequent protests from European missionaries and traders. It would almost appear as if Japan had deliberately attempted to goad the Koreans into open revolt, in order to afford an excuse for annexation, and recent American and English visitors to

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<sup>143</sup> Ian McGibbon, *New Zealand and the Korean War. Volume 1. Politics and Diplomacy*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp 2-3.

<sup>144</sup> Young-lob Chung, *Korea Under Siege 1876-1945: Capital Formation and Economic Transformation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 42.

the Far East all agree that the conduct of our allies has been most tyrannical and unjust.

The aforementioned ‘visitors’ are not specifically identified, but emotive, oriental comparisons to the Turk-like Japanese dominating the ‘hapless’ and ‘timid’ Koreans would have served to ignite anti-Eastern sentiment that had been a part of the Western Christian psyche since the Crusades.<sup>145</sup> Such a passive-aggressive call to arms suggested that Japan’s imperial ambitions needed to be checked by Western powers while cynically doubting the West’s nerve to take the required military action. The undertones of goading indignation in the author’s voice suggests that some in New Zealand believed that perceived Western complacency and lack of conviction in military affairs would allow a lesser ‘barbarian’ people, in the robust vigour of their ascendancy, to overthrow a noble and civilised world order. Yet despite the author’s vexation, his overall analysis of the situation regarding the outlook for British interests in Australasia was calculatedly pragmatic:

So far as the Australasian States are concerned, the Japanese annexation and its natural and inevitable corollary, the Japanese colonisation of Manchuria, would be an excellent thing. It would postpone, probably for half a century at least, any attempt on the part of Japan to demand or insist upon the opening up of the Northern Territory of Australia to Japanese immigration. The climate of Manchuria is much more suitable than that of Northern Australia for the Japanese, and the territory is so close to Japan itself that there can be no comparison, in point of convenience of transport and control, between the two territories. Out of evil may sometimes come good, whatever the moralists may contend to the contrary. It would not be difficult to prove that the Japanese annexation of Korea, to be followed in a few years to come by a vast

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<sup>145</sup> Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, p.81.

emigration of Japanese to Manchuria, would, although perhaps inimical to British, American, and Chinese commercial interests in the Far East, largely minimise the danger of the “little brown men” ever attempting the invasion of Australia.<sup>146</sup>

Again, the fear of ‘inundation’ is thematic in the Pakeha attitude to Japan. Tongue-in-cheek as it may have been intended, the editorial demonstrates the growing sense of insecurity within the Anglo-Saxon world with regards to Japanese ascendancy. It may be construed that New Zealanders thought it was far better that the ‘little brown men’ of China should suffer in the place of whites, and that such suffering could indeed be seen as ‘consolation’, even if meant in jest, demonstrates the hurt pride among Anglo-Saxons that the military power of Europeans should be challenged (and bested, as was the case with Russia) so convincingly by an Asian people. The trend in editorials and letters from this time is that New Zealanders and Australians were beginning to fear Japan not just in terms of a horde of anonymous peasant labourers who might upset Western economies, but as a powerful state and military force in its own right, one whom it was now beyond the strength of European powers to control. As the decades progressed and Japan became increasingly mired in conflicts on the Chinese mainland, the previously mentioned praise heaped upon Japanese victories by the likes of Tomati Patini would eventually dissipate, in a sense vindicating the hardnosed cynicism toward Japan’s ambitions demonstrated here by the *Marlborough Express*.

Both the justifications and denunciations of Japan’s wars in Asia were made with equal fervour. Japanese propagandists insisted that their increased militarism in the early twentieth century was in order to stave off the predations of Western empires,<sup>147</sup> while Western powers became increasingly hostile to Japan’s ambitions in an effort to curb its

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<sup>146</sup> *The Marlborough Express*, 21 May, 1910, p. 4.

<sup>147</sup> Barak Kushner, *The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda*, University of Hawai’i Press, 2006, p.8.

seemingly voracious imperial appetite.<sup>148</sup> But not all Western interpretations of Japan's military foray into Korea were negative. Indeed, Japan's initial forays in imperialism at the turn of the century were generally met with a tepid bemusement in Western diplomatic circles.<sup>149</sup> A moderate account of Korea's annexation appearing in the *Evening Post's* weekly 'spectator summary' article for the week ending August 27, 1910, entitled 'A Serious Step':

The most important foreign news of the week is the announcement that Japan is about to annex Korea. Thus Japan ceases to be an island kingdom, and turns her provisional undertakings on the continent of Asia into permanent responsibilities. It is a serious step, even though it has appeared inevitable for some time. The British Foreign Office has issued a statement that no objection has been taken "on political grounds" to Japan's decision. The commercial effect of annexation has been "receiving consideration," but no statement can be made till the conditions of annexation are published. It would, of course, be a grave matter for our trade if the severe Japanese tariff were imposed against us in Korea. Hitherto trade in Korea has been governed by the pledge of Japan under treaty to grant equal commercial opportunities to all nations. She will not attempt, we imagine, to change that stipulation without the consent of those principally affected by it.<sup>150</sup>

That 'no objection was taken on political grounds' demonstrates the moral neutrality of Japan's imperialist ambitions in British eyes. In 1910, Western attitudes to Japan's military had not yet adopted the monstrous connotations that they would in the nineteen thirties and forties when Japan's enterprises increasingly encroached upon Western interests and war appeared more imminent. At this early stage in Japan's imperial development, the annexation

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<sup>148</sup> Dower, p. 27.

<sup>149</sup> Young Park, *Korea and the Imperialists: In Search of a National Identity*, Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2009, p. 109.

<sup>150</sup> *Evening Post*, 22 October, 1910, p. 12.

of Korea took on more of a metaphorical significance in the sense of a child leaving the world of schoolyard antics and ‘provisional undertakings’ and graduating into the adult realm of ‘permanent responsibilities’.

There were ample reports of the takeover in New Zealand print. These were usually brief, terse and matter-of-fact, focusing largely on such topics as how the annexation would affect British economic interests<sup>151</sup> and tariff arrangements,<sup>152</sup> in addition to reports on historical grievances<sup>153</sup> and violent animosities between Koreans and Japanese ‘settlers’.<sup>154</sup> Yet letters to the editor regarding the annexation were relatively sparse. Clearly, the annexation’s economic repercussions were foremost among New Zealanders’ concerns, if they had concerns at all. With regard to the *Evening Post* editorial, no attention was paid to the humanitarian aspects of the annexation, but rather it focused on anxieties that readers may have felt regarding commercial interests in Asia. It is telling that the British Foreign Office’s reaction to the annexation was mentioned, but the New Zealand government’s was not. For the most part New Zealanders clearly looked to Britain for leadership regarding how best to interact with Japan, which is in keeping with New Zealand’s general policy of abdicating responsibility for diplomatic relations and hoping Britain would act with its Pacific interests in mind.<sup>155</sup> It is also worth noting that the opinions expressed in papers from Wellington, Wanganui and the Manawatu were similarly pragmatic in their coverage of the annexation, and the opinions voiced in *The Marlborough Express* differed mainly in the amount of emotive drama with which they were expressed, rather than the viewpoint themselves. This suggests that regionalism played little part in the formation of the writers’ viewpoints. Yet regardless of how much initiative the New Zealand government and its people were willing to take concerning diplomatic relations with Japan, at this point in history Japan’s status was

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<sup>151</sup> *Wanganui Chronicle*, 30 July, 1910, p. 5.

<sup>152</sup> *Wanganui Chronicle*, 30 August, 1910, p. 5.

<sup>153</sup> *Manawatu Times*, 5 January, 1910, p. 3.

<sup>154</sup> *Evening Post*, 2 February, 1910, p. 7.

<sup>155</sup> Tom Brooking, *The History of New Zealand*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004, p.187.

swiftly graduating from 'little brown men' as the nation launched itself violently onto the radar of New Zealand and the rest of the Pacific.

## Chapter Three

### A Polite Commitment: The Anglo-Japanese Alliance in Effect

The Russo-Japanese war helped cement Japan's place diplomatically as a valued bulwark against perceived Russian and German incursions into the Pacific, and the First World War only strengthened this sense of Anglo-Japanese fellowship.<sup>156</sup> On a more 'street' level, it also helped raise the spectre of Asian militarism encroaching on British Pacific interests, which included New Zealand itself. However, in New Zealanders' eyes, Germany was a more pressing concern, and for the most part the 'Brown Briton' stereotype triumphed over that of the 'Yellow Peril' in the early decades of the twentieth century as a result of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and its assurances of Japanese support in the face of German hostility. The *Feilding Star* published a report lambasting anti-Asian sentiments throughout the Empire (though the author seemingly couldn't resist using emotive verbs to describe an Indian population who "... over-runs South Africa as a small dealer and trader as much as the Chinese fruiterer over-runs Wellington.")<sup>157</sup>, and a letter to the *Manawatu Standard* railed against the newly introduced White Australia policy, asking "Why should any British subject, white, black, brown or yellow, be debarred from landing and residing in any part of the British Empire?"<sup>158</sup> Indeed, it seemed to be a time of somewhat liberal sentiments expressed in old racist tautology. There was a sense that the Japanese were as close to the ideal of British gentlemanliness that an Asian ethnic group could aspire to. Images were published following the Russo-Japanese war that denoted the sporting dignity of the Japanese (see figure 7). An illustration published in *The Otago Witness* in 1905 depicted Japanese Admiral Togo visiting his former Russian rival Admiral Rozhdestvensky in hospital following the Russian defeat (see figure 7). The paper reported it to be a most sporting gesture, indicative

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<sup>156</sup> Nish (1966), p. 372.

<sup>157</sup> *Feilding Star*, 8 February, 1908, p. 2.

<sup>158</sup> *Manawatu Standard*, 15 June, 1905, p. 3.

of the “high character of the victors.”<sup>159</sup> And indeed, later reports at the opening of hostilities during the First World War praised Japan’s ‘punctilious courtesy’ in how they selectively and carefully shelled the German fleet at Tsingtau while sparing the town.<sup>160</sup> And so essentially, New Zealand’s attitude to the Japanese in the decade from 1910 was one of pragmatic approval. To many New Zealanders at this time the Japanese were by no means an equal (or even fathomable) people, yet their aid in hampering the expansion of the British Empire’s European rivals was welcome.



**Figure 7: Togo Visits Rozhdestvensky in Hospital. 1905. The National Library of New Zealand. Retrieved from <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/14551593>**

### **War Loyalty and Trade Rivalry**

The outbreak of the First World War meant that fears of a demographic flood from Asia were put to one side in favour of military expedience. Japan was seen as a valued ally who

<sup>159</sup> The National Library of New Zealand. Retrieved from <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/14551593>

<sup>160</sup> *Wanganui Chronicle*, 18 November 1914, p. 5.

contributed admirably to the British war effort, with the Japanese navy playing a key role in escorting colonial British troops from the Pacific to European battlefields.<sup>161</sup> Yet old racial chauvinisms died hard, and despite New Zealand's reliance on Japanese naval resources at this time there seems to still have been an abundance of racial denigration in New Zealand toward the Japanese as an ethnic group. It appears that less-than-favourable depictions of the Japanese found their way into films on show in Wellington in 1915, yet there were voices of protest regarding such caricatures among the Wellington public. One concerned 'Briton' wrote to the *Evening Post* in 1916, in a letter titled, *Is it Objectionable?*

Sir, — "Is New Zealand loyal to Great Britain's Allies?" This was the question I asked myself after spending an hour in a picture theatre last night. A few weeks ago some Japanese training vessels visited the Dominion and were received with acclamation and honour at all ports, everyone apparently approving of the loyalty of Japan to Great Britain, which is undoubted, as all her actions since the present war began have proved. Against this worthy nation's actions we have those of America. Yet in spite of the fact that we are straining every effort to win a great war, and each individual to do his or her best to this end, our noble ally is being shown as something beneath contempt and America glorified, in a picture now showing in this town. Sir, as a true Briton who has fought for his flag, I ask you in all justice to our ally to use every effort in your power to prevent a further production of this picture anywhere in the Dominion during the duration of this war.<sup>162</sup>

The 'picture' in question is not named (though it may refer to the 1915 silent film rendition of *Madame Butterfly* directed by Sidney Olcott and starring the white Canadian Mary

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<sup>161</sup> Lissington, p. 25.

<sup>162</sup> *Evening Post*. 8 September, 1916, p. 8.

Pickford as the Japanese Cho-Cho-San. Numerous articles<sup>163</sup> refer to cinema and theatre presentations of *Madame Butterfly* around this time), but it is telling that the writer's defence of Japan in this case is based on issues of wartime loyalty, rather than perceived injustices of racial stereotyping. The United States was not yet involved in the First World War, and so patriotic citizens of 'the Dominion' (a choice of title emphasizing New Zealand's 'Britishness') may have felt a deeper sense of duty to the Japanese navy that was 'doing its bit' for the war effort than they did toward another 'white' nation who was nevertheless uninvolved in British struggles. That the writer suggests censorship of the film take place for the duration of the war indicates that New Zealanders believed they should stick up for Japan for as long as gentlemanly decorum and military expedience demanded it, rather than out of any sense of cultural empathy or racial equality. This begs the question as to whether racial slurs were seen as acceptable after the war had ended and necessity was no longer a factor. Indeed, there is little expression of camaraderie with the Japanese in printed sources that does not stem from a sense of wartime obligations to official allies. A round-about answer to this question comes from the editor's reply to the letter;

In the opinion of other critics exception can, with some reason, be taken to the picture referred to by our correspondent. The general theme is, they state, not an attractive one. We understand the film was produced in America, where the anti-Japanese sentiment is fairly strong. The people of New Zealand recognise the valuable part played by Japan in the present war, and it is doubtful if such a picture as that under notice would prejudice public opinion against Japan to any appreciable extent. On the other hand, it is not, in the opinion of critics, calculated to foster sympathy. The censorship regulations come into force on 3rd October, after which date all pictures to

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<sup>163</sup> *Evening Post*, 21 December, 1916, p. 3. *Dominion*, 21 December, 1916, p. 3. *Poverty Bay Herald*, 7 September, 1916, p. 5. *Press*, 16 October, 1916, p. 4. *Otago Daily Times*, 21 August, 1916, p. 8.

which genuine exception can be taken will be prohibited. The managements of the various picture theatres in Wellington have always shown a commendable desire to study the public, and, generally speaking, exercise a strict supervision over the pictures.<sup>164</sup>

Clearly there were Pakeha sympathetic to the dignity of the Japanese in public depictions, yet the editor points out that the key point of difference between New Zealand's and the United States' attitude to Japan was recognition of Japan's services as a war ally. Were it not for such a military alliance, it is possible that there would have been more tacit support for American-style anti-Japanese sentiment, as both the letter and the reply to it make no reference to any inherent dignity of the Japanese, but rather they stress the perceived duty of New Zealanders to not speak ill of wartime allies. The editor defends Japan's 'valuable part' in the war, but does nothing to denounce the perceived anti-Japanese attitudes inherent in the American film, which suggests that an anti-Japanese undercurrent based on racial grounds was present in New Zealand which was nevertheless swept under the rug for the sake of military expedience. Other bulletins received via telegraph and distributed throughout New Zealand papers venerated the Japanese for standing 'staunchly to the Allies until Prussian militarism is overthrown,' emphasising that "She may approve of the return of Kaiochau to China, but is determined to drive out the German menace from Asia."<sup>165</sup> The point of similarity between New Zealand and Japan emphasised in this context was thusly borne out of patriotism and loyalty as a result of military allegiance, not genuine admiration or camaraderie.

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<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> *Poverty Bay Herald*, 16 December, 1916, p. 5.



Figure 8: The Battleship *Iwate* Visits Wellington. 1916. Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand. Retrieved from <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/1215/visiting-a-naval-ship>



**Figure 9: The Companies of the *Iwate* and *Azuma* visit Rotorua with the Hons. G.W. Russell, A.M. Myers and a Maori Guide. 1916. *Alexander Turnbull Library*. Retrieved from Trotter, p. 76.**

The patriotic associations between New Zealanders and the Japanese also stemmed from the compatibility of Japanese cultural mores with British ideals of honour, decorum and formality that the middle and upper classes of both nations shared.<sup>166</sup> Photographs of the visit from the Japanese battleships *Iwate* and *Azuma* in 1916 (see figures 8, 9 and 10) demonstrate the formality of the Japanese public persona: the impeccable military uniforms, the stiff posture of officers, the emotionally neutral facial expressions. Indeed, ethnic differences aside, the appearance of the Japanese in these photographs is very similar to the appearance of their ‘British’ New Zealand counterparts. These posed images draw strong parallels with the vernacular used in contemporary letters and editorials in that the posture of both the Japanese officers and New Zealand dignitaries exudes the ‘honour’ referred to by the ‘Briton’

<sup>166</sup> Keiko Itoh, *The Japanese Community in Pre-War Britain: From Integration to Disintegration*, New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 29.

who railed against the undignified portrayal of the Japanese in film. In these images we see two peoples whose obsession with formality makes them likely friends, but whose ethnic differences and prejudices ultimately keep such amicability to a stiff and distant level. There is a sense of military formality in these images that suggests a commonplace view among Pakeha at this time that respectability comes through how one conducts oneself in formal situations, and in this context the Japanese truly do seem to be accepted and celebrated as being the aforementioned ‘Brown Britons’. Indeed, such an aesthetic and moral viewpoint of Japanese gentility had been cultivated by British sociologists and socialites alike since Japan opened its culture to the Victorian Empire. The British wanted to view Japan as a dignified, civilising force in Asia, insofar as the Japanese reflected British middle class mores, and the Japanese were happy to live up to such orientalist expectations in order to increase their global standing.<sup>167</sup> In the photographs, the Japanese naval officers appeared to have been met with welcoming, if somewhat stiff and distant, approval by New Zealand dignitaries. The garb of the lone ‘Maori guide’ in figure 9 reflects the degree of spectacle tourism on the part of the Pakeha hosts who sought to show off the curiosities of New Zealand’s ‘natives’ as a point of fascination for the Japanese,<sup>168</sup> who had their own interests in indigenous populations.<sup>169</sup> When viewed in this context, there are distinct imperial undertones to the photograph; as if the British Empire were demonstrating the reach and stability of its *imperium* over non-white peoples to the officers of a nation that sought to become a non-white empire in its own right.

In the previous piece, the editor, much like the contributor, defended Japan seemingly out of a sense of obligation to preserve the dignity of one’s wartime allies. This attitude was

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<sup>167</sup> John Walter de Gruchy, *Orientalism and the Creation of Japanese Literature in English*, University of Hawai’i Press, 2003, pp.17-18.

<sup>168</sup> Karen Fox, *Maori and Aboriginal Women in the Public Eye: Representing Difference 1950-2000*, Canberra: ANU E Press, 2011, p.97.

<sup>169</sup> Faye Yuan Kleeman, *Under an Imperial Sun: Japanese Colonial Literature of Taiwan and the South*, University of Hawai’i Press, 2003, p.20.

thematic in many other contemporary opinion pieces such as this one from the *Wairarapa Daily Times*, with the title itself being representative of New Zealand's political attitude to Japan at this time:

SHODDY PATRIOTISM.

Sir, —Will you permit me to express my regret at your permitting a correspondent, under the nom-de-plume of “Trade,” during this time of stress and crisis through which the British Empire is passing, to voice his spleen and hatred in your usually patriotic columns, at Britain's gallant ally and faithful friend—Japan. It appears to me that his bitterness and hatred are only equalled by his ignorance, for were he able to realise how greatly we are indebted as a nation for the assistance she has extended to us during this world-wide war, he would have hesitated before he ventured to point the finger of scorn at “such a nation as Japan.” We may, however, I think, treat his utterances with the contempt they deserve, as it is not difficult, under the nom-de-plume he has assumed, to detect the trail of the pro-German. Apologising for trespassing on your valuable space.—I am, etc., A BRITISHER.<sup>170</sup>

War tensions clearly ran high for the writer to defend Japan so vehemently as to accuse those who do not display an acceptable degree of wartime allegiance of being in league with the German enemy. New Zealanders were quick to defend Japan on patriotic grounds as a means of showing solidarity among wartime allies, but, as mentioned, such wartime solidarity did not necessarily equate with a sense of kinship, or even camaraderie. Japan was thoroughly ‘other’ to the New Zealand identity. New Zealanders seemed to buy in fully with the attitudes of other English speaking nationalities whereby the Japanese could never be seen being on a

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<sup>170</sup> *Wairarapa Daily Times*, April 10, 1915, p 5.

truly equal ethnic footing with European peoples.<sup>171</sup> The aforementioned unpatriotic ‘voicing of spleen’ to which the ‘Britisher’ referred had appeared in the previous day’s edition of the *Wairarapa Daily Times*, under the title of *Commercial Enterprise*;

Sir, —This matter is again before the people of this country, and we have at present the Japanese Trade Commission in Wellington, trying to secure the trade formerly carried on by Germany. Well, this is of great importance to our future, both commercially and nationally, because it means that we would be starving our own people to feed the people of another nation. Any article produced in Japan can be produced within the British Empire, and this being a fact one would hardly think it fit to buy from such a nation as Japan, which will, if not at present, later be hostile to our cause. Now that we have an opportunity to capture the trade not already in our possession, why should we let it slip? There is no doubt that it will be a very long time before such an opportunity offers itself again. We, the people of a great commercial and manufacturing nation, should not let our own trades be idle, just because we can buy a cheaper article of foreign manufacture, which is far from the British standard. What is the use of sending men from New Zealand to lay down their lives for our freedom if we are going to build up a nation as we did Germany? Why, we are going the right way to have within the course of a few years a war which may not end so favourably to us as this one will. Hoping this will be a warning to the far-sighted people of New Zealand. —I am, etc.,  
TRADE.<sup>172</sup>

Economic protectionism trounced wartime loyalties in the hierarchy of Pakeha social imperatives. The sentiment of ‘Buy New Zealand made’ (or at least, ‘Buy British’) appears to

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<sup>171</sup> Dower, p 78.

