



Canada-China Friendship Society[®]
La Société d'amitié Canada-Chine

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**Remembrances of Canada-China Relations:
from
1788 to the Establishment of Canada-China
Diplomatic Relations on October 13, 1970**

A history featuring audio, visual and cinematic records

A Project of the Ottawa Canada-China
Film Festival on the occasion of the 50th
anniversary of the establishment of
Canada-China Diplomatic Relations
November 19, 2020

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Introduction

October 13, 2020 is the 50th anniversary of the re-establishment of Canada-China diplomatic relations. As a way of recognising the long history of relations between Canada and the People's Republic of China, the Ottawa Canada-China Film Festival set out to identify readily available cinematic material that explored and highlighted relations between Canada and China up to the establishment of diplomatic relations on October 13, 1970. Not long into the project we learned of important connections between Canada and China that not only predated the first public screening of moving pictures in 1895 but also the creation of Canada in 1867. As a result the scope of the project was broadened to include audio, visual, television and cinematic material that bring to life important events in relations between Canada and China over the centuries. By the conclusion of the project it included 13 movies and documentaries, 8 TV news reports and interview, 4 radio reports / programmes, 12 pictures or images of historic events or documents, 3 links to significant banks of documents and images, and 1 music video. Most of this material can be accessed online free of charge.

The project was undertaken because we believe that cinema, television, audio stories, news reports, paintings and photographs have great power to convey not only the facts of a situation but also the emotional content of the day and thereby provide a feeling for the times that is not available from the factual reporting of events. Evidently it has not been possible to provide a detailed or comprehensive overview of Canada – China relations, but the assembled text, audio, visual, TV and cinematic material does shed light on many key events and the pulse of the times throughout the long duration of Canada-China relations. Over the 232 years since the first Chinese settlers arrived on the west coast of what would become known as Vancouver Island there have been many significant advances, ruptures and reconciliations in Canada-China relations, with the biggest shifts happened during times of great social stress in either China or Canada.

As you read this document we invite you to use the links in the text and at the end of each section to explore the rich reservoir of multimedia material, and to immerse yourself in the people and the stories that make up the multitude interactions between the Chinese and Canadians between 1788 and 1970. We encourage you to allow your imagination free reign as you bear witness to key moments and events; triumphal celebrations; revolutionaries; grinding poverty and hard work; racial strife; war time alliances that too quickly turned to war; repeated examples of complex international diplomacy that strained Canada's relations with larger countries; and patient diplomatic negotiations motivated by visions of a better world.

It is our hope that by following this long and often convoluted history of Canada-China relations and by delving into the multimedia resources that expose the context of the times, it will build a knowledge and comprehension that Canada and China share many long-term goals and interests. In the past these shared goals and interests have allowed Canada and China to overcome many obstacles. We dare to hope that as in 1970 today's leaders on both sides will challenge current orthodoxies and find creative solutions that will lead to for a better future for all.

1788: First non-indigenous settlement on the west coast of Canada leads to British Control (1, 2, 3)

The story of relations between Canada and China begins long before Canada existed. It can be argued that this early contact was essential to the creation of Canada as a British colony.

In 1778, Captain James Cook stayed for nearly a month at Nootka Sound on the west coast of what is now known as Vancouver Island. This was Cook's third voyage to the Pacific, becoming the first European known to actually set foot in British Columbia. He discovers that the aboriginal people, the Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka), were familiar with iron (probably because of earlier trade with the Spanish) and trade for various items, including sea otter pelts. The pelts later command a fantastic price in China. (1).

Cook's report on the rich profit to be made in trading in sea otter pelts in China encouraged Captain John Meares to undertake a fur trading mission from China to the west coast of North America.

In the spring of 1788, Captain John Meares recruited 50 Chinese smiths and carpenters from Macao and Guangzhou (Canton), and set sail for Canada. Meares started the expedition with two vessels and false papers intended to get around the monopoly of the East India Company held on British trade in the Pacific. That monopoly required all British traders to be licensed with the company and pay duties. Meares ships sailed under the Portuguese flag from China. (2)

On 13 May 1788, the ships with the Chinese craftsmen aboard arrived at Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island. They helped Meares build a fortress and a 40-tonne schooner, the *North West America*, which was launched in September 1788. This was the first non-indigenous vessel built in the Pacific Northwest. A formal picture captured the launch of the *North West America* complete with celebratory cannon fire and the participation of the Nuu-chah-nulth population. See following image (3). In 1789 Meares brought another 70 Chinese workers (3) to the Nootka settlement.

Using Nootka Sound as a base of operations Meares spent the summer of 1788 trading for furs along the coasts of present-day British Columbia and Washington. Meares later claimed that Maquinna a chief of the Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka) people sold him some land on the shore of Friendly Cove in Nootka Sound, in exchange for some pistols and trade goods, and that on this land a building was erected.

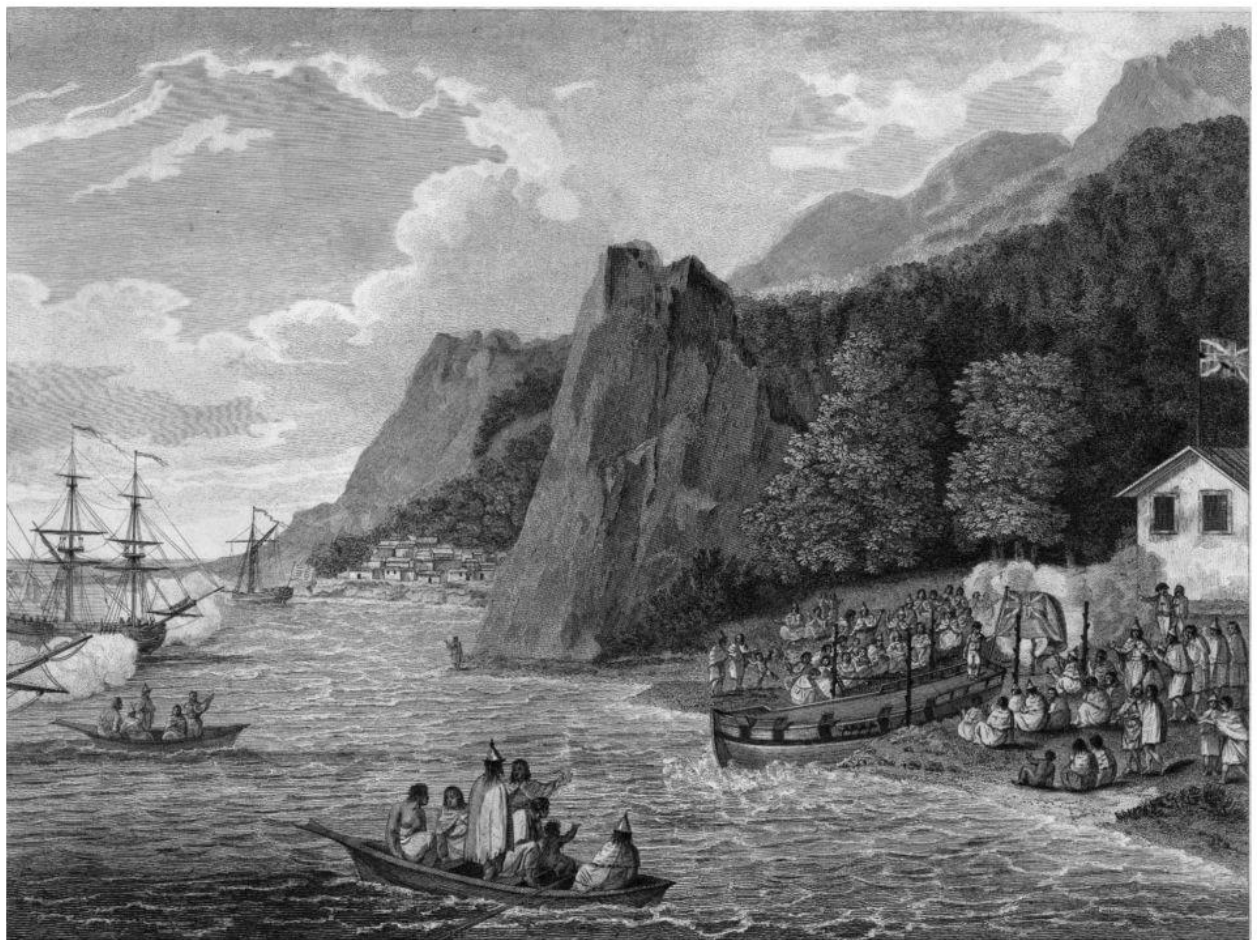
In the summer of 1789, the Spaniards arrived at Nootka Sound and fought with the British. Spain strongly disputed Meares' claims, and the true facts of the matter have never been fully established. Chief Maquinna himself later called Meares a liar and denied selling him any land.

