

# First World War as Global War: Japan, New Zealand, and the Dawn of an Asia/Pacific World

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“The first salvo greeted the men at the Oval, and the western enclosure at the Octagon was filled with children (in charge of their teachers), who waved flags and cheered enthusiastically. The regimental brass band and the pipe band played at intervals, and added to the attractiveness of the march.”

*Otago Witness*, 23 Sept. 1914 <sup>1</sup>

“The convoy and escort makes a great show...”

Gordon Gerald Harper, Canterbury Mounted Rifles, 25 Nov. 1914 <sup>2</sup>

The joyous expressions above echo scenes of exultation throughout Europe that greeted the outbreak of general war in August 1914. Responding to the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Polish countess Misia Sert exclaimed in Paris, “What luck! Oh God, if only there really is a war.”<sup>3</sup> In Germany, Bonn University Rector Aloys Schulte rejoiced that “the grand spirit of the wars of liberation is renewing itself in us and around us.”<sup>4</sup> In London, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George hailed the chance to rediscover “the great peaks we had forgotten, of Honour, Duty, Patriotism.”<sup>5</sup>

Historians of the First World War have long questioned the pervasiveness of such enthusiasm.<sup>6</sup> In fact, while the *Otago Witness* of September 1914 quoted above chronicled the fervor of local children viewing the “very impressive” spectacle of 1,000 marching men on 21 September, it also noted a “diffidence” among adult observers, “disposed to feel ashamed of making a demonstration.”<sup>7</sup> The following day was “wet and dismal overhead and underfoot,” and, despite the revelry of 21

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<sup>1</sup> Expeditionary Force,” *Otago Witness*, issue 3158, 23 Sept. 1914, p. 27. Courtesy of National Library of New Zealand, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/OW19140923.2.54.1> (Accessed 21 Dec. 2016). The article is describing an event on 21 September 1914.

<sup>2</sup> Describing the convoy of New Zealand troop ships and escorts as they arrived in Albany, Australia. Gordon Gerald Harper letter to brother Eric Harper, 25 November 1914; Reprinted in Glyn Harper, ed., *Letters from Gallipoli: New Zealand Soldiers Write Home* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2011), p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> John Baxter, *Paris at the End of the World* (New York: HarperCollins, 2014), p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Konrad H. Jarausch, “German Students in the First World War,” *Central European History* 17, no. 4 (Dec. 1984), p. 310.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Marc Ferro, *The Great War, 1914–1918* (London: Routledge, 1973), pp. 20–21.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War: Explaining World War I* (London: Penguin, 1998), chap. 7; Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth, and Mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Leonard V. Smith, Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau, and Annette Becker, *France and the Great War, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). As indicated by Niall Ferguson’s chapter title (“Days of August: The Myth of War Enthusiasm”), this excitement is now routinely referred to as the “myth of war enthusiasm.”

<sup>7</sup> “Expeditionary Force,” p. 27.

September, “the departure of the troops was, to all intents and purposes, officially ignored.”<sup>8</sup> This episode confirms, in other words, the need to take account of a host of variables—age, class, gender, timing, region, etc.—in discussing responses to the outbreak of war in August 1914.<sup>9</sup>

## World War I Centennial

Given the centennial anniversary, these and similar observations of the First World War have increasingly made global headlines since 2014. While Google registers only 6.35 million World War I-related articles in the ten-year period from 2004 through 2013, 87.6 million stories about the Great War made the headlines from 2014 through 2016.<sup>10</sup> And the past three years have been very good for special exhibits on the First World War. America’s National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City broke annual attendance records for two years in a row in 2014 and 2015.<sup>11</sup> In July 2016, an all-time high number of guests visited the Memorial in a single month.<sup>12</sup> In New Zealand, celebrated producer and director of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* film trilogies, Sir Peter Jackson, fashioned a \$10 million Great War Exhibit in April 2015 in the former Dominion Museum in central Wellington. Complete with full color photographs, and recreations of the sights, sounds, and smells of pre-war European streets and wartime battle scenes, the exhibit attracted over 140,000 visitors in its first eight months, and more than 1,000 guests a day during the busy summer months.<sup>13</sup>