<sup>172</sup> *Wairarapa Daily Times*, April 9, 1915, p. 5.

have held wide-spread appeal among the economy-minded New Zealand citizenry. Pakeha in this era saw themselves as belonging to a ‘great commercial and manufacturing nation’ whose fortunes nevertheless rested on the pragmatic exploitation of economic inequalities, which in no small part extended to ensuring that foreign nations (of which, Japan was certainly seen as being one) were not assisted in their push for economic development. Similar sentiments had already been voiced in the same paper by a writer who signed off simply as ‘A Briton’.

Sir,—The folly of buying a cheap article of foreign production has, by this war, exposed itself, and we, as a nation, should not let it occur again. Japan appears to be trying to capture the trade lately held by Germany, but we should not be led astray by this move. Japan is at present one of our allies, but we should watch her closely, for she is the next rival for the command of the seas, and will, by capturing German trade, make herself a very powerful rival. The Japs produce the cheap article which has hitherto been produced in Germany, and we, as a self-governing people, should, if we want freedom, refuse anything other than the goods produced in Britain and British Dominions. I make this appeal to the sane people of the British Dominions, not as I did before, but in the press, because I think that it should be pointed out to the people before it is too late.<sup>173</sup>

The writer’s anonymity makes it difficult to ascertain what the appeals made ‘before’ entailed, but it is clear that these writers were loath to support Asian economies at the perceived expense of the British Commonwealth. Indeed, the very monikers that writers chose reflected how Pakeha New Zealanders saw themselves in relation to Japan. The newspaper editorial sections were awash with ‘Britons’ and ‘Britishers’ and other such

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<sup>173</sup> *Wairarapa Daily Times*, March 19, 1915, p. 5.

writers who based their identity on their status as subjects of the British Empire. As far as economic protectionism was concerned, the views of such British loyalists carried the usual refrains of buying locally in order to maintain national industries, but they nevertheless contained a significant element of Anglo-Saxon racial chauvinism and animosity toward those they considered anathema to British interests. Behind these exchanges was the worry that a sort of Asian slave labour would undercut the competitiveness of New Zealand industries and reduce the standard of living enjoyed by citizens of the British Empire.<sup>174</sup> The views of these writers echo those of twenty-first century commentators who have lamented New Zealand businesses outsourcing their production bases to Asia in search of lower overheads, the closure of Dunedin's Fisher and Paykel plant in favour of production facilities in Thailand in 2008 being only one case in point:

[Fisher and Paykel CEO John Bongard] rejected the suggestion Fisher and Paykel was focusing on doing business in low-wage economies, but noted New Zealand manufacturing could not compete against imports from those economies.<sup>175</sup>

Indeed, for New Zealanders, Japan was the looming economic menace in the early twentieth century, just as many believe China to be in the early twenty first.<sup>176</sup> Columnist Bryan Gould wrote in *NZ Herald* in August 2012:

The goods we import instead of making ourselves might, for example, have a higher value than those we concentrate on exporting. That seems to be the case with China; while we congratulate ourselves on increasing our primary product exports to China, we try not to notice the much greater increase in the value of our manufactured imports from that country. And we have to pay for

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<sup>174</sup> Lissington, p. 2.

<sup>175</sup> *Otago Daily Times*. April 18, 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/3601/bitterness-after-480-jobs-axed>

<sup>176</sup> "China 'Main Threat to UK Economy.'" BBC News, 6 February, 2006. Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/4686306.stm>

those imports across the foreign exchanges, imposing a further burden on our balance of payments - a burden we already struggle to manage.<sup>177</sup>

Written almost a century later, Gould's views match those of 'A Briton' with regard to the import of 'cheap' goods of Asian manufacture. Again the spectre of inundation haunted the conversation: not inundation of people in this case, but of goods produced so cheaply as to render local companies unable to compete. Again the author warns of threats to the nation's long-term standard of living (and perhaps even its survival) if addiction to cheap goods is not curbed. The Briton's 'nation' was one in which Europeans enjoyed demographic, political and economic dominance, and Gould's is not much different (according to the 2006 census, the majority of New Zealanders with weekly incomes over \$500 were Pakeha)<sup>178</sup>. Hence, the perceived threat of Asian economic power upsetting this dominance (and potentially lowering European people's standard of living and earning to an equivalent to that of the 'masses' of Asia) permeates every aspect of the Pakeha economic worldview.

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<sup>177</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, August 7, 2012. Retrieved from [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=3&objectid=10825050](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=10825050)

<sup>178</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/graph/23808/weekly-income-by-ethnicity>



**Figure 10: Japanese Sailors from the *Iwate* and *Azuma* demonstrate Sumo Wrestling Techniques. Wellington. 1916. *Alexander Turnbull Library*. Retrieved from Trotter, p. 75.**

New Zealanders were clearly worried about Japan's increasing economic and military clout, but for Japan's part, there was little political wherewithal to engage in 'internationalist' policies. As Hosoya Chichiro explained in his analysis of Japan's post-war international outlook, "The Japanese delegation to the Paris Peace Conference... were instructed by Tokyo not to play an active role in matters not involving their direct interest. They remained a 'silent partner', not making any contribution to the effort to build a new international order."<sup>179</sup> Indeed, Japan's inclination toward isolationism stemmed in no small part from a series of rebuffs from foreign powers, and indeed Genrō oligarch Yamagata Aritomo was supposedly

<sup>179</sup> Chichiro Hosoya, "Britain and the United States in Japan's View of the International System, 1919-37", in Ian Nish, *Anglo-Japanese Alienation 1919-1952: Papers of the Anglo-Japanese Conference on the History of the Second World War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 5.

obsessed with the notion of a white imperialist ‘anti-yellow bloc’ forming after the First World War.<sup>180</sup> The Japanese had assumed that German Pacific territories would be ceded to them by the British, but instead a mere mandate was granted at the behest of Lloyd George, and this was interpreted as a ‘betrayal of British friendship toward Japan’ by privy councillor Ito Miyoji.<sup>181</sup> Likewise, the fledgling League of Nations’ refusal to insert a passage calling for the elimination of racial discrimination into its covenant was a further indication to Japanese policy makers that the Western world did not truly value Japan’s contributions to the international order.<sup>182</sup> In addition, Japan was increasingly focusing its resources onto expansion into China at the expense of European ventures there.<sup>183</sup> Therefore, the stage was therefore set for a decidedly cooler relationship between Japan and New Zealand leading into the 1920s. On the one hand, Japanese contributions to the war effort had been appreciated by the New Zealand public. Yet on the other, New Zealanders were vehemently opposed to any further increase in Japanese fortunes in the Pacific. Likewise, the groundwork was beginning to be laid for factions within the Japanese government and military to begin a more assertive imperialist stance in foreign policy.<sup>184</sup>

It was not only British imperial patriots filling the editorials in an attempt to rouse mistrust toward rising Japanese fortunes, self-proclaimed socialists too had their misgivings. Daniel Hay, writing in *Maoriland Worker* penned a scathing rebuke of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1921 when the treaty was scheduled for renewal. The piece (some two and a half thousand words in length) reads as pseudo-historic narrative of Japan’s meteoric rise in economic and military power. It contained clear cautionary undertones hinting at the insatiability of the Japanese military’s supposed lust for conquest, and was written in a tone

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<sup>180</sup> Thomas W. Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations: Empire and World Order 1914-1938*, University of Hawai’i Press, 2008, p.27.

<sup>181</sup> Hosoya, p.5.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> Srivastava Joshi, *International Relations*, Meerut: Privisha, 1978, p.157.

<sup>184</sup> Ian Nish, *Japanese Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period*, Westport: Praegar Publishers, 2002, p.18.

that foreshadowed the overtly derogatory caricatures of Japanese soldiers in the wartime propaganda images of the 1940s.<sup>185</sup> He began:

This month it will be decided whether the Anglo-Japanese Treaty is to be renewed. Mr. Massey, who as Premier of New Zealand, will attend the sittings of the Imperial Conference will claim to represent the views of the people of this country. As far as the people can be said to hold views on this or any other subject he will probably be right. It is unfortunate that the public have shown so little interest in this question. There has been no adequate discussion about it, either in Parliament or the daily papers. The status of the market for wool meat, butter, and cheese appear to be of far more importance than a Treaty which may presently involve us in another war; for the Treaty is a military-alliance which provides, for combined action in the Pacific by Great Britain and Japan. Mr. Massey has said that there- was nothing to lose, and probably much to gain by its renewal. I question his statement. In case of war we in New Zealand would certainly suffer.<sup>186</sup>

Reading between the lines would suggest that while Japan's economic fortunes were a source of consternation for New Zealanders whose interests lay in foreign relations, they did not occupy the worries of most 'everyday' New Zealanders at this time. The overall tone of the piece lacks the overtly racist vitriol and allusions to Japanese bestialism that would manifest in the war years of the forties,<sup>187</sup> yet the message remained unflattering regarding Japanese ambitions. The conversation (perhaps inevitably considering Pakeha attitudes toward Asian 'inundation') turned to issues of Japanese migration. Hay continued:

The amazingly rapid rise of Japan is one of the most significant facts of the twentieth century. Fifty years ago the Japanese were a medieval people

<sup>185</sup> Robert Fyne, *The Hollywood Propaganda of World War II*, London: Scarecrow Press, 1994, p.74.

<sup>186</sup> *Maoriland Worker*, 15 June, 1921, p. 2.

<sup>187</sup> Cf. Dower, Chapter 1.

living in a state of picturesque feudalism, almost unknown to the Western races and counting for nothing in world politics. To-day their ambitious and aggressive foreign policy is the greatest menace to the peace of the world. In the nineteenth century no Japanese were permitted to go abroad; they were as completely shut off from the world as if they lived upon Mars. To-day they are challenging the right of any country to deny them admittance. In 1854 Commodore Perry, with ten American warships, appeared in-Japanese waters and made proposals for trade and intercourse. Attended by a guard of 500 men he signed a treaty opening Japan to the world. To-day, the Japanese in their turn claim the right to settle in America, and many are willing to enforce their demands by a huge army and navy.

The spectre of a non-European power enforcing rights to migration and trade (a privilege predominantly enjoyed by Europeans at the expense of populations in Africa, Asia and the Americas)<sup>188</sup> looms large in Hay's writing. He continued with an exhaustive list of Japanese military endeavours, emphasising the motivations behind "that policy which aims at the elimination of the white powers from the Far East and the ultimate end of which is to make Japan mistress in Asia and the dominating power of the Pacific." Indeed, the racial insecurities beneath Hay's formality are never far from the surface, and with regard to the perceived shackling of Britain's foreign policy to Japanese interests through a renewal of the alliance his musings soon turn to how "by his own incredible stupidity the white man would have lost his pride of place and the Mongolian would become the rulers of the world!" As has been observed regarding New Zealand's attitude toward Germany and Russia, the global outlook of the Pakeha New Zealander revolved around the competition of empires. Despite his socialist leanings, the issue foremost on Hay's mind was the extent to which Japan was an

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<sup>188</sup> Belachew Gebrewold, "Migration Theories and African Migration to Europe", in Belachew Gebrewold (ed.), *Africa and Fortress Europe: Threats and Opportunities*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007, p. 94.

economic and military rival to the British Empire, and therefore it could be deduced that racial chauvinism trounced the ideals of socialist internationalism in Hay's world view. Yet, interestingly (and perhaps as a result of the *Maoriland Worker's* leftist leanings: the paper's *raison d'être* being the provision of a voice for New Zealand unions<sup>189</sup>), Hay eventually specified that he believed the policies of the Japanese Imperial Government to not necessarily reflect the ambitions of the Japanese people as a whole:

In this article, where I have been speaking of Japan, I have, of course, generally been referring to the Japanese Government. In Japan, as in other countries, the Government by its control of the schools and press has induced the great majority of the people to support its policy, and this policy is controlled by the ruling class who believe that to enable the nation to survive there must be no cessation of its expansion. Nevertheless there are now in Japan millions of people who do not support the imperialistic designs of their government. It is to them we must look for help to save the white and yellow races from a cataclysmic race war in the Pacific. The Japanese people must be treated with justice. Their legitimate aspirations must be acceded to if peace is to be preserved.

These ruminations on the distinction between imperialist government and the common man at first glance appear to be an effort on Hay's part to circumvent racial prejudices and make common ground between workers in New Zealand and Japan (reminiscent of Marx's own "Working men of all countries, unite!"<sup>190</sup>). Yet they serve rather to provide a segue into his ultimately segregationist line of argument that the Pacific outposts of the 'white race' (seen as

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<sup>189</sup> *The National Library of New Zealand*. Retrieved from <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=CL1.MW&essay=1&e=-----10--1----0-->

<sup>190</sup> Marx, Karl, "The Communist Manifesto". From *Selected Writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*. London: CRW Publishing, 2009, p. 64.

inherently superior in Hay's eyes as being the race that 'created most' and 'achieved most') must be protected from a flood of 'Asiatics':

Asia is the natural home of the Chinese and Japanese, for they were there before the dawn of history. White men are the intruders of yesterday, who forced their way in by war, not to build up the country, but to exploit it. The Japanese and Chinese and their kindred races have endured much at the hands of Europeans. Consequently, their aspirations to complete independence and supremacy in Asia should be met in a reasonable manner, recognising the justice of their attitude. On the other hand, it is absolutely necessary to the supremacy of the white race —the race that has created most, achieved most, and gives the richest promise for the future —that Asiatics should be prevented from settling in the white lands bordering the Pacific. America, Australia, and New Zealand belong to the white race by right of conquest and settlement. To admit a flood of Asiatics to these countries would be to lower the standard of life in them, to degrade white labour, and ultimately to outnumber, swamp, and replace the slower breeding white man.

Or, to paraphrase: Let the Asians have Asia and leave the Pacific to the 'white man'. If we are to find evidence of political views among New Zealanders transcending racial stereotypes we must look elsewhere. 'Right of conquest' is mentioned with all its imperialist connotations with no touch of irony despite the leftist leanings of his publication. Conquest and domination, those concepts so vilified by socialist philosophers as the cornerstones of imperial capitalism,<sup>191</sup> are here invoked as the privilege of a 'supreme' race that can congratulate itself on supposedly 'promising most for the future'. This racial divisiveness is especially eyebrow-raising considering that one of the *Maoriland Worker's* stated goals was

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<sup>191</sup> Tom Lansford, *Communism*, New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2008, p.20.

pacifism and the international cooperation of labourers and unionists.<sup>192</sup> Perhaps such cooperation was implied as being only necessary (or even feasible) among those of European lineage. Regardless, Hay concluded with the question:

How are Canada, Australia, and New Zealand to be defended from the threatened invasion of Asiatics? By a military alliance between Britain and the imperialistic Government of Japan, or by friendly conferences between the people of the two nations? There is no point in the dispute which cannot be settled by reasonable discussion. To-day, the Japanese are overcrowded in their homeland and are aroused to bitter hostility by the denial of liberty to migrate to white lands. But intelligent and far-minded Japanese recognise that the problem of over-population can best be solved by following the example of the cultured classes in all civilised countries, that is, by limiting the size of the family to reasonable proportions. It is the imperialists who want a high birth-rate, the jingoistic militarists who require a plentiful supply of cheap cannon food to enable them to carry out their schemes of aggrandisement—and it is they who are favoured by the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty.

On the one hand, Hay blames ‘jingoist militarism’ for diplomatic tensions between the British and the Japanese in the Pacific, but on the other, he drums up racial chauvinism disguised as ‘patriotism’ through emotive and provocative rhetoric to exclude and alienate the Japanese from the New Zealand population wherever possible. The extent to which Hay’s beliefs reflected Pakeha attitudes is reflected in similar letters from the time period. There were those who recognised the value of the alliance on pragmatic grounds, as a zero-sum equation in which Japan’s military strength was best kept on-side than off.<sup>193</sup> A later article from the *Maoriland Worker* suggested that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance smacked of an imperialist

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<sup>192</sup> *The National Library of New Zealand*. Retrieved from <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=CL1.MW&essay=1&e=-----10--1----0-->

<sup>193</sup> *Evening Post*, 16 November 1921, p. 4.

conspiracy when it reported on the general, yet non-committal, levels of support that commonwealth leaders showed toward renewing the alliance: “It sounds somewhat vacuous, but what else can be expected from a gathering of secret diplomats resolved to divulge as little as possible about their deliberations?”<sup>194</sup>

Hay believed that international camaraderie of the working class did not transcend race politics, and he was not alone in his general distrust of Japan’s growing influence. An antagonistic exchange took place in the *Auckland Star* between Coleman Phillips (a prolific writer on matters regarding New Zealand and the Pacific whose collected manuscripts may be found in the *National Library of New Zealand*)<sup>195</sup> and one T. Ichijima that revealed much about how New Zealanders and Japanese believed the New Zealand government ought to approach Japan in the post-war world. The fate of Germany’s former Pacific territories as decided at the Paris Peace Conference was the cause of Phillips’ consternation. He began:

Wellington people may not quite understand Mr. Massey’s insistence upon Sir Joseph Ward having a seat at the Peace Conference. A few words from me may help to clear this matter up. The reason is that the freedom and liberty of New Zealand and Australia are at stake, and more than one voice at the Peace Conference is necessary to uphold our interests. A secret treaty appears to have been entered into between the British government and Japan, giving Japan the Pacific Islands north of the Equator, viz., the Carolines, Marshalls, Radacks, Ralicks, and half of the Gilberts. If Japan gets these islands our future liberty is gone.

I regret to say so, but as a private citizen of New Zealand since 1872 (when I first began my Pacific Island work) I have always found that the Home Government did not appear to care for Australasian interests in the

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<sup>194</sup> *Maoriland Worker*, 6 July 1921, p.1.

<sup>195</sup> *National Library of New Zealand*. Retrieved from <http://natlib.govt.nz/items/22744197>

Pacific; but, more or less readily, agreed to other nations acquiring many of the islands, which, under the Polynesian scheme of 1873, I had naturally thought would fall to us and our then trading schooners. Any person of common sense travelling among the islands, as I did then, would have thought the same. But no, those islands were given to Germany, and the Sydney and Melbourne trading vessels were turned back. Our New Zealand traders also beat about there, but we confined our efforts then more to the central and southern islands...

The tone is set in similarly alarmist fashion to that taken by Daniel Hay. But the tone soon takes a turn for the incendiary, and the subject matter switches to politics; primarily the timidity and short-sightedness of the Massey government as he saw it, and the brave yet ultimately futile protests of Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes against the seeming haste with which Britain had considered its Pacific territories at the conference:<sup>196</sup>

Mr. Lloyd George is annoyed at Mr. Hughes' protests against the Japanese secret treaty. I say, let us all support Mr. Hughes in this to the utmost. Let anyone take a map of the Pacific and see for himself. He will find that Japan by getting the islands north of the Equator advances to within 2000 miles of Auckland, and to about the same distance from Sydney and Honolulu: and Honolulu is within 2000 miles of San Francisco.

I begged Mr. Massey before he left (knowing how the Home Government would neglect our interests) to try and stop Japan acquiring such a central position.

I asked Mr. Massey to see President Wilson on his way home, and President Poincare in Paris, and explain the position to them. Why should we

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<sup>196</sup> Richard Kay, "Caging the Prussian Dragon: New Zealand and the Paris Peace Conference 1919", in John Crawford and Ian McGibbon (eds.), *New Zealand's Great War: New Zealand, The Allies and the First World War*, Auckland: Exisle Publishing, 2007, p.140.

help Japan to get within easy distance of the U.S.A.? But that is what the Home Government would do by giving Japan these thousands of valuable islands.

I do not wish to embarrass the Home Government. But why was the secret treaty entered into? To get Japanese help? Utter madness, say I. Japan was bound by treaty to help us, without paying such a price; as it may mean the overlordship of the Pacific, and consequently of New Zealand and Australia...