Regardless, Meares' claims of having established a settlement at Nootka Sound became a key factor in the subsequent negotiations between the British and Spanish which resulted in the British eventually securing control of the territory that would become the west coast of Canada.

What happened to the Chinese is a mystery as some were imprisoned by the Spaniards, some escaped and some might have been killed. For 69 years after 1789 there was no written evidence of further Chinese arrivals on the western coast of Canada.

The Chinese craftsmanship and diligence impressed Meares so much that he wrote in his memoirs: "if hereafter trading posts should be established on the American coast, a colony of these men should be a very important acquisition." His remarks were prophetic. The supply of quality inexpensive Chinese labour was indispensable in opening the virgin land of British Columbia.

A Visual Record: The 1788 Launching of the North West America



C. Allen del.

*The Launch of the North West America at Nootka Sound.
Being the first Vessel that was ever built in that part of the Globe.*

R. Pollard fecit.

Printed and Sold by W. Woodcock, at the Sign of the Anchor, in Pall Mall.

1880 – 1885: Canada from Sea to Sea: Chinese Immigrants Build the Canadian Pacific Railway ^(4, 15, 16)

In British Columbia over several years, opinion was deeply divided as to whether to join Canada or the United States. In 1870, "The Great Confederation Debate" in the B.C. Legislature established the terms for joining confederation. The terms included a transcontinental railroad link to the rest of Canada. In Ottawa a few months later, representatives for British Columbia successfully negotiated entry into the Canadian confederation. On July 20, 1871 British Columbia officially became Canada's sixth province.

Work on the railway was to start within two years of joining and be completed within ten years. However, politics, finances, mismanagement and scandal delayed the start of construction. Eventually, contracts were signed and the CPR agreed to complete the railway by 1891. The railroad would be built in two sections. The western section would move east over the Rocky Mountains and join with the central section, beginning in Ontario. The two sections would connect at Craigellachie, B.C.

In 1880, the Canadian government awarded 37-year-old Andrew Onderdonk, an American engineer and construction contractor, contracts to build four sections of the railroad through the Fraser River Canyon. In 1882, he was awarded a fifth contract for the section that ran from Port Moody on the Pacific coast to Yale, B.C. The western section landscape presented major engineering challenges, and bridges, tunnels and retaining walls had to be built. Onderdonk began work on the line north of Yale, B.C. in May 1880. Yale was on the Fraser River, and mountains on either side rose up to 2,438 m (8,000 ft.). The mountains were made of granite, one of the toughest rocks in the world. It took eighteen months of daily, round the clock blasting to bore four major tunnels. More than thirty tunnels were made in the first 27 km (17 mi.) north of Yale, and more than 100 trestles and bridges were built in a 40 km (30 mi.) section.

Onderdonk agreed to a payment that was below his own estimate for the cost to build the railroad. The shortfall was more than \$1.5 M and he had to look for ways to save money.

Onderdonk, like Captain Meares 92 years earlier, decided to hire Chinese workers who were reliable hard working, willing to accept less pay and to also provide for their own living and working needs. This decision was made despite having promised the Canadian government to first employ surplus white labour from British Columbia and the rest of Canada, then French Canadians, followed by First Nations and, lastly, Chinese. His decision to use Chinese labour was highly controversial. The Chinese were not wanted in British Columbia, and labour unions were opposed to the use of Chinese workers who they believed took jobs away by accepting lower wages.

However, in 1882 Prime Minister John A Macdonald defended Onderdonk's decision to use Chinese labour saying "**It is simply a question of alternatives: either you must have this labour or you can't have the railway.**" Since the continental railway was essential to British Columbia's agreement to become part of Canada, Chinese labour was essential to the creation of the Canada we know today.

The nation building role of the Canadian Pacific Railway is well known, however it less well understood that the completion of the railway also connected the rest of Canada to the Pacific Ocean. This connection made Canada into a Pacific nation with a land and sea links connecting all of Canada to Asia and its markets, most importantly Japan and China.

During the 19th century, war and rebellion in China forced many peasants and workers to seek their livelihoods elsewhere. Rural poverty and political upheavals stemming from the First Opium War (1839–1842) and the Hakka led T'ai P'ing Rebellion (1850–1864) caused widespread Chinese emigration. Historically, the majority of migrants came from the Pearl River delta of Guangdong province. In these areas, a tradition existed of seeking opportunities overseas, sending money back to support relatives in China, and eventually returning, if possible.

In the period 1858 to 1860 following the California gold rush many Chinese had arrived in Victoria from San Francisco to take part in the Canadian gold rush. The *Victoria Daily Colonist* reported that an estimated 4,000 Chinese arrived in 1860 alone. The gold rush transformed Victoria from a sleepy town of 300 British inhabitants in 1858 to a robust community with 1,577 Chinese residents and 2,884 white residents by the spring of 1860. Many of these prospectors remained in Canada.

17,000 Chinese came to Canada from 1881 through 1884. Several thousand came from the coastal areas of the United States where they helped build the American transcontinental railroad, but the majority of Chinese railroad workers came directly to Canada from southern China. Recruitment companies in Guangdong province advertised job opportunities in Canada and arranged passage. The companies also handled an individual's employment contract, and offered some protection to workers after arrival in Canada. The cost for the service was 2 1/2% of an individual's wage plus about \$40 for the passage fare, which was to be paid once work began. The men came in groups as large as a thousand. In 1882, ten sailing ships chartered by Andrew Onderdonk brought 6,000 men from China to Canada.