Discussions of the First World War have taken much longer to gather momentum in Japan. Unlike in the territories of the principal belligerents, there are very few memorials to the Great War in Japan. This largely reflects the relatively small number of Japanese casualties during the war—just slightly more than 2,000, less than four percent of New Zealand’s wartime casualties.<sup>14</sup> Understandably, one of the few Japanese monuments to the war is associated with an institution that suffered significant wartime losses. In its valiant effort to transport troops and goods for the Allies, the Japan Mail Shipping Line (NYK) lost five ships between 1914 and 1918. In 1919, NYK erected a cenotaph in honor of its martyred sailors at Sōjiji Temple in Yokohama Prefecture.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>8</sup> “The Empire’s Call,” *Otago Witness*, issue 3159, 30 Sept. 1914, p. 28. Courtesy of National Library of New Zealand, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/OW19140930.2.54> (Accessed 22 Dec. 2016).

<sup>9</sup> As appropriately noted in Wayne Thorpe, “The European Syndicalists and War, 1914–1918,” *Contemporary European History* 10, no. 1 (Mar. 2001), p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Google search, 22 December 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Through the third week in November, 2015, the memorial recorded 257,830 visitors. The record for 2014 was 235,271. “World War I Museum Breaks Attendance Record,” *The Kansas City Star*, 25 Nov. 2015, <http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/article46446915.html> (Accessed 22 Dec. 2016).

<sup>12</sup> Over 28,000 guests visited the Memorial in July 2016. Mike Vietti, “National World War I Museum and Memorial Breaks All-Time Monthly Attendance Record in July,” *National World War I Museum and Memorial News Release*, 1 Aug. 2016, [https://theworldwar-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/prod/s3fs-public/8-1-16\\_July\\_Attendance\\_Record.pdf](https://theworldwar-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/prod/s3fs-public/8-1-16_July_Attendance_Record.pdf) (Accessed 22 Dec. 2016).

<sup>13</sup> “Cash Needed to Keep Exhibit Free,” *The Dominion Post*, 18 Jan. 2016, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> Frederick R. Dickinson, *World War I and the Triumph of a New Japan, 1919–1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Although the cenotaph was destroyed in the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake, it was reestablished in 1927. “Lest We Forget,” *Travel Bulletin*, Nov. 1927. Courtesy of Waseda University Library, <http://www.nyk.com/yusen/697/> (Accessed 22 Dec. 2016).

Given the profound impact of both the Russo-Japanese and Second World Wars in Japan, Japanese scholars have understandably spent more energy analyzing the 1904–5 and 1931–45 years than developments between 1914 and 1918. The first Japanese scholarly analysis of the Great War after 1945 did not appear until 1963, in a special issue of the foreign affairs journal, *Kokusai seiji* (International Politics).<sup>16</sup> But the centennial commemoration of the Great War has had a profound effect upon Japanese academe. More volumes on the First World War have been published in Japanese in the last five years than in the 67 years between 1945 and 2012 combined.<sup>17</sup>

## Globalization of the Study of World War I

Just as exciting as the new wave of Japanese-language analyses has been the increasing globalization of World War I coverage in the English-speaking world. A special exhibit titled “Sand to Snow” about the global reach of the war was, in part, responsible for the high attendance numbers at the National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City in 2015.<sup>18</sup> More importantly, we now have a growing body of English-language literature on the Great War that highlights the impact of the conflagration far from the Western Front. From Portugal to Syria to Japan to China, we have a sense today of a war that, for the first time in recorded history, truly transformed the entire globe.<sup>19</sup>

Among this newer scholarship, the increased attention to the Asia/Pacific region is striking. In the last four years, at least five major titles on the First World War have appeared in English focusing exclusively on this region.<sup>20</sup> One might argue that analyses of the Asia/Pacific are the most important new frontier in the study of the Great War. Developments in the region, after all, offer more than just a glimpse of the global reach of the conflict. They provide a powerful means to challenge the Eurocentrism that continues to define intellectual life in the twenty-first century.

