

G-SEC WORKING PAPER No.15

Building a New Racial World Order:

Intersection of Pan-Asianism and Pan-Africanism in the Post-WWI World

Keiko Araki*

May, 2007

Abstract

This paper explains how Pan-Asianists in Japan and Pan-Africanists in the United States sympathized with each other in the post-WWI world.

Major black leaders in the post-WWI period, such as Marcus Garvey, adopted Pan-Africanism as a key concept to uplift the status of blacks in US society. Garvey sought to build a progressive nation-state in Africa, which would represent the whole black population. Inspired by the rule of self-determination formalized after WWI, he tried to substantiate blacks as a 'nation' and elevate them as a whole. Garvey considered Japan as a model for the upcoming black nation-state and a leader of all darker races.

On the other hand, Japanese intellectuals found racism and colonialism to be decisive defects in the democracy highly advocated by European nations. Frustrated with their own lower status in world politics, these intellectuals attacked European and American treatment of blacks. Although those who later became Pan-Asianists regarded African Americans and Africans as backward people, they identify their international situation with the status of black people. Moreover, they claimed to represent all the colored people oppressed by the European-centered world. The idea would later justify their imperial activities in Asia.

Keywords: Pan-Africanism; Pan-Asianism; Race; Colonialism

* Part-time Instructor at Tokai University and Waseda University. E-mail: oakland309jp@yahoo.co.jp

“Our point is that Pan-Africa belongs logically with Pan-Asia.”

- W. E. B. DuBois, *Dark Princess*¹

Introduction: Pan-Asianism and Pan-Africanism

This paper explains how Pan-Asianists in Japan and Pan-Africanists in the United States sympathized with each other in the post-WWI world. Pan-Africanism was considered an ideology for emancipation, while Pan-Asianism is mainly referred to in relation with Japanese aggression in Asia. However, in the Post-WWI era, they shared the same worldview in which they were both victims. We will see both tried to build a new racial world order where they would hold appropriate positions.

To define Pan-Africanism and Pan-Asianism is a difficult task because both contain a variety of ideas and actual movements. According to P. Olanwuche Esendebe, Pan-Africanism, with some simplification, is “a political and cultural phenomenon that regards Africa, Africans and African descendants abroad as a unit. It seeks to regenerate and unify Africa and promote a feeling of oneness among the people of the African world. It glorifies the African past and inculcates pride in African values.”² Major black leaders in the post-WWI period adopted Pan-Africanism as a key concept to uplift the status of blacks in US society. Believing the destiny of black people lay in Africa, they aimed to decolonize the

¹ DuBois (1995), p.20.

² Esendebe (1994), p.5.

continent and to eventually overthrow the racial hierarchy in which Europeans were always on the top and blacks were always on the bottom.

Marcus Garvey sought to build a progressive nation-state in Africa, which would represent the whole black population. Inspired by the rule of self-determination formalized after WWI, he tried to substantiate blacks as a “nation” and elevate them as a whole. Marcus Garvey, as well as other prominent black leaders in the United States, looked to Japan as, first, a model nation for black people and, second, as a leader of colored peoples because it was the only non-white nation that was recognized as an independent actor in world politics.

In their turn, some Japanese Pan-Asianists paid special attention to the Garvey movement because of its accusations of European colonialism and international racism, which they also denounced as decisive defects in the democracy highly advocated by the West. Frustrated with their own low status in world politics, these intellectuals attacked European and American treatment of blacks. Although they regarded black people, especially Africans, as more backward people than themselves, they identified their international situation with the status of black people. Moreover, they claimed to represent all the colored people oppressed by the European-centered world. The idea would later justify their imperial activities in Asia during the Pacific War.

Yoshimi Takeuchi, a pioneer scholar of this field, who uses the term “Asianism” instead of “Pan-Asianism” to describe this political trend, suggests that Pan-Asianism does not exist as an independent factor but as an accompanying tendency to various ideologies. However, he sees at least one common tendency; “its directivity toward Asian unity irrespective of using the act

of aggression as its means.”³ A lot of intellectuals and political leaders shared a sense of Pan-Asianism from the latter half of the 19th century through the end of WWII. Much scholarly attention has been paid to Pan-Asianism in the 1930s and 1940s, as an indispensable part of the Pacific War, and, in regard to this paper’s field of interest, there are several excellent works dealing with the Pacific War as a race war.⁴ However, not much scholarly work refers to Pan-Asianism’s relationship with people of African descent before the 1930s.⁵

By focusing on the Garvey movement, this paper shows how these two groups actually shared the same ideal in the midst of the transformation of the international order. I think the post-WWI period is crucial for the development of these ideas because the advocates found words, rhetoric, and reasoning to express and justify their demands. Pan-Africanism and Pan-Asianism were already international phenomena but, under the effect of WWI, they went beyond their own categories and contained broader visions.

Marcus Garvey’s Pan-African Nationalist Movement

Marcus Garvey was a Jamaican black activist who organized the first black mass movement in the United States in 1917. He proposed an “imagined community” of Africans at home and abroad by transforming the notion of black “race,” which had been degraded in the European

³ Matsumoto (2000), pp.10-11. In his opinion, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere was certainly one of Asianism’s varieties, but it should be seen not only as a consequence of Asianism but also as a deviation from it.

⁴ Thorne (1985); Dower (1986); Horne (2004).

⁵ Pioneer works on relationships between the Japanese and African Americans including the pre-1930s era are below. Kearney (1998); Gallicchio (2000)

racial order, into a “nation,” to gain a fair and respectable position in world politics in an era when the principle of self-determination was justified.⁶ WWI caused the transformation of the international order and changed its main actors from empires to nation-states. Furthermore, any country without a “strong,” centralized government had no voice to be heard in the world. Japanese politicians, well recognizing this fact, built a new nation-state through the Meiji Restoration and gained full membership in world politics.