Chinese railroad workers were given the difficult and dangerous jobs. Using simple tools and manual labour, they built roadbeds, bridges and tunnels along a route that spanned deep canyons and rivers and cut through hard granite mountains. The work was backbreaking. They moved an unimaginable amount of rock and gravel in pushcarts, and on shoulder poles. Many died when explosives were used, through tunnel collapses and other accidents. Blasting was often done with cheaper nitroglycerine, rather than the more stable and expensive TNT dynamite, which the white workers used. Chinese worked under extreme conditions, sometimes clinging to the side of a steep mountainside or while suspended in the air by harnesses in the skeleton of a partially built bridge.

One conservative estimate of 600 deaths of Chinese workers is based on Onderdonk's testimony at the 1885 *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration*. Other estimates are in the thousands. Safety measures to protect Chinese workers from injury or death were non-existent. Many men died through accidents at work sites. Blasting, in particular, killed workers who were crushed by collapsing tunnels and rock slides. Illnesses caused by sub-standard living conditions and crippling winter weather also took the lives of men. Scurvy, a disease caused by a vitamin deficiency produced by eating a diet limited to rice and dried salmon, ran unchecked through the camps, killing hundreds.

Despite the dangerous work conditions and the weather, the Chinese men earned the reputation of being excellent workers. Michael Haney, Onderdonk's superintendent, wrote that he could not recall even one incident of dishonesty. J.A. Chapleau, the Premier of Quebec, testified at *The Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration* in 1885 that the Chinese workers were "... trained gangs of rock men as good as I ever saw."

The Photographic, Cinematic and Video Record 1880 to 1885

In the official photos of the ceremonial “last Spike” being driven in to complete the CPR there are no Chinese present. Happily at the following web site there are many photos and excellent documentation of the brave Chinese who built the western sections of the CPR through the mountains.

<https://www.mhso.ca/tiesthatbind/index.php>

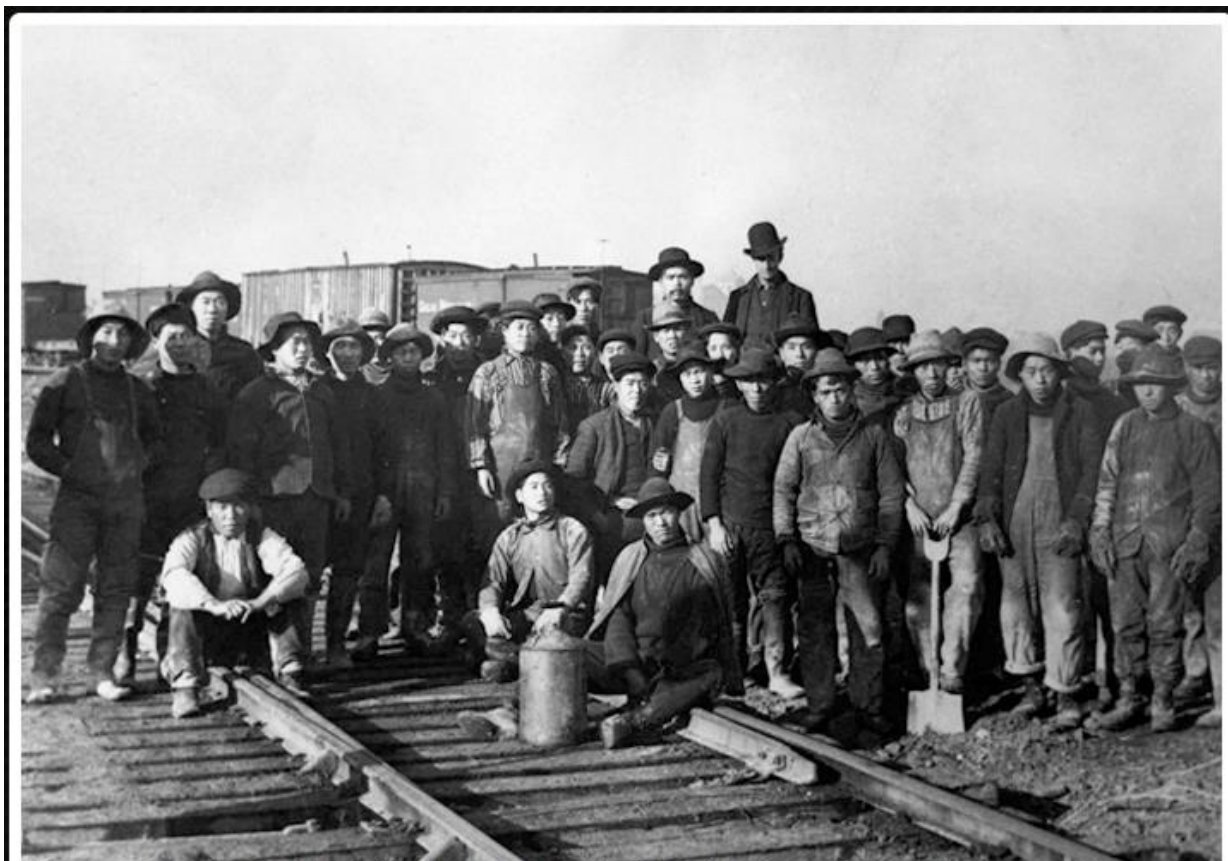
Canadian Pacific Railway: This short documentary based on historic photos tells the political and construction story of building the Canadian Pacific Railway, including the role of Chinese workers.

<https://www.cpac.ca/en/programs/telling-times/episodes/21253229/#>

Nitro. In this Heritage Minute a young Chinese worker volunteers to set a dangerous nitroglycerine charge at a CPR construction site in British Columbia in the 1880s.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EE3ISzalVuo>

For a touching musical tribute to the thousands of Chinese men, who lost their lives building the western section of the C.P.R. connecting British Columbia to the rest of Canada, we recommend *The Unsung Heroes*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=DERmPDKwi3M&feature=youtu.be>



Chinese workers of the Canadian Pacific Railway, 1884. Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

1887 to 1911 Sun Yat-sen and the Historic Ties between Canada and China's Republican Revolution ^(21, 22)

Sun Yat-sen is the father of modern China. His 1911 revolution founded today's Chinese Republic and he had a strong presence in the history of Chinese Canadians.

From 1895-1911 Sun travelled worldwide Chinese communities mobilising political and financial support. He visited Canada in secret in 1897, 1910 and 1911. If caught he would have been arrested.

In Canada he raised \$1,000,000 (2020 dollars), a militia and recruited 3 Edmontonians to his post-WW I entourage.



Edmonton Chinese militia

Sun Yat-sen had 3 revolutionary principles: China should be an independent nation; improved standard of living in China; and, China should be a democratic republic. He also promised to advocate for fairer laws and juster (sic) treatment for Chinese in Canada.