<sup>16</sup> Nihon kokusai seiji gakkai, ed., *Kokusai seiji: Daiichiji sekai taisen*, 1962, no. 3.4 (no. 23) (Oct. 1963).

<sup>17</sup> In just the last two years, see Naraoka Sōchi, *Taika nijūikkajō yōkyū to wa nan datta no ka: Daiichiji sekai taisen to Nitchū tairitsu no genten* (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2015); Gunji shigakkai, ed., *Gunji shigaku: Daiichiji sekai taisen to sono eikyō* 50, no. 3.4 (Mar. 2015); Yang Haicheng, *Nitchū seiji gaikō kankeishi no kenkyū: Daiichiji sekai taisenki o chūshin ni* (Tokyo: Fuyōshobō Shuppan, 2015); Fujihara Tatsushi, ed., *Daiichiji sekai taisen o kangaeru* (Higashikurume: Kyōwakoku, 2016); Matoba Tetsurō, ed., *Daiichiji sekai taisen to gendai* (Tokyo: Maruzen Shuppan, 2016); Iikura Akira, *Daiichiji sekai taisenshi: fūshiga to tomo ni miru shidōshatachi* (Tokyo: Chūkō Shinsho, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> “World War I Museum Breaks Attendance Record.”

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, James L. Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Frederick R. Dickinson, *War and National Reinvention: Japan in the Great War, 1914–1919* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999); Xu Guoqi, *China and the Great War: China’s Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Filipe Ribeiro de Menezes, *Portugal 1914–1926: From the First World War to Military Dictatorship* (Bristol: University of Bristol, 2004).

<sup>20</sup> See Dickinson, *World War I and the Triumph of a New Japan, 1919–1930*; Nicholas Tarling, *Asia and the First World War: Involvement and Aftermath* (Auckland: NZ Asia Institute, 2014); Oliviero Frattolillo and Antony Best, eds., *Japan and the Great War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Heather Streets-Salter, *Southeast Asia and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Xu Guoqi, *Asia and the Great War: A Shared History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

## Importance of the Asia/Pacific Theater

We get a vivid sense of the importance of the Asia/Pacific theater of the Great War from the two epigrams above. As already noted, scenes of jubilation over displays of power were common throughout Europe in the fall of 1914. Such enthusiasm was also tempered in communities throughout Europe, depending on age, class, gender, timing, and location. What is most striking about the scenes introduced above, however, is that, while they strongly confirm developments in Europe in the fall of 1914, they took place thousands of miles away, in Dunedin, New Zealand and Albany, Australia.

The most important lesson of these scenes from Dunedin and Albany, in other words, is the powerful impact they reveal of the First World War as far from the Western Front as one might travel. While the parade of soldiers that marched through the Octagon in central Dunedin on 21 September 1914 numbered only 1,000, these men were part of a larger force of 8,500, plus almost 4,000 horses, that set sail from New Zealand to Europe in October 1914. And the convoy and escort described by Canterbury gunner Gordon Harper in November 1914 included ten troopships and several British and Japanese naval escorts.<sup>21</sup>

The most dramatic discussion of the First World War as global engagement is usually a reference to the enormous power of the United States, which ultimately crossed the Atlantic Ocean to help win the Allied cause. The United States drafted 2.8 million men and supplied the Entente with a battleship group, destroyers, and submarines.<sup>22</sup> But it is worth remembering that Washington did not declare war on Germany until over two and a half years after the initial British declaration—in April 1917. And American troops did not appear in force on the continent until the spring of 1918, just six months before the end of the conflict.<sup>23</sup> By contrast, New Zealand responded immediately to the 4 August 1914 British declaration of war, mobilizing four expeditionary forces by the end of August. Likewise, Japan issued an ultimatum to Germany on 15 August, 1914, just eight days after ally Britain formally requested aid. Tokyo formally declared war on Germany on 23 August 1914.<sup>24</sup>