Lissington states that according to inside sources at the time, President Wilson's attitude toward Japan at the conference was decidedly negative, and his outlook regarding a Japanese North Pacific pessimistic.<sup>197</sup> Indeed, Massey himself was no comrade of the Japanese people, agreeing with Hughes and Canadian Prime Minister Robert Borden on the need for a stronger British presence in the Pacific to directly oppose the Japanese.<sup>198</sup> The United States government had in the past made no secret of its antipathy toward Japanese expansion.<sup>199</sup> Knowledge of such would have coloured Phillips' exasperation as to why the Japanese were allowed to acquire such strategic territories. Japan was technically within its rights to hold the territories under the terms of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, but the reality of such gains for Japan struck a discordant note with New Zealand commentators, and Phillips concludes his piece with a lamentation of the alliance (the 'secret treaty', as he called it) that tied the New Zealand and Australian people to accepting such outcomes:

I say again that the Home Government is careless of Australasian interests. I don't blame Mr. Lloyd George. He has not been here, and does not know the extreme gravity of the position. If he did, he would act differently.

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<sup>197</sup> Lissington, p. 36.

<sup>198</sup> Neville Meaney, *Australia and World Crisis: 1914-1923*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2009, p.133.

<sup>199</sup> Izumi Hirobe, *Japanese Pride, American Prejudice: Modifying the Exclusion Clause of the 1924 Immigration Act*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001, p.218.

But it is the Cabinet. Cabinet folly has been shown by entering into that secret treaty giving these valuable islands and most valuable position in the Pacific to Japan. Equally was that folly shown when Heligoland was given to Germany; a matter I warned England against doing in a pamphlet I published in 1875, entitled “British Colonisation and British Commerce,” advocating the annexation of all the Pacific Islands, which could then have easily been done, as is well seen now.

We should cable Home at once, heartily supporting what our representatives are doing. It is to guide the Home Government we should try and act now. At the Gilberts Japan would command every Pacific trade route.<sup>200</sup>

Phillips’ haranguing of the Home Government was then countered by one of the few Japanese voices in English to be found in letters and editorials of this era. T. Ichijima wrote to the *Auckland Star* a week later (in a letter that lacked paragraphing):

Sir.—I, as a Japanese, want to say a few words regarding an article on the Pacific Islands question which appeared in your Friday’s paper (February 7), contributed by Mr. Coleman Phillips. I do not know what political or social position this gentleman, Mr. Phillips, holds in your country, but it seems to me that if he can advise the Ministers of State on political matters his views, as expressed in the article referred to, may carry some weight with the general public. However, be this as it may, I am somewhat surprised at his opinions concerning Japan and the Pacific Islands. I am afraid that this gentleman misunderstands Japan. Why is it dangerous to hand over those small islands, north of the Equator, to Japan - If it gives an uneasy feeling to the

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<sup>200</sup> *Auckland Star*, 7 February 1919, p.7.

neighbouring States for Japan to hold the mandatory power over those islands, the same argument will apply to Japan when other nations occupy the same position. But it can never be so. New Zealanders must remember that my country is now working under the League of Nations' scheme, and if Japan is not to be given authority over the territory referred to, who will get it? Is New Zealand wanting it? No! She already has Samoa—about twice as large as the total area of those islands. Australia? No! She got Kaiser Wilhelm's Land, Bismarck Archipelago, etc.—a hundred times larger than the islands to be received by Japan. America or China? I don't think they have any right to a claim, as they did not take part in the early stages of the war. Who then has more right and a juster claim than Japan?

The sense of hypocrisy that Ichijima feels regarding Phillips' views is palpable, and the significance of this rests in Ichijima's rarity as a candid Japanese voice in New Zealand print.<sup>201</sup> From Ichijima's perspective, there was no reason as to why Japan should not be rewarded for its efforts during wartime as much as any other allied nation. Here we see Japanese international relations from the viewpoint of a people who were beginning to expect diplomatic consideration on equal footing with white empires, and indeed they would demand it as was the case with the Racial Equality Proposal in the League of Nations charter.<sup>202</sup> Where Pakeha were interpreting Japan's rise in terms of either a militarily expedient resource to be used, as was the case with letter writers during the First World War, or of outright and imminent threat to New Zealand's sovereignty, as was the case with Hay and Phillips, Ichijima makes plain the racial chauvinism inherent in Pakeha attitudes by demanding a commonsense consideration of Japanese claims based on an assumption of racial equality. That Ichijima had to implore the *Auckland Star's* readership to think in such a

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<sup>201</sup> McNeil, p.28.

<sup>202</sup> Louis D. Hayes, *Japan and the Security of Asia*, Boston: Lexington Books, 2001, p.41.

way demonstrates the rarity of such an idea. He went on to beg New Zealanders to consider Japan's track record as a British ally:

I will not state here how the Japanese have worked loyally in the cause of England and humanity, as I believe that the people of New Zealand know as much concerning this as I do. I say, therefore, Japan should be given dominion over those small Pacific Islands for the work she has done in this war. Mr. Phillips says: "Japan was bound by treaty to help us, without paying such a price." If there shall not be reward for the work done by Japan, New Zealand or Australia should equally have no right to be given Samoa or New Guinea, because, according to the argument of Mr. Phillips, they have done their duty towards the Mother Country, England, which is what Japan has done under the obligations of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Your mother country, England, requested Japan to take those islands from German hands at the beginning of the war. We have done this work for our ally and for humanity, and looked after them for more than four years, and my country has not betrayed the confidence which was given to her by England. Is it not ignoring your mother country's confidence in us that you should protest against Japan retaining this territory? I hope Mr. Massey and Mr. Hughes, in dealing with this question, will not misjudge your ally Japan and the Japanese. Let us not forget your motto "play the game." I have been in this country for more than fifteen months, and have had ample opportunity of arriving at a definite opinion concerning your aims in life. I regard your people as the advocates of humanity and justice, and I really have a good feeling for your nation, because, I think, we understand you better than you understand us. We must

avoid misunderstandings and misjudgements in a matter of this description. —

I am, etc., T. ICHIJIMA.<sup>203</sup>

Ichijima's appeal to diplomatic empathy from New Zealanders fell largely on deaf ears. As is inferred by the research of Jenny Bol Jun Lee<sup>204</sup> and Bevan Yee<sup>205</sup> regarding Asian experiences in New Zealand, this was an age when for Pakeha to consider a non-white ethnic group as racially equal was unthinkable, as most people of Asian descent were relegated to marginalised positions in New Zealand society. The double standard applied to Japan as outlined by Ichijima regarding post-war territorial acquisitions in the Pacific further illustrates this. The ways in which Pakeha talked about Japan, from William Massey in parliament to Daniel Hay in the smoko room, showed that they were incapable of any functionally diplomatic level of empathy with an 'Asiatic' race.<sup>206</sup> Such views were in accordance with viewpoints of American diplomats, who had mistrusted Japanese '*daimyos* and *samurai*' since the end of the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>207</sup> And American views were becoming increasingly pertinent to New Zealanders, as the balance of power in the Pacific in the 1920s was shifting away from the absolute dominance of the British Royal Navy and moving toward a more American hegemonic order, with the Four Power Treaty signed at the Washington Conference in 1921 asserting American Pacific interests with greater force than had been seen previously.<sup>208</sup> Indeed, the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance that the Four Power Treaty represented irked the Japanese delegation, who felt that Britain had

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<sup>203</sup> *Auckland Star*, 13 February 1919, p.9.

<sup>204</sup> Jenny Bol Jun Lee, "Eating Pork Bones and Puha With Chopsticks: Maori-Chinese Constructions", in Manying Ip (ed.), *Unfolding History, Evolving Identity: The Chinese in New Zealand*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003, p.99.

<sup>205</sup> Bevan Yee, "Coping With Insecurity: Everyday Experiences of Chinese New Zealanders", in Manying Ip (ed.), *Unfolding History, Evolving Identity: The Chinese in New Zealand*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003, p. 216.

<sup>206</sup> T.G.Otte, "'A Very Great Gulf': Late Victorian British Diplomacy and Race in East Asia", in Rotem Kowner and Walter Demel (eds.), *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia: Western and Eastern Constructions*, Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2013, p.150.

<sup>207</sup> Philip Towle, "Race, Culture and the Reaction to the Japanese Victory of 1905 in the English-Speaking World", in Rotem Kowner and Walter Demel (eds.), *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia: Western and Eastern Constructions*, Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2013, p.295.

<sup>208</sup> Trotter, p. 78.

betrayed their previous friendship in favour of an insinuated racial alliance with the United States. On 20 December, 1921, Lt.-General Tanaka Kunishige, head of the Japanese army delegation to the Washington Conference, wrote to Field-Marshal Uehara Yusaka:

In short, the conference proved to be an attempt to oppress the non-Anglo-Saxon races, especially the coloured races, by the two English-speaking countries, Britain and the United States... Britain helped the US both directly and indirectly, taking a hostile attitude towards Japan, her ally in the Anglo-Japanese alliance, and finally succeeded in abandoning the alliance, on conditions favourable to themselves. It was a great victory for them brought about by crafty British diplomacy.<sup>209</sup>

The strong undercurrents of xenophobia among British New Zealanders regarding Japanese trade and militarism were in line with attitudes among white citizens of the United States living on the Pacific Coast, as is demonstrated by the research of Lucie Cheng and Marian Katz.<sup>210</sup> In 1907, the United States and Japan reached a ‘Gentleman’s Agreement’ with regards to immigration by which the United States would not restrict Japanese immigration and Japan would not allow further emigration to the United States.<sup>211</sup> It was never ratified by Congress and was abandoned as policy in 1924. Indeed it was policies such as these that Daniel Hay likely referred to when he warned that the Japanese were ‘aroused to bitter hostility by the denial of liberty to migrate to white lands.’ As with New Zealand, the fear of ‘inundation’ by Japanese labourers fuelled American efforts to hamper their migration. The *Seattle Star* openly described itself as leading a ‘vigorous’ campaign to ‘restrict Japanese penetration’<sup>212</sup>, printing numerous articles regarding the House Committee on Immigration

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<sup>209</sup> Hosoya, p. 8.

<sup>210</sup> Lucie Cheng and Marian Katz, “Migration and the Diaspora Communities”, in Colin Mackerras and Richard Maidment (eds.), *Culture and Society in the Asia-Pacific*, London: Routledge, 1998, p.62.

<sup>211</sup> Blair, Doug. *The 1920 Anti-Japanese Crusade and Congressional Hearings*. 2006. Retrieved from [http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/Japanese\\_restriction.htm](http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/Japanese_restriction.htm)

<sup>212</sup> *Seattle Star*, July 27, 1920, p. 1.

and Naturalization's consideration of Pacific Coast Japanese immigration in 1920. One such article was titled '*EXCLUSION! THE SOLUTION THAT MEANS PEACE*'. It began:

The burden of the pro-Japanese argument, as presented to the congressional committee in Seattle, seems to be that at present there are not enough Nipponese in the United States to cause any alarm.

Even if this were the case, there still would remain the problem of the future. If their numbers are safe now, will they continue so under present immigration laws and under the so-called "gentleman's agreement?"<sup>213</sup>

The article attacks the Gentleman's Agreement in particular as unduly favouring the Japanese, who, in the opinion of the author, had not honoured the spirit of the agreement and had continued to inundate the US Pacific coast. The writer later insisted that "Japanese numbers must not increase. If we are to accept the expressions of the pro-Japanese at their face value, they, too, recognize the need for checking further immigration of the little brown men. The peace of the United States and of Japan lies in the graceful acceptance of this fact." There was no honorific veneer or urging of patriotic solidarity for the Japanese in the United States. The Japanese were 'Little Brown Men' rather than the equally racist but less derogatory 'Brown Britons'. The lack of a formal military bond such as the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, as well as the absence of the feelings of obligation created by Japanese assistance in the First World War, meant that anti-Japanese sentiment could be flung about in print media with full force. The article finally proposed that:

There is a solution – RIGID EXCLUSION, as rigid as the Japanese apply to the Chinese and Koreans in their own country. Economic necessity demands it. Racial differences intensify the demand.

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<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

We have imitated the ostrich long enough. We cannot hide from the issue any longer. We must face the issue resolutely, for the peace and contentment of the American people.<sup>214</sup>

The lack of welcome extended to the Japanese cannot be stated more plainly. It is interesting that ‘racial differences’ are highlighted as a reason to exclude the Japanese from the United States, and doubly so that Japanese immigration policies regarding Korea and China are invoked as justification for the American exclusionist stance. John Dower, in his work relating to American racial propaganda in the Second World War, emphasises that it was Japan’s status as an unconquered, uncolonised, non-white nation that in turn had established colonies of its own that raised alarms among white commentators.<sup>215</sup> The Japanese were often ridiculed in American media as a faceless, multitudinous, horde of incompetent primitives,<sup>216</sup> “Savages in modern garb.”<sup>217</sup> But this derisive mockery masked a genuine fear that Japan’s military and economic power rivalled, or at least had the feasible potential to rival, that of ‘white’ nations. The Russo-Japanese War had proven Japan’s military capabilities, and the annexation of Korea legitimated Japan’s colonial aspirations. Yet despite the Japanese’s expertise in imitating European imperial tendencies they nevertheless remained firmly in the camp of non-white ‘otherness’.<sup>218</sup> There were some in the United States that believed that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had its uses as an ‘Anti-Bolshevik Bulwark’,<sup>219</sup> and still others believed that the West had been hypocritical in its condemnation of the Japan and that Japan was indeed ‘the hero’ and, potentially, ‘the light of Asia’.<sup>220</sup> But the majority of American viewpoints tended toward the perception of the Japanese as a threat, and Japan’s military’s

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<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> Dower, p. 148.

<sup>216</sup> Markus Nornes and Yukio Fukushima (eds.), *The Japan/American Film Wars: World War II Propaganda and Its Cultural Contexts*, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994, p. 153.

<sup>217</sup> Dower, p. 123.

<sup>218</sup> Dower, p. 148.

<sup>219</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 4 June 1921, p. 7.

<sup>220</sup> *Evening Post*, 29 May 1919, p.3.

spectacular initial victories in the Pacific Theatre in the early 1940s vindicated white presumptions that the ‘brutality’ and ‘irrationality’ of the Japanese national character made for soldiers of superhuman prowess and ruthless treachery.<sup>221</sup> Regardless, in the 1920s the American view of Japan was not yet that of a monstrous marauder, but of a looming menace; a rising economic and military rival of alien pedigree and ominous machinations, and what was more, one that might inspire other Asian peoples to similarly empower themselves.<sup>222</sup>

Not all Pacific peoples viewed Japan as a rising threat. The ‘racial differences’ that ‘intensified the demand’ for the exclusion of Japanese from US territory were in fact a point of attraction for the ethnic groups of the Pacific who were alienated by the European powers. Where white Americans and New Zealanders saw in Japan the threat of economic competition and demographic inundation, many Maori saw the prospect of political enfranchisement in the face of European neglect.<sup>223</sup> The Japanese had acquainted themselves with Maori communities sporadically since the beginnings of their naval expansion in the late nineteenth century. Japanese anthropologists were interested in how Pacific peoples had been affected by European colonisation, and indeed through such studies they took lessons on how to avoid subjugation by European powers. One such scholar, Shigetaka Shiga, sailed the Pacific on board the *Tsukuba* in 1886, as the Meiji restoration and modernisation of Japan was in full swing. He translated a Maori song as part of his book, *Nanyo Jiji (Conditions of the South Seas)* in which the singer laments ‘Pakeha’ insects driving out their ‘Maori’ counterparts while ‘Pakeha’ grasses shrivelled up their life-sustaining ‘Maori’ grasses. In analysing what he believed to be the subsumation of Maori culture into the European

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<sup>221</sup> Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, p.251.

<sup>222</sup> *Northern Advocate*, 8 October 1925, p. 2.

<sup>223</sup> McNeil (1999), p. 39.

geopolitical sphere, Shiga urged the Japanese people to develop and treasure their own sense of unique cultural identity, and to resist the wholesale adoption of Western culture.<sup>224</sup>

Many Maori viewed the Japanese as exemplars of virtue, and used their example as a modernised Asiatic nation when verbally sparring with Pakeha they considered overbearing. When writing to the *Bay of Plenty Times* to defend against Pakeha allegations of Northern Iwi's lack of patriotism, Te Hirau Rea invoked the progress of the Japanese:

If the altered circumstances of both European and Maori are obvious, and a change is desirable, a sacrifice should be made by those above us; say the laying aside of the right of pre-emption by the Crown, and the granting of money on mortgages of individualised Maori land; while the Maori could surrender his privileges (?) Japan emerged from an ancient Asiatic State and became modernised by the sacrifice of the Samauri [*sic*], who laid aside their privileges. Could not the Crown Minister follow the noble example of the Samauri? [*sic*] As for the lack of patriotism, speaking for myself and my hapu—we would drain the best blood in our veins, in defence of the land of our birth and the home of our Tipunas, as willingly as the plaided men of the North do, and have done for theirs.<sup>225</sup>

Clearly the writer is not wholly familiar with Japanese culture (even 'Samurai' is misspelled), but the significance of his letter lies in the mere invocation of Japan as a symbol of 'coloured advancement'. The cliché of Japanese sophistication is nevertheless employed as a rhetorical device to strengthen his argument, which suggests that the Japanese enjoyed a degree of mana among Maori, especially when viewed with a distant and uncritical eye.

Japanese colonial expansion offered Maori a blueprint for non-white political and military power in the Pacific, as well as the hope of self-determination for indigenous Pacific

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<sup>224</sup> McNeil (1999), p. 38.

<sup>225</sup> *Bay of Plenty Times*, 13 March 1918, p. 2.

populations.<sup>226</sup> Having grown increasingly frustrated with the seeming unwillingness of Pakeha to address Treaty of Waitangi grievances, the Ratana Church found seemingly sympathetic (or at least politely humouring) ears among Japanese dignitaries when Ratana and his delegation visited Japan in 1925.<sup>227</sup> Naturally, this raised eyebrows among Pakeha commentators. The *Auckland Star* reported:

Yesterday an important meeting took place in Ohinemutu, the occasion being the reception of an emissary of Ratana who was instructed to obtain signatures to Ratana's covenant — a document agreeing to accept God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and angels, to give up Maori beliefs of all kinds and accept Ratana as the sole leader of the race, spiritually and temporally.

This request for signatures, coming after Ratana's visit to Japan, where he was stated to have been cordially received, and had laid the grievances of the Maoris arising out of non-observance of the Treaty of Waitangi before the Government of that country, and from whom he had received a token (a dagger), as the emissary last night put it: "Ratana married the Maori race to the Japanese, and their salvation lies now in the hands of Japan" was regarded as sinister. It was felt that, under cover of these signatures he (Ratana) would use himself as the Divine agent on earth, and direct his people to disloyal tendencies.<sup>228</sup>

When pressed by New Zealand officials, the Japanese government denied any meetings of a political nature with Ratana.<sup>229</sup> Yet the Crown's fears of shifting Maori loyalties were not entirely unfounded. One Japanese soldier, Isamu Kawase, recounted that shortly after the Pacific War began he was summoned to a panel of Japanese commanders to discuss how

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<sup>226</sup> Dower, p 276.

<sup>227</sup> McNeil (1999), p. 39.

<sup>228</sup> *Auckland Star*, 16 January, 1925, p.9.

<sup>229</sup> McNeil (1999), p. 39.

Maori grievances against the Crown might be exploited on a military basis as had been attempted in India and Burma.<sup>230</sup> Having lived among New Zealanders himself, Kawase did not believe such a proposition feasible as Maori grievances did not appear strong enough to inspire acts of outright insurrection.<sup>231</sup> Ratana himself was quick to shut down any lines of inquiry that might link his Treaty of Waitangi agitation with treasonous allegiances. A subsequent report in the same issue of the *Auckland Star* clarified Ratana's views on the Maori Japanese relationship with Japan:

“Ratana has never made nor suggested a political or national alliance with Japan, and he repudiates the reported statements made at Rotorua.” said Mr. Peter Moko, Ratana's official executive officer, when questioned by a “Chronicle” representative by telephone to-night.

“We visited Japan to disseminate the Gospel,” continued Mr. Moko. “On our arrival there the Japanese people were so hospitable that we understood from their kindness that they were related to the Maoris. As a matter of fact, we found afterwards, through inquiries, that the Japanese people and our people were related. We had sent no emissary to Rotorua, and the only one that could be so regarded was a man who came from the subtribe to Ratana on the occasion of the recent gathering. On that occasion Ratana made the position clear, and said that there was a blood relationship with Japan.”<sup>232</sup>

This ‘blood relationship’ referred to notions of shared ancestry among non-white peoples of the Pacific.<sup>233</sup> While Moko states that the Japanese concurred with this shared-ancestry

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<sup>230</sup> A Japanese political cartoon published in *Osaka Puck* in February 1942 demonstrated Britain's perilous military position in India should the local population be persuaded to side with the Japanese and overthrow the British administration (see figure 11).

