

Statement from the International Research Institute of Controversial Histories:

We welcome Prime Minister Abe's speech at the start of the 200th session of the Diet referring to the one hundredth anniversary of Japan's proposal to the League of Nations concerning the elimination of racial discrimination

October 24, 2019

The International Research Institute of Controversial Histories (iRICH)

This year, 2019, marks the one hundredth anniversary of Japan's bold proposal to eliminate racial discrimination amid very strong oppositions during the drafting of the League of Nations Covenant at the Paris Peace Conference. We, the International Research Institute of Controversial Histories (iRICH), have enthusiastically participated in various activities to honor Japan's efforts for the realization of a world without racial discrimination, starting in 2018 and working up to the 100th anniversary in 2019. Simultaneously, we have requested the Japanese Government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to inform the world of Japan's lofty endeavor to eliminate racism worldwide and at the same time, to inform the Japanese people of this feat and enhance national pride.

This time, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo referred to the one hundredth anniversary of Japan's proposal of the elimination of racial discrimination during his speech, in detail, at the 200th session of the Diet, held on October 4, 2019. The iRICH heartily acknowledges the Prime Minister's reference to Japan's proposal. Prime Minister Abe stated in his speech, "After a disastrous War [World War I] that claimed ten million lives, in considering how to create a new world, Japan proposed racial equality [in 1919], as an ideal for a new era and a forward looking principle." The Prime Minister concluded his speech, stating, "The great ideal Japan held at that time is now a fundamental principle of the international community, as shown in the form, over the centuries, of the International Covenants on Human Rights and measures. We, the living, looking towards the future, should follow this ideal as a nation, in this new Reiwa era."

Since 1919, as a world leader, Japan continuously proposed to eliminate racial discrimination and worked hard to realize this. Today, this lofty idea is upheld in the United Nations and by others international organizations. Prime Minister Abe's speech can be seen as appreciation of Japan's enormous efforts in this area over the past 100 years. We, of the new Reiwa era, are obliged to lead the world in this ideal. Today, totalitarian states such as China and Russia are growing in strength. On the other hand, the United States, today's world leader, seems to lack firm convictions. Under these circumstances, Japan, together with Western European countries, based on the principle of liberal democracy, should lead the international community towards a better world. We believe this is Japan's

global role for the 21st century.

After World War II, European and American colonialism ended and more than one hundred countries realized independence and self-determination. These were also the great fruits of Japan's continuous efforts to realize the end of racism, which encouraged the oppressed to free themselves from colonialism. However, after World War II, as a result of General Headquarters' policy of complete brainwashing, many Japanese are still obsessed with a self-debasing view of history. Worldwide, many people still hold a historical view based on the Tokyo Trials (the Victorious Countries' view of history). It may not be easy for people holding such a view to realize Japan's great contributions in the field of human rights and ethics. Viewing history objectively and rationally, it is clear that Japan's efforts made it possible for a great many countries to achieve independence after World War II. Looking back on all of world history, was there any other country that contributed as much as Japan did in the field of human rights and ethics? The Japanese people today should be proud of what their ancestors' achieved within the international community.

Concerning this matter, the Japanese Foreign Ministry has stated something to this effect. On August 16, 2018, in Geneva, at a session of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) concerning Japan, at the beginning of an opening speech by a representative of the Japanese Government, Japanese Foreign Ministry Deputy Director General of the Foreign Policy Bureau (at the time) Otaka Masato stated, "Ninety-nine years ago, the international community, on the initiative of the Japanese Government, took the first step to tackle the issue of racial discrimination during the Paris Peace Conference." Moreover, on February 26, 2019, at the 40th regular meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Tsuji Kiyoto, the then Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, also referred to the one hundredth anniversary of Japan's proposal to eliminate racial discrimination.

Now, allow me to introduce major activities of the International Research Institute of Controversial Histories regarding this matter. First, during the investigation of Japan at the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Geneva on August 16, 2016, at lunchtime briefings by NGOs, we gave a brief speech about the one hundredth anniversary of Japan's proposal of the elimination of racial discrimination. We also gave a speech on this subject on December 20, 2016, during a large-scale international symposium titled *The One Hundred-Fiftieth Anniversary of the Meiji Restoration*, held for three days at Tel Aviv University and hosted by the Israeli Academy of Japan Study (IAJS). We gave a speech that toppled the Tokyo Trials-based historical view, and as such, it was probably the first time ever that Japanese scholars made such a speech or presentation in such places as the United Nations, which is a club of the victorious countries, and major international

meetings.

In addition, the iRICH held a commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of Japan's proposal to eliminate racial discrimination on February 13, 2019. This was the very date when minister plenipotentiary of the Japanese Government, Makino Nobuaki, proposed to put the elimination of racial discrimination in the preface of the draft of the League of Nations' covenant. Last but not least, this Institute sincerely wishes, with Prime Minister Abe's recent speech in the Diet, that Japan's long and successful effort to achieve worldwide racial equality will be honored both at home and overseas.

[Reference]

The relevant part of Prime Minister Abe's speech in the Diet on October 4, 2019:

5. Conclusion

A hundred years ago, *Afro-American Newspaper* reported Japan's proposal at the Paris Peace Conference: After a disastrous War that claimed as many as ten million lives, how are we to create a new world? As an ideal toward a new era and a new principle looking into future, Japan upheld "racial equality."

At the time, with European and American colonies all over the world, Japan's proposal for racial equality met with strong oppositions from many countries. However, Japan never backed down. Before delegations from countries around the world, Japan's plenipotentiary Nobuaki Makino dauntlessly declared:

"We understand that the world is now under difficult circumstances, but there are no walls we cannot overcome."

The lofty ideal that Japan held at the time has today, after centuries, become a basic principle of the International Covenants on Human Rights and of the entire international community.

We, the living today, should equally hold this ideal for Japan to follow as a nation, in this new era of Reiwa, looking into future.