The swiftness with which New Zealand and Japan joined the allied cause in August 1914 accentuates the pivotal importance of the Asia/Pacific region to the war. New Zealand troops were, of course, part of a larger contingent of British dominion forces, all of which responded eagerly to London's initial call for help. And New Zealand's contribution was small relative to that of other imperial forces, such as those from India, Canada, even Australia.<sup>25</sup> But one could argue that New Zealand sacrificed even more than that of its immediate neighbor, Australia. After all, while the Australian contingent remained an all-volunteer force, New Zealand introduced conscription in

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<sup>21</sup> Matthew Tonks, "The New Zealand Expeditionary Force Sets Forth," *New Zealand WW100*, <http://ww100.govt.nz/the-new-zealand-expeditionary-force-sets-forth> (Accessed 24 Dec., 2016).

<sup>22</sup> For a convenient overview, see Hew Strachan, *The First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), chap. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Although one million American soldiers had arrived on the continent by May 1918, there were only 14,000 yanks in Europe in June 1917.

<sup>24</sup> For details of the Japanese decision for war, see Frederick R. Dickinson, "Japan," in *World War I: The Origins*, eds. Richard Hamilton and Holger Herwig (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 300–36.

<sup>25</sup> For relative numbers, see Stephen Garton, "The Dominions, Ireland, and India," in *Empires at War, 1911–1923*, eds. Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 155.

November 1916.<sup>26</sup> As a consequence, New Zealand suffered a higher rate of death as a percentage of the total national population—1.5%—compared to that of Australia, which registered 1.2%.<sup>27</sup>

As for Japan, although more details follow, it is worth noting here that four divisions of New Zealand troops were ready to embark for Europe by 28 August 1914. They were unable to depart, however, until British and Japanese naval escorts arrived two months later. The enthusiastic description of the majestic naval convoy by New Zealand gunner Harper above would not have been possible without Japanese naval aid. One cannot underestimate, in other words, the importance of swift action by both New Zealand and Japan in building critical early momentum for the Allied cause.

## Japan in World War I

Early action by New Zealand and Japan together offer a dramatic glimpse of the global reach of the First World War. And the full story of Japanese belligerence accentuates the importance of the Asia/Pacific theater. Even before the Japanese Navy began escorting dominion troops to the Arabian Sea, two naval task forces ejected the German East Asiatic Squadron from the Marshall, Mariana, and Caroline Islands in the South Pacific (September 1914). This mirrored similar action by the New Zealand and Australian navies, which occupied German Samoa and German New Guinea in August and September, respectively. By November 1914, 29,000 Japanese and 2,800 British imperial troops vanquished the German fortress at Qingdao, China.<sup>28</sup>

The Battle of the Marne is typically hailed as the first great Allied victory of the Great War. After the swift capitulation of Belgium, French and British troops finally halted German momentum and spared France from total conquest in September 1914.<sup>29</sup> As important as the Marne was, however, it was less a clear Allied “victory” than a narrow escape from annihilation. By contrast, developments in the Asia/Pacific region pointed to a decisive win for the Entente. By November 1914, Japanese, New Zealand, Australian, and British forces had eliminated German power in the region.

Despite this decisive early victory, Japan continued to contribute significantly to the Allied war effort through 1918. A four-ship battle flotilla of Japan’s First Squadron protected navigation routes in the Pacific Ocean from September 1914.<sup>30</sup> A separate three-ship flotilla joined a Royal Navy battle group patrolling the American west coast from the Panama Canal to Canada through the spring of 1915.<sup>31</sup> Ships from Japan’s Third Fleet escorted Australian and New Zealand troops from the Pacific Ocean to the Arabian Sea from October 1914. In February 1915, Japanese marines joined British and French marines to suppress an uprising of Indian soldiers in Singapore.<sup>32</sup> Following attacks on

<sup>26</sup> Philippa Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 138.