<sup>231</sup> McNeil (1999), p.40.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> McNeil (1999), p. 38.

hypothesis, later policies of the Japanese Co-Prosperity Sphere would suggest that shared ancestry did not equate to equality of race or culture in Japanese eyes.<sup>234</sup> Indeed, the Japanese sociologists who drafted the theories behind the Co-Prosperity Sphere were clear in their assessment of a hierarchy of ‘proper place’, resting upon allocation of administrative powers on a largely racial basis, with the Japanese ‘*Yamato*’ people squarely at the top of the ethnic food chain.<sup>235</sup>



**Figure 11: “India! Now is the Time to Rise!” *Osaka Puck*, February 1942. Retrieved from Dower, p. 196.**

Yet despite the generally racist foundations, the Japanese concept of ‘peoplehood’ focused largely around cultural considerations, rather than genetic. Dower explains the concept, as derived from the Japanese imperial publication, *The Investigation of Global Policy with the Yamato Race as Nucleus* (1943):

<sup>234</sup> Eyal Benvenisti, *The International Law of Occupation, Second Edition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, p.133.

<sup>235</sup> Dower, p. 266.

In their theoretical explanation of “race,” the Japanese researchers drew a distinction between the narrow and more biologically oriented concept (*Rasse* in German, *jinsbu* in Japanese) and the broader, more culturally influenced perception of a race as a people or nationality (*Volk* in German, *minzoku*<sup>236</sup> in Japanese). *Minzoku*, or *Volk*, was the core word. The [*Investigation of Global Policy with the Yamato Race as Nucleus*] most often identified the Japanese themselves as the *Yamato Minzoku* (“Yamato People” or “Yamato Race”), rather than simply the “Japanese” (*Nipponjin*), but the same general rubric applied to other peoples as well.<sup>237</sup>

The belief in the strength of the Japanese people centred on the inherent superiority of the *Yamato Minzoku* (Japanese People), who would enjoy pride of place at the centre of the Co-Prosperity Sphere’s administration.<sup>238</sup> The fixation on skin colour that so fascinated Western minds was only of peripheral significance in Japanese thinking, and concepts of ‘white’, ‘black’ and ‘yellow’ did not feature strongly in the Japanese vernacular.<sup>239</sup> For this reason, notions of shared ancestry with Maori were compatible with Japanese notions of racial ties with indigenous peoples of the Pacific; an idea that played a significant role in Japanese anti-Western wartime propaganda such as the image portrayed in figure 12, in which a patriarchal Japanese hand liberates an indigenous Indonesian labourer from the ‘tyranny’ of the Dutch. At the same time, the subjugation of such peoples was justified in Japanese eyes due to the inherent cultural superiority of the *Yamato Minzoku*. The Japanese therefore shared the attitudes of the European counterparts with regards to indigenous peoples of the Pacific in

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<sup>236</sup> Interestingly, the Korean equivalent is ‘*Minjeok*’ (pronounced ‘*min-jock*’), and the notion of ‘Korean People’ transcends the diplomatic divide of the North and South Korean states. It is likely that this concept of ‘racial nationality’ in Korea as mentioned in the Introduction was imported from Japan during the period of Japanese occupation as a means of subsuming Korean culture into the Co-Prosperity Sphere. Cf. Nadia Y. Kim, *Imperial Citizens: Koreans and Race from Seoul to LA*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008, p.24.

<sup>237</sup> Dower, p.267.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

that the ‘home’ culture was deemed inherently superior to that of the ‘native’. According to the *Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper, when the Ratana performance group played a private concert for Minister of Agriculture Takahashi, he later commented to reporters about the Maori people’s ‘pleasant’ nature and noted that while they might be ‘natives’, their high level of education was impressive.<sup>240</sup> The Japanese did not necessarily expect cultural sophistication from Maori, and largely viewed them more as a fascinating example of a noble yet primitive race with an admirably martial spirit (*bushido*) that had allowed itself to be tamed for its own good.<sup>241</sup>



**Figure 12: ‘People of the Southern Region’. *Osaka Puck*, December 1942. Retrieved from Dower, p. 200.**

This reasoning was not far removed from the generally patronising attitude that Pakeha had shown toward Maori in the century or so of colonisation. As Auckland pioneer Sir John Logan Campbell put it when wistfully remembering of ‘savage faculty’ of the pre-colonial Maori in his memoir, *Poenamo* (1881):

<sup>240</sup> McNeil (1999), p. 39.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid*, p. 40.

... the savage faculty as I knew it, and as others of the very earliest days, like myself, now all so rapidly passing away, also knew it, of the Maori race as known to the pioneer settlers of the land, and not as known to those of later days, who arrive in the colony and have on their tongues the talk of the “*nigger* element,” and who have no knowledge and no ideas of Maori character, save as gathered from these later days, when a new generation has sprung into being, whose acts and deeds on the war-path when the opposing races met face to face have been the gauge by which Maori character has been judged. To these new-comers the aborigines are an abomination, a delusion, and a snare.

They know not, have never heard of, and to few, indeed, is known, the high chivalrous honour which characterised the Maoris in the early wars we had with them.<sup>242</sup>

In other words: ‘as inferior as we Pakeha may view them to be now, the Maori used to be somewhat respectable in a martial sense.’ This was perhaps a less optimistic viewpoint from that of the Japanese, whose official colonial policy rested on concepts of ‘racial consanguinity’ and a ‘racial cooperative body’, with Japanese firmly in a dominant position. Japanese sociologists such as Sazuko Yoshino in his book, *Nanyo*, wrote of the ‘impressive physiques’ and ‘courageous faces’ of Maori,<sup>243</sup> yet there is little official mention of Maori in Japanese texts. Nevertheless, the Japanese *Cardinal Principles of the National Polity* published in 1937 used the metaphor of the family to illustrate the role that indigenous populations would have in a Japanese Pacific:

In each community there are those who take the upper places while there are those who work below them. Through each fulfilling his position is the

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<sup>242</sup> Campbell, John Logan, *Poenamo Revisted*, Auckland: Godwit, 2012, p. 216.

<sup>243</sup> McNeil (1999), p. 38.

harmony of a community obtained. To fulfil one's part means to do one's appointed task with the utmost faithfulness each in his own sphere; and by this means do those above receive help from inferiors, and inferiors are loved by superiors; and in working together harmoniously is beautiful concord manifested and creative work carried out. This applies both to the community and to the State.<sup>244</sup>

There was certainly no view toward establishing enfranchisement of Maori in either the Pakeha or the Japanese worldview, and as the research of Michael Weiner demonstrates, it is unlikely that Maori would have truly have been better off under Japanese rule.<sup>245</sup> As Weiner states, the predominant philosophy behind the projected future of the Co-Prosperity Sphere was based on Confucian ideals of 'proper place', which, in the cases of Korea and Taiwan, was expressed in terms of the subjugation of indigenous cultures and their assimilation into the Japanese way of life, albeit at a subservient level.<sup>246</sup> Robert Harvey's research suggests that Japanese ideology would have demanded that Maori accept an 'inferior' social position in the interests of collective harmony, as was shown by the testimonies of Korean 'comfort women' (forced prostitutes servicing the Japanese army) who attested that the status of non-Japanese ethnicities under Japanese rule was one of abject servitude.<sup>247</sup> It is difficult to ascertain whether the similarities of the racially chauvinistic views toward Pacific peoples held by both the Japanese and the British developed independently or were a result of a cross-pollination of imperial tendencies. But certainly, many key Japanese modernisers (such as the educationalist Arinori Mori, who spent a year in the United States in 1867) had long ago adopted Western attitudes regarding the importance of colonialism based on "duty, friendship

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<sup>244</sup> Retrieved from Dower, p. 280.

<sup>245</sup> Michael Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan*, Oxon: Routledge, 1994, p.30.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31.

<sup>247</sup> Harvey, p. 220.

and obedience”.<sup>248</sup> The ideal colonial system adopted by the Japanese was based on the British Empire under Queen Victoria, but the transplanting of such values into the Japanese school system meant that the receiving of obedience became the prerogative of the Meiji emperor.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Harvey, p.98.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*

## Chapter Four

### Breaking Ties: The Ending of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the Invasion of Manchuria.

The 1920s heralded a change in diplomatic alignments in the Pacific that would eventually culminate in total war. The Four Powers Treaty at the Washington Conference of 1921 made the Anglo-Japanese Alliance defunct, and it was officially terminated in 1923. This turn of events, as has been observed, was viewed with cynicism and a sense of betrayal by Japanese diplomats.<sup>250</sup> Opinion was split within the British sphere of influence as to the ramifications of allowing the treaty to stagnate. Canada approved of the distancing of British and Japanese affairs (perhaps as a result of their proximity to the generally anti-Japanese USA),<sup>251</sup> whereas the overall reaction in New Zealand papers was muted.<sup>252</sup> A neutralisation of viewpoint regarding Japan appeared to be taking place among New Zealanders during this period. As the Japanese were no longer official allies of the British Empire, the sense of obligation to observe politeness toward them (as observed in previous chapters) was no longer an issue. Yet equally, many New Zealanders demonstrated little overt desire to antagonise or offend the burgeoning Pacific power. As indeed one commentator stated in the *Evening Post*, “it is a ‘fool’ thing [*sic*] to bait Japan!”<sup>253</sup> Indeed, then-prime minister William Massey urged at the 1921 Imperial Meeting with regard to allowing the Anglo-Japanese Alliance to abrogate that “... we should be guilty of the basest ingratitude. It would not be playing the game and we should lose the respect of the other nations of the world... Japan is a proud nation, a very sensitive nation, and a very suspicious nation. We all know it and we may, if we are not

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<sup>250</sup> Hosoya, p. 8.

<sup>251</sup> Lissington, p. 42.

<sup>252</sup> Lissington, p. 47.

<sup>253</sup> *Evening Post*, 4 October 1913, p.9.

careful, turn a nation with a temperament like that from a loyal friend into a very dangerous antagonist.”<sup>254</sup> It was therefore imperative that if, as was likely the case, the termination of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance led to a stark rift in New Zealand-Japanese relations, that New Zealand more closely align itself with other Anglophone powers; namely Australia and the USA.<sup>255</sup>

In the 1920s, the United States became increasingly assertive in Pacific affairs.<sup>256</sup> New Zealand found itself torn between traditional loyalties to Britain and keeping on-side with the rapidly growing influence of the United States, with the casualty of this diplomatic juggling-act being New Zealand’s previously agreeable diplomatic relationship with Japan. A bulletin in the *Auckland Star* in 1921 summarised the information that New Zealanders had with regard to the changing political climate in the Pacific:

Mr. W. E. Hughes, Premier of Australia, in the course of an interview to-day, said that the safety of Australia lies in the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, but such an arrangement did not appear at present welcome to America. His opinion was that the hope of the world depends on an alliance and understanding between the two great branches of the English speaking world. The position was paradoxical, no doubt. Why was America aiming at the largest world navy, or against whom did she propose to defend herself? Australia had no quarrel with America or Japan. Renewal of the Treaty in some form acceptable to Britain, America, Japan and Australasia seemed the way to end the competition in armaments. Sometimes it was said that a modification of the treaty acceptable to all was impossible, yet the differences

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<sup>254</sup> Lissington, p. 48.

<sup>255</sup> Ian Nish, “Japan in Britain’s View of the International System 1919-37”, in Ian Nish (ed.), *Anglo-Japanese Alienation 1919-1952: Papers of the Anglo-Japanese Conference on the History of the Second World War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 49.

<sup>256</sup> Stanley B. Weeks and Charles A. Meconis, *The Armed Forces of the USA in the Asia-Pacific Region, Volume 3*, New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999, p.11.

between Japan and America were small compared with the suffering and destruction which would result from war between them.<sup>257</sup>

The article implies that the diplomatic discussion of the day among Western powers focused on the ‘impossibility’ of a workable Anglo-Japanese treaty with regards to American expectations of its future role as a Pacific power. The Americans would brook no Asian rival in the Pacific. The article continues:

Who said that it was impossible for America to accept the Anglo-Japanese Treaty? The problem of Western America was no different to the problem Australia faced. Americans did not desire war as a people, and Australia could say definitely that Australia wished for peace and friendship with Japan. While making an effort to retain the friendship of Japan, Australia could not make an enemy of the United States, and the representatives of Australia would strive to solve the problem, safeguarding the honour of all parties and removing causes of friction and misunderstanding.

The underlying argument appears to be condemnatory of American stubbornness to legitimate Japan’s naval power in the Northern Pacific. Such was Japan’s meteoric rise that the USA refused to budge on its belief in Japanese insatiability for economic and military expansion.<sup>258</sup> These sentiments were an extension of the ire expressed in American Pacific Coast newspapers regarding the Gentleman’s Agreement and the exclusion of Japanese immigrants into American soil (see chapter 2). Japanese power was anathema to the American idea of the Pacific as a rightfully white-dominated territory (the rhetoric of which was made plain by writers such as Daniel Hay).<sup>259</sup> The article concludes with a warning regarding the financial ramifications of letting the treaty lapse:

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<sup>257</sup> *Auckland Star*, 4 June, 1921, p. 7.

<sup>258</sup> Hosoya, p. 7.

<sup>259</sup> Dower, p. 148.

If the Anglo-Japanese Treaty by any mischance were not renewed, the effect on the naval defence scheme would be serious to the Empire and the people, who in any circumstances had to bear enormous financial burdens to maintain an effective navy, would find their responsibilities tremendously increased.

Indeed, naval budgeting had been one of the fundamental reasons for the establishment of the treaty in the first place.<sup>260</sup> But such considerations in their inception were toward a Japan that in 1897 was fundamentally smaller and more manageable than the seemingly robust and ambitious empire that Britain was dealing with in 1921. Military and financial expedience thus had brought The British Empire in the Pacific to a crossroads, the navigation of which required no small measure of soul searching. On the one hand, Britain, as it had demonstrated through the establishment of the alliance, had little desire to increase the financial cost of policing its Pacific territories. On the other, there was a distinct apprehension among white denizens of the Pacific toward the growing influence of a non-white power.<sup>261</sup> Japan's rising fortunes suggested to Britain that an alternative ally in the United States (through the proxy of the League of Nations) might be preferable, given their previous cooperation in the First World War as well as the idea of a shared heritage between the two.<sup>262</sup> Japan, it seemed, had outgrown its usefulness, and now constituted a looming menace that needed to be checked, rather than befriended.

The Japanese general public were largely disappointed, even disgusted, by the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. To many, such as Field Marshall Uehara Yusaku, the abandonment of the alliance, symbolised by the Washington Conference, was a tangible example of 'an attempt to oppress the non-Anglo-Saxon races, by the two English-speaking

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<sup>260</sup> Nish (1966), p. 251.

<sup>261</sup> Brawley, p.17.

<sup>262</sup> Nish (1982), p. 40.

countries, Britain and the United States.’<sup>263</sup> This attitude thereby laid the foundations for an increasingly antagonistic stance from the Japanese military regarding British interests in the Pacific and Southeast Asia. Indeed, factions within the Japanese government began to view militarism in Asia as a paramount component of maintaining stability in the region.<sup>264</sup> This is to say nothing of New Zealand’s growing sense of identity and self-determination in managing its foreign policy. Since attaining dominion status in 1907, there was an added emphasis on making the appropriate noises of autonomy in the diplomatic arena. The need to provide at least this outward facade of self-determination was expressed in a letter to the *Auckland Star* in 1921:

Sir, —If New Zealand is to regard herself and be regarded as a nation, all the implications of this changed status must be recognised. Whether or not New Zealand was legally implicated in the Anglo-Japanese alliance while she was no more than a Dominion is important, but more important is the question of her present relation to that alliance. If Britain fails to denounce the treaty with Japan, will the nation of Canada, which seems to be opposed to the said treaty, and as a nation has never been a party to it, be held to be involved in it? But if Canada may be exempt so may New Zealand. The question of England’s renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in the Prime Ministers’ Conference in London is *ultra vires*, so far as the Premiere of the ex-British Dominions are concerned. The Prime Minister of Australia promises to refer the question of defence to the Federal Parliament before committing Australia to any expenditure. And the Australian Parliament has a right to be consulted in this as also in the Anglo-Japanese alliance before standing committed to it.

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<sup>263</sup> Hosoya, p. 8.

<sup>264</sup> Katsumi Usui, “A consideration of Anglo-Japanese Relations: Japanese Views of Britain, 1937-1941”, in Ian Nish, *Anglo-Japanese Alienation 1919-1952: Papers of the Anglo-Japanese Conference on the History of the Second World War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 79.

The same is true of New Zealand. New Zealand's Prime Minister is not her plenipotentiary.—I am, etc.,

J. G. HUGHES.<sup>265</sup>

The issue of renewing the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was increasingly becoming an issue of New Zealand's sovereignty and self-determination. New Zealand's obligations under the treaty were meeting with increased scrutiny due to the increased stature of both Japan and New Zealand itself. This reflects the growing confidence of the Pakeha citizenry with regard to how their country devised its foreign policy, or at least a growing sense of criticism of the foreign policy devised in London.<sup>266</sup> Some New Zealanders believed that there was a general campaign in the British media to malign the Japanese in the interests of making the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance less palatable. One commentator wrote to the *Auckland Star* in response to comments made by Lord Northcliffe that Japan was a fundamentally militarist society:

Now we have the same malign and deceiving influence at work trying to make the British public believe that "the world in general, and the British Empire particularly," is threatened with danger because of the supposed "militarism of Japan." This statement by Lord Northcliffe is, to my mind, mischievous nonsense, and ought to be promptly suppressed. The attempt to create ill feeling between Britain and Japan, even had it been made at a more opportune time than during the visit of the Prince of Wales to Japan, has no hope of success. Japan is no more militaristic than Britain is: she is carrying out her obligations under the Washington disarmament agreement as faithfully as she formerly fulfilled all her obligations under the British Alliance: and her people are as much opposed to great warlike ventures as any people on earth.

<sup>265</sup> *Auckland Star*, 8 July 1921, p. 2.

<sup>266</sup> Gerald Chaudron, *New Zealand in the League of Nations: The Beginnings of an Independent Foreign Policy 1919-1939*, Jefferson: McFarland and Company, 2012, p. 203.

But if the “bribed newspapers” of Japan and the recklessly arrogant Press of Great Britain join in carrying on a provocative and insulting campaign, they may, if not checked, produce a very critical situation, full of dangerous possibilities to both countries.<sup>267</sup>

There was clearly some subtlety to the way Japan was viewed by some sectors of New Zealand society. Here, as was mentioned by Hay in the *Maoriland Worker*, a distinction was drawn between the militarism of the ruling elite, and the benign mundanities of ordinary citizens in their day-to-day lives. Such distinctions and social variations are important to note when compared with the grand, sweeping generalisations of Japanese blood thirst propagated among the Western Allies during the Second World War.<sup>268</sup> New Zealanders did not generally see the Japanese as a homogenously brutal or sinister ‘race’ at this point in history, as some degree of distinction between echelons of Japanese society (however based on clichés it may have been) came through in letters and editorials. However, this would gradually change, both as a result of further Japanese military ventures, and of New Zealand’s growing closeness to, and indeed military dependence on, the vehemently anti-Japanese United States.

### **Manchuria Invaded**

If the demise of the Anglo-Japanese alliance cut the British and Japanese worlds adrift from one another, then the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 was the current that swept them apart. Japan’s further penetration into the Chinese mainland suggested that its military ambitions extended beyond its immediate borders, and perhaps even had designs on regions of British influence.<sup>269</sup> Yet the reaction (or lack thereof) within the League of Nations gave

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<sup>267</sup> *Auckland Star*, 3 May 1922, p. 9.

<sup>268</sup> Koppes and Black, p.79.

<sup>269</sup> Louise Young, *Japan’s Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, p.51.

New Zealanders cause for concern.<sup>270</sup> If Japan could wage war unchecked, who would defend the antipodean territories if the Japanese military turned their gaze upon them? One incensed observer wrote to the *Evening Post*:

Sir, — Is no one in this country going to make a protest against Japan's violation of her engagements to refrain from war and force in the settlement of international disputes? Where is the League of Nations Union that it fails at this critical moment to point out Japan's offence? Every peace-loving person in the country should use his or her influence in urging the Government to see that its representative on the League of Nations supports that body in its efforts towards the prevention or cessation of hostilities. Let us make no mistake in the matter. This war is not aimed at China only — it is also a movement against Russia. There is a section of people who so cordially hate Russia and its Communistic Government that it would condone any action calculated to injure that country, even to the extent of supporting a war started by Japan. This section is ably voiced by the Beaverbrook Press, and unfortunately is not without some support even in New Zealand. — I am etc.,  
NATIONS.<sup>271</sup>

Manchuria was symbolic to New Zealanders both of the League of Nations' failure to avert international hostilities as well as the Japanese military's seemingly unpredictable machinations. The two combined to increase New Zealanders' anxieties regarding the perceived hostility of their former ally toward British interests in Asia and the Pacific. Gone were the days of overlooking Japanese militarism as was the case with Korea in 1910. It is telling of how far diplomatic relations between Japan and New Zealand had stagnated that Soviet Russia, for so long vilified in New Zealand politics (Massey himself advocating a ban

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<sup>270</sup> Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003, p.51.

<sup>271</sup> *Evening Post*, 4 January 1932, p. 6.

on 'disloyal', 'seditious' and 'Bolshevik' literature),<sup>272</sup> was now receiving sympathy from the New Zealand public for a *perceived* prelude to invasion on Japan's part.