The concept of race is socially and historically constructed in the particular context of each society. It has been utilized, with other factors, such as gender and class, when a nation-state formed itself by defining who should be the authentic “nation” and who should not.⁷ Thus, racial categories in one particular society cannot be applied to other societies, as we can see the category of “colored” has been used differently in the United States than in South Africa. However, as in Anthony Marx’s use of the United States, South Africa, and Brazil as examples, we can see a common phenomenon: that people of African descent belong to the lowest social stratum in each society.⁸ This kind of global racial order was partly due to the myth of Social Darwinism, which was widely accepted in the late 19th century. It believed that blacks were hereditarily inferior to white people, so blacks did not deserve independence, justifying European colonization of Africa. Homogenized and degraded, people of African descent realized the necessity of African redemption in order to uplift their own status in the New World.

⁶ I would like to borrow Professor Benedict Anderson’s concept of “imagined communities” to describe Garvey’s attempt, even though his movement neither accomplished an actual nation-state nor involved all the “black” people in the world in a real sense, because he intended to build a nation-state in Africa that would be a back-up of all the black people in the world.

⁷ Goldberg (2002).

⁸ Marx (1998).

Thinking blacks were degraded because they did not have a nation-state that could protect them as their back-up, Garvey tried to make a “nation” for all black people scattered throughout the world. The anthropological notion of “nation” that spread in the 1960s, meaning a group of people who share “a way of life” such as languages and customs, did not necessarily apply in the early 20th century when “nation” indicated a group of people who were the subject of a nation-state. Garvey treated blacks as a “nation” not for sharing a way of life but to be “subjects” of a possible nation-state in Africa.

His horizons were not limited within the US, but expanded to the Atlantic world composed of Africa, Europe, the West Indies, and the Americas, where black people resided. According to Garvey, black people needed a “strong” nation-state which was politically independent, economically thriving, and militarily self-defensive, so that it could represent and protect all the black people in the world. The black nation would then be recognized as a main actor in international relations.

He looked for land where blacks could build a nation-state, but he did not mean to bring all the black people back to the nation-state. His image of the black nation-state was rather that of empire. What was needed was a developed black nation-state that would receive full respect from other nation-states and speak for all the black people living in other areas. Garvey established an imagined black community, “the Republic of Africa,” appointed himself provisional President, and decided on the national flag and national anthem. The Republic even possessed “Universal African Legions,” which were symbolically meaningful, as black masses had a sense of racial pride when they saw the legions marching in parades.

He launched a black-owned shipping business, Black Star Line (BSL), to achieve a self-help

community among blacks. Incorporated in Delaware, the BSL sold stock only to black people, for five dollars per share, with a maximum of 200 shares per person.⁹ Believing in “progress” in human history and the theory of “survival of the fittest”, he tried to develop an independent economy among blacks. In his opinion, blacks could receive respect from other races if they made a contribution to social evolution:

When we can as a race settle down to business with honesty of purpose, we will be on the way to the founding of a permanent and strong position among the nations and races of the world.¹⁰

According to him, each nation or people was classified not by color but by what they achieved, or more precisely, contributed to human civilization.¹¹ Garvey felt that blacks’ failure to contribute since the ancient era caused their degradation in the modern world, and what they needed in order to avoid discrimination was to achieve civilization. He did not accept the notion that blacks were inherently inferior. Blacks, who were currently in the position of backwardness, used to be far ahead of others in the era of ancient civilization in Egypt. This degraded position was temporary and could be improved by self-help efforts.

In Garvey’s view, there were differences in degree of “civilization” within the same race. As one of the objects of the UNIA was “to assist in civilizing the backward tribes of Africa,” advanced blacks in the “New World” were expected to lead the whole race. In the post-WWI

⁹ Certificate of Incorporation of the Black Star Line, Inc., in Hill, ed. (1983-), vol.1, pp.441-43.

¹⁰ Editorial Letter by Marcus Garvey, January 31, 1919, in Hill, ed. (1983-), vol.1, p.352.

¹¹ *Negro World*, September 17, 1921 in Hill, ed. (1983-), vol.4, p.39.

era in New York, there appeared a type of black people called “New Negroes,” who equipped themselves with self-respect and self-dependence as a result of the “Great Migration” from the South to the North, being transformed from “Old Negroes,” which was “more of a formula than a human being - a something to be argued about, condemned or defended, to be ‘kept down,’ or ‘in his place,’ or ‘help up’.”¹² These “New Negroes” were the supporters of Garvey’s movement in northern cities.

Japan played a unique and vital role in his conception as a model for the future nation of blacks. It was the first non-white nation to defeat a white imperial state, in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, and became the third biggest nation in marine industry in the world after WWI - it became one of the Big Powers. Garvey regarded the Japanese and Chinese states as the back-ups of those immigrants in the United States, stating “[t]he Japanese and Chinese are not lynched in this country because of the fear of retaliation. Behind these men are standing armies and navies to protect them ... but Negroes, representing an undignified and unorganized nation, are lynched....”¹³

While the yellow race was placed under the white race in Social Darwinism, the Japanese victory over white Russia revealed its falseness. Garvey did not overlook this evidence and claimed that blacks could also overturn the existing racial order; “what the yellow race did the black race could also do.”¹⁴ The existence of the Japanese state helped him to overcome the view of absolute and fixed racial order.

¹² Locke (1968), p.3.

¹³ *Negro World*, March 29, 1919, in Hill, ed. (1983-), vol.1, p.397.

¹⁴ Report by Bureau Agent Harold Nathan, February 8, 1922, in Hill, ed. (1983-), vol.4, p.492.

The prejudice of the world is not so much against skin - it is not so much against color - it is against what you have not done. They were prejudiced against the Japanese 70 years ago ... Since the Japanese have achieved what has happened? Our proud and haughty President has issued an invitation from the White House to nations of equal standing to come and meet in Washington to discuss the question of disarmament.¹⁵

One noticeable incident occurred in Texas. The *Chicago Defender* published an editorial titled "Texas and the Yellow Peril," which introduced a story of two Japanese families who faced white opposition when they attempted to move to Texas. On their arrival at the station, they were "told [by members of the American Legion and prominent citizens] that it would be dangerous for them to attempt to settle on the property purchased." The editorial shows sympathy with the Japanese' suffering from color prejudice while noticing that the Japanese are different from blacks. The Japanese person "has behind him an army and a navy that could prove mighty 'awkward hands' in a row."¹⁶

The same incident was introduced in a Japanese-American newspaper, *Nichi-bei Shu-ho* (*Japanese-America Commercial Weekly*), published in New York. According to the report, those families agreed to go back to California after long talks with the Texans, reportedly with a settlement of \$10,000, including compensation and the actual cost they had already paid for the land.¹⁷ It is imaginable that blacks, who faced the risk of lynching in the South without any

¹⁵ *Negro World*, September 17, 1921, in Hill, ed. (1983-), vol.4, p.39.