<sup>27</sup> Calculated from figures from the Australian War Memorial and the Auckland War Memorial Museum.

<sup>28</sup> Troop numbers from Eguchi Keiichi, *Futatsu no taishen* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1989), p. 20.

<sup>29</sup> Most recently, Holger Herwig has accentuated the significance of the Marne. See Holger H. Herwig, *The Marne, 1914: The Opening of World War I and the Battle That Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2011).

<sup>30</sup> Hashiguchi Jihei, “Japan’s Share in the Naval Operations of the Great War,” Japan Dept. of the Navy, 8 Dec. 1918, p. 4. National Archives, Washington, D.C., Record Group 165, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs: Military Intelligence Division Files, Japan, Folder: 003011-026-0568.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> See Streets-Salter, *Southeast Asia and the First World War*, chap. 1, 2.

Japanese merchant vessels, three Japanese destroyer divisions and one cruiser joined the allied fight against German submarines in the Mediterranean in February 1917.<sup>33</sup>

Where Japanese military power was not directly involved, substantial Japanese aid flowed. Several Japanese Red Cross units operated in allied capitals during the war.<sup>34</sup> Japanese cargo ships plied European waters, reaching 200,000 tons between 1914 and 1918.<sup>35</sup> In April 1917, Europeans chartered 311 Japanese vessels to aid with the general war trade.<sup>36</sup> And 100,000 tons of chartered ships from Japan carried coal and supplies between Britain and France during the war.<sup>37</sup> Japan supplied badly needed copper and currency to the allies, including 640 million yen in loans.<sup>38</sup> To Russia, Japan transferred three Japanese cruisers and sold 600,000 rifles.<sup>39</sup> For France, Japan built twelve destroyers, delivered directly to the Mediterranean.<sup>40</sup> In August 1918, Japan joined an international expedition to Siberia, eventually dispatching 72,000 troops—the largest Allied contribution—to help check the expansion of Bolshevik power to the Russian Far East.<sup>41</sup>

## World War I in Japan

As important as Japan's contributions were to the Allied war effort, the First World War had a pivotal impact on the development of modern Japan, as well. Since the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry in Uraga Bay in July 1853, Japanese statesmen had scrambled to join the ranks of "civilized" powers. By the end of the nineteenth century, they had replaced all feudal institutions with the infrastructure of a modern state and had even begun building a modern empire—in Taiwan and Korea. It was not until the First World War, however, that Japan acquired all the trappings of a distinguished twentieth century polity.

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<sup>33</sup> Letter from Secretary of the Navy Edwin Denby to American Secretary of State, 23 September 1921. Stanley K. Hornbeck Papers, Box 255, "Japan: War Costs and Contributions" File, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford, CA.

<sup>34</sup> Araki Eiko, *Naichingēru no matsuei tachi: "Kango" kara yominaosu daiichiji sekai taisen* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2014).

<sup>35</sup> M. Togo, "Japan and Ships," *The North American Review* 207, no. 748 (Mar. 1918), p. 373.

<sup>36</sup> "Shipping and Shipbuilding Industry of Japan," 19 Mar. 1918, p. 8. National Archives, Washington, D.C., Record Group 165, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs: Military Intelligence Division Files, Japan, Folder: 003011-026-0568-0001.

<sup>37</sup> Togo, "Japan and Ships," p. 373.

<sup>38</sup> Major K. F. Baldwin, Office of the Chief of Staff, War Department, Military Intelligence Division, "A Brief Account of Japan's Part in the World War," 16 September 1921, p. 6, Stanley K. Hornbeck Papers, Box 255, "Japan: War Costs and Contributions" file, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford, CA. If loans to China are counted, the sum approaches one billion yen. Between 1916 and 1918, Japan lent 280 million yen of public and private loans to China. David Asher, "Convergence and its Costs: The Failure of Japanese Economic Reform and the Breakdown of the Washington System, 1918–1932," PhD dissertation, St. Antony's College: Trinity, 2002, p. 73.