Ruminations on Japan's anti-Soviet motives for the invasion were fleshed out in subsequent news bulletins. A report in the *Evening Post* later in 1932 postulated the possible Russian connection with regards to Japan's rationale for invading Manchuria:

Japan's invasion of Manchuria was dictated partly by the desire to make a second Russo-Japanese war impossible, according to George E. Sokolsky, former editor of the "Far Eastern Review" and author of "The Tinderbox of Asia," who told the Williamstown Institute of Politics last month that every step taken by Japan in Manchuria today made such a war more remote.

Mr. Sokolsky's "hard-boiled view of the situation," as he called it, was that the action taken by Japan last September in Manchuria was a defence of the very life-blood of her people. She had to act quickly in view of her unparalleled economic depression and in view of Soviet Russia's industrialisation.

The Soviet programme at Kuznetz and Magnetogorsk, the double-tracking of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, and the possibility of building railroads from Siberia to Soviet Mongolia, said Mr. Sokolsky, would entirely change the economic and strategic balance of power between Japan and Soviet Russia. Sooner or later Japan would have had to meet Russia's advances in Siberia and Mongolia by counterbalancing advances in Manchuria. She might have waited until Russia was capable of driving her off the mainland of Asia and dictating the future of Asia. Instead of waiting to settle issues with Russia

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<sup>272</sup> Alexander Trapeznik and Aaron Fox, *Lenin's Legacy Down Under: New Zealand's Cold War*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2004, p. 102.

by another war the Japanese General Staff acted to strengthen the “national life line,” as he termed her interest in Manchuria. “To face the facts and to act quickly is still sound national strategy, although it may lack the finesse of conversational diplomacy so popular among nations which enjoy absolute security,” he remarked drily.

The article’s tone of dry pragmatism reads as if the writer is cynically chiding the public for entertaining the idea that Western mores of honour-in-diplomacy (real or imagined) could possibly apply to non-Western powers. *Of course* Japan invaded the Chinese mainland, Sokolsky suggests, to not do so would be to guarantee long-term encirclement by rival forces such as the USSR, the USA and Britain. It was indeed a ‘hard-nosed’ explanation of Japanese motives, but the unspoken assessment underlying the piece is that Japan was indeed an outsider, a cornered animal, and that the West should not assume that stable, predictable diplomatic relations would be possible when realism demanded that Japan undertake ruthless militarism in order to fulfil her ambitions for growth.<sup>273</sup> In essence, the message to New Zealanders was: ‘We can’t blame them for acting violently, but neither can we trust them.’ The article continued this reasoning by providing a Chinese perspective of the invasion:

#### CHINA’S SIDE.

Dr. T. Z. Koo, vice-‘chairman of the World’s Student Christian Federation of Peiping, gave the Chinese view of the Manchurian affair and concluded with the statement that it was China’s policy now to see that ‘Japan’s life line’ did not function. The strained relations between China and Japan in recent years, declared-Dr. Koo, had grown out of the provisions of the Treaty of Portsmouth which ended the Russo-Japanese War. Since then, he said, Japan had been demanding more from China than she agreed to in that

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<sup>273</sup> Khoon Choy Lee, *Japan: Between Myth and Reality*, Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 1995, p.178.

treaty, while China has been trying to evade fulfilment of the treaty, and of other treaties “extorted” from her.

The cumulative effect of all the Japanese demands on China, he continued, had piled up so much distrust of her designs against Chinese territory that it appeared to the Chinese that Japan was following in Manchuria the same procedure she had followed in Korea. Dr. Boy H. Akagi, lecturer on Japanese affairs of Columbia University maintained that Japan was driven into the Asiatic continent “by an irretrievable blind force of history” and the two factors behind that force were “Russia’s grandiose dream for a Far Eastern Empire and China’s perennial weakness,” says the “New York Times.”<sup>274</sup>

While the Chinese could see the Japanese policy in Korea and the establishment of Manchukuo as events occurring in a continuum of military expansion (and were therefore not surprised, despite being appalled, at Japanese actions), New Zealanders seemed more shocked and apprehensive about this seemingly sudden display of aggression. New Zealanders were now coming out of their phase of viewing Japan as a military ally, and were adopting the aforementioned ‘distrust’ toward Japan felt by the Chinese and Americans. Where Japan’s previous military endeavours had either adversely affected New Zealand’s rivals (as was the case in the Russo-Japanese War), or had only affected peoples whom New Zealanders had little contact with or overt affinity for (as was the case in Korea), Japan was now, by invading the Chinese mainland, directly threatening the territories and interests of the British Empire such as Shanghai and Hong Kong. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the Manchurian invasion essentially marked the turning point in terms of New Zealanders perception of Japan from ally to rival.

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<sup>274</sup> *Evening Post*, 27 October 1932, p. 5.

In New Zealand print, the general tones of reporting and commentary on the Manchurian incursion and the establishment of the Manchukuo state were condemnatory. Opinion pieces regarding Japanese militarism were now more common in New Zealand papers as New Zealanders felt increasingly apprehensive about future Japanese machinations. The Chinese consul himself wrote to the *Evening Post* in May, 1933 with the title, ‘SINO-JAPANESE DISPUTE’:

Sir,— In last night’s “Evening Post” there appeared under the heading of “Japanese- Traders” a statement made by Mr. Yutaka Nakajima respecting the Sino-Japanese dispute. I desire to make the following reply:—

With reference to Mr. Nakajima’s statement that “Japan did not want war with China,” how can Mr. Nakajima reconcile Japan’s seizure of Mukden on September 18, 1931, by force, and latterly her military occupation of the whole of Manchuria and Jehol? Even if China, as emphasised by Mr. Nakajima, did not protect Japanese interests in Manchuria, there are still remedies such as that provided in the League of Nations Covenant, the Nine-Power Treaty, and the Kellogg- Briand Pact, which Japan could have invoked to attain her object, other than that of employing military force. In regard to the statement of Mr. Nakajima that “China is in the position of having virtually no nationality,” may I point out that such an assertion is absolutely untrue, and is made merely a pretext for justification of Japan’s invasion of Manchuria.—I am, etc,

CHUNHOW H. PAO,

Consul for the Republic of China.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> *Evening Post*, 4 May 1933, p. 10.

Pao's letter referred to the following article, published two days earlier, which discussed trade possibilities between Japan and New Zealand. It contained the subheading, 'RECIPROCITY DESIRED', and dealt mainly with mundane concerns regarding increased Japanese demand for New Zealand wool. It concluded with the politically charged (and jarringly inserted, given the prosaic content of the rest of the short piece) statements referred to by the Chinese consul:

"Japan did not want war with China," Mr. Nakajima said. "However, China is in the position of having virtually no nationality and Japanese interests in Manchuria were menaced by troops and brigands who were without the law. China could not keep the country in order, and Japan had to step in to protect her own interests. The war has not affected trade to any marked extent."<sup>276</sup>

It was relatively uncommon for New Zealand papers to have exclusive interviews with Japanese officials at this time, just as it was uncommon for Japanese officials in general to be available for comment in New Zealand at all due to their limited presence in-country. Nakajima's dismissive and arrogant tone was of course sufficient to rile the Chinese consul, but his implications of Chinese primitivism may well have rung true with New Zealanders. For the most part, white New Zealanders had traditionally viewed the Chinese as undesirable immigrants,<sup>277</sup> with the Poll Tax policy being but one example of such general antipathy. However, this disdain for the Chinese on New Zealand soil was now being countered by a desire to defend British interests in China from incursions by rival imperial powers. China could now be seen as both a victim of Japanese duplicity, as well as a stalwart defender of Western interests in Asia. By 1933, New Zealanders still had very limited contact with the

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<sup>276</sup> *Evening Post*, 2 May 1933, p. 6.

<sup>277</sup> Cf. Manying Ip, "Chinese Immigration to Australia and New Zealand: Government Policies and Race Relations", in Chee-Beng Tan (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of the Chinese Diaspora*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2013, p.159 and Phoebe H. Li, *A Virtual Chinatown: The Diasporic Mediasphere of Chinese Migrants in New Zealand (Chinese Overseas)*, Boston: Brill Academic, 2013, p. 6.

Japanese, and much of the commentary made by New Zealanders at this time was based on generalisations and reports received from the international press. Indeed, in previous decades it was this limited contact that had fostered the generally favourable impressions that New Zealanders had of Japan during the days of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Yet in the 1930s it was this same level of unfamiliarity (and New Zealanders' heavy reliance on foreign news reports for their information regarding Asia- many written with an anti-Japanese slant), which meant that publically-voiced opinions of New Zealanders speedily and unequivocally turned against their former allies.

### **Enduring Ties**

Despite the general deterioration of attitudes within New Zealand toward Japan, some elements of the former alliance remained. These came predominantly in the form of sporting ties and symbolic naval visits.

The Japanese warships *Asawa* and *Iwate* (which had been a regular visitor to NZ waters: see figures 8-10) docked at Wellington harbour in June 1932 and entertained the locals with demonstrations of traditional Japanese martial arts. A photograph published in the *Evening Post* shows Japanese sailors practicing some form of *kendo* swordsmanship before a considerable crowd (see figure 13). The sizable crowd watching the demonstration shows that New Zealanders were still fascinated by Japanese culture, despite the increasingly negative depictions of Japan in print media.

In addition to naval visits, New Zealand civilians also interacted with the Japanese on the rugby pitch, with the New Zealand Universities rugby side touring Japan in 1936 (see figures 14 and 15). The New Zealand players were impressed by the sophistication of Tokyo, with its neon lights that one could 'read a newspaper at night in the glare' by, as well as the

efficiency of the Japanese railway system.<sup>278</sup> The players took note of the cheap labour in Japan that enabled the railway company to employ men with flags to stop traffic at every crossing.<sup>279</sup> Such reports of cheap labour, while voiced in an innocuous tone of apparent admiration, no doubt fed into the existing preconceptions among New Zealanders that Japan was rife with hordes of labourers ready to ‘inundate’ the British Empire. The New Zealanders were similarly impressed by the standard of rugby played by the Japanese. One Ian Stace, a forward in the NZ Universities side, described the work ethic of the Japanese players:

The players were small and wiry, and kept the game open with continuous passing. There was little individual play, the five-eighths never cutting through or the wings going for the corners. They played too much as a team. They undoubtedly trained too much, from two to four hours... daily right through the year, and there was a danger of the game becoming professional... They were great sports, but ‘gabbled’ a great deal during the game.<sup>280</sup>

It is worth noting that the tour only took place after several unsuccessful attempts by the Japanese Rugby Football Union to arrange a visit by the All Blacks or a New Zealand provincial side, inferring that the New Zealand Rugby Union either did not perceive the Japanese side to be worthy opponents, or that such a tour would be politically remiss given the diplomatic tensions between the two nations.<sup>281</sup>

Ultimately, the late 1920s and early 1930s were the turning point in New Zealanders’ attitudes toward Japan. While Pakeha perceptions of the Japanese had never really been particularly nuanced and were largely based on racial stereotypes and caricatures (even more considerate views saw Japan as a nation of ‘government’ and ‘people’, rather than as a

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<sup>278</sup> Ian Stace and Peter Boston, “The 1936 New Zealand Universities Rugby Tour to Japan”, in Roger Peren (ed.), *Japan and New Zealand – 150 Years*, (pp. 63-64), Palmerston North: Hutcheson, Bowman and Stuart, 1999, p. 63.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>281</sup> Antony Best, *Britain, Japan and Pearl Harbour: Avoiding War in East Asia, 1936-1941*, Abingdon: Routledge, 1995, p.122.

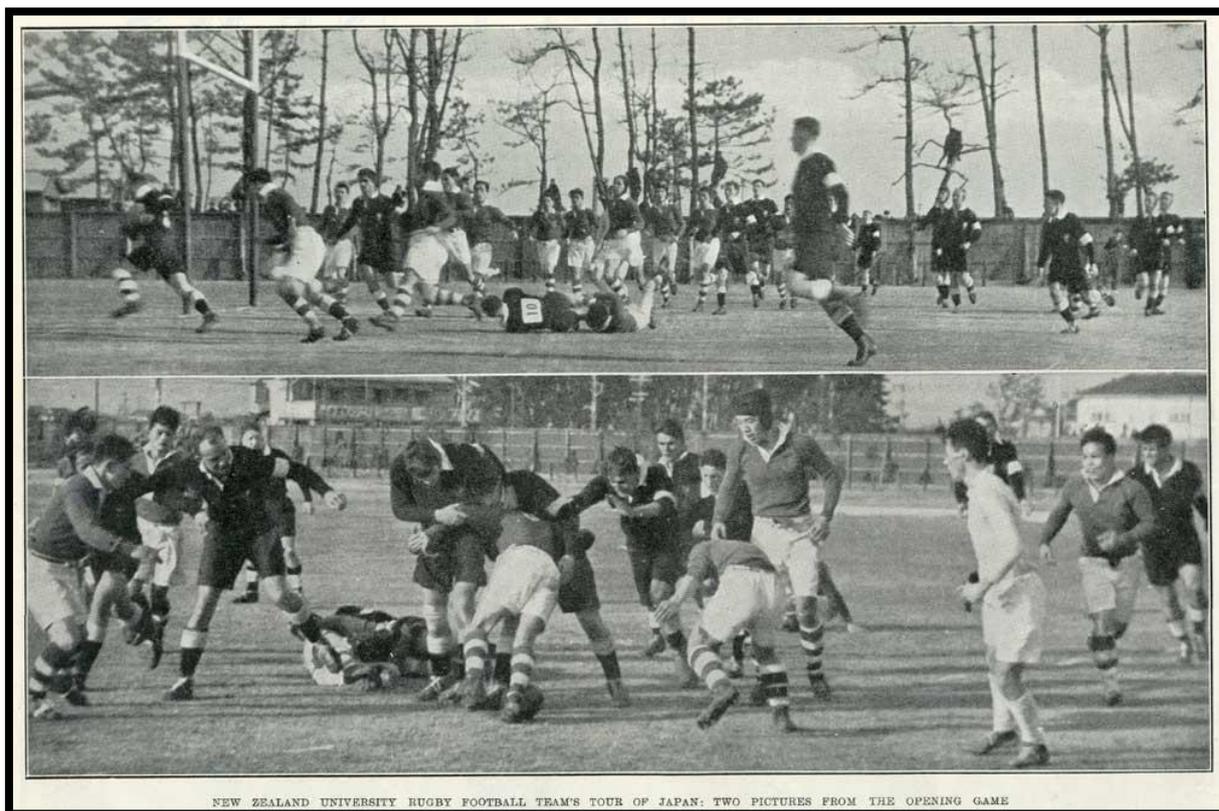
democratic multitude),<sup>282</sup> up until the 1920s they were nevertheless at least somewhat favourable (the ‘Brown Britons’ stereotype largely winning out over that of the ‘Yellow Peril’). However, as Japanese military exploits took them increasingly closer to direct competition with the West, the tone swiftly soured.



**Figure 13: Japanese Sailors Entertain Wellingtonians with Martial Arts. *Evening Post*. 1932. The National Library of New Zealand. Retrieved from <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/22642224>**

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<sup>282</sup> Koppes and Black, p.252.



**Figure 14: The New Zealand University Rugby Football Team Tours Japan. 18 March, 1936. *Auckland Weekly News*. Retrieved from [http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/dbtw-wpd/HeritageImages/images/photos/AWNf/1936/AWNS\\_19360318\\_p040\\_i001\\_vx.jpg](http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/dbtw-wpd/HeritageImages/images/photos/AWNf/1936/AWNS_19360318_p040_i001_vx.jpg)**



**Figure 15: The Japanese Minister of Education Meets The New Zealand University Rugby Football Team. 1936. *Auckland Weekly News*. Retrieved from McNeil, p. 30.**

## Chapter Five

### The Lines Are Drawn: New Zealand and Japan in the Makings of World War

As the Japanese military found itself increasingly embroiled in conflict on the Chinese mainland, the global press (and, by derivation, the New Zealand public) became increasingly sceptical of Japanese military ambitions. This was due in no small part to the development of Japan's unapologetically militaristic stance in China.<sup>283</sup> No longer was Japan seen as a nation of 'Brown Britons', well-suited to share with Britain in the imperialist burdens of ruling Asia. Rather, the Japanese would gradually be bestowed in print media with the sinister veneer of the faceless Eastern hordes hitherto applied to British foes such as Russia and the Kaiser's armies of Germany. This gradual deterioration in public perceptions arose predominantly through Japan's growing association with Germany in addition to its increasingly volatile military actions on the Chinese mainland. As the Western powers grew increasingly distrustful of Japan, the Japanese government grew less inclined to seek close diplomatic ties with them. Indeed, many Japanese diplomats and officials in the 1930s were of the anti-Western generation that felt most slighted by the post-war diplomatic arrangements.<sup>284</sup> This created a circular deterioration of relations, whereby the more isolated Japan became, the more militaristic its outlook grew to be, which in turn served to isolate it further.

The Japanese leadership in the 1930s made no secret of its antipathy toward Britain and the United States, who they saw as enforcing a *status quo* of Anglo-Saxon domination upon international trade under the guise of peace. Those who sought to overturn this white-

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<sup>283</sup> Ian Nish, "Japan in Britain's View of the International System 1919-37", in Ian Nish (ed.), *Anglo-Japanese Alienation 1919-1952: Papers of the Anglo-Japanese Conference on the History of the Second World War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 27.

<sup>284</sup> Barbara J. Brooks, *Japan's Imperial Diplomacy: Consuls, Treaty Ports, and War in China, 1895-1938*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000, p.33.

dominated system would therefore need to embrace the label of ‘aggressor’.<sup>285</sup> To Japanese officials, their difficulties in quelling Chinese resistance carried the implication that British and American forces were attacking Japan through the proxy of the Chinese army.<sup>286</sup> Such sentiments were reported in New Zealand media, and by the late 1930s news bulletins were covering not only Western apprehensions regarding Japan, but also Japanese indignation regarding the perceived meddling of the West in Japan’s affairs. One such report in the *Auckland Star* presciently invoked the spirit of Cold War conflict-by-proxy, claiming that the Japanese believed the British to be at war with them vicariously through the Chinese military.

It read:

Anti-British resentment is steadily mounting among Japanese, who think that pro-Chinese partisanship far exceeds reasonable consideration for British interests in China, says a Tokyo message. Many Japanese say that actually Britain is waging war against Japan and using the Chinese Army. The Press is daily bitterly accusing Britain for jettisoning what remained of amity with Japanese, and numerous public bodies are passing resolutions denouncing British activities. Similar talk is heard everywhere, on trams, in buses and streets.

Little is said about the Dominions, which the Japanese regard as merely the echo of British views.

While reports of German mediation of the Far East dispute seem to be at least premature, remarks the Berlin correspondent of the “Daily Telegraph,” it appears that Germany would be ready with proposals if approached by Japan.

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<sup>285</sup> Usui, p. 78.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid*, p. 81.

Two significant factors are raised at this point of the report: the first is that the Japanese government at this time viewed New Zealand as a mere extension of Britain, unworthy of individual consideration as a sovereign nation, and the second being that Japan was beginning to be closely associated with Germany in the New Zealand public dialogue, therefore sealing Japan's image as a threat to British interests, and thus to New Zealand. The report continued:

The spokesman of the Chinese Foreign Office, states a Nanking message, denies reports that a discussion of terms of settlement is being considered outside the Brussels Conference, from which China does not expect much. She expects still less from direct negotiations with Japan, or from British or American aid.

Therefore, China's own dogged resistance is her only salvation. On that point Marshal Chiang Kai-shek is adamant in spite of the Chinese reverses on the Shansi, Honan and Shanghai fronts.<sup>287</sup>

Such public goading of Britain and America from the Chinese foreign office and the denunciation of negotiations with Japan did much to bolster the diplomatic profile of the Chinese as a 'dogged resistance' movement going it alone against an aggressive Japanese military, without the aid of aloof governments in Britain and America. The increasingly dramatic conflict between China and Japan meant that the profile of 'the Orient' was thus rising in New Zealand media. Bulletins were increasingly differentiating between Asian nations, and no longer were Asian peoples for the most part lumped together as an analogous ethnic group. This differentiation seems to have largely been diplomatic positioning for a potential future conflict with Japan and was relatively simplistic. Indeed, the Japanese were initially eager to improve relations with Britain, provided that all support for Chiang Kai-

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<sup>287</sup> *Auckland Star*, 8 November, 1937, p. 7.

Shek's nationalists was withdrawn.<sup>288</sup> Britain refused such appeasement, and the British press (and by proxy the New Zealand press receiving bulletins via telegraph) was astir with 'outrage' regarding Japanese actions despite attempts to 'calm' journalists down.<sup>289</sup> As the perceived threat of Japanese expansionism in Asia and the Pacific gained momentum, New Zealanders began to take a more avid interest in the ethnic and historical forces of the region.