¹⁶ *Chicago Defender*, January 15, 1921.

¹⁷ *Nichi-bei Shuho*, vol. 1018 (January 15, 1921).

kind of talk or compensation, saw the Texan treatment of Japanese as reflecting the existence of the mighty Japanese nation behind them.

Japan as the Champion of Darker Races

(1) The Japanese Proposal of the Anti-Discrimination Bill at the Paris Peace Conference

The Japanese proposal of the Anti-Discrimination Bill in the Peace Conference in 1919 gave an impression to blacks that Japan was the guardian for all the darker peoples. The proposal was considered as an objection by a leading nation of color against the white-dominant world system. The Japanese government spoke for other nations and peoples of color.

American Black people's hope of Japan was embodied in the formation of the International League of Darker Peoples (ILDP). It was actually organized by Rev. R. D. Jonas, a white preacher, to collect information on black radicals in Harlem in the middle of 1918. The true intention of Jonas is not clear, but, in an interview by an agent in the Bureau of Investigation, he said the real purpose was "to band the negroes together against the inroads of Socialism and Bolshevism."¹⁸ It was reported that behind him, there were "a majority of the Methodist preachers who realize that Bolshevism or even Socialism means the overthrow of religion." They intended to let Jonas "mingle with" blacks, discuss their ideas in sympathy and get

¹⁸ Report by R. W. Finch, February 11, 1919, OG258421, RG65, U.S. National Archives and Record Administration (NARA).

information that would “form a basis for a counteracting program of lectures and literature on the part of the preachers.”¹⁹ Jonas also worked as an agent for the British as an informer on black activities in the United States while also giving information to the Bureau of Investigation in the United States.

Significant black leaders, such as Madame C. J. Walker, Chandler Owen, Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., and Phillip Randolph, as well as Garvey, held a meeting to launch the ILDP in order to organize black delegates for the coming Peace Conference in Paris and to make an impact on it. The permanent aim of the organization was “to maintain a permanent international council of darker peoples” for the sake of non-white people in the world.²⁰

Members of the ILDP visited the editor of the *Yorozu Choho*, a daily newspaper published in Tokyo, Ruiko Kuroiwa, who accompanied the Japanese delegation in Paris and stayed at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel on January 7th on his way to Europe. Asked for cooperation, Kuroiwa reportedly replied in a non-committal way:

Japan has always had at heart these things you propose. Your great President, Mr. Wilson, has urged the world to meet in a spirit of fraternity and equality to promote world-wide liberty and justice. The people of my country have accepted the invitation in the broadest sense.

However, the same report informs us that Kuroiwa went further in endorsing “cooperation

¹⁹ Report by R. W. Finch, February 12, 1919, OG258421, RG65, NARA.

²⁰ *World Forum*, Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1919, in 10218-296(3) 273X(50), RG165, NARA.

between the Japanese and the dark people of Asia and Africa.”²¹ The ILDP prepared and probably handed a petition to Kuroiwa. The petition has not been found, but a copy of the cover letter is stored in the Madame C. J. Walker Collection at the Indiana Historical Society. It is written in Japanese under the name of Jonas, with English sentences of almost the same contents attached above the leaders’ names on the margin of the letter.²² The ILDP gave out a notice to hold a mass meeting with “the Japanese Envoy en route to Peace Conference” on January 16, 1919 but we do not know who the Japanese speaker was.²³

The Japanese proposal, after amending it to a less offensive statement by avoiding the word “race,” gained a majority vote, 11 out of 17. However, President Wilson, who had strongly opposed the proposal with the British delegates, ruled that it needed unanimous approval and rejected it. *The Messenger*, a black socialist magazine, states “Japan raised the race issue and threw a monkey wrench into the league of white nations which well nigh knocked the peace conference into pieces. It was successfully side-tracked however.”²⁴

After the session, C. D. B. King, one of the Liberian delegates, who later became the President of Liberia, asked Georges Clemenceau, the French President, to insert the following remarks into the official records of the plenary session of the Peace Conference, where Nobuaki Makino, one of the Japanese delegates, gave a speech. He said he had refrained from making remarks at the session due to the lack of time at the conference.

²¹ Report of Capt. Dalrymple, Military Intelligence, April 5, 1919, 10218-324/ 1/ 273X(50), RG165, NARA.

²² Cover Letter of International League of the Darker Peoples, December 30, 1918, Indiana Historical Society.

²³ A Handbill of the International League of Darker Peoples, “inclosure,” RG165, 10218-296 (2) 2-1 273 (50), NARA

²⁴ *The Messenger*, March 1919, p.5.

As an African, and the only member of the Negro Race present, I beg your kind permission to express my sincerest thanks and heartfelt gratitude to my most distinguished and honorable colleague, Baron Makino, for his great and admirable speech just delivered, on the question of the equality of races.²⁵

Behind this sympathy was frustration and hypocrisy the Liberian felt in the midst of a conference where the principles of democracy and self-determination were highly advocated. The Financial Adviser to the Republic of Liberia, who joined the Conference as one of the Liberian delegates, reported King's dissatisfaction with "his isolation from the conference."²⁶

Liberia is an Ally and not an enemy and we object to being treated as enemies. We object to this discussion going on at which Liberia is not represented. Liberia's fate is being determined and she has no voice in the matter. Liberia wants a voice in discussing the responsibilities [...]. Even if a Mandatory is given regarding Liberia, she at least has the right advanced by President Wilson of self-determination as to what Government shall have the Mandatory over her.²⁷

The ILDP faded away probably because the Anti-Racial Discrimination Bill was rejected,

²⁵ C. D. B. King to M. Clemenceau, April 30, 1919, RG59, 763.72119/5119, NARA.