<sup>39</sup> Japan had originally captured the cruisers from Russia in the Russo-Japanese War: the Sagami (originally, the Peresviet), the Tango (Poltava), and the Sōya (Varyag). See Shibusawa Eiichi, ed., Theodore Roosevelt, *What the Japanese Stood for in the World War*, pamphlet (1918), p. 25. Information about rifles from Baldwin, "A Brief Account of Japan's Part in the World War," p. 6.

<sup>40</sup> Hashiguchi Jihei, "Japan's Share in the Naval Operations of the Great War," p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> The 72,000 figure from Baldwin, "A Brief Account of Japan's Part in the World War," p. 5.

First, the Great War marked a pivotal transition from agricultural to primarily industrial state. Japan's sizeable contribution to the Allied war effort had an enormous impact upon the domestic economy. Between 1910–14 and 1920–4, Japanese exports tripled.<sup>42</sup> From 1913 to 1922, the Japanese economy expanded by 5.21 percent, significantly higher than the international standard at the time.<sup>43</sup> By the 1920–24 years, manufactured goods comprised over 90 percent of Japanese exports.<sup>44</sup> By 1926, Japan produced double the value of manufactured goods as in the primary sectors of agriculture, forestry and fisheries.<sup>45</sup> In 1925, the population of Japan proper stood at 60.74 million, the fifth largest behind China, the United States, Russia and Germany.<sup>46</sup>

Just as important as this economic transformation was a dramatic change in Japanese global status. With its military victories against China in 1895 and Imperial Russia in 1905, Japan had become a major regional power. But Tokyo's pivotal contributions to the Allies between 1914 and 1918 catapulted Japan, for the first time in history, to the status of world power.

This status was apparent first in the degree to which belligerents on both sides of the conflict scrambled for Japanese aid and support. After formally requesting Japanese aid in Asia in early August 1914, Britain petitioned in September for troops from Japan to the Western front.<sup>47</sup> German and Austrian representatives approached Japanese diplomats in European capitals several times in the first two years of the war over the possibility of a separate peace.<sup>48</sup> With the fall of Qingdao, China, Allied requests for aid soared. On 6 November 1914, British Foreign Secretary Edward Grey urged that Britain's ambassador to Tokyo request a Japanese force "take part in the main operations of war in France, Belgium and Germany in the same way as our Army is doing, and to fight alongside of our soldiers on the continent of Europe."<sup>49</sup> Soon after, French newspapers reported informal French requests for 500,000 Japanese troops to join Serbia in operations in the Balkans.<sup>50</sup> As late as July 1918, the U.S. Navy declared it a "matter of vital necessity" that Japanese battle cruisers help protect U.S. troop transports across the Atlantic.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>42</sup> W. G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism 1894–1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 126, table 2.

<sup>43</sup> According to the Ōkawa Kazushi project. Ōkawa Kazushi, Takamatsu Nobukiyo, and Yamamoto Yūzō, *Kokumin shotoku* (Tōyō keizai shinpō, 1974); cited in Takemura Tamio, *Taishō bunka teikoku no yūtopia* (Tokyo: Sangensha, 2004), p. 13.

<sup>44</sup> Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism 1894–1945*, p. 126, table 2.

<sup>45</sup> Hayami Akira and Kojima Miyoko, *Taishō demogurafi: Rekishi jinkōgaku de mita hazama no jidai* (Tokyo: Bunshun Shinsho, 2004), p. 19.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 238–39.

<sup>47</sup> Sir Edward Grey to Japanese Ambassador to Britain, Inoue Katsunosuke, 2 Nov. 1914. Japanese Foreign Ministry archives, File 5-2-2-51 "Papers related to Appeals for a Japanese Expedition on the Occasion of the European War," Tokyo.