Asian voices were becoming increasingly heard in New Zealand print, yet whether or not they were listened to by the public is difficult to ascertain. Rivalries between China and Japan came to the fore within letters to the editor sections of various papers. A Chinese 'missioner' by the name of Y. S. Chau wrote to the *Auckland Star* in April, 1938, criticising the economic and demographic policies Japan was implementing in its newly-acquired territories:

At the present time Japan is feeling that she has no friend in the whole world, so she again says that she is willing to allow the open-door policy in China. Since Germany and Italy and Japan have signed a three-power pact against Communism many people say that Germany and Italy are Japan's friend- but this is very far from the truth. Each country is closely watching the other and trying to use the other for its own benefit. Now Japan is feeling her position in China very awkward, so she is trying to get help from other countries by promising the open door. If a bank is strong and has plenty of money it pays what interest it wishes and does not mind if more people do not invest money with it. But if a bank is weak and wants more business it promises more interest on investments to try to induce people to invest their money with it. Now I say that Japan will always use the open door in China

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<sup>288</sup> Bradford A. Lee, *Britain and the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1939: A Study in the Dilemmas of Britain's Decline*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973, p.145.

<sup>289</sup> J.K.J. Perry, "Powerless and Frustrated: Britain's Relationship with China in the Opening Years of the Second Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1939", in *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, September 2011, Vol. 22, Issue 3, p.412.

for her own benefit only. When the Japanese got into Manchuria the British Oil Company closed down, the American banks and Russian banks closed down, and a German iron business with fifty years' history in China had to close its doors. When the Japanese got into Peiping they made the Customs regulation to suit Japan. When they got into Shanghai they stole everything, particularly young boys from three to twelve years of age, and sent them to Japan to be reared as Japanese and trained to be soldiers for the future. In Shanghai now there are all Japanese goods and all ships must fly the Japanese flag, which all goes to prove that wherever Japan goes she will only use the open door for herself and close it to other nations. If Japan used the open door in her own country for the whole world I would believe that she was friendly to the world, but when she closes the door in Japan but makes a loud noise about an open door in China, I know that this is just another of her ways of trying to conquer China for her own ends.

Y. S. CHAU, Chinese Missioner.<sup>290</sup>

Again, the Japanese connection to Germany and Italy was made plain, and therefore so too was the implication of Japan's association with fascism and a widening conspiracy against Western democracies.<sup>291</sup> While Chau suggests that the Axis powers were not true allies, his choice of words nevertheless insinuates a degree of base cunning on the part of Japan, and he certainly vilifies the Japanese as untrusting and untrustworthy agents of disorder in the Asia-Pacific region; ones who would seek to squeeze out all economic rivals. Diatribes such as Chau's provided further condemnation of Japan's machinations, which added weight to Western distrust of Japan as such views from the Chinese could not be said to have a 'white'

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<sup>290</sup> *Auckland Star*, 29 April 1938, p. 6.

<sup>291</sup> Johanna Menzel Meskill, *Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan: The Hollow Diplomatic Alliance*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2012, p.13.

bias. As far as New Zealand media reports were concerned (editorials and letters to the editor included), Japan was seemingly making enemies of all nations and races.

Thus the realignment of Japan from friend to foe continued apace, with the verbal sparring between China and Japan continuing to play out in New Zealand print editorials. The Chinese consul took a swipe at his Japanese counterpart in an *Evening Post* letter printed in May of 1938, countering the Japanese line that military action in China was part of a strategy to eliminate communist insurrection:

#### JAPAN'S ATTITUDE

Sir, —In an interview given to a representative of the “Evening Post” and published in your journal on Saturday, April 30, the newly-appointed Consul-General for Japan in New Zealand, Mr. Kuchi Gunji, stated, among other things, that “the growing menace of Communism in the Far East was the real issue in the Sino-Japanese conflict.” “The Nanking Government,” Mr. Gunji declared, “was dominated by Russian influence and the threat to Japan had reached a stage where forbearance was no longer possible.”

Mr. Gunji is not the only Japanese who has made references to the Chinese Communist Party, and the question of Communism. ‘Like Mr. Gunji, they contend that Communism and anti-Japanese policy of the Chinese Government were the two main obstacles to peaceful relations between China and Japan. Such groundless propaganda, however, can hardly deceive the world.

Having thus publicly denounced the Japanese consul-general as a liar, the Chinese consul then proceeded to clarify the principles of the Chinese State. In doing so, he surely sought to both vilify the Japanese in the eyes of the New Zealand readership while simultaneously legitimising the Chinese National Government as a modern, principled entity. From his desire

to educate the New Zealand public on the nature of Chinese politics we can deduce that the New Zealand public were generally ignorant of the principles of the Chinese State, and indeed perhaps of the major differences between Japan and China in general. In any case, he stresses the anti-communist efforts of the National Government in order to curtail any further Japanese 'propagandising'. This suggests that 'playing the anti-communist card', as it were, was a sound tactic in order to win the sympathies of the Pakeha readership.<sup>292</sup> The consul continued:

China's policy rests firmly on the foundation of the Three People's Principles enunciated by the late Dr. Sun Yat Sen. During the last decade, supreme efforts have been made by the Kuomintang and the National Government to prevent the spread of Communist doctrines and to suppress violence of the Chinese Communists. The long-drawn-out campaign against the Communists and the great cost it involved are facts too well known to require lengthy narration. More recently, the Communist Party, awakening to the acute danger of foreign aggression, realised that national salvation could be achieved only through wholehearted enforcement of the Three People's Principles. Consequently, on September 22, the Communist Party formally declared: (1) The renunciation of the theory and practice of violence; (2) the cessation of all activities aimed at Bolshevising China; (3) the abolition of the Chinese Soviets; (4) the disbandment of the Chinese Red Army. In view of those developments, it may be said that the whole Chinese nation is devoted to the Three People's Principles today, striving under the guidance of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, to resist foreign aggression and to realise Dr.

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<sup>292</sup> Trepeznik and Fox, p. 106.

Sun Yat Sen's lofty ideals. The facts mentioned above cannot be obscured by propaganda, however cleverly contrived.

It cannot be over-emphasised that the present unhappy state of relations between the Chinese and the Japanese is entirely due to Japan's ceaseless aggression against China.

Mr. Gunji is reported to have stated that Japan for twenty years had been striving for co-operation with her neighbour, but without the slightest success. Mr. Gunji must surely know that co-operation rests upon mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and interest. Japan wants domination over China, not co-operation with China. Japan can have co-operation the moment she abandons her traditional policy of force, ceases her acts of aggression, and recalls her invading forces from Chinese soil.—I am, etc.,

FENG WANG,

Consul for the Republic of China in New Zealand.<sup>293</sup>

Wang's letter reveals more than just the antipathy between the Chinese and Japanese governments; it reveals the unifying impact of the Japanese invasion upon disparate political groups within China. If the Chinese communists and nationalists were willing to set aside their differences in order to oppose the Japanese as a common foe, it could then be implied by the New Zealand readership that this unity should extend to the New Zealand people as well, who should see themselves as having a vested interest in containing Japan, given both the British Empire's interests in China and Japan's increasingly close association with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.<sup>294</sup> Indeed, the English-speaking readership was becoming increasingly exposed to images of Japan as an Asiatic carbon-copy of Hitler's Germany (see

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<sup>293</sup> *Evening Post*, 2 May, 1938, p. 8.

<sup>294</sup> Minoru Nomura, "Military Policy-Makers Behind Japanese Strategy Against Britain", in Ian Nish, *Anglo-Japanese Alienation 1919-1952: Papers of the Anglo-Japanese Conference on the History of the Second World War*, (pp. 147-155), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, pp 147-148.

figure 16). While Japan's vigour as a Pacific power had once been an attractive trait during the years of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, it became most undesirable when that energy was potentially directed at the British Pacific territories. Japan was all the more garnering a reputation for being the villain of the Pacific, whereby the discipline, imperialism and hunger for modernisation that had once so characterised its favourability among citizens in the British territories now lent it the sinister and threatening veneer of a nation that was continuously and deliberately undermining British interests.<sup>295</sup>



**Figure 16: Now What in Blazes am I Going to Use for Jews? *PM Magazine*.**

**October 20, 1941. Retrieved from**

<http://libraries.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dswenttowar/#ark:bb5290966g>

Articles printed in papers in the British Pacific territories generally expressed a suspicion of Japanese motives, and the militaristic opinions expressed by Japanese officials

<sup>295</sup> Gerald Samson, *British Policy in the Far East*, in *Foreign Affairs*, 4 January 1940, Vol. 18, Issue 3, p.483.

did little to alleviate such concerns. The Australian media responded with alarm to an interview with Japanese admiral Nobumasa Suetsugu, in which he voiced his opinion that ‘coloured races’ in the Pacific must be liberated from white domination. A subsequent report in the Perth-based *West Australian* under the title “Whites in Asia”, attempted to clarify the admiral’s intent, yet did little to alleviate the Australian media’s impression that conflict with Japan was becoming increasingly likely. It read:

It is officially announced that the views on Britain and whites in Asia expressed in his recent interview in “Kaizo,” an influential political review, by Admiral Suetsugu, the new Minister for Home Affairs, were his private views, and that his statements had been misunderstood and misinterpreted abroad.

Admiral Suetsugu, it is now stated, after declaring that peace in the Far East could be stabilised only by cooperation between Japan, China and Manchuria, said:--“Whether or not this means the ejection of whites from Eastern Asia is a very serious problem. Unless the coloured races are rescued from slavery under the yoke of the whites there cannot be world peace. If we try to bring it about suddenly there will be bitter friction and our aims might be defeated, but the goal is clear. Things must tend in that direction.”

If such statements regarding the ‘ejection of whites’ and the ‘liberation of coloured races from slavery’ were intended to alleviate the fears of Australians and New Zealanders (who had their own worries, however unfounded, regarding the loyalties of indigenous populations within their own territories),<sup>296</sup> they no doubt did not have the desired effect. The report continued:

Referring to Britain, Admiral Suetsugu wrote:--“The Nanking Government’s boast of prolonged resistance must mean it still counts on

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<sup>296</sup> R. Scott Sheffield, “Rehabilitating the Indigene: Post-War Reconstruction and the Image of the Indigenous Other in English Canada and New Zealand, 1943-1948”, in Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (eds.), *Rediscovering the British World*, Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005, p.354.

British assistance. If that is so, the root evil must be extirpated. If that leads to a clash between Britain and Japan that cannot be helped. I think Britain should undertake to stop that assistance.”

The Japanese Foreign Office spokesman (Mr. Kawai) stated today that the interview was given before Admiral Suetsugu became Home Minister and did not represent the views of the Government. He asserted the interview did not indicate a policy of driving whites from Asia, but emphasised that white domination over coloured races needed modification so that real world peace might be secured. The reference to British aid to China should not be interpreted as challenging. Admiral Suetsugu wanted only to emphasise the importance of stopping arms supplies to China. He did not say Japan wanted to fight Britain and did not predict a clash.<sup>297</sup>

But what could such ‘modification’ involve if not the dismantling of jealously-guarded British military domination of the region? The 1930s were indeed a time of relentless euphemisms in Western print, and again the spectre of the Japanese being champions of indigenous Pacific peoples rose before the white Australasian public. The Ratana statements made in 1925 of blood ties between Maori and the Japanese were appearing all the more likely to bear political fruit. For those European New Zealanders who enjoyed a comfortable position of power, the Japanese navy represented an imposing threat from without. But additionally, and equally menacingly to Pakeha New Zealanders, the Japanese rhetoric of racial politics as pertained to Pacific indigenous cultures (tenuous as race relations were between whites and non-whites in New Zealand) presented a plausible threat from within -

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<sup>297</sup> *The West Australian*, 10 January 1938, p. 21.

though the vigorous contributions of the Maori War Effort Organisation and the Maori Battalion would ultimately prove such worries baseless.<sup>298</sup>

### **Singapore Threatened**

Among New Zealanders, the imperative to establish a substantial military presence in Asia had been strong since the early 1920s.<sup>299</sup> Indeed, many had seen the Anglo-Japanese Alliance as an unworthy compromise in that it sacrificed British naval superiority in favour of financial expedience.<sup>300</sup> Such critics would be vindicated by the eventual souring of the alliance which left British territories defended by a Royal Navy that had been allowed to atrophy due to a reliance on Japanese protection.<sup>301</sup> As New Zealand and Australia's vulnerability became increasingly evident, the case for developing a naval base at Singapore became increasingly robust. Yet, from the perspective of citizens in England, such an undertaking (if paid for by taxes of all imperial subjects) would come at considerable financial cost, while apparently benefiting only the relatively few British inhabitants of the South Pacific without much tangible gain for British citizens 'at home'. Yet such was the fear of Japan by the late 1930s, both in the colonies and in the motherland, that the expense of building and manning the naval base became increasingly tolerable. One 'Ex-RN' (which the reader can infer to mean 'ex Royal Navy') summed up the situation in a letter to the *Auckland Star*:

The people of New Zealand should be glad to treble their contribution for effective defence. As long as the British Fleet is unable to operate in the Pacific the Empire is in danger. Though in the past England has had a navy

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<sup>298</sup> Sheffield, p.345.

<sup>299</sup> Lissington, p. 56.

<sup>300</sup> Ian Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires, 1894-1907*, London: Athlone Press, 1966, p. 241.

<sup>301</sup> John Gallagher, *The Decline, Revival and Fall of the British Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, p.131.

large enough to contain an enemy fleet in Europe and to fight in another part of the world, she cannot do so to-day. With the relative strengths of five naval Powers as they are to-day, she cannot conduct major operations in the Pacific without losing the command of her home waters. It is impossible to carry on a two Power standard war with a one Power standard navy. The English Channel is the strategical [*sic*] key to the British Empire. There the enemy's attack must be expected, and thence, as a base, naval operations all over the world must be conducted. England's problem to-day is to get a sufficiently large fleet to Singapore at the appropriate time when the crisis comes, as come it will, and soon. Should the fleet fail to arrive in time, England will lose Hongkong [*sic*], Singapore, her self-governing Dominions, and her other possessions. Imperialism is challenged from two sides. On the one hand there is a rising tide of nationalism within the various empires, entailing demands for self-government and independence. On the other hand, there is an increasing realisation that the whole idea of the exclusive Empire belongs to an age that is past, and that the backward regions of the world, both in respect of economic development and cultural advance, should be regarded as a responsibility resting upon the international community as a whole. It is clear that a hopelessly vulnerable Great Britain cannot expect to preserve a large colonial Empire, for its own exclusive benefit. The economic tariff bubble is nearing bursting point.

EX-R.N.<sup>302</sup>

By 1941, reports in print media seemed to suggest that war with Japan was increasingly likely. Indeed, Hitler himself urged the Japanese government in February of

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<sup>302</sup> *Auckland Star*, 31 January 1938, p. 6.

1941 to ‘humiliate’ Britain by attacking the Singapore base as early as possible (but the attack would be strategically delayed until after the attack on Pearl Harbour for fear of United States retaliation).<sup>303</sup> Again, blunt comments made by Admiral Suetsugu would inflame antipodean fears of Japanese invasion. On 3 February, 1941, the *Auckland Star* reported:

Australia and India, but not New Zealand, will be in the second phase of Japan’s “new order,” said Admiral Suetsugu, in an interview with the “New York Times” Tokyo correspondent. The first phase will include China, the Malayan Islands, and the Dutch East Indies.

Singapore was the key to the situation. It was regarded as a serious obstacle to Japanese hegemony in the South Seas.

Admiral Suetsugu added that Singapore, Hawaii and Australia constituted points vital to the strategy of an enemy attacking Japan... the Singapore base will justify the millions spent on it.<sup>304</sup>

Such assurances that New Zealand would not be factor into Japan’s territorial acquisitions would have been scant consolation for New Zealanders who considered the strength of Australia to be a safeguard against foreign invasion.<sup>305</sup> Suetsugu was convinced of the superiority of the ‘Japanese spirit’, and had long been bull-headed when discussing Japanese militarism in the Pacific.<sup>306</sup> He apparently had no compunctions about stoking the security fears of British imperial subjects. Regardless, such overt statements, on-record, of Japanese intentions toward military action against British territories consolidated the general sense of alarm and impending conflagration in the British Pacific.

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<sup>303</sup> Nomura, p. 148.

<sup>304</sup> *Auckland Star*, 3 February 1941, p. 7.

<sup>305</sup> John Connor, *ANZAC and Empire: George Foster Pearce and the Foundations of Australian Defence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, p.89.

<sup>306</sup> John J Stephan, *Hawaii Under the Rising Sun: Japan’s Plans for Conquest After Pearl Harbour*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002, p. 71.

The ‘millions spent’ in establishing and maintaining the Singapore naval base had long been a point of contention between the British and antipodean parliaments. New Zealand and Australia strongly desired a bulwark of British naval force in Asia to contain possible Japanese southward expansion, while the British citizenry in the homeland felt reluctant to invest the necessary funds to establish and maintain an Asia-Pacific fleet formidable enough to counteract the Japanese navy, let alone to build the base itself. To many in the British Isles, Singapore (and the worries of the antipodean colonials) was of remote concern. As the *Ellesmere Guardian* reported in 1936:

As to the need for a costly and powerful base so remote from home, many English people have their doubts. Even the Middle East, to the average man in the street, seems too far away to be a potential source of worry. But the Government, the Admiralty and the War Office are of a different opinion.

They regard Singapore as a key position—as the gateway through which an enemy might easily bring disaster to the Empire. For that reason the British taxpayer has been forced to pay for something which he persists in regarding as of direct interest only to Australia and the Eastern Crown colonies.

Nevertheless, Singapore is not a threat to any world Power. It is, however, a potent reminder that Britain is now fully prepared for any eventuality in the Pacific.<sup>307</sup>

The language is consolatory despite its jingoistic undertones. The writer denounces the militarism of the ‘enemy’ (which could only be inferred to be Japan) while simultaneously excusing the militarism of the British. It was as if the zeitgeist of the both the writer and readership was one of ‘we shan’t start the fight, but by jingo we’ll finish it!’ Ultimately, the

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<sup>307</sup> *Ellesmere Guardian*, 17 January 1936, p. 5.

base was constructed, but no requisite fleet was built with which to patrol the surrounding territories, the majority of the Royal Navy having been withdrawn to defend Britain from German invasion. The base was therefore an expensive and immobile money-sink that lacked sea and air support and was vulnerable to enemy land-based attack,<sup>308</sup> and it fell notoriously swiftly to Japanese assault in 1942. Such a spectacular defeat was not predicted, as for the latter half of the 1930s there was no dearth in newspaper reports describing the base's 'mighty' fortifications.<sup>309</sup> Regardless, the fall of Singapore to the Japanese brought home to Australians and New Zealanders their vulnerability, leading to the unsurprising surge of anti-Japanese vehemence in public opinion.



<sup>308</sup> Clayton, Graham, *Last Stand in Singapore*, Auckland: Random House, 2008, p.252.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*

**Figure 17: Don't let them carve THOSE faces on our mountains! *PM Magazine*.**

**December 12, 1941. UC San Diego Libraries. Retrieved from**

**<http://libraries.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dswenttowar/#ark:bb3618599q>**

## Chapter Six

### The Pacific at War – New Zealand and Japan as Enemies

Revisionist scholars such as Robert Harvey<sup>310</sup> and Katsui Usui<sup>311</sup> have argued that Japan's hand was forced by Western powers into launching pre-emptive strikes against British and American strongholds in the Pacific as a matter of long-term survival. Such was the economic stranglehold that American and British trade embargoes held over Japanese economic interests that the Japanese military believed that a ferocious onslaught with the element of surprise was the only means toward securing the economic lifelines that the swiftly modernising Japanese state needed.<sup>312</sup> Such views may hold credence with the benefit of hindsight, as the United States had long taken a vigorous and aggressive anti-Japanese economic stance and Britain had also held misgivings regarding Japanese economic ascendancy,<sup>313</sup> but New Zealanders at the time, as shall be seen, nevertheless bought into the notion that the Japanese were indeed the villains who had connived the 'day of infamy' as Roosevelt dubbed the Pearl Harbour attack. Additionally, emotive reports of gross human rights abuses in China were becoming increasingly frequent in print ('rape', 'pillage', 'looting' and 'slaughter' being common descriptors),<sup>314</sup> adding fuel to the vehemently anti-Japanese fire.

The dramatically rapid escalation of the Pacific war left many citizens of the British territories ruminating on how the situation had been allowed to deteriorate to such a degree, yet the sense of shock among New Zealanders and Australians was muted in comparison to the reaction of American media bulletins. Vitriolic denunciations of the Japanese were not

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<sup>310</sup> Harvey, p. 242.

<sup>311</sup> Usui, p. 84.

<sup>312</sup> Nomura, p. 147.

<sup>313</sup> Nish (1982), p. 28.