²⁶ H. F. Worley to William A. Phillips, April 23, 1919, RG59, 763.72119/5122, NARA; Contee, (1970), p.140.

²⁷ Memorandum by H. F. Worley, April 22, 1919, RG59, 763.72119/5122, NARA.

and Madame C. J. Walker, a prominent member, died in March. Whatever purpose Jonas actually had, it was remarkable that prominent black leaders who would later criticize each other joined the movement and solidly took action with the Japanese.

(2) Race War

Even after the failure of the Anti-Racial Discrimination Bill, Japan was still admired as the leader of the darker peoples. Viewing international relations with the racial factor, African-American leaders presumed that the real purpose of the Washington Disarmament Conference was to dispossess Japan of her emergent power. They reminded people that Japan was doing the same as other European nations and questioned why only Japan was accused. Their answer was that Japan was a non-white nation. Regarding Japan as the guard against European colonialism in Asia, Garvey stated that Asia would never disarm until Asia controlled Asia.²⁸

Possible race war between Japan and the white race, particularly the United States, typically seen in Theodore Lothrop Stoddard's *Rising Tide of Color against White World-supremacy*, was often discussed beginning in the late 19th century.²⁹ Garvey occasionally mentioned a coming race war stating that black people should stop supporting their old-time masters when such a race war occurred.³⁰ Other black leaders shared Garvey's view and thought it the duty

²⁸ *Negro World*, November 19, 1921, in Hill, ed. (1983-), vol.4, pp.172-90.

²⁹ Stoddard (1920); Another example is Pitkin (1921).

³⁰ *Negro World*, December 3, 1921, in Hill, ed. (1983-), vol.4, pp.204-206.

of black people to be on the side of the Japanese. *The Crusader* articulately “defines that duty as NOT TO FIGHT AGAINST JAPAN OR MEXICO, BUT RATHER TO FILL THE PRISONS AND DUNGEONS OF THE WHITE MAN ... THAN TO SHOULDER ARMS AGAINST OTHER MEMBERS OF THE DARKER RACES.”³¹ A Chinese student in Milwaukee responded to the editorial in the next issue, “expressing ... deepest appreciation and admiration” to the editor. The student states that “[o]ne of the most treacherous methods of the white people to dominate the darker races is to intrigue and plot among the dark peoples themselves ... the revolt of the Koreans and the boycott of the Chinese against the Japanese are partly due to the pernicious influence of the Occidental people.”³²

In harmony with the student, Garvey claimed that anti-Japanese agitations in China and Korea had been inspired by Europeans.³³ According to him, “white capitalists have gone into China and have poisoned the minds of the Chinese against themselves and against the Japanese. They have been subsidizing certain Chinese to fight among themselves, to divide up their soil into two republics. They have subsidized the Chinese to reject every proposal of Japan.”³⁴

Although he recognized there was conflict between the Japanese and Chinese, he did not go deeper into the issue, nor did most of the other black leaders. When the Japanese plan to propose the Anti-Discrimination Bill at the Peace Conference appeared, *The Negro World* republished an article (obviously without permission) from *The New York Times*, stating the bill would probably be submitted through the cooperation of Japan and China. The truth was that

³¹ *The Crusader*, vol.3, no.4 (December 1920), p.12.

³² *The Crusader*, vol.3, no.5 (January 1921), p.29.

³³ Report by Bureau Agent W. L. Buchanan, February 24, 1922, in Hill, ed. (1983-), vol.4, p.523; Speech by Marcus Garvey, November 13, 1921, in Hill, *ibid.*, pp.172-190; *Crusader*, vol.3, no.5, January 1921, p.29; *Crisis*, vol.21, no.4, February 1921, p.168; *Crisis*, vol.23, no.3, January 1922, p.103.

³⁴ Speech by Marcus Garvey, *Negro World*, November 19, 1921, in Hill, ed. (1983-), vol.4, p.187.

the Chinese government did not accept the Japanese offer of cooperation, and the actual aim of the Japanese was to have an advantage over imperial competition in China. Seemingly, *Negro World* sought to inspire blacks by its provocative title, “JAPAN MOBILIZING THE SENTIMENT OF YELLOW RACE: Can You Understand This, Mr. Negro?”³⁵

In June 1919, *Negro World* published an article titled “CHINESE KNOW HOW TO FIGHT INJUSTICE,” which briefly dealt with the May Fourth Movement and its spread to other areas. It regards boycott, which the Chinese people undertook against Japanese products, as “a Weapon Negroes Can Use” but does not analyze the cause of the movement.³⁶ Garvey affirmed that “[i]n another twenty years Japan and China are going to get together.” When the Chinese delegation declared its demand for self-determination as an independent nation, Garvey overlooked that the demand was also toward the Japanese; he reduced it to the cry of “Asia for the Asians,” claiming it should be admitted as well as the principle of “Africa for the Africans.”³⁷

When the Conference on the Limitation of Armament was to be held in Washington, D.C., in November 1921, Garvey sent a telegram to the secretary of the conference appealing not to repeat the mistake made by the Peace Conference, which failed to establish a real world peace by leaving the weak to be oppressed.³⁸ He visited Washington, D.C., and gave lectures around the area, thinking it to be a good chance to clarify the demands of black people to the world. However, he doubted the European initiative to proceed to disarmament. “Japan knows well

³⁵ *Negro World*, November 30, 1919, in Hill, ed. (1983-), vol.2, p.299; *New York Times*, November 22, 1919.

³⁶ *Negro World*, June 14, 1919.

³⁷ Speeches by Marcus Garvey, November 13, 1921, in Hill, ed. (1983-), vol.4, pp.174, 186, 187.

