

The Long March is the first of its kind in the annals of history. It is a manifesto, a propaganda force, a seeding-machine. . . . It has proclaimed to the world that the Red Army is an army of heroes, while the imperialists and their running dogs, Chiang Kai-shek and his like, are impotent.<sup>41</sup>

The ongoing political discord between China's two main political parties throughout the early 1930s undermined the stability of the country. These vulnerabilities appeared increasingly attractive to ultranationalists, particularly in Japan, who desired parts of China to fall under their spheres of influence.

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39 Pei-kai Cheng, Michael Lestz, and Jonathan D. Spence, eds., *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 253.

40 Mao Zedong was born in 1893 in Hunan Province in central China. His father was a reasonably rich peasant farmer and he and the young Mao Zedong did not get on well at all. Mao left home at an early age and ended up first in the provincial capital, Changsha, where he started to study and also to write. He wrote about a variety of issues from women's rights to the need for China to develop a stronger and more vibrant culture.

41 Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990), 409.



## READING 8

# EXCLUSION AND HUMILIATION

Chinese and Japanese encountered strife abroad that directly affected life at home. In late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America, immigration quotas limiting Chinese and Japanese from entering the United States reflected widespread prejudices directed toward individuals of Asian descent. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 restricted the numbers of Chinese laborers from entering the United States based upon their nationality and denied any Chinese laborer from becoming a citizen. The discriminatory practices directed toward Chinese also affected Japanese laborers. While over time the United States and Japan accepted agreements such as the Gentleman's Agreement allowing small numbers of Japanese to enter the country, the existence of such policies led to ongoing diplomatic tensions with Western nations.<sup>42</sup>

Such strains were evident in 1919 when China and Japan attended the Paris Peace Conference to help negotiate the post-World War I Treaty of Versailles. Japan's feelings of self-confidence soon grew to animosity. Japanese leaders participating in the negotiations believed their status around the table came about as a result of their declaration of war against Germany on August 23, 1914. Japan's motivations for declaring war were to secure German-held territory in China so as to further elevate their global stature.

But the Japanese delegation arrived in Paris with another goal as well—to get a clause on racial equality written into the covenant of the League of Nations. The establishment of the League of Nations was recommended by United States president Woodrow Wilson in the last point of the 1918 “Fourteen Points” speech. It called for a “league of nations,” an international institution whereby future conflicts would be resolved around a table rather than on a battlefield. Japanese leaders believed the inclusion of a racial equality clause in such a document could be used to outlaw racial discrimination in all future international dealings. Makino Nobuaki, a leader of the Japanese delegation, introduced his proposal by saying:

[P]rejudices had been a source of troubles and wars throughout history and they may become more acute in the future. The problem possessed a very delicate and complicated nature involving the play of human passions, but equality could not be denied simply because of one's race. Shared struggles during the war demonstrated that different races worked with each other, saving lives irrespective of racial differences, and a common bond of sympathy and gratitude had been established to an extent never before experienced. I think it only just that after this common suffering and deliverance the principle of equality among men should be admitted. . . . For these several reasons, political and moral integrity required the delegates to go on record supporting the following amendment:

The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Parties agree to accord as soon as possible to all alien nationals of States, members of the League, equal and just treatment in every respect making no distinction, either in law or in fact, on account of their race or nationality.<sup>43</sup>

While Japan was one of five Allied nations officially at the table with the “Big Four” (France, Italy, Great Britain, and the United States), its influence was ultimately undermined by its allies, who wanted to keep Japan’s regional power at bay. For Japanese nationalists, this was yet another piece of evidence that the Japanese were disrespected by Western nations. On April 11, 1919. Makino made his final plea in support of the racial equality clause:

The whole purpose of the League was to regulate the conduct of nations and peoples toward one another, according to a higher moral standard than has reigned in the past, and to administer justice throughout the world. In this regard, the wrongs of racial discrimination have been and continue to be, the source of profound resentment on the part of large numbers of the human race, directly affecting their rights and their pride. Many nations had fought in the recent war to create a new international order, and the hopes of their nationals now have risen to new heights with victory. Given the noble objectives of the League, the heavy burden of the past, and the great aspirations of the future, the leaders of the world should openly declare their support for at least the principle of equality of nations and just treatment of their nationals.<sup>44</sup>

At the insistence of the Japanese delegation, a vote was held. The modified amendment asked for nothing more than a formal recognition of the principle of equality of nations and just treatment of their nationals. Eleven of the 17 delegates voted for the amendment and despite the vote the racial equality clause was not adopted.

Historian Margaret MacMillan writes that the loudest opposition came from the British Empire delegation, specifically Billy Hughes who believed approval of the clause would be the first breach “in the dike protecting Australia.” She goes on to quote one of Hughes’ subordinates as saying, “No Govt. could live for a day in Australia if it tampered with White Australia.”<sup>45</sup> President Wilson, who was chairing the meeting, knew that any reference to racial equality would alienate key politicians on the West Coast of the United States, and he needed their support to get the League of Nations ultimately through the US Congress.<sup>46</sup> With this in mind and because there were strong objections from many of the members of the delegation, Wilson announced the amendment could not carry.<sup>47</sup>

Many in the international and Japanese press were highly critical of this decision. A headline in the *Sacramento Union* announced “Peace Delegates Beat Japan’s Proposal for Racial Equality” and a Japanese newspaper said

the decision would be a “medium for provoking racial hatred and jealousy that will lead to friction and hostilities throughout the world.”<sup>48</sup> After the Japanese delegation returned home, they did not retreat from their call for racial equality, but they were dismayed at the league’s decision. Makino noted: “Such a frame of mind, I am afraid, would be detrimental to that harmony and co-operation, upon which foundation alone can the League now contemplated be scarcely built.”<sup>49</sup>

In the following years, Japan turned away from international cooperation and became a more insular and militaristic nation. Japanese statesmen Ishii Kikujiro, implementing discriminatory policies despite their position at the Paris Peace Conference, later reflected:

The problems of population and race will in the future form the hardest and most important issues between nations. These problems have failed of solution by the old methods of aggression and diplomatic intrigue and the world is expecting a new style of diplomacy to solve them. . . . It must be remembered that these problems do not concern Japan and the United States alone, but are common to most countries of the world. The satisfactory solution to these baffling problems is the responsibility of twentieth century diplomacy.<sup>50</sup>

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42 The Gentlemen’s Agreement of 1907 was an informal agreement made between the United States and Meiji Japan stating that the United States would neither impose nor enforce restrictions on Japanese immigration and Japan would not allow further emigration to the United States. For more information on Chinese and Japanese immigration policy, see Facing History’s *Becoming American: The Chinese Experience*.

43 Paul Gordon Lauren, “Human Rights in History: Diplomacy and Racial Equality at the Paris Peace Conference,” *Diplomatic History* 2, no. 3 (1978): 257-58. The first draft of the proposed clause was presented to the League of Nations on February 13, 1919, as an amendment to Article 21 of the league’s charter.

44 Michael L Krenn, ed., *The Impact of Race on U.S. Foreign Policy: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 270.

45 Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2003), 319.

46 *Ibid.*, 320.

47 *Ibid.*

48 “Anglo-Saxons Want to Dominate the World,” *Japan Times*, April 26, 1919, quoted in Lauren, “Human Rights in History.” The original Japanese quote was in the Japanese-language *Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shimbun* newspaper, and translated in the contemporary English-language *Japan Times* newspaper.

49 MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 321.

50 Ishii Kikujiro, *Diplomatic Commentaries*, trans. W. R. Langdon (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1936), 270–71, quoted in Lauren, “Human Rights in History,” 107.