The events Sun and his Canadian supporters to set in motion are still evolving in ways no one could have imagined in 1911.

The above is a very limited summary of an article by Paula Simons published September 13, 2014 in the Edmonton Journal. For a much fuller and colourful description of these events please go to <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/sun-yat-sen-and-canada-the-historic-ties-between-alberta-and-chinas-revolution>.

1885 to 1947: Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Act. ⁽⁴⁾

On November 7, 1885, the last spike was driven into a railway tie near Craigellachie, B.C., linking the western and central sections of the Canadian Pacific Railway. By then, Parliament had already been swayed by anti-Chinese sentiment largely originating in British Columbia. The same year, Parliament heard the report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, in which supporters of importing Chinese labour squared off against its opponents.

Parliament acted quickly on the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Lawmakers in Ottawa went further with the Chinese Immigration Act (1885) that imposed the first head tax of \$50 on all Chinese entering Canada. Amendments to the Act in 1900 and 1903 increased the head tax to \$100, and \$500. The various head taxes paid by Chinese immigrants added about \$24 M to federal and provincial coffers, nearly enough to pay the cost of the western section of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The head tax was a big source of revenue for the Canadian government, which didn't collect income taxes until after World War I because it wanted to provide an incentive for preferred immigrants.

On July 1, 1923, as Canadians celebrated Dominion Day, Chinese and their families were dealt another blow by the federal government. The head tax was replaced by the Chinese Exclusion Act.

The Chinese Exclusion Act, formally called the *Chinese Immigration Act (1923)*, barred all but a few Chinese from entering Canada until it was repealed in 1947, largely due to the actions of Chinese Canadian civil rights activists, including some Canadian-born Chinese war veterans.

The Cinematic Record 1845 to 1947

Karen Cho's touching documentary [In the Shadow of Gold Mountain](https://www.nfb.ca/film/in_the_shadow_of_gold_mountain/) explores the impact of the Head Tax and the Chinese Exclusion Act on Chinese Canadians and their struggle for recognition and equal treatment. It can be watched free at https://www.nfb.ca/film/in_the_shadow_of_gold_mountain/

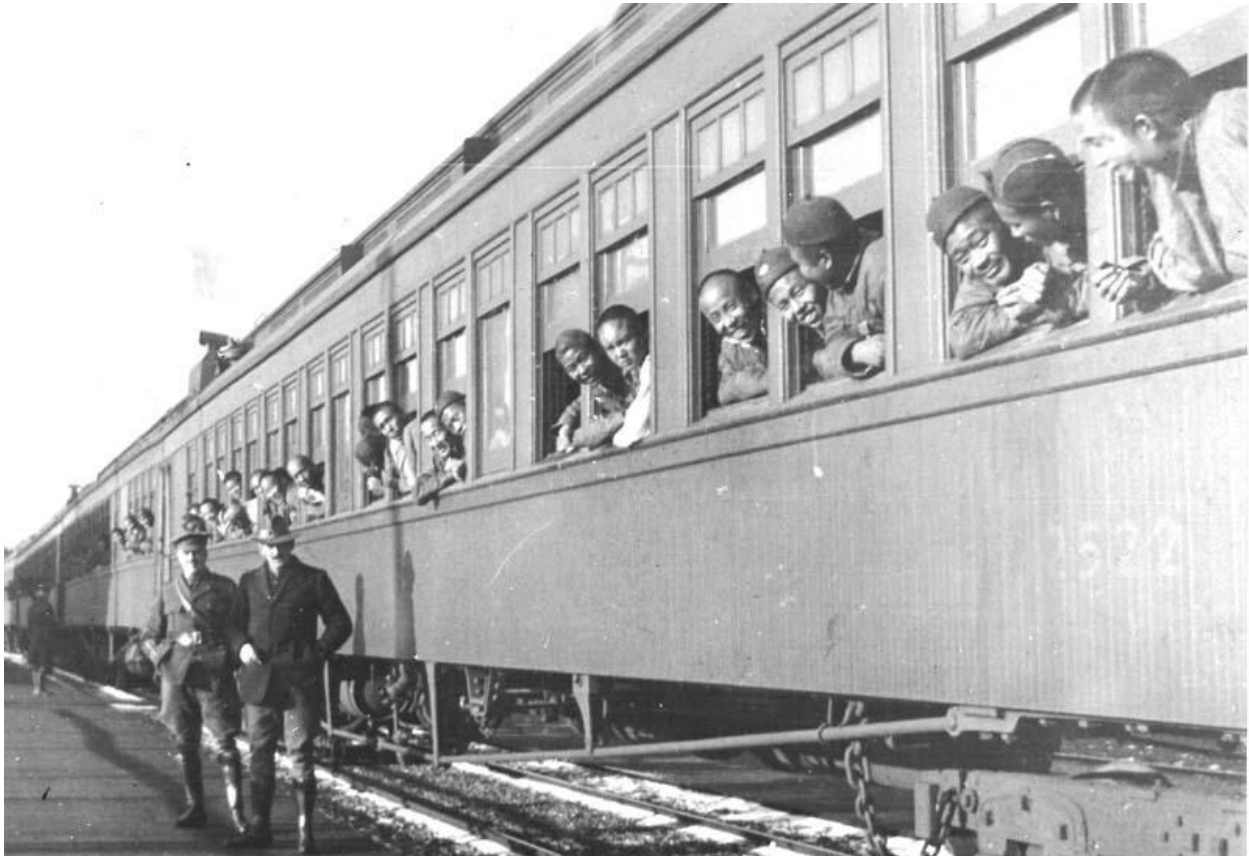
It is worth noting that one of the first initiatives that followed the establishment of Canada-China diplomatic relations in 1970 was a programme of family reunification that facilitate the reunion of Chinese citizens with their Chinese-Canadian families.

1916: Indentured Chinese labourers shipped across Canada to WW 1 battlefields. ^(5, 17)

In 1916 during the First World War, Canada as part of the British Empire was represented by the British in international matters. In 1916 the British, French and Chinese states signed agreements to send almost 140,000 indentured Chinese labourers to the World War I battlefields of Europe. 85,000 members of this newly formed 'Chinese Labour Corps' were secretly transported across Canada in locked CPR trains on the very railway built by their countrymen. This happened at a time with the entry

of Chinese into Canada was restricted by the Chinese Head Tax. The question of this unusual journey still remains: 'What were the Chinese doing in an imperialist war in Europe?'

In the following photo members of the Chinese Labour Corps lean out the windows of a Canadian Pacific Railway car during stop. Outside Military and security personnel look on (David Livingstone Collection).