<sup>314</sup> *Evening Post*, 19 January 1938, p.18. *Akaroa Mail and Banks Peninsula Advertiser*, 16 August 1938, p. 4. *Evening Post*, 4 January 1939, p.8. *Auckland Star*, 23 November 1943, p. 2.

widespread, and indeed would not become so until after the Pacific island-hopping campaign reached its full fury years later.<sup>315</sup> Rather, a sense of grim resignation and stoic reserve seemed to settle into the mindsets of the New Zealand and Australian public. There was widespread regret among New Zealanders and Australians as to the past closeness between the British territories and their newfound enemy. A letter to the editor in Adelaide's *The Advertiser* bemoaned Australia's lack of alliance-building with China and Russia:

Australians are manly enough to acknowledge their own mistakes. We most certainly have erred in many ways, especially so, in providing war material to Japan, and also in our shameful neglect of China and Russia. We all knew for many years the serious danger of aggression by Japan. All that we did was to send over Sir John Latham as Ambassador to keep the peace. We should have fostered friendship and trade with the two peace-loving nations Russia and China, all three to agree to keep the peace, all three to unite against Japanese aggression against any member of the peace pact.<sup>316</sup>

Such enthusiastic praise for the communist regime in Russia may come across as hyperbolic, perhaps even hypocritical, as it was indeed the Japanese navy's defeat of Russia in earlier decades that had made Japan an attractive ally. Yet grim regrets aside, the spectacularly swift loss of the Singapore base led to panic and finger-pointing in New Zealand print. As has been mentioned, the Singapore base was largely ineffective due to the lack of a requisite naval fleet assigned to it. One H.W.U. Haddon came to the defence of the base's designers after they had been publically lambasted by letter contributors (namely one 'H.G.P.') for perceived flaws in the base's defences:

H.G.P.'s comparison of the designer of Singapore with a man who kept a stable with an unlocked back door is utterly misleading. Singapore was

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<sup>315</sup> Nicholas Evan Sarantakes, *Allies Against the Rising Sun; The United States, the British Nations, and the Defeat of Imperial Japan.*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009, pp. 325-326.

<sup>316</sup> *The Advertiser*, 2 February 1942, p. 9.

protected in the rear by more than 20 aerodromes stretching 450 miles north. Was it the fault of the designer that these aerodromes were not fully stocked with planes and adequately garrisoned? Again, it was designed to be protected by a powerful fleet, and it was no fault of the designer that the fleet was not provided. Further, it was screened in the rear by 1000 miles of the neutral or friendly territory of Indochina, which fell into enemy hands less than one year ago, long after the designer had completed his task. No; the fault lies upon the vast majority of voters of all the Empire countries who, with ostrich-like stupidity, shut their eyes to every lesson of history and insisted on returning to power politicians who promised to cut the cost of army, navy and air force. I do not remember H.G.P.'s voice 15, 10 or even 5 years ago urging that you and I, and even H.G.P. himself, should be taxed to strengthen our fighting services. Perhaps H.G.P. was then in Australia, which country contributed least to Singapore and squealed loudest at its fall. As to the cost —well, the United Nations are spending on the war daily a sum equal to the whole cost of Singapore.

H. W. U. HADDON.<sup>317</sup>

Clearly, both New Zealanders and Australians had been shocked by the rapidity of Japanese military advances and were divided as to how these advances could have been checked or prevented. The New Zealand government had indeed been more zealous than Australia in its financial support for constructing the Singapore base, having granted £100,000 in 1923 to 'set a fine example to other parts of the Empire', in the words of Governor-General John Jellicoe, to do likewise.<sup>318</sup> Such enthusiasm was never truly replicated in Britain (as seen in the previous chapter), and such underinvestment fuelled the 'I told you so' public refrain in

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<sup>317</sup> *Auckland Star*, 19 February 1942, p. 6.

<sup>318</sup> *Lissington*, p. 59.

the months following Singapore's fall. The bitter tone of this letter, aimed squarely at Australia, belies the frustrations felt by many New Zealanders that something could and should have been done to avert the Pacific's predicament. Coupled with the tone of the Australian letter before it, the public refrain on both sides of the Tasman seems to have been 'we should have known better'.

In post-Pearl Harbour New Zealand, the attitude toward Japan in print media became universally hostile and increasingly belligerent. The rhetoric employed by journalists and letter writers became vitriolic and aggressive, and the subject matter turned away from ruminations on the causes of the conflict and more toward how best to destroy Japan as a military force. Reports and editorials became increasingly propagandist in their demonization of Japan, reflecting the bestial depictions of the Japanese that had already been a mainstay in American media for decades.<sup>319</sup> One such editorial in the *Evening Post* in December 1941 had this to say:

A DESPERATE THROW

SHORTAGE OF MATERIAL

Japan had risked everything on one desperate throw; she was prepared to sacrifice men by the thousand to secure territory from which raw materials could be drawn, because, without oil and metals, she could not last against the Allies throughout the coming year, said Mr. A. Ashton, who lived among the Japanese for eleven years, in an interview with "The Post" today. Japanese officers were prepared to order their men to death, and the men were ready to go because they had been taught that no other soldiers could stand against them, and that it was not only the highest honour, but their supreme duty, to die for the Emperor.

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<sup>319</sup> Dower, p. 78.

... Referring to the treachery practised by the Japanese in the Pacific, Mr. Ashton said that both the British and American authorities should have expected it. The Japanese had treated him with scrupulous honesty, but their moral outlook was not like that of Europeans. What an Englishman would regard as a dirty trick was looked upon as a clever deed in Japan. A man who went out to fight a duel with an adversary and succeeded in substituting a wooden sword for the real article in his opponent's scabbard was extolled in Japanese story books. If he could introduce water into the scabbard so that the wooden sword would swell and become a fixture he was even cleverer. He could not realise why the British and American authorities had not anticipated just what happened in the Pacific.<sup>320</sup>

The vernacular that New Zealanders used to describe the Japanese had turned alarmingly brutal. Alien, bestial aspects of Japanese culture were accentuated, and gone was any veneer of polite vestigial allegiance from the days of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance (see figure 18 for a bestial representation of the apelike, 'marauding Jap': "brutality is a part of their fighting equipment."). Instead, the letter, and others like it, focused on the perceived nihilistic aspects of Japanese militarism; the 'ordering of men to their deaths' and 'treachery practised'. The discipline and dedication to duty of the Japanese soldiers that had once made them 'Brown Britons' now gave them the veneer of a theocratic death cult.

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<sup>320</sup> *Evening Post*, 20 December, 1941, p.8.



**Figure 18: How Tough Are the Japanese? *New York Times*. 1943. Retrieved from Dower, p. 187.**

So keenly-felt was the urge to do one's bit for the war effort that many readers felt compelled to help in any way possible. Violent patriotism combined with 'Kiwi ingenuity' at times provided unintentionally humorous pieces. One W.D. Keys wrote a letter to the *Auckland Star* in December 1941 insisting that the New Zealand Defence Department take up his offer to produce home-made land mines:

#### WAR INVENTIONS

For nearly two years I have endeavoured to interest the New Zealand defence authorities in a proposal to manufacture anti-tank land mines in New Zealand. I have the plans for these mines, which would be efficient, destructive and cheap, and extremely simple to manufacture. We are now at war with Japan

and a defence against landing parties and mechanised forces may be necessary any day. It is not too late to make these mines now. It is up to the Defence Department to at least try and investigate my claims. W. D. KEYS.<sup>321</sup>

One can picture Mr. Keys' relentlessly composing his pleas to the government over several years, only to be met with cold rebuffs, and the zealous glee which he must have felt at the prospect of the New Zealand people finally taking his do-it-yourself explosives seriously at the outbreak of war. Much as they had been in their enthusiasm for constructing the Singapore base, New Zealanders were characteristic in their keenness to be seen as contributing to the war effort beyond what was expected of a nation of small stature.<sup>322</sup>

With war in the Pacific came a need among New Zealanders for news regarding the progress of the conflict. New Zealanders were clearly attuned to radio broadcasts regarding the war, with an increasing reliance on American leadership over British becoming apparent. Apparently, hysteria abounded as to the ability of the axis powers to propagandise the New Zealand public via short-wave radio transistors. One 'Verb, Sap' responded to this belief in a letter to the *Evening Post*:

Sir—'Anyone listening to "Radio Newsreel," broadcast from the B.B.C. on Tuesday evening from 9.30 to 9.55, would have found in it complete answers to the foolish people who attach any importance to Axis propaganda, and to the more foolish who would have every short-wave radio set in New Zealand smashed. If people here would only do as President Roosevelt was quoted in the newsreel as suggesting, namely, listen to the war news with a map in front of them, they would realise that Japan herself is in

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<sup>321</sup> *Auckland Star*, 9 December, 1941, p. 6.

<sup>322</sup> Sarantakes, p. 325.

greater danger at the moment than New Zealand is. — I am, etc.. VERB.

SAP.<sup>323</sup>

As well as providing a somewhat humorous image (again, unintentionally) of a nation taking to their radio sets with hammers in order to block enemy transmissions, the letter also provides insight into the waning influence of Britain and the rise of the United States as the forerunner of Western influence in the Pacific.<sup>324</sup> As evinced by the references made in this letter, much of the New Zealand public looked to Roosevelt, not Churchill, as the voice of leadership in the Pacific War.

The outbreak of war also ushered in a groundswell of patriotism that countermanded a print industry that had an established tradition of criticising New Zealand leaders.<sup>325</sup> One Mrs. MacGlashen Smith wrote to the *Evening Post* with complaints regarding the paper's unpatriotic focus on the shortcomings of British and American leaders:

Sir,—You say in your leader of February 24: “Are we going to allow our morale to revolve round the lying Axis of Berlin-Tokio,” etc. And yet, time and time again, have you published the supposed errors and blunders of leaders in this war; which is enough to make the people criticise and lose faith in them. Take this issue, on page five, you publish: “British and American Errors,” which makes one gasp, for if true, then those responsible must be quite incapable of leading us to victory. If not true, then you yourselves are doing exactly what you blame the people for doing, i.e., spreading alarms, undermining the people's morale and creating dissatisfaction in our leaders.—  
I am, etc.,

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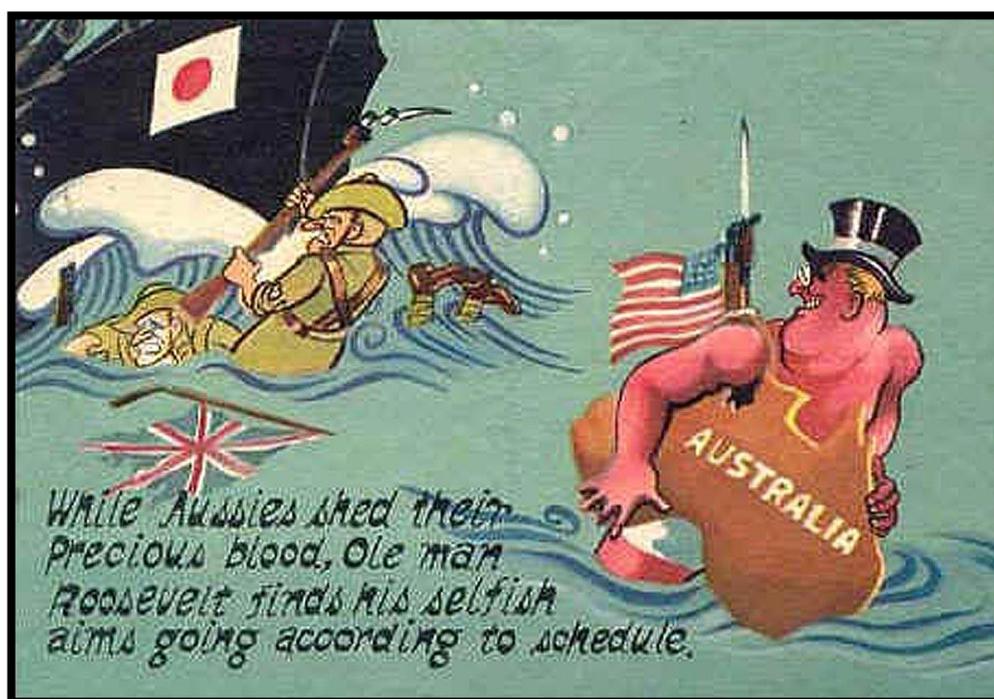
<sup>323</sup> *Evening Post*, 26 February 1942, p. 6.

<sup>324</sup> Elias C. Hill, *The Rise, the Fall and the Recovery of the USA*, Bloomington: Xlibris Corporation, 2009, p.174.

<sup>325</sup> Day, p. 4.

(MRS.) C. MacGLASHEN SMITH<sup>326</sup>

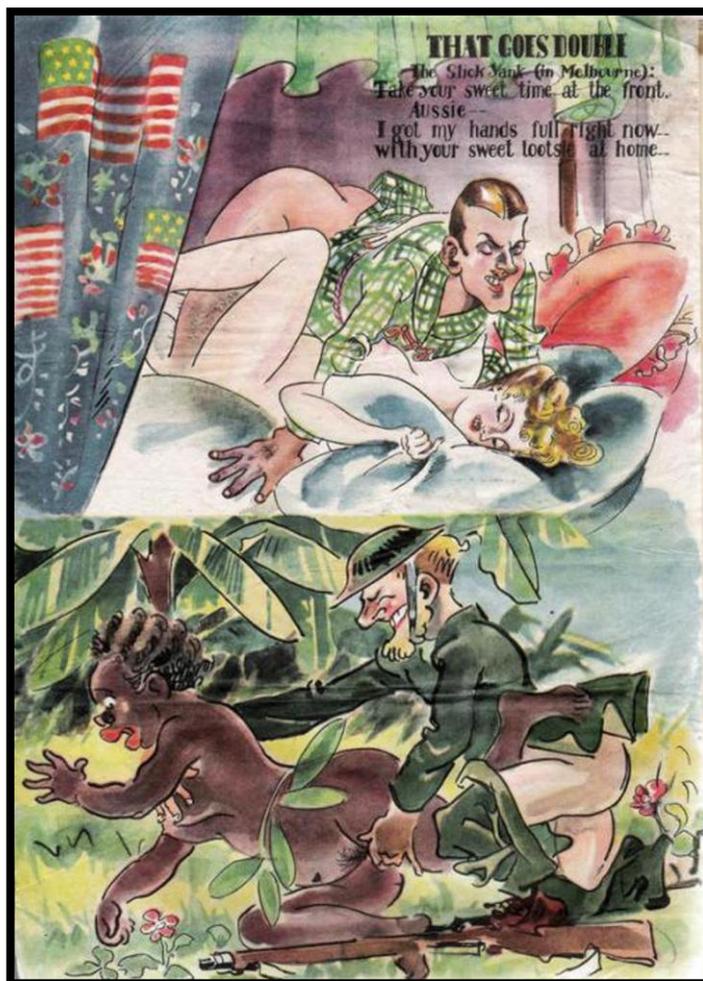
Much seemed to be made of Axis propaganda (which was indeed broadcast from Berlin to New Zealanders in regular two-hourly afternoon short-wave programs during the war),<sup>327</sup> and the fear that New Zealanders may be susceptible to its influence. Hence the editorials alluded to by Mrs. MacGlashen regarding the need for New Zealanders to pay such propaganda no heed.



**Figure 19: Japanese Propaganda Leaflet for Australian Troops. Digital Poster Collection. Retrieved from <http://digitalpostercollection.com/propaganda/1939-1945-world-war-ii/japan/>**

<sup>326</sup> *Evening Post*, 26 February 1942, p. 6.

<sup>327</sup> Hugh Price, *The Plot to Subvert Wartime New Zealand: A True Story of an Impudent Hoax*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2006, p.42.



**Figure 20: Japanese Propaganda Leaflet for Australian Troops. Retrieved from <http://digitalpostercollection.com/propaganda/1939-1945-world-war-ii/japan/>**

Yet while many New Zealanders were looking increasingly to the United States for direction in the Pacific war effort and protection from the Japanese, others, perhaps disillusioned by the failure of the Singapore base to provide any sort of effective bulwark against the Japanese onslaught, advocated a more self-sufficient approach. The tone of writing was becoming increasingly bitter, the vocabulary increasingly derogatory. One especially emphatic piece was penned by ‘Referendum’ to the *Auckland Star* in 1942:

STOP DANGER

The people of Australia and New Zealand are in deadly danger of being overrun by the brown hordes of the Eastern totalitarian nation! Are we to be the next inoffensive little “ant” to be crushed under the mailed foot of warlike Japan, or will we be a scorpion from which he will have to recoil till the might of America finally crushes him? The Dominions have to fend for themselves and make their own war effort. Only one person in 50 is making a real effort in New Zealand at present and the reason is not hard to find. When a person with ability attempts to develop anything which would contribute to our national safety, he is bound hand and foot with the red tape of our Governmental Departments. To fight we need weapons of war and we can no longer wait for England and the U.S.A. to supply these weapons; we must make them ourselves. This is not a job for a few, but for everyone. The weapons we could make here in Auckland are many:—Bren-gun carriers and light tanks, anti-tank guns and mortars, anti-aircraft guns and Owen guns, fast motor launches and corvettes. If the soldiers of New Zealand had sufficient of these weapons, instead of being an easy proposition, which we are at the moment, we would be strong enough to resist any attempt to invade our shores. You will no doubt say that there is not sufficient material in New Zealand for the manufacture of these weapons, that there are no engines for them and no machines to make them with, but you are wrong, because there are the engines from heavy-duty lorries and tractors which could be utilised in a dozen ways till more robust engines were available from Australian heavy industries. You may consider that we do not have the engineers for this work in the country, but you are wrong again, because, although I do not travel a great deal through the Dominion, I have come into contact with dozens. The

only question that remains is whether or not we will make use of these men. I will work with every ounce of my strength to bring this about. Will you? The people of Auckland could make at least one Bren carrier a day and the other weapons as well. REFERENDUM.<sup>328</sup>

This letter is of particular interest both for its violent denigration of the Japanese as well as its wildly unrealistic hopes for an independent, nationwide war effort. The proposition of a fully-mobilised New Zealand industrialised for a protracted campaign, (in tanks powered by lorry engines no less), may seem laughably far-fetched (New Zealand steel manufacturing was undeveloped at this time,<sup>329</sup> and most soldiers relied on Britain and the United States for equipment),<sup>330</sup> but the significance of the piece comes from its underlying tone of sadness and regret despite its venomous imagery. As unpleasant as the vitriolic, racist diatribe may appear to the modern reader, it nevertheless also serves as the desperate, pitiable lamentations of a man who believes that he may be witnessing his country's final days. We can see that New Zealanders genuinely feared that they may have been facing total destruction at the hands of the Japanese. The writer admits to a lack of worldly experience, having 'not travelled a great deal through the Dominion', and this no doubt coloured his fanciful hopes and is clearly shown in his generally naive and overly optimistic appraisal of New Zealand's prospects for a self-sustained war effort. Yet ultimately, and perhaps most significantly, there is a sense of disappointment and even betrayal inherent in the way the writer portrays the leadership of Britain and the United States as nations for whose help New Zealanders can no longer afford to wait. The 'soul' of white New Zealand was beginning to move away from its British roots toward a more independent identity. Britain's failures at both Singapore and

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<sup>328</sup> *Auckland Star*, 23 March 1942, p. 4.

<sup>329</sup> Ross Galbreath, *DSIR: Making Science Work for New Zealand*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1998, p.179.

<sup>330</sup> David Horner, *World War II: The Pacific*, New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 2010, p.73.

Dunkirk had shown Pakeha the military frailty of their mother country,<sup>331</sup> and as with all children when confronted with the mortality of their parents, Pakeha realised increasingly that they needed to look elsewhere for protection and purpose.

The majority of New Zealand's fighting men were already engaged in operations in Europe and North Africa when war broke out in the Pacific. As Patrick Thomson points out, the decision of prime minister Fraser to leave most New Zealand troops in the European theatre despite Japanese encroachments strained New Zealand's relationship with Australia under John Curtin, who had opted to man a larger Pacific contingent in response to the Japanese threat.<sup>332</sup> At the time, most New Zealanders saw it as their patriotic duty to engage in the European theatre in defence of Britain against Germany.<sup>333</sup> However, the proximity of engagements in the Pacific to New Zealand's shores meant that the expedience of survival began to override such imperial bravado. Indeed, as the writer of the following letter to the *Auckland Star* in December 1942 puts it, New Zealanders needed to look to their own defence for "sensible and not sentimental reasons":

In reply to Walter Grey's "Leave Them There." might I offer a suggestion that he read again the *Star* editorials of November 23 and 24 and perhaps he will then see and understand that the object of those articles regarding the return of the Second N.Z.E.F. was to impress upon the people of N.Z. the need of every trained man we possess to fight our first foe (surely), Japan. I think Walter Grey rather missed the point which he took to be that, for some unknown but sentimental reason the *Star* wished to advocate the return of the New Zealand Division for a permanent rest and holiday. This, although well deserved, was not the object. Our one and only way of getting the Second

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<sup>331</sup> Michael Arnold, *Sacrifice of Singapore: Churchill's Biggest Blunder*, Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, 2011, p.199.

<sup>332</sup> Thomson, p.1.

<sup>333</sup> Sarantakes, p. 325.

