ORIENTING CANADA

Race, Empire, and the Transpacific

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Abbreviations

AEL	Asiatic Exclusion League
CCF	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CFM	Council of Foreign Ministers
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CLPD	Canadian League for Peace and Democracy
CPC	Combined Policy Committee
CPV	Chinese People's Volunteers
CYC	Canadian Youth Congress
DEA	Department of External Affairs
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
FEAC	Far Eastern Advisory Council
FEC	Far Eastern Commission
GMD	Guomindang (Nationalist Party)
GHQ	General Headquarters (of SCAP)
ICSC	International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ILO	International Labour Organization

IPR	Institute of Pacific Relations
IMTFE	International Military Tribunal for the Far East
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Council
PPS	Policy Planning Staff
PRC	People's Republic of China
PWC	Pacific War Council
ROK	Republic of Korea
SAC	Strategic Air Command (US)
SCAP	Supreme Command(er) of the Allied Powers
SFPT	San Francisco Peace Treaty
SWNCC	State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee
UNTCOK	United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea
VTLC	Vancouver Trades and Labour Council

A Note on Language

In general, I have conformed to East Asian usage in terms of people's names: family name first and given name second, except where the names are commonly used otherwise in the English language sources. Where necessary, I have provided the contemporary names of people and places as well as the terms used at the time.

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Map of East Asia

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Part 2: Pax Americana – Race, Anti-Communism, and Asia

Introduction

This book examines how concepts of race and empire "oriented" Canada and the Transpacific in the first half of the twentieth century. The term "oriented" is used in both the conventional sense – providing a particular direction – and in a critical sense, turning Asia and its diverse peoples into a racialized "other," a notion initially developed by Edward Said in his now famous *Orientalism*.[1] I have purposefully chosen the term "transpacific." The welding together of "trans" and "Pacific" captures the geographic focus of the narrative as well as the notion of continuous movement and transformation. It best reflects the dynamic flow of ideas and peoples engaged in border-crossings on both sides of the Pacific. This particular study focuses on interactions among the peoples and governments of Canada, China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam and, to a somewhat less extent, India.

How did concepts of race and empire come to occupy centre stage in *Orienting Canada*? An initial project examining Canada and the "Cold War" in East Asia ended in the uncomfortable realization that questions of race were essential to the telling of the story but that they were not easily written about or readily received by traditional diplomatic historians. Once broached, however, the concept of race demanded serious attention, and a close examination of its impact on Canadian foreign policies was imperative. This opened up very different horizons and fundamentally altered my views on Canadian and East-Asian history. It required a broader yet more

focused inquiry that could capture enough of the past to actually map the contours of race and empires as they evolved.

The bookends for this volume are the 1907 race riots in Vancouver and the 1954-56 Geneva Accords for Indochina. *Orienting Canada* follows a seam that is clearly "Canadian," yet it also delves into substantive historical issues in East Asia that had an impact on transpacific experiences. The interconnections between the "Canadian" and the "East Asian" constitute this book's specific realm of inquiry. Thus, the voices of Korean comfort women and Canadian prime ministers, Chinese head tax payers and Japanese diplomats, Chinese forced labourers in Japan and Canadian feminists in China, Japanese "traitors" and Vietnamese communists, Japanese-Canadian soldiers and Hiroshima survivors are brought together in what might at first appear a dissonant chorus. In fact, they are what one scholar has recently called the "stories of an uncommon past," that is, the past "in the sense of rarely remembered, ignored, or erased, but also uncommon in terms of being unique, different, or not assimilated into a common narrative."[2] These unique stories offer a new frame, one that transcends commonly held views about Canada and Asia and that allows us to better perceive the often unspoken relationship between race and empire.

Looking back from the vantage point of another half century or more later, the shadows of this past remain perceptible – in the political landscape of East Asia, in continuing demands for redress and reconciliation in both Asia and Canada, and in ongoing battles connected with memory-making and foreign policy. As shifting economic dynamics turn the world's attention towards Asia once again, the present and the past come together to underscore a main theme of this book: the Transpacific has played a foundational role in Canadian and world politics in ways that are too often neglected and/or are poorly understood.

Anyone who teaches about Asia in North America is aware of the problem of Eurocentrism – how a persistent emphasis on European history or Canada's European links marginalizes Asia, not to mention Africa, Latin America, and the Carribean.[3] The research for this project not only underscores the pervasiveness of the problem but also goes to the heart of the matter – opening up the historical process that created the bias and that allows it to be continually reproduced. Indeed, much English-language scholarship often tends to refract the past and the world through a Eurocentric lens that eliminates, downplays, or denigrates the role of those excluded from the centres of power. As Erez Manela explains in his new study on the Versailles peace talks of 1919: "In the standard narrative of the peace

conference, non-Western regions and peoples figure most often as inert masses of territory and humanity that the great powers carved up in an unprecedented expansion of imperialism."[4] This not only holds true for the prewar period but also continues to reproduce itself in histories of the wartime and postwar periods. Furthermore, it spans the political spectrum. A recent critique of the US role in the Second World War, for example, does an admirable job of demystifying the American role in Europe during the war but completely ignores its important contributions in the Pacific.[5]

Eurocentrism has relegated the story of the war in the Pacific to a minor spot behind the conflict in Europe, despite the fact the war there began in 1937 with the invasion of China, a full two years before the invasion of Poland. And if the Pacific War is given prominence of place, it is often contrived as a chronicle spanning Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima, highlighting the role of the United States, a protagonist determined in war, beneficent in victory. As a result, "Asian contributions to defeating the emperor's soldiers and sailors were displaced by an all-consuming focus on the American victory in the "Pacific War."[6] A similar problem affects the writing of the postwar Pacific, in which Asia is construed as a subject area of contention in a bipolar world dominated by the Soviet Union and the United States.[7] The wars in Vietnam and Korea are often portrayed as proxy wars, and, in many English-language accounts, this 1950s' Cold War perspective continues to shape both scholarly and popular perceptions of the past, denying those in Asia any substantial form of agency in world history.[8]

The Transpacific fares just as badly if not worse in Canadian history writing.[9] The crafting of this country's past has tended to be Atlantic-centred, focusing on European immigrant experience that displaces "First Nations peoples at the same time that it erases our Pacific past."[10] Social historians have made impressive strides in correcting this trend, particularly in regard to Aboriginal, class, and gender history, provoking Jack Granatstein, the *eminence gris* of traditional nationalist historians, to accuse them of "killing" Canadian history.[11] Yet, even among social historians, neglect of the Transpacific remains a problem.[12] And, although there have been changes recently, a Eurocentric narrative continues to grip Canadian diplomatic history, rendering Asia a "distraction" (at best) or, more often than not, relegating it to the oblivion of the omitted.[13]

Fortunately, streams of non-Eurocentric scholarship have also evolved, providing the basis for alternative perspectives on the past. For many years, Canadian scholars of Asia have authored important studies on Canada and the Transpacific, many of which I cite later in this book. From the 1970s on,