The Cinematic and Radio Record 1916

- The forgotten Canadian history of the Chinese Labour Corp: A very informative 11:45 minute item on CBC's The Current about the Chinese Labour Battalions in France during World War I. In addition to the interview there are photographs and an extensive description of the events. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-nov-11-2019-1.5355337/the-forgotten-canadian-history-of-the-chinese-labour-corps-1.5355602>
- Thanks to BC filmmaker Jordan Patterson we have a cinematic telling of the story in his docudrama, Tricks on the Dead: The Story of the Chinese Labour Corps in WWI. You can see the trailer and watch the film at this link <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/130341>

Below the Chinese Labour Battalions in France can be seen celebrating Chinese New Year on February 11, 1918. The image is from National Defence/Library and Archives Canada.PA-002418



1937 to 1942: Far Eastern Front of World War II / The War of Resistance Against Japan, Norman Bethune (6, 13, 14)

The War of Resistance Against Japan can have different names in China (The War of Resistance (*kang zhan*), Second Sino-Japanese war). In the west it is thought of as The Far Eastern Theatre of World War II. Regardless of the name it was a brutal and complex war that witnessed among other things the Second United Front, from late 1936 to 1941, a temporary rapprochement between China's Kuomintang / Nationalist Government under Chiang Kai-shek and the Communist force led by Mao Zedong. In the early stages of the war, Japan with its superior military capability made considerable advances. But the Chinese refused to make concessions with both the Nationalist and Communist forces resisting.

Canadian doctor Norman Bethune, an avowed communist, travelled to China and worked with Mao's Eighth Route Army. The following photograph shows Bethune hard at work in the field. Bethune helped bring modern medicine to rural China and often treated sick villagers as much as wounded soldiers. He died of blood poisoning in 1939. Following his death Bethune was memorialised by Mao in a text that

generations of Chinese school children studied, making Bethune a revered national hero in China. For generations he remained largely unknown in Canada and was often denigrated because he became a Communist late in his life.



In 1941 almost 2,000 Canadian troops were stationed in Hong Kong as part of the British Imperial forces to defend it against a possible Japanese invasion and to provide assurance to the Chinese Nationalist government that the British would defend Hong Kong against Japan. For this period of time the goals of the Canadian Government and the Chinese Government were united in defeating Japan. 557 Canadians died in the battle or subsequently in Prisoner of War Camps. The Defense of Hong Kong Memorial Wall honours the Canadians who defended Hong Kong.



For more information on the Memorial and these events see <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/art-monuments/monuments/defence-hong-kong.html> .

The Cinematic Record 1937 to 1942

We have five films and an extended interview from and about this period including three items on Norman Bethune:

- December 1937: **Nanjing** directed by Bill Guttentag and Dan Sturman was released in 2007. It is a powerful, emotional and relevant reminder of the heartbreaking toll war takes on the innocent. Nanking tells the story of the Japanese invasion of Nanking, China, in the early days of World War II. As part of a campaign to conquer all of China, the Japanese subjected Nanking – which was then China’s capital – to months of aerial bombardment, and when the city fell, the Japanese army unleashed murder and rape on a horrifying scale. In the midst of the rampage, a small group of Westerners banded together to establish a Safety Zone where over 200,000 Chinese found refuge. Unarmed, these missionaries, university professors, doctors and businessmen – including a Nazi named John Rabe – bore witness to the events, while risking their own lives to protect civilians from slaughter.

The story is told through deeply moving interviews with Chinese survivors, chilling archival footage and photos of the events, and testimonies of former Japanese soldiers. However, the heart of **Nanjing** is a filmed stage reading of the Westerners’ letters and diaries, featuring Woody Harrelson, Mariel Hemingway and Jurgen Prochnow. Through the interweaving of archival images, testimonies of survivors, and readings of first-hand accounts, the film puts the viewer on the streets of Nanking and brings the forgotten past to startling life.

For more information on **Nanjing** see <http://www.nankingthefilm.com/synopsis.aspx>.

We have not found an online source to watch for this film. If you find an online source please let us know. In our experience this is an excellent film.

Among other things the expatriates at the centre of the reporting of the Nanjing massacres were powerful voices telling the world about these events. Their reporting to the world will have contributed to the world’s recognition of the brutality China survived and the heroism of its defense which in turn contributed to the Republic of China, being honoured as the first signatory to the United Nations Charter on August 24 1945. Since the launching of the UN, China has been one of five members of the United Nations Security Council. From 1945 until 1971, China was represented at the UN by the Republic of China based in Taiwan. A year after Canada’s diplomatic recognition the People’s Republic of China in 1970 the UN General Assembly voted to replace Republic of China with the government of People’s Republic of China.

- December 1939: **In the Name of the Emperor** The brutal occupation of Nanking by Japanese soldiers is captured with documentary footage in the film. The brutality of the Japanese occupation is a continuing source tension between China and Japan that continues to colour their diplomatic relations. NB: Warning this film contains brutal documentary footage. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFGu7K_9cuU&has_verified=1&bpctr=1600914377. In.
- 1939 Canadian Norman Bethune died in China from blood poisoning contracted while caring for civilians and soldiers of the Communist Party of China’s Eighth Route Army which was fighting against Japan. Bethune helped bring modern medicine to rural China and often treated sick

villagers as much as wounded soldiers. His service to the CPC earned him the respect of Mao Zedong, who wrote a eulogy dedicated to Bethune when he died. He earned the continuing gratitude and honor in the People's Republic of China to this day. The remembrance of Bethune was an early point of cohesion around which both Canadian Chinese diplomats could agree.

A National Film Board docudrama titled **Bethune** with Donald Brittan can be seen free at this link <https://www.nfb.ca/film/bethune/> ;

Adrienne Clarkson on Norman Bethune. Surgeon, inventor and political activist Norman Bethune headed the Canadian Medical Unit during the Spanish Civil War, developing the world's first mobile medical unit. He later went to China to help the Red Army fight the Japanese, where he died of blood poisoning in 1939. Born in Hong Kong the same year Norman Bethune died, Adrienne Clarkson's family fell victim to the Japanese invasion and lost their property. Clarkson and her parents came to Canada in 1942. She was appointed Governor General of Canada in 1999. In this 23 minute documentary Clarkson takes us through Bethune's life, accomplishments and formative experiences. Free at <https://www.cpac.ca/en/programs/extraordinary-canadians/episodes/47279974/#>

Norman Bethune. On June 29 2009 Former journalist, Canadian Governor General and most recently, author, Adrienne Clarkson sat down on QTV to talk about her book "**Norman Bethune**" a biography on the extraordinary Canadian. In her book Clarkson provides fresh insights into Bethune's personal life and the factors that shaped his beliefs. This interview can be seen free at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLc1wAK1GJQ>

- December 8 to 25. 1941, The Battle of Hong Kong. As part of the British Imperial forces 1,975 Canadian soldiers and personnel arrived on 16 November 1941 to reinforce the Hong Kong garrison against a possible Japanese invasion. The reinforcements were meant, among other things, to reassure the Nationalist Government of Chiang Kai-shek that the British were committed to defending Hong Kong. On December 8, 1941 Japan launched an attack on Hong Kong, 4 hours after it attacked Pearl Harbour. Outnumbered 4 to 1 the defenders of Hong Kong were defeated in 17 days on December 25 1941. Canadian Force casualties in the battle were 290 were killed or died of wounds, and 493 men wounded. Survivors were interred for 3.5 years and another 267 perished, mainly due to neglect and abuse. In December 2011, Japan's parliamentary vice-minister for foreign affairs apologised for the mistreatment to a group of Canadian veterans of the Battle of Hong Kong. In the National Film Board documentary titled **Savage Christmas: Hong Kong 1941**, several veterans returned to Hong Kong and recall the story of Canadian soldiers who surrendered to Japanese forces and spent the rest of the war as prisoners in horrendous conditions. It can be watched free at https://www.nfb.ca/film/savage_christmas_hong_kong_1941/ .

