

**The transnational internationalist community
and the “Manchurian question”: British-American-Japanese
relations within the Institute of Pacific Relations regarding China
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This article examines the role played by the internationalist intellectuals affiliated with the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR) in renewed attempts to reach international conciliation over the “Manchurian question” during 1933-34. The IPR, which was established in 1925 in response to the passage of the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act (known in Japan as the “Japanese Exclusion Act”) was a transnational network of intellectuals from nations enjoying foreign relations with countries of the Asia-Pacific region; and although the organization assumed a non-governmental character, numerous governments, including the United Kingdom, Japan and China approached the IPR, especially after the Manchurian Incident, having been drawn to the aspect that it was under American leadership.

For example, the British dyarchist Lionel Curtis joined the IPR in pursuit of British-American cooperation in dealing with China, and for this purpose attempted to reform the Organization. However, the Royal Institute of International Affairs (the British Council of the IPR) failed in its attempts to move the headquarters of the International Secretariat of IPR into the Shanghai International settlement and to influence the selection of the Secretary General of the International Secretariat, while a faction supporting British-Japanese cooperation led by Archibald Rose took over the leadership of the Royal Institute.

Meanwhile in Japan, it was the Army’s Imperial Way Faction (Kodoha 皇道派) that welcomed Rose’s IPR group in the hope of improving Japan’s relations with Britain and the United States. The Kodoha proceeded to compromise with Rose over Manchuria’s open door policy and contributed to the creation of Japanese-English conciliation led by the British Treasury. On the other hand,

Iwanaga Yukichi, the director of the organization's Japanese Council of IPR, the Japanese Army and Ministry of Foreign Affairs were busy promoting a plan for the IPR's "approval" of Manchukuo. This plan, which aimed at simultaneous approval by Reuters, representing British public opinion, the Associated Press, representing US public opinion, and the IPR, representing the internationalist community, was accepted by the IPR Japanese Council, despite a lukewarm reception among its ranks, and was expected to effect an improvement in relations with Britain and the US for Japan's bureaucracy through assurances from its Foreign Ministry.

The above set of circumstances shows that despite its position as a very important organization within the world of international politics during the war interim period, the IPR also functioned as an important connection for the United States, whose isolationist public opinion was preventing any proactive international involvement, in the foreign affairs of the Asian-Pacific region.