³⁸ Marcus Garvey to the Secretary, International Conference on Disarmament, November 12, 1921, in Hill, *ibid.*, pp.167-69.

that it is a scheme to rehabilitate Europe at the expense of Asia. But Asia is not going to disarm, not until all the others have completely disarmed.”³⁹

However, Garvey did not mean to give blanket approval to Japan but thought of black people as an independent voice in world politics. He suggested that blacks “would be able to hold the balance of power in the world” if they supported Japan. Although he suggested cooperation between blacks and the Japanese, Garvey set as his final goal for blacks to stand on their own legs, on alert for suppression by any group: “[t]hree babies are born; one yellow; one white; and one black. Soon the yellow baby gets guns and ammunition and puts on a uniform. The white baby does the same thing; grows up to manhood. All that time what do you think the negro baby is doing? Why standing looking on. Bye and bye a time comes for action. What occurs? They shoot that negro, and that has been going on ever since America has been discovered.” He also referred to a race war between blacks and whites if things would not change, especially in the South, where white mobs frequently lynched blacks. “The next war will be between the Negroes and the whites ... with Japan to fight with us, we can win such a war....”⁴⁰

Garvey actually realized the Japanese imperialistic attitude in Asia. He claimed that only blacks could play a role to protect all humanity, “for when we look to the Anglo-Saxon we see him full of greed, full of avarice, with no mercy, no love, no charity. We go from the white man to the yellow man, and we see the same unenviable characteristics in the Japanese.”⁴¹

³⁹ Speeches by Marcus Garvey, November 13, 1921, in Hill, *Papers*, vol. 4, 189.

⁴⁰ Bureau of Investigation Reports, December 3, 1918, RG 65, File OG 329359, NARA.

⁴¹ Speech by Marcus Garvey, January 1, 1922, (*Negro World*, January 14, 1922), in Hill, *Papers*, vol. 4, 326.

However, it is apparent that he did not seriously consider the fundamental problem of Japan-China relations.

He believed the advanced within one racial group should lead the less advanced to uplift the whole race, so that conscious black people, such as UNIA members and “New Negroes,” should lead other unconscious black masses. He seemed to apply this theory to the Asian situation when talking about their awareness of European colonial intention: “The Japanese has discovered it, the *Sleeping Chinaman, at last, has awakened from his slumber* and discovered it and the *sleeping, superstit[i]ous Indian and Hindu Moslem* has discovered it, through Mahatma Gandhi” (emphasis mine). He continued, identifying the UNIA and Japan: “thank God, the Universal Negro Improvement Association has discovered it, through the new Negro.” For him, since Japan was more advanced than China in regard to “progress” at that time, it was natural that Japan took the leading position.⁴² William Pickens would make the point clearer by identifying the Chinese and black masses: “The Chinese are more nearly like the Negroes; they are numerous, but loosely organized. [...] If China were as well organized as is Japan, China would be the greatest power represented in Washington today. For an individual Chinese is worth as much as an individual Japanese, or more.”⁴³

Other black leaders shared Garvey’s views. W. E. B. DuBois, a Harvard graduate, who was a founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), thought it was the propaganda prepared by Great Britain that made “the white world think the only enemy of China is Japan.”⁴⁴ *The Crisis*, the NAACP’s organ, compares the

⁴² Speech by Marcus Garvey, February 5, 1922, in Hill, *ibid.*, p.486.

⁴³ William Pickens to the *Negro World*, December 17, 1921, in Hill, *ibid.*, p.284.

⁴⁴ *Crisis*, vol.23, no.3 (January 1922), p.103.

proportions of holdings in China by Japan and those of European nations and asks “why is it seemingly the custom to continually speak of ‘Japanese aggression’ and not one word about the huge holdings of these other nations?” It concludes that “[t]he world certainly seems to have a double standard of international justice and it seems quite time that the real aggressors ceased using Japan as a smoke screen.”⁴⁵

DuBois visited Manchuria and Japan at the end of 1936 after traveling mainly in Europe for seven months. He concluded that one of the characteristics of Manchuria, a colony of Japan, was “[a]bsence of racial or color caste. [...] There is ... no apparent discrimination between motherland and colony.... Nowhere else in the world, to my knowledge, is this true. And why? Because Japanese and Manchoukans are so nearly related in race that there is nor can be no race prejudice. Ergo: no nation should rule a colony whose people they cannot conceive as Equals.”⁴⁶ Actually, he was courteously treated as a government guest by the Japanese, which probably made him see only what the Japanese officials wanted him to see.⁴⁷ After all, he persisted in his romantic view of inner racial harmony.⁴⁸

Only socialists held a different view on the issue. Their organ, *The Messenger*, claimed that “[t]he Japanese statesmen are not in the least concerned about race or color prejudice. The smug and oily Japanese diplomats are no different from Woodrow Wilson, Lloyd George or Orlando. They do not suffer from race prejudice. [...] They care nothing for even the

⁴⁵ According to the data, originally published in the *Boston Post*, England owned 27.8% of the total land of China; Russia 42.3%; France 3.4%; and Japan 5.6%. *The Crisis*, vol.21, no.4 (February 1921), p.168.

⁴⁶ DuBois (1937), pp.83-84.

⁴⁷ Takemoto (1994), pp.80-85.

⁴⁸ After WWII, DuBois still sympathized with the Japanese motivation to fight against white Europeans, but did not romanticize it: “[S]o as far as she tried to substitute for European, an Asiatic caste system under a ‘superior’ Japanese race, ... she was offering Asia no acceptable exchange for Western exploitation.” DuBois (1995), p.86.

Japanese people and at this very same moment are suppressing and oppressing mercilessly the people of Korea and forcing hard bargains upon unfortunate China. *It is possible, however, by appealing to the race issue[,] to divert the attention of the Japanese people from the abuses of the Japanese plutocracy. And that is the real intention of Japanese statesmen and peace delegates.*⁴⁹

The article of *The Asian Review*, “Lynching in America,” was introduced in several black newspapers such as *The Chicago Defender*, *The California Eagle*, and *The Messenger*.⁵⁰ However, the tone of *The Messenger* was quite different, revealing the “hypocrisy of the Japanese which brutalizes the Chinese, oppresses most shamefully the Koreans, crushes and abuses the Japanese working classes, and disfranchises more Japanese ... than the United States disfranchises Negroes in the South.” According to the cautious editors of *The Messenger*, the Japanese article was to “serve the Japanese ruling class in a two-fold manner. It will inspire the Japanese masses with the fatalistic determination never to come under the yoke of American imperialism. Next, it will create discontent with America on the part of that portion of the population – Negroes.”