1942-1951: Canada-China Diplomatic Relations Established & Ended (6, 7, 8, 11, 18, 19, 20)

Formal Canada–China relations date from 1942, when Canada sent an ambassador to China. Before then, Canada had been represented by the British ambassador.

As part of the British Empire and later the Commonwealth of Nations, Canada did not establish a foreign ministry until 1909 and developed an independent foreign policy only after the passage of the Statute of Westminster in 1931. Canada began to establish embassies overseas in the 1940s. In 1942, Canada posted its first ambassador to the Republic of China in the wartime Nationalist capital of Chongqing. The embassy was moved to Nanjing in 1946 with Ambassador the Honourable Thomas Clayton Davis. Ambassador Davis remained in Nanjing after Communist troops took the city on April 23, 1949 and became the Canadian Ambassador to the communist led People’s Republic of China. He was succeeded in July 1949 by Chester Ronning as Chargé D'affaires.

It is important to recognise the major role that Canadian Christian missionaries played during these turbulent times in shaping Canadian’s knowledge and understanding of China. In *Engaging China*, Paul Evans writes that “missionaries were at centre stage between 1888 and 1959.... On a per capita basis there were more Christian missionaries from Canada than from any other country.” The missionaries “larger impact may have been on attitudes at home in Canada through the continuous contact the missionaries maintained with sponsoring congregations by means of letters, newsletters, and visits.” Among numerous influences was the staffing of senior positions in Canada’s External Affairs. Chester Ronning was born in China of missionary parents and posted to China from 1945 to 1951. Subsequently Canada’s first three ambassadors to the People’s Republic of China (1970 to 1980), and several key policy makers in Ottawa, were born in China of missionary parents.”

“The mission mentality that criticized China has its echo in the call from politicians, academics, human rights groups, and journalists that ‘without human rights based on the individual, democracy, and the rule of law, China cannot modernise its society’.” The impact of missionary views and presences was amplified by the fact that until the early 1940s, Canada had no Canadian diplomatic representation in China, so the missionaries represented the only substantial Canadian community in the country.”

Despite these strong missionary views Ambassador Davies, Lester Pearson and Arthur Menzies (who became Canada’s third Ambassador to the PRC) “did not hold rosy views of the Nationalist government and watched the civil war from the sidelines. There was little regret when the Nationalists were defeated. Plans were put in place to set up diplomatic relations in 1949 with the new Communist government shortly after it took power. The realist arguments were that every effort must be made to keep China out of the Soviet orbit and that there was a prospect for working with China’s new rulers.”

At the same time “Canada faced a strategic dilemma following the Communist victory in the Chinese Civil War in 1949. On many issues, Canada followed the lead of British and the United States, but those

two governments followed different policies on China. The United Kingdom, under a socialist government extended diplomatic recognition to the Communist Chinese, but the United States refused to recognize the Communist government. After Louis St. Laurent's Liberal Party won the Canadian federal election of 1949, Canada set out to follow the British approach. The Canadian embassy in Nanjing was kept open, and Canada posted a Chargé D'affaires, Chester Ronning. By June 23, 1950, the Canadian Department of External Affairs had prepared instructions for the Chargé to open negotiations with the Chinese government for an exchange of ambassadors. However, the Korean War began two days later, on June 25, 1950 and disrupted the negotiations.

Korean War 1950 to 1951 ^(18, 19, 20)

Japan's defeat in World War II brought an end to 35 year of Japanese colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula. The Allies divided the peninsula into North and South Korea, with the North occupied by troops from the Soviet Union and the South, below the 38th parallel, occupied by troops from the United States.

Initially the rival factions tried to diplomatically reunite the divided nation. However, on June 25 1950 North Korea tried to do it with military forces when the Korean People's Army moved south across the 38th parallel to capture Seoul within a week. Quickly the northern forces controlled all of South Korea except for a tiny enclave at the end of the peninsula around the strategic port of the port of Pusan.

The United Nations' Security Council authorized military defence of South Korea on June 27, 1950. The UN initiative was led by the United States and supported by 21 countries including Canada. The UN troops led by the United States pushed back the North Korean troops and on October 1 crossed the 38th parallel and entered North Korea for the first time, causing the North Korean government to request military assistance from the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Republic of China.

The military success of the UN troops and the request for assistance from the North Korean leadership led to high level discussions between the Soviet Union and China. In a series of emergency meetings that lasted from 2 to 5 October, Chinese leaders debated whether to send Chinese troops into Korea. There was resistance among many leaders, including senior military leaders, to confronting the US in Korea. Mao strongly supported intervention and Zhou Enlai firmly supported him. The cases for intervention centred on the concern that if US troops conquered Korea and reached the Yalu River they might cross it and invade China. The Politburo agreed to intervene in Korea calling the operation the "War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea".

On October 19, 1950 The Eighth US Army captured Pyongyang the capital of North Korea. The same day 200,000 Chinese troops entered into North Korea. Canadian troops arrived in Pusan on November 25, 1950. By February 1951 the Canadian troops were in direct conflict with the Korean People's Army and the Communist China's Peoples' Volunteer Army. With Canadian and Chinese troops in direct conflict the continuation of Canada-China diplomatic relations became untenable. After Canada voted in favour of a UN resolution that branded China an aggressor, the Chinese government asked Chargé D'affaires Ronning to leave. The Canadian embassy in Nanjing was closed on February 26, 1951.

Canada continued to maintain diplomatic relations with the Republic of China, whose government had evacuated to Taiwan after losing to the Communists. Canada did not send an ambassador to the Nationalist Chinese capital of Taipei. Relations were maintained with Taiwan through the Taipei

Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Ottawa; and an office in Taipei of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. The latter office included staff from External Affairs / Global Affairs people.

The Cinematic and Radio Record 1942 to 1951

For early part of this period China is gripped by a civil war between the Kuomintang (KMT)-led government of the Republic of China (ROC) and the Communist Party of China (CPC) led by Mao. The civil war ended in 1949. By October 1950 the Chinese government had troops in North Korea fighting against United Nations forces that included Canada troops. The tumultuous environment led to many conflicting views on China and rapidly changing views and reporting.

In 1948 CBC radio did a substantial piece on the nearing victory of the Communists in China's civil war and whether they or the Nationalist government would be best for the people of China. A panel of three debated the prospects. Former missionary A.J. Brace who was a strong pro-nationalist believes that the ability and integrity of Nationalist leaders in China compare favourably with those of any leadership anywhere. Charles Gagan, of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association, took the opposite view. He says under the Communists, farmers are no longer beholden to greedy landlords. "In the Communist area, the people were so much happier".

A year later in 1949, CBC news report with Canada's Ambassador to China, T.C. Davis, argues there's no reason why Canada and China can't do business after the communist takeover.

In early 1950 CBC radio reported that Britain had recognised the communist government of the People's Republic of China. Later in 1950 National Film Board produced a documentary on Canadian troops in Korea where they are fighting Chinese troops. Together these four items from 1948 to 1950 show the rapidly changing logical and emotional context for Canada-China diplomatic relations and the radical change in Canadian perspectives on the new Communist government of the People's Republic of China.

Also from this period there is a National Film Board documentary on the life of Chester Ronning, who was a Canadian diplomat to China beginning in 1945. He was appointed as the most senior diplomat to the newly declared People's Republic of China in 1949 at the level of Chargé D'affaires. This film is interesting not solely because it reveals the life and many accomplishments of an outstanding Canadian. It also provides a window into the life of one of many devoted Christians born to missionaries in China. Throughout his many careers, Ronning's lifelong ambition was to explain China to the western world. His story is a rare example of the meeting of East and West in a compassionate, remarkable man.

- 1948 Communists Poised for Victory in China. A civil war is nearing its end in 1948 as Chinese Communists under Mao Zedong and the Nationalist Guomindang party under Chiang Kai-shek struggle for control of the country. Which party would make a better government for the country of 540 million? In this a 6 ½ minute clip from the CBC Radio program Citizens' Forum, three Canadian observers of the situation debate the merits of each side.
<https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/communists-poised-for-victory>
- October 1949. Will Canada recognize Communist China?
<https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/will-canada-recognize-communist-china> The Canadian ambassador, T. C. Davis, says there's no reason why Canada and China can't do business after the communist takeover. 3 minute clip from CBC radio.

- Jan. 6, 1950: World Reacts to Chinese Revolution CBC Radio 2 minute news report. Britain is the first world power to recognize China's new Communist regime under Mao.
<https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/world-reacts-to-chinese-revolution>
- 1950. The National Film Board short documentary, *With the Canadians in Korea*, shows the intensity of this war through a record of the living conditions and military operations of the 25th Canadian Infantry Brigade on the front lines facing Chinese troops. The film reviews the unfolding of the war and presents a soldier's account of front-line conditions.
https://www.nfb.ca/film/with_the_canadians_in_korea/
- 1945-51. The National Film board documentary China Mission: The Chester Ronning Story can be watched free at https://www.nfb.ca/film/china_mission_the_chester_ronning_story/.

1951 to 1962 Diefenbaker and the sale of Canadian Grain to Famine Stricken China (24, 25, 26, 27, 28)

In *Engaging China*, Paul Evans summarized the tensions between the forces for and against diplomatically recognising China as follows, "For the decade and a half after the Korean Armistice was signed in 1953, the overriding diplomatic question was when, not if, Canada would recognise the People's Republic of China (PRC). A shifting series of obstacles arose to postpone that recognition – negative public opinion, views of the United States, Chinese belligerence at key moments, and the deepening American involvement in Vietnam. The important domestic features were the political resistance to opening relations with the PRC and the continuous desire by officials and diplomats to find a way to do so."

Before and after he became Prime Minister in 1956, John Diefenbaker was firmly against recognition repeated arguing that "recognition and Communist China's entry into the United Nations ... was not just a matter of diplomatic convenience but would be a sign of moral approval and should not be considered until China changed its international behavior." Inside the Department of External Affairs there were different views. Internal reviews in 1958 and 1963 "offered a consistent strategic rationale that challenged the wisdom of isolating China and instead recognized what were the facts on the ground. Many inside the Department called for 'peaceful engagement'".

At the same time, from 1958 to 1962 China was suffering through one of the worst famines in world history. It is estimated that between 20 million and 55 million (Wiki Great Chinese Famine) Chinese died of starvation due to a collapse in Chinese agriculture. This collapse is attributed to China's policies including the Great Leap Forward with contributing factors being flooding in 1958 and drought in 1959 and 1960.

Today in similar circumstance a nation suffering a collapse in food production would look to its trading partners for food supplies. However, this was at the height of the Cold War (1945–1991), led by the US against communism especially in the Soviet Union and China. The Western alliance, which included Canada, was very successful in isolating these China and the Soviet Union from normal trade with the West. At the same time there was a serious split between the Soviet Union and China between 1956 and 1966 over their different interpretations and practical applications of Marxism-Leninism. "In the Western world, the Sino-Soviet split transformed the bi-polar cold war into a tri-polar cold war, a

geopolitical event as important as the erection of the Berlin Wall (1961), the defusing of the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962)” For China the split with the Soviet Union meant it could not look to the Soviet Union to import significant amounts of food during the famine.

Jeremy Luedi, the editor of True North Far East has detailed the events of this period in an article, *When Canada came to the aid of a starving China*. Diplomatically isolated, and facing active resistance from the USA and USSR, “China sought assistance from countries like Canada and Australia, which might be willing to put aside Cold War tensions. During this time, China also approached the United States for assistance; however, the Kennedy administration was unwilling to provide its Cold War rival with grain, in a bid to exert pressure on Beijing to withdraw its support for Communist movements in Southeast Asia, notably North Vietnam.

“While Washington managed to dissuade many Western nations from coming to China’s aid, Canada bucked this trend, a fact that soured relations between Ottawa and Washington, and led to a falling out between Prime Minister John Diefenbaker and President Kennedy. Despite American opposition, China managed to sign a deal for 2.35 million tonnes of Canadian grain, aided by Ottawa’s willingness to agree to a twenty-five percent down payment, a lifeline to the cash strapped Chinese.

“Having failed to prevent the deal, the White House sought out other means to hamper Canada’s ability to fulfil its deal with China. Specifically, the United States initially demanded that Canada’s Imperial Oil ask permission from the US to provide fuel to grain ships sailing to China, as Imperial Oil’s parent company - Standard Oil - was American. Canadian officials countered that Washington could not expect to dictate the behaviour of a Canadian subsidiary. From a domestic angle, Washington did not want to be seen as feeding (or helping feed) Communist China, yet Canada warned of the potential anti-American backlash should the US be seen as interfering in Canada’s economy.

“Washington relented on the fuel issue. (However), the White House then directed the Treasury Department to ban the export of vacuators (machinery needed to load grain ships) to Canada in a bid to stall the Chinese deal. The Canadian embassy in Washington also received strongly worded statements in May 1961 from a senior White House official who noted that the wheat deal had ‘a very real political importance [...] and should be re-evaluated.’

“Concerns about American interference only forced the Canadian establishment to dig in its heels, making Ottawa more determined to follow through with the deal. The fact that Canada’s trade with China was almost exclusively in agricultural products played well to the Conservative-leaning Prairie Provinces, with the allure of profitable exports thus boosting support for the Diefenbaker government. Bilateral trade between Canada and China stood at \$13 million in 1960 (\$113 million in 2020 dollars) but skyrocketed to \$129 million (\$1.14 billion in 2020) in 1961 after the first wheat sales to China.