N.Z.E.F. home is by “demanding” it, not by crawling on our hands and knees and in a quiet, timid voice begging for it. May I point out that a short while ago (since the entry of Japan into the war) two Australian divisions were returned home by the simple expedient of “demanding” their recall. Shipping facilities were surely in worse straits then than to-day, when we have the full support of American shipping. For sensible and not sentimental reasons might I suggest, as did the Star editorials of the 23rd and 24th instant, that the return of the Second N.Z.E.F. be “demanded” by the people of New Zealand to help defend the Pacific.

FIRST THINGS FIRST.<sup>334</sup>

Imperial deference was clearly waning in the New Zealand psyche. There is a distinct sense that New Zealanders no longer believed they could afford to trust in British naval power. Nor could they trust that the British army itself would utilise New Zealand fighting men in such a way that would be conducive to New Zealand’s effective defence, such as deeming the distant North African campaign to take precedence over the much more immediate one (for New Zealand) in the Pacific. Increasingly, an assertiveness was germinating in the Pakeha character that would arguably be the catalyst for a much more independent (albeit America-focused) foreign policy in the latter half of the twentieth century.<sup>335</sup> Again, the letter mentions the United States as the defender and benefactor of New Zealand’s shipping lanes, not Britain. While New Zealanders may have wanted Great Britain to maintain a significant presence in the Pacific (Prime Minister Peter Fraser himself had emphasized to his American allies that Britain needed to “continue to play her full part in the Pacific”)<sup>336</sup> the pragmatic

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<sup>334</sup> *Auckland Star*, 2 December, 1942, p. 2.

<sup>335</sup> McGibbon, p. 26.

<sup>336</sup> Sarantakes, p. 326.

reality was that only the United States had the military wherewithal to effectively do battle with Japan.<sup>337</sup>

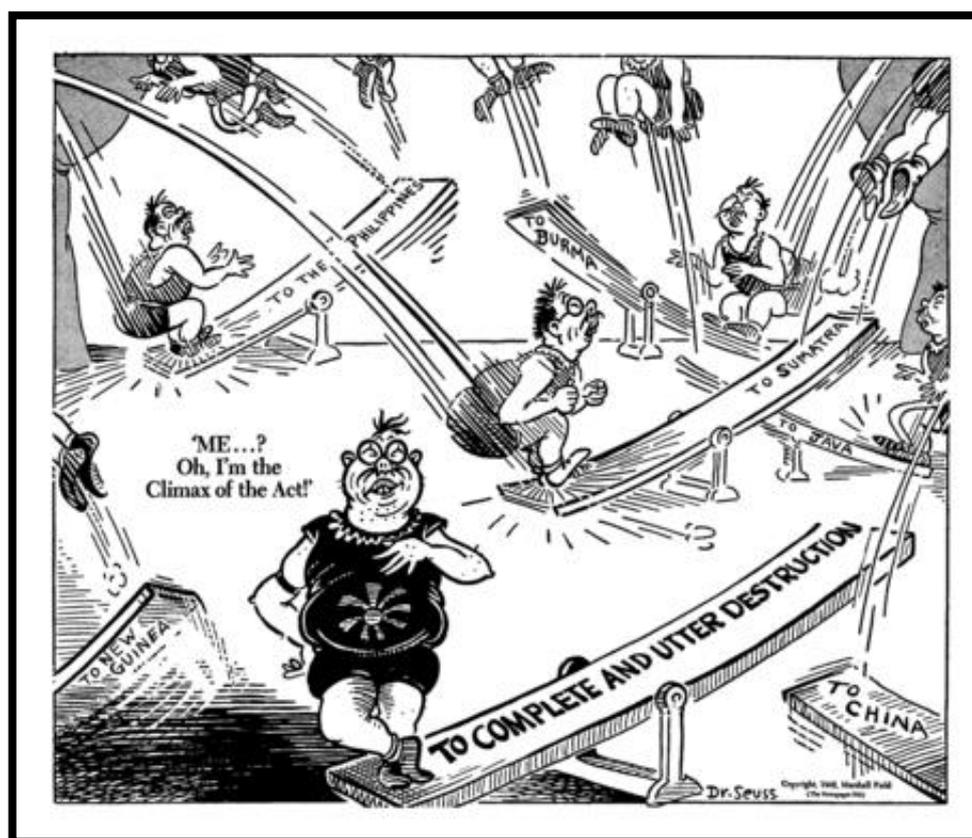


Figure 21: Me? Oh, I'm the Climax of the Act. *PM Magazine*. May 13, 1942. UC

San Diego Libraries. Retrieved from

<http://libraries.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dswenttowar/#ark:bb40964169>

Ultimately, the focus of Pakeha New Zealand was drawn away from the machinations of the British navy in Singapore and more toward aiding the American fleet push the Japanese out of the Pacific.<sup>338</sup> The advocacy of total war, of the annihilation of Japan as a military entity, and that ‘only attack can get us anywhere’ became the mainstay military maxims of ‘armchair generals’ as the following letter to the *Auckland Star* put it:

<sup>337</sup> Ritchie Owendale, “The War and the British Commonwealth”, in Loyd E. Lee (ed.), *World War II in Europe, Africa and the Americas, with General Sources*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997, p.457.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*

## ATTACK ON JAPAN

It was a favourite axiom of British military strategy that “offensive is the best defensive,” but that obvious maxim seems to be working in reverse at the present time. No one ever heard of a war being won by retreat or futile defence of different points. Your article on the possibility of a “blitz” on Japan is very opportune indeed. It, however, does not go far enough. Of course, armchair admirals and generals have ever been able to win wars very easily, but the vital necessity for some of an offensive nature against Japan may excuse civilian speculation. If the Allied nations, having troops in New Zealand, Australia, India, Fiji, Canada and the United States, were to leave each of these places comparatively undefended and send every man, tank, gun, plane, or other weapon of war right into the heart of Japan, backed up with every war vessel of these Allies, this, and this only, would stop Japanese spread and victory. A “blitz.” That is, a quick striking and withdrawal, is of little use compared with a permanent landing on Japanese home soil. Failure to accomplish the object would not leave us worse off than we are on the “withdrawal” plan, and its successful achievement would mean the quick fold-up of Japan. The same tactics apply to Germany in Europe, and it is only when an all-out attack on Germany is made that the tide will turn. Since it is the civilian who will find himself burdened with the cost of this war, and whose children’s children will try to pay the vast interest bill, it may not be out of place for one to point the obvious course of action. Only attack will get us anywhere. E.W.F.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> *Auckland Star*, 27 March 1942, p.4.

The final line would be vindicated by the ensuing three years of the bludgeoning, American-led, ‘island hopping’ naval campaign.<sup>340</sup> New Zealanders were now at a turning point in the development of their identities; where once there was an implacable sense of imperialist honour and duty that marked every aspect of the New Zealander’s worldview, there was now a sense of doubt and uncertainty. As Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage had put it when declaring war on Germany in 1939, “Where she [Britain] goes, we go; where she stands, we stand.”<sup>341</sup> Now, a mere three years later, the spectacular humiliations of the British armed forces and the subsequent clear demonstrations of New Zealand’s vulnerability to Japanese expansion meant that such jingoistic faith could no longer be reconciled with the demands of national survival. New Zealanders’ attitudes toward enemies of the British Empire were no less disdainful or aggressive than they had ever been. Indeed, the threat of actual invasion had loaned these attitudes a more desperately violent subtext, but New Zealanders’ faith in the inherent strength, dignity and right-to-rule of the British Empire that had once reverberated so strongly in the voices of Daniel Hay and other such ‘Britons’ and ‘Britishers’ that filled the editorial sections of New Zealand’s daily papers was clearly beginning to waver.

The Japanese had brought to Pakeha the spectre of subjugation in a way that the Caucasian Germans and French never had, and in so doing they changed irrevocably the soul of white New Zealand, for it became increasingly obvious that Britain, seen as a figure of hegemonic order and strength in the Pacific for over a century, could no longer guarantee the safety of its subjects. New Zealanders would continue to ‘do their bit’ for the Empire in the years following the end of the Pacific war, as the 1947-48 ‘Aid to Britain’ campaign to restore Britain’s war-ravaged economy proved.<sup>342</sup> Yet the end of British military power in the Pacific nevertheless left the New Zealand psyche permanently scarred, not just with vague

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<sup>340</sup> McGibbon, p. 24.

<sup>341</sup> Ian F. Grant, *Between the Lines: A Cartoon Century of New Zealand Political and Social History, 1906-2005*, Wellington: New Zealand Cartoon Archive, 2005, p. 116.

<sup>342</sup> McGibbon, p. 15.

worries of economic and demographic ‘inundation’ as had been the case in the past, but with the fear of real, plausible military invasion. Even after the utter destruction and dismantling of the Japanese Empire its spectre haunted the minds of the New Zealand public.<sup>343</sup> New Zealanders knew that their privileged position in the global order was not guaranteed, and that pragmatic arrangements needed to be made in order to purchase a sense of security in the post-war world. The ‘close call’ of an averted Japanese invasion was the looming shadow that New Zealanders feared as they took their first tentative steps into the Cold War and the age of ANZUS.

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<sup>343</sup> McGibbon, p. 16.

## Conclusion

At the outbreak of the Pacific War, New Zealand identified itself for the most part as a bastion of Britishness, and its association with Japan had followed the wax and wane of Anglo-Japanese relations. As the first half of the twentieth century unfolded, the way that New Zealanders viewed Japan followed a sine wave from disdain, to admiration, to suspicion, to outright loathing. Letters and editorials largely corroborate the views of scholars such as Bennett,<sup>344</sup> Lissington<sup>345</sup> and Trotter,<sup>346</sup> who, in consulting predominantly official diplomatic sources, strongly suggested that there was never any true sense of empathy or shared experience between Pakeha New Zealanders and their Japanese counterparts, yet that both nations did, at one time, share a sense of contractual duty to one another through the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. This was perhaps more keenly felt by the Japanese, who wanted to join the circle of international powers and felt they had more to prove than the New Zealanders, who felt they were already a 'part of the group', albeit in a frontier sense. However, New Zealanders never seemed to truly trust their erstwhile allies, considering them too foreign, indeed more than foreign (for such a label would include the French and Germans); too '*Asiatic*', to be true equals. The primary material of this thesis mainly confirmed Johnson and Moloughney's views of a general, 'white New Zealand' attitude whereby those of Asian descent were considered inferior and undesirable as both migrants and diplomatic partners.<sup>347</sup> Behind all of the letters and editorials penned by white New Zealanders regarding Japan there was a subtext of fear; first of demographic 'inundation', then later of military invasion. Underpinning this fear was also a sense of pride at claiming descent, both culturally and ethnically, from Britain. For New Zealanders such as Daniel Hay, the position of the 'white race' in the Pacific was fragile, yet also crucial for the

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<sup>344</sup> Bennett (2001), p. 95.

<sup>345</sup> Lissington, p.27.

<sup>346</sup> Trotter, p.70.

<sup>347</sup> Johnson and Moloughney, p. 128.

continuance of civilisation. As Bennett suggests, for many citizens of the Pacific Dominions, Pakeha New Zealanders included, the expansion of Japan into Greater Asia and the Pacific was a cataclysm of tragic and barbaric proportions.<sup>348</sup>

New Zealand as a nation was reasonably cohesive in how it regarded Japan, and regionalism played no noticeable part in differentiating New Zealanders' views. Any differences in opinion were mainly divided along ideological lines rather than geographical, and judging by the letters and editorials that New Zealanders wrote during this time period the most significant factors were indeed the historical and political movements of the day. Ideology-based papers such as *NZ Truth* and the *Maoriland Worker* were almost uniformly negative in how they portrayed the Japanese, thereby reflecting their nationalist tendencies coupled with the unabashed tabloid populism that steeped their journalistic vernacular. It was as if readers of these papers *wanted* to hear tales of Japanese atrocities in order to justify the preconceived notions of Asiatic barbarity that they already held. Although there were smatterings of sympathy for Japanese workers in such publications, these were offset by the wholesale condemnation of the Japanese leadership, who, it was believed, had supreme control over their masses of subjects. Stereotypes of the Japanese being a cultish, slavish society dominated by ruthless militarists permeated New Zealand print, and even relatively positive depictions of the Japanese still focused on generalisations of their military prowess. The empathy that some New Zealanders showed toward the Japanese commoner was still the patronising compliment paid to a people deemed fundamentally flawed; the Japanese subject was to be felt sorry for, not fraternised with. As the research of Tony Ballantyne illustrates, to New Zealanders, the Asiatic way of life, cheap, crowded and competitive as it was believed to be, was abhorrent,<sup>349</sup> and Japan represented a nation that sought to export that culture at the expense of the integrity of the British Empire. Denigrations were at times held in check by

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<sup>348</sup> Bennett (2001), p. 97.

<sup>349</sup> Ballantyne (2012), p.98.

diplomatic duty as New Zealanders showed during the days of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, and especially during the First World War, but such gestures were ultimately part of a business arrangement of wartime obligations and were not born of true respect. Overall, New Zealanders moderated their viewpoints in line with a sense of civic duty as dictated by Britain via the proxy of the New Zealand government.

Race was never far from the minds of Pakeha New Zealanders when it came to how they viewed Japan. One need only look at the colloquial vernacular employed by editorialists and letter writers to gain a distinct impression that Pakeha New Zealanders possessed a chauvinistic sense of racial superiority in relation to the Japanese. A significant proportion of writers would sign off with monikers in some form of reference to British ancestry; 'Britishers', 'Britons' and 'Royal Navy' enthusiasts populated the public forums that were the printed editorial sections. While certainly there were alternative communities within New Zealand to those of the British descent, by far the most dominant voices that show through in print media are those of Pakeha males, and most of these voices adopt a unified British imperial stance in opposition to Asiatic expansion. This sense of a unified British colonial identity as a foundation of the country conflicts with recent assertions by Giselle Byrnes that the evolution of New Zealand nationalism was not a steady progression from colonial identity.<sup>350</sup> There was certainly a strong sense of British cohesiveness in the way that white New Zealanders viewed Japan, and indeed, such cohesiveness of viewpoint was arguably one of the primary factors in the development of the 'Pakeha' identity. In this sense, fear of Japan was a unifying force among Pakeha that circumvented any regionalist (and indeed nationalist) tendencies, as white colonials of the British commonwealth from Ottawa to Canberra cohered in their desire to contain the Japanese, despite reluctance in the motherland. Indeed, aside from those few who deemed denigration of Japan unseemly in the context of wartime

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<sup>350</sup> Byrnes, p.7.

loyalties under the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, there was little effort on the part of Pakeha to empathise with or understand the Japanese beyond the level of diplomatic obligation, as in the minds of Pakeha the economic and territorial needs of the British Empire took precedence over diplomatic relations with foreign powers.

Whether seen as ‘Brown Britons’ or ‘Yellow Peril’, the Japanese were a race apart from white New Zealand. Indeed, such separation did much to fuel Pakeha fears of usurpation by other non-white peoples, particularly Maori, who at first viewed the Japanese as an inspirational beacon of non-white power in the Pacific. Ironically, there was an inverse response from Maori toward the Japanese as the twentieth century unfolded. The more power and territory the Japanese gained, the more obvious the inconsistencies in their racial policies became. Their brutal treatment of the Chinese in particular during the Second Sino-Japanese War became a testament to the *Yamato*-centred ideologies of the Co-Prosperity Sphere, and so Maori admiration for the Japanese quickly dissipated during the 1930s. Maori would ultimately prove to be some of the most loyal and self-sacrificing of British subjects during the Second World War, despite Japanese efforts to make the most of indigenous dissatisfaction with European imperial governance in Asia and the Pacific. While Japanese attempts to capitalise on such ethnic admiration in the 1930s and 40s would ultimately bear little fruit, they would nevertheless solidify the Pakeha perspective that the Japanese were both alien and hostile, and therefore a people to be reviled, and, after the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbour and Singapore, destroyed.

With regard to the primary sources as a means of understanding New Zealand culture, editorials and letters to the editor proved to indeed be a rich source of anecdotal evidence. Though they were naturally limited by the biases of those who wrote them, this limitation actually proved beneficial in terms of providing both a narrative of New Zealand historical perspectives as well as the vernacular through which those perspectives were given. They

provided an account of historical events in the middle class argot of argumentative speech, and the prejudices and partisanship that they demonstrated helped paint a fuller picture of how Pakeha viewed the world beyond their shores, and, as a consequence, how they viewed themselves.

For the most part, the primary materials consulted in this thesis have endorsed the existing scholarly views on New Zealand's historical relationship with Asia. The anti-Asian vernacular of New Zealand letters and editorials was generally congruent with the work of scholars such as James Ng,<sup>351</sup> Manying Ip<sup>352</sup> and Jacqueline Leckie,<sup>353</sup> whose research into the experiences of Chinese and Indian settlers respectively paints a portrait of the marginalisation of Asian ethnic groups from the Pakeha 'mainstream'. However, as McNeil makes plain, there were points of difference between how Japan was viewed from other Asian ethnicities as a result of the comparatively miniscule number of Japanese immigrants in New Zealand.<sup>354</sup> What the letters and editorials show is that the Japanese obtained an element of respectability in Pakeha eyes from their rapid industrialisation and seemingly genteel customs (as 'Brown Britons') that the Chinese and Indians, closer and more familiar to the average white New Zealander, never did. As Leckie suggests, if the Pakeha aversion to the Chinese and Indian communities was born of fear of economic competition with cheap labour<sup>355</sup> as well as general contempt for peoples considered innately uncivilised,<sup>356</sup> the Pakeha distaste for Japan in the twenties and thirties had more to do with its posing a legitimate military threat. However, as far as racial slurs were concerned, the outbreak of the Pacific War meant that any diplomatic niceties or subtleties in ethnic distinction were cast

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<sup>351</sup> Ng, p. 24.

<sup>352</sup> Cf. Ip (2003), *Preface*.

<sup>353</sup> Leckie, p.83.

<sup>354</sup> McNeil, p. 31.

<sup>355</sup> Leckie, p. 111.

<sup>356</sup> Tsu, p.70.

aside, and the Japanese were lumped well and truly in the camp of the 'brown hordes'.<sup>357</sup> What the collation and analysis of these letters and editorials has shown is that Pakeha New Zealanders were united in a sense of racial superiority and a shared belief in the right of the British Empire to rule the Pacific. The letters and editorials show that by the 1930s Japan had provided New Zealanders (including Maori) with a feasible prospect of subjugation to an alien power, and in doing so, it brought the country together through both a sense of shared danger and a loathing of a common enemy.

While my research has largely corroborated existing scholarship regarding New Zealand's official interactions with Japan, I believe it has added a vernacular layer to such studies of official diplomacy. Concerning Asian Studies, while academics such as Manying Ip, James Ng, Bevan Yee and Jacqueline Leckie have provided plentiful research on the anecdotal experiences of Chinese and Indian communities in New Zealand, this thesis fills a gap in terms of providing a narrative of how New Zealanders historically interacted with Japan in particular on an everyday basis. It also establishes a starting point upon which to pursue further primary research and interviews in line with Roger Peren's work concerning the historic Japanese experience in New Zealand, and the New Zealand experience in Japan.

Ultimately, the history of New Zealand's early dealings with Japan was a tale told through hearsay, and much of New Zealand's relationship with Japan was undertaken via proxy. Whether through the diplomatic arrangements of the British Government or foreign news bulletins cycled into New Zealand papers via telegraph, New Zealanders absorbed Japan and the Japanese through snippets provided by others, and this showed through in the way New Zealanders expressed their opinions. It was a cold relationship; distant in both geography and spirit, and it profoundly affected New Zealand's relationship with Asia today. The issues that worried the New Zealanders of the early twentieth century regarding Japan

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<sup>357</sup> Cf. Chapter 6.

(economic imbalance, demographic inundation, military dominance) were the same as those that New Zealanders of the early twenty first century feel toward China.<sup>358</sup> Much like those of the *Iwate* and *Azuma* in the early decades of the twentieth century, the recent (as of January 2014) visits of Chinese naval vessels to Auckland harbour can be as ominous or inspirational as the New Zealand public choose to view them. Indeed, much can be learned from the tragic consequences of the great political divisions in the Pacific in the early twentieth century; and New Zealand today, as it always has, stands in the middle of vast ocean currents of diplomatic intrigue. Whether or not it keeps its feet will depend on how much it learns from the mistakes and triumphs of its own history.



**Figure 22: Chinese Warships Visit Auckland Harbour. October 11 2013. *Xinhua News*. Retrieved from [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/photo/2013-10/11/c\\_132790007.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/photo/2013-10/11/c_132790007.htm)**

<sup>358</sup> Johnson and Maloughney, p. 136.



**Figure 23: Overseas Chinese Welcome Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy Ships at Auckland Harbour. *Xinhua News*. October 11 2013. Retrieved from [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/photo/2013-10/11/c\\_132790007\\_5.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/photo/2013-10/11/c_132790007_5.htm)**

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*Marlborough Express*

*The New York Times* (United States)

*New Zealand Free Lance*

*New Zealand Herald*

*NZ Truth*

*Otago Daily Times*

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