With a few exceptions, most black leaders admired Japan and believed in harmony within the yellow race. The Japanese proposal of the anti-discrimination bill made a great impact on black people, who felt represented by the Japanese at the conference. Young A. Philip Randolph, a founding editor of *The Messenger*, who launched the “Garvey Must Go!” campaign against the Garvey movement in 1922, used to be a core member of the ILDP. Adam Clayton

⁴⁹ *The Messenger*, June 1919, p.6.

⁵⁰ *The Asian Review*, vol.2, no.4 (May-June 1921), p.321; *Chicago Defender*, July 16, 1921; *The California Eagle*, July 16, 1921; *The Messenger*, vol.3, no.3 (August 1921), p.225.

Powell, Sr., who was a prominent clergyman in Harlem, was also at the center of the ILDP. It is remarkable in African-American history that such a wide range of leaders, diverse in their beliefs and ages, gathered in hope for Japan as a leader of darker races.

The Japanese Views of Garvey and Black Issues

U. S. Military Intelligence held a lot of reports mentioning the possibility of a race war between the United States and Japan and sympathetic feelings shared by blacks and the Japanese. Some Japanese people were reported to have attended meetings of Garvey's organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), and even gave a speech. Others had personal contacts with Garvey as well as other UNIA leaders. In October 1919, a Japanese "was reported to have said that Garvey's statement about the 'day of the war of races' was good agitation for Japan." An advertisement of a meeting of the Black Star Line says that "Come and Hear a Japanese delegate to speak about the company."⁵¹

The First International Convention of the UNIA held in August 1920 especially attracted attention to the Japanese. Several reports mentioned that two Japanese tried to have trade with the UNIA in vain.⁵² One agent in the Military Intelligence pursued information about a Japanese person who was around a cricket club formed mostly by West Indians in New York in

⁵¹ A Report by the War Department, October 20, 1919, RG165, 10218-364/12, NARA.

⁵² Report by Special Agent P-138, October 21, 1920, OG258421, RG165, NARA; Report by Special Agent P-138, October 22, 1920 in Hill, ed. (1983-), vol.3, p.62; Report by Special Agent P-138, November 5, 1920 in Hill, *ibid.*, p.71.

relation to the Garvey movement.⁵³ It was reported that the Colored People's Union, an organization for all the colored races, was established in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Seattle, in which Japanese, Indian, and black people were active.⁵⁴ There was not much direct evidence whether the Japanese and blacks actually worked together but the government always recognized the possibility and cautiously watched their activities.

The Garvey movement was scrutinized by Japanese residents in California where exclusion of the Japanese was being legitimized. In *Shin-sekai (The New World)*, a Japanese-American newspaper published in San Francisco, there appeared a series of eleven columns on the Garvey movement in January 1921.⁵⁵ Introducing his ideas and movement by focusing on the UNIA's First International Convention, held in August 1920, it praises Garvey's scheme to build an independent nation-state in Africa and have an independent economy among blacks. Lamenting their lack of a leader like Garvey, it affirms that the Japanese in the United States should follow the Garvey movement to develop their community and to be responsible for their motherland. "If such an honest person did such a thing, how would our community be flourishing? We should blame ourselves, but we do not have a person like Garvey."⁵⁶

Masuichi Midoro, a correspondent for *Asahi Shimbun*, seems to have given the most objective description of Garvey and his movement. After the UNIA convention in 1920, he visited Garvey's office in Harlem and had an interview with him. He wrote a series of three

⁵³ Reports by Special Agent P-138 in October and November, 1920, OG258421, RG65, NARA; Reports by P-138, BS202600-667, RG65, NARA.

⁵⁴ J. J. Hannigan, Commandant, Twelfth Naval District, to the Director, Office of Naval Intelligence, December 3, 1921 in Hill, ed. (1983-), vol.4, pp.236-37; Office of Naval Intelligence, Report of the week ending March 18, 1922 in Kornweibel ed., (1985), Reel No.23, Flame Nos.686-89.

⁵⁵ *Shin-sekai (The New World)*, January 4-15, 1921

⁵⁶ *Shin-sekai*, January 15, 1921.

long articles titled “Yellow Peril or Black Peril: Newly Recurring Fear for White People” in the end of the year. In the articles, he introduces the Garvey movement and its divided reception; some almost ignore it and others too much exaggerate it. He rather states that the central issue is white fear against unity of colored peoples, especially between the Chinese and the Japanese. Midoro concludes that it would be dangerous either to put too much emphasis on this white fear or to ignore it.⁵⁷

The contemporary Japanese public opinion and press comments shared the worldview of “survival of the fittest,” disappointment toward Wilson’s idealism, and a sense of humiliation by the United States.⁵⁸ Some Japanese political leaders, especially those who advocated Pan-Asian philosophy, recognized Garvey’s “nationalist” movement. They sometimes borrowed Garvey’s philosophy to support their assertion that Asian countries should unite against European imperialism and make Japan the leader of Asia.

Kokuryū-kai (Black Dragon Society), a Pan-Asianist political group led by Ryōhei Uchida, was well aware of the racial world structure. They started an English magazine, the *Asian Review*, to dispel the misunderstanding of Europe and America about Asian countries “by mutual exchange of ideas and opinions.”⁵⁹ Uchida clarifies the object of this English journal “to honestly express the Japanese point of view before the world’s eyes.”⁶⁰ There was a large quantity of articles on racial problems in each country, including lynching of black Americans in the United States, as well as on white domination in world politics.

⁵⁷ *Asahi Shimbun*, December 24-26, 1920.

⁵⁸ Sawada (1999), pp.79-102.

⁵⁹ *Asian Review*, vol.1, no.1 (February 1920).

⁶⁰ *Ajia Jiron* (Asia Commentary), vol.4, no.4 (April 1920).