<sup>48</sup> Frank Iklé, "Japanese-German Peace Negotiations During World War I," *American History Review*, no. 71 (Oct. 1965), pp. 62–76.

<sup>49</sup> Sir Edward Grey to British embassy, Tokyo, 6 Nov. 1914. Japanese Foreign Ministry archives, File 5-2-2-51 "Papers related to Appeals for a Japanese Expedition on the Occasion of the European War," Tokyo.

<sup>50</sup> Payson Jackson Treat, "Japan, America and the Great War," *A League of Nations*, 1/8 (Dec. 1918), p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> Letter from Secretary of the Navy, Edwin Denby to American Secretary of State, 23 Sept. 1921. Stanley K. Hornbeck Papers, Box 255, 'Japan: War Costs and Contributions' file, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford, CA.

Although Tokyo ultimately refused all requests for a Japanese troop presence in Europe, the Allies clearly understood the importance of Japanese support. As Stanford history professor Payson Jackson Treat declared in 1918, had Japan decided to join Germany and Austria instead of the Entente, “Russia would have had to mobilize a large army in the Far East, the British colonials would hardly have dared leave their own lands, and the commerce of the Pacific would have passed out of the control of the Allies.”<sup>52</sup> In return for her abiding loyalty to the Allied cause, Japan in 1919 was bestowed the ultimate reward: the right for her plenipotentiaries to sit with representatives of the four other victorious powers at the Paris Peace Conference. The significance of the moment was not lost in Tokyo. As Prime Minister Hara Takashi declared in January 1920, at Paris, “as one of five great powers, the empire [Japan] contributed to the recovery of world peace. With this, the empire’s status has gained all the more authority, and her responsibility to the world has become increasingly weighty.”<sup>53</sup>

### Global Implications of World War I

Historians have long identified one of the most striking global ramifications of the First World War as the decline of European power. Indeed, the brunt of the 14 million deaths and \$180 million in indirect costs were born by the principal European belligerents. In the early 1990s, Harvard University professor of history David Blackbourn regularly ended the first of a two-semester sequence on modern European history with the celebrated quotation from British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey at the outbreak of war in Europe. Writing to the editor of the *Westminster Gazette*, John Alfred Spender, on 3 August 1914, Grey perceptively declared that “The lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our life-time.”<sup>54</sup>

Second only to evidence of a declining Europe in the tale of global reverberations of World War I is the discussion of the rise of an “American Century.” Indeed, the U.S. tipped the balance of the conflict in its April 1917 declaration of war and played a decisive role in fashioning the postwar peace. Economically, the United States replaced Western Europe as the principal locus of world industry, finance, and trade, following a near-tripling of manufacturing production between 1914 and 1919.<sup>55</sup> In 1913, the combined production of Germany, Britain, France, and Belgium substantially outpaced that of the United States. By the late 1920s, the U.S. surpassed the total output of these countries by nearly a half. From 1914 to 1919, the U.S. transformed from being the world’s greatest debtor to its greatest creditor nation.<sup>56</sup>

What receives less attention in discussions of the global consequences of World War I are developments in the Asia/Pacific region. When Asia does merit mention, analyses tend to highlight

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<sup>52</sup> Treat “Japan, America and the Great War,” p. 7

<sup>53</sup> Hara, “Hara shushō no tsūchō” (Jan. 1920); cited in Kawada Minoru, *Hara Takashi: Tenkanki no kōsō* (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1995), p. 150.

<sup>54</sup> Viscount Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty-Five Years 1892–1916*, 2 vols. (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1925), vol. 1, p. 20.