“Dismayed with Diefenbaker’s obstinacy on the issue, President Kennedy went further; with journalist Knowlton Nash recalling that Kennedy told his brother that ‘I don’t want to see that boring son of a bitch [Diefenbaker] again!’

“In securing the wheat deal with China, Canada catapulted itself to become one of the most important sources of grain for the world’s most populous country, supplying forty percent of the PRC’s needs from the mid 1980s to mid 2000s ... Canada also became an important donor of grain to China via the World Food Program: Ottawa donated 520,000 tonnes, worth \$190 million between 1995 and 2005. Indeed, it was only in 2005 that China finally transitioned from being a recipient of food aid. Donations aside (by 2005) Beijing was the single largest customer of the Canadian Wheat Board.

“A second legacy of the deal, less well known but arguably more important, was the decision of the Diefenbaker government in 1962 (five years before the introduction of Canada’s points-based immigration rules) to accept 100 refugee families from famine stricken China. ... “Change is always difficult for any person, organizations, or countries. Now, they’re changing the immigration policy. They’re dipping their toe in the water with the 100 families, seeing if this would work, or whether it would be a bunch of people who end up as criminals, or, who knows, starting their own sleeper cell.”

Canada’s wheat deal had already made the country aware of the plight of the Chinese, and this modest humanitarian commitment was another way for Diefenbaker to chart his own course on the China issue. At a time when Canadian immigration restrictions effectively barred most Chinese from coming to the country, Ottawa made a conscious decision to test the possibility of normalizing Chinese immigration to Canada, for despite the repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act in 1947, immigrants to Canada were still overwhelmingly Caucasian. Not only was this a novel decision due to prevailing attitudes to race, but the fact that refugees were coming from the Communist world also challenged the limits of political tolerance in Canada, given the fears about Communist infiltration in the West.

1963 to October 1970: Re-establishing Canada-China Diplomatic Relations (6, 7, 8)

In 1963 Lester Pearson formed his first minority Liberal Government. Paul Evans reports that the officials in the Department of External Affairs “offered a consistent strategic rationale that challenged the wisdom of isolating China and instead recognising what were the facts on the ground. ... The newly appointed secretary of state for external affairs, Paul Martin, called for a ‘progressive attitude’ and ‘broadening contacts at a variety of levels in an endeavour to penetrate the curtain of ignorance and the blunt the edge of ideological differences’ Martin did not sympathise with Chinese Communism but instead was deeply committed to strengthening the United Nations system through universal participation.” He believed the United Nations could not meet its full potential without the PRC membership. As a result in 1963 he called for ‘a realistic and yet progressive attitude’”

Despite these arguments in favour of recognising China the Prime Minister of the day, Lester Pearson, remained ambivalent. Pearson as a diplomat, foreign minister and Prime Minister “spoke of the ‘cruelties and tyrannies’ of the government in Beijing, but repeatedly used the argument that Communist China was a reality and that its isolation encouraged recurring crises. ... He encouraged various trial balloons ... but after every review he came to the conclusion that the timing was not right. ‘Surely peace with Washington is more important than praise from Peking’. ‘When you have a division of public opinion inside your own country and there is no great impelling urgency, morally, or politically to take action, then your relations with your neighbour, with the United States, becomes important in respect to that issues’”.

While politicians delayed action, public opinion was shifting in favour of recognising the PRC. In 1959 national public opinion polls showed 32% support for recognition and 44% opposed. By 1964 51% supported and 34% opposed. This shift allowed a Liberal Party conference in October 1966 to pass a resolution in support of recognition and UN admission.

As a result the stage was set for Pierre Elliot Trudeau, who was sworn in as leader of the Liberal Party and Prime Minister on April 20 of 1968. On May 29, 1968 Trudeau announce that he would move to

recognise the PRC and see it seated in the United Nations while talking account of the existence of a separate government in Taiwan.” On June 25, 1968 the Canadian federal election was won by Trudeau’s Liberal party.

Trudeau brought a unique set of experiences to that decision. As a private citizen he travelled twice to China in 1949 and 1960. In 1949 China was in the midst of a civil war. In 1960 China was in the middle of the Great Leap Forward a programme of rapid industrialisation that would ultimately fail and when combined with poor weather and crop failures in 1959 and 1960 would lead to mass starvation. During the 1960 trip Trudeau and his delegation met both Chairman Mao and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai. In 1961 Trudeau and Jacques Hébert published a book about their trip to China, *Deux innocents en Chine rouge*. This is a link to a 1968 CBC interview with Jacques Hébert about their travels in China <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/two-innocents-in-red-china>. Despite, or perhaps because of, the difficult times being experienced in China during his travels; Trudeau was able to discern the importance of normalising relations with China.

In 1968 Trudeau as the new head of the Liberal Party of Canada and Prime Minister gave speeches on May 10th, 20th, 25th and 29th that laid out clearly his reasons for recognition of the People’s Republic of China. Evans summarized these speeches thusly: “Trudeau offered a precise and consistent rationale that was almost exclusively geopolitical. (A rationale) that reflected the Department of External Affairs arguments of the past twenty years:”

- ‘China must become a member of the world community because many of the major world issues ‘will not be resolved completely or in any lasting way unless and until an accommodation has been reached with the Chinese nation’;
- ‘I would be in favour of any measures, including recognition on suitable terms, that can intensify the contacts between our two countries and thus normalise our relations and contribute to international order and stability’; and
- ‘Canada has long advocated a positive approach to Mainland China and its inclusion in the world community, We have an economic interest in trade with China ... and a political interest in preventing tension between China and its neighbours, but especially between China and the United States’”.

Evans concludes that Trudeau’s “case for recognition was *realpolitik* and tied to China’s foreign behaviour. There was no hint that the diplomatic opening would change China’s domestic institutions or society.”

The negotiations over diplomatic relations lasted from February 19, 1969 to October 1970 and involved 18 separate negotiating sessions. Based on detailed research by Mei Ping and Chen Wenzhao (8) which are published as part of the record of a series of meetings in 2010 titled *The Past and Future of Canada-China Relations* (see link below for their very readable and informative papers) the world learned a great deal about the goals and deliberations of the Chinese leadership with regard to the negotiations for diplomatic relations with Canada.

The negotiations between Canada and China were taking place in very difficult domestic contexts in both countries. China was at the height of the Cultural Revolution which was creating turmoil across China and stress in the leadership. Below there are 3 links to separate CBC reports on life in China through this period.

At the same time Canada was in the midst of the FLQ armed separatist challenge. From 1963 to 1970 the Quebec nationalist group Front de liberation du Quebec (FLQ) detonated over 950 bombs. The largest single bombing was of the Montreal Stock Exchange on February 13, 1969, which caused extensive damage and injured 27 people. By October 1970, as the negotiations with China were drawing to a conclusion, the situation in Quebec had become a crisis:

- October 5, 1970 The FLQ kidnap British diplomat James Cross;
- October 10, 1970 the