An article, titled “Coloured and Whites,” states that their “intention is not only to champion the cause of Japan but of all Asian and African countries.” In a reply to a white American reader who, claiming “to love Japan and to admire the Japanese people,” felt uncomfortable when she had found that the magazine referred to the Japanese as “colored,” which was usually applied to blacks in the United States, the editorial says that when “we employ the word ‘colored,’ we refer to the Asian and African peoples including the Negroes also.” Moreover, the article protests against her description of American blacks as “a bestial and low people,” stating, “[t]here may be undesirable elements among the Negroes, just as there are wicked persons among the Americans and Europeans. For the fault of a few to accuse the whole race, however, cannot be justified by any logic.” Showing their will to become the voice of voiceless people, they tried to impress their readers as the savior of the colored races.⁶¹

In the nature of a propagandist journal, the *Asian Review* introduced Midoro’s article about Garvey that appeared in *Asahi Shimbun* in November 1920. Connecting the black movement with anti-Japanese sentiments of American people, the original report emphasizes what white American people are really scared of is a Japan-China alliance rather than a Japanese uprising because China has both human and natural resources, its own civilization, and huge land. However, the *Asian Review* completely neglects this point of view and stresses the cooperation between blacks and Asians, which was not actually mentioned in the original. They attributed anti-Japanese sentiment in China and Korea to the European and American propagandists, the view shared by Garvey and other African-American leaders.⁶²

⁶¹ *Asian Review*, vol.1, no.5, July 1920.

⁶² *Asahi Shimbun*, November 24, 25, 26, 1920; *Asian Review*, vol.2, no.1 (January 1921).

Kametarō Mitsukawa, who joined several political associations and later became a professor at Takushoku University, paid more attention to the Garvey movement. He established Rōsō-kai in 1918 and Yūzon-sha in 1919, both of which were comprised of mainly right-wing intellectuals, such as Shūmei Ōkawa and Ikki Kita, as well as other ideologues.⁶³ Mitsukawa was an advocate of Pan-Asianism, pursuing redemption and reconstruction of Asia. Viewing world history as a racial conflict between the East and the West, he asserted Asia should be united against European imperialism. While his “Asian Monroe Doctrine” remained an unclear concept at that time, according to Yuichi Hasegawa, it did not necessarily mean intervention in China but rather emancipation of Asia by reorganizing the world. In this regard, he also took notice of socialism but paid much more attention to nationalist movements.⁶⁴

In 1925, Mitsukawa published *Kokujin Mondai* (“the Negro Problem”), a pioneer work on this subject that focuses on the Garvey movement, as it puts Garvey’s tricolor (red, black and green) Pan-African flag on the title page. He explains African-American history as the precondition of the Garvey movement and regards WWI as a watershed to create this new type of movement.⁶⁵

He does not hesitate to express his passionate sympathy with black people: “the author has devoted his mind and body to the struggle to recapture the deprived Asia, while looking for comrades for a decade. Africa, which is exploited like Asia; black people, who are oppressed

⁶³ Both Roso-kai and Yuson-sha held members beyond the borders of generation, ideology and gender. Szpilman (2001), pp.445-47.

⁶⁴ Hasegawa (2001), pp.266-67, 298.

⁶⁵ Mitsukawa (1925); This book was completed in 1922 but had been lost during the Kanto earthquake in 1923 until the spring of 1925 when the manuscript was found by chance. The English title, “The Negro Problem,” is based on the letter of thanks from Amy Jacques Garvey, Garvey’s wife, to Kametarō Mitsukawa, who apparently sent an autographed copy of the book to UNIA. Amy Jacques Garvey to Kametarō Mitsukawa, February 11, 1926, in Hill, ed. (1983-), vol.6, p.340.

like yellow people; they inevitably hurt my spirit.”⁶⁶ Mitsukawa equated Garvey’s “black African movement” with his “yellow Asian movement” in terms of their common intention “to prove that the world was not created for white people.” While both of them were victims of the white supremacy, however, he saw the Japanese as more advanced than blacks, because the latter were accordingly inspired by the Japanese proposal of the anti-discrimination bill at the Peace Conference. Furthermore, he considered that there was a difference within blacks in their level of development. In the Garvey movement, he stated, “advanced people of African descent in the New World” were supposed to help “backward Africa” to develop and civilize. While urging readers to support the movement, Mitsukawa stresses the special task for the Japanese to lead the whole of Asia.

Despite recognizing that American blacks did not comprise a “nation,” he regarded the Garvey movement as a nationalist movement based on the fact that Garvey aimed at withdrawal of Europeans from Africa and establishment of a black nation-state in the motherland.⁶⁷ On the other hand, Mitsukawa hesitates to estimate how possible the formation of a black nation-state would be. In 1920, two years before he completed the book, Mitsukawa had introduced the Garvey movement to Japanese readers, responding to UNIA’s first international convention. Here, he revealed some doubt about the achievement of the “black Africanism” prior to the yellow Asianism since Africa had been a real “dark continent” and its residents were “totally ignorant and foolish, only constituting a primitive nation.” While he did not mean Garvey’s scheme was imaginary, he thought it could be realized when their African unity

⁶⁶ Mitsukawa (1925), pp.2-3.

⁶⁷ Mitsukawa (1925), pp.3-4.

included all the people in Africa regardless of race, and when Egyptians and Afrikaners were in the leading position.⁶⁸ He further states that black people should intermarry with other “superior” races and worship other excellent religions.⁶⁹ On the other hand, in Mitsukawa’s view, African Americans, apart from “savage” Africans, were developed and civilized.⁷⁰

In his opinion, world peace could never be achieved without resolving racial and national problems. He advocates that Japan should go hand in hand with other Asian countries but stresses that Japan, as “the oldest brother,” should take the leading role.⁷¹ In his opinion, the Japanese did not properly handle their responsibility of preserving China from European forces.⁷² He realized Japan had its own racial and national problems. Mentioning that the Japanese acted brutally during colonization of Korea, he optimistically, or rather irresponsibly, dismisses the issue, by saying “I believe such brutal acts are not seen now.” The Japanese colonization of Korea did not seem to be an issue to him. What he thought the Japanese needed, in order to attract Korean people’s minds, was “love toward Koreans.”⁷³

Mitsukawa’s slighting of the Korean issue corresponds with Garvey’s attitude toward Africans. Both of them saw that racial unity against the European imperialism was most important and failed to recognize diversity within the race. Hiroko Sato indicates that the premier fault of Mitsukawa’s book is in Mitsukawa’s ambiguous definition of “blacks” that includes African blacks, American blacks, and Pacific “natives.” She states that being

⁶⁸ *Ajia Jiron (Asia Commentaries)*, vol.4, no.10 (October 1920); Afrikaners are the Dutch-origin white population in South Africa, who were struggling for independence from the British.