<sup>55</sup> From \$23 billion to \$60 billion. See Jeffrey A. Frieden, *Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the Twentieth Century* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), p. 132.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

the rise of “nationalism.” According to Xu Guoqi, the Great War spurred powerful movements for self-determination in China, India, Korea, and Vietnam, ultimately leading to political independence in these states.<sup>57</sup> Erez Manela makes a similar argument about China and India during the 1914 to 1919 years.<sup>58</sup>

It should be noted, however, that none of these states achieved full independence until long after the end of the First World War. Despite ubiquitous references to “self-determination” in 1919, imperial territories expanded, rather than contract, following the Great War. Former territories of vanquished empires—Imperial Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire—were bequeathed to victorious states after the war, many in the form of new League of Nations “mandates.” The true global significance of the Asian theater of the Great War, in other words, must lie elsewhere.

## Conclusion

Early action by both New Zealand and Japan at the outset of World War I vividly illustrates the importance of the Asia/Pacific theater in the ultimate defeat of Imperial Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1918. More dramatically, Japan’s extraordinary political, military, and economic contributions during the war raise serious questions about the viability of the Entente in the absence of Japanese support. While some locate in World War I-era Asia the seeds of liberation movements across the globe, those movements do not gain momentum until after 1945. And one can locate similar seeds in World War I-era Africa and the Middle East, not just in Asia.

The most powerful lesson of the history of New Zealand and Japan in the First World War lies, rather, in the glimpse that we get of a new Asia/Pacific-centered world. As in colonial territories India, Korea, and Vietnam, citizens of New Zealand tackled weighty issues of national identity between 1914 and 1919. Although full independence did not arrive until after 1945, a new national consciousness clearly emerged by 1919. New Zealand mobilized in 1914 as a loyal dominion of the British Empire.<sup>59</sup> Fighting with Australia in Gallipoli as part of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) and digging in the trenches of France, Australian and New Zealand troops by 1915 acquired an identity distinct from their British counterparts, as Anzacs and “Diggers.” By 1917, New Zealand diggers had another moniker, this time distinct from even their Australian mates: “kiwis.”<sup>60</sup>

The transition from dominion troops to kiwis in wartime New Zealand is more than a tale of the rise of “nationalism” in Oceania. It is a glimpse of the concrete ways in which the Asia/Pacific region began to exercise a distinct voice in international affairs. Even more dramatic between 1914 and 1918 was the rise of Imperial Japan as an industrial state and world power. World War I did not immediately generate an Asia/Pacific world. But the Allied victory depended in large part on Japanese

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<sup>57</sup> Xu, *Asia and the Great War*.

<sup>58</sup> Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>59</sup> Britain formally conferred dominion status on New Zealand in 1907, granting it the privilege of self-government, like the other three White Dominions, Canada, Australia, and South Africa. Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, p. 124.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

naval power and shipping. And the new American Century, in turn, relied on the willingness of the new world power and now third largest naval power, Japan, to help fashion the infrastructure of a new, peaceful, multi-national order—the Treaty of Versailles, League of Nations Covenant, Five-Power Treaty, Nine-Power Treaty, Four-Power Treaty, Kellogg-Briand Pact, London Naval Treaty, etc.<sup>61</sup>

The American Century grew from sprouts of peace and security in the Pacific during the Great War and came of age through America's own management of Asia/Pacific security in World War II. It is fitting now in the twenty-first century, as the American Century draws to a close, that an important voice from the World War I-era Asia/Pacific has emerged more forcefully than ever before. In light of certain refusal by the Trump administration to ratify the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement, New Zealand Prime Minister John Key forecasted at the Asia Pacific Economic Conference (APEC) in Peru in November 2016 a momentous transfer of leadership from the U.S. to the Asia-Pacific region. Although America should remain a party to TPP, Key declared, the free trade agreement would bring substantial benefits to the eleven other member states—with or without Washington's participation.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> For more on Japanese participation in the institutional foundations of post-Versailles multilateralism, see Dickinson, *World War I and the Triumph of a New Japan*.

<sup>62</sup> Patrick O'Meara, "NZ still keen for TPP without US, Key tells APEC," *Radio New Zealand*, 22 Nov. 2016, <http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/business/318478/nz-still-keen-for-tpp-without-us,-key-tells-apec> (Accessed 27 Dec., 2016).

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