⁶⁹ Mitsukawa (1925), p.306.

⁷⁰ Mitsukawa (1926), pp.87-88.

⁷¹ Mitsukawa (1926), pp.95-101, 112.

⁷² *Ajia Jiron*, vol.3, no.10 (October 1919).

⁷³ Mitsukawa (1926), pp.153-59.

unaware of the Garvey movement's impracticality, due to the lack of knowledge of the reality of Africa and African Americans, he found hope in Garvey's movement.⁷⁴

Conclusion

The relationship between African Americans and the Japanese, which has been disregarded for years, shows the mind-set of the time about race. Living more than six decades later, we often fail to see such a racial structure in pre-WWII history, since talking on race in international relations was avoided after WWII.⁷⁵ However, the concept of "race" had been discussed in world politics with credibility in the early 20th century, when the Japanese claim to be the leader of colored races found enormous support among African Americans who connected their domestic racial problems to the white-dominated world order. Both Japanese intellectuals and black leaders utilized the Japanese position confronting white imperialism to justify their further struggle to make strong nations for themselves in order to achieve respectable status in world politics.

The Asian Monroe Doctrine was not well accepted in the post-WWI era when the Japanese foreign policy was still pro-Western, seeking cooperation with the United States and Great Britain. In the course of its popularization from the 1930s through the end of the Pacific War,

⁷⁴ Sato (1973), pp.34-35

⁷⁵ The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, prohibiting discrimination based on race and other factors, as a response to the Nazi holocaust and denying that concept of race by a scientific base.

it contained and justified a more interventionist attitude toward other Asian nations. To understand the history of the Pacific War, it would be helpful to follow the track of Pan-Asianism, including its early relationship with Pan-Africanism. Their relationship also shows how international society was racially organized in the early 20th century. Both Pan-Asianists and Pan-Africanists thought it to be useful to bind “Asians” as a collective actor as well as “blacks” to overturn the old racial world order and rebuild a new one. When WWI was over, Pan-Asianists and Pan-Africanists found the words and rhetoric to support their struggle against white domination. They situated their movements in the international sphere in the same way, and so, sympathized with each other.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, Benedict (2006), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition, London and New York: Verso
- Contee, C. G. (1970), “Document: The Worley Report on the Pan-African Congress of 1919”, *Journal of Negro History*, vol.55 (April 1970)
- Dower, John W. (1986), *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, Pantheon Books
- DuBois, W. E. B. (1928), *Dark Princess: A Romance*, Jackson: University of Mississippi
- DuBois, W. E. B. (1937), “Japanese Colonialism”, *Pittsburgh Courier*, February 13, 1937, In

- David Levering Lewis, ed. (1995), *W. E. B. DuBois: A Reader*, New York: Henry Holt and Company
- DuBois, W. E. B. (1945), “Japan, Color, and Afro-Americans”, *Chicago Defender*, August 25, 1945, In David Levering Lewis, ed. (1995), *W. E. B. DuBois: A Reader*, New York: Henry Holt and Company
- Esendebe, P. Olanwuche (1994), *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement, 1776-1991*, 2nd ed., Washington, D. C.: Howard University Press
- Gallicchio, Marc (2000), *The African American Encounter with Japan and China: Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895-1945*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press
- Goldberg, David Theo (2002), *The Racial State*, Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers
- Hasegawa, Yūichi (2001), “Mitsukawa Kametaro no Taibei Ninshiki (Kametaro Mitsuoka’s View of the United States)”, In Yūichi Hasegawa, ed., *Taisho-ki Nihon no Amerika Ninshiki* (Japanese Views of the United States during the Taisho era), Keio University Press
- Hill, Robert A., ed. (1983-), *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Berkeley: The University of California Press
- Horne, Gerald (2004), *Race War!: White Supremacy and the Japanese Attack on the British Empire*, New York and London: New York University Press
- Kearney, Reginald (1998), *African American Views of the Japanese: Solidarity or Sedition?*, New York: State University of New York Press
- Kornweibel, Theodore, ed. (1985), *Federal Surveillance of Afro-Americans (1917-1925): The First World War, the Red Scare, and the Garvey Movement*, Frederick, MD: University

Publication of America (microfilm)

Locke, Alain (1968), "The New Negro", In Alain Locke, ed., *The New Negro*, New York:

Atheneum

Marx, Anthony W. (1998), *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, the United*

States, and Brazil, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Matsumoto, Ken-ichi (2000), *Yoshimi Takeuchi, "Nihon no Ajia Shugi": Sei-doku*, Iwanami

Shoten

Mitsukawa, Kametaro (1926), *Sekai Josei to Dai-Nippon* (World Affairs and great Japan),

Kouchi-sha

Pitkin, Walter B. (1921), *Must We Fight Japan?*, New York: The Century Co.

Stoddard, Theodore Lothrop (1920), *Rising Tide of Color against White World-supremacy*, New

York: Scribner

Sato, Hiroko (1973), "Japanese Views on the Racial Problems in the United States", *Kiyo*

(Annals), Institute for Comparative Studies of Culture, Tokyo Woman's Christian

University, vol.34

Sawada, Jiro (1999), *Kindai Nihon-jin no Amerika-kan: Nichi-ro Sensou igo wo Chu-shin ni*

(Modern Japanese Views of America after the Russo-Japanese War), Keio University Press

Szpilman, Christopher W. A. (2001), "Kaidai (Bibliographical Notes)", In Takushoku Daigaku

Souritsu 100 shu-nen Kinen Shuppan, *Mitsukawa Kametaro: Chiiki, Chikyu Jijo no*

Keimou-sha (Kametaro Mitsukawa: An Educator of Regional and Global Affairs), Jou

(vol.1), Takushoku Daigaku

Takemoto, Yuko (1994), "*W. E. B. DuBois to Nippon* (W. E. B. DuBois and Japan)", Shien,

vol.54, no.2

Thorne, Christopher (1985), *The Issue of War, States, Societies, and the Far Eastern Conflict of 1941-1945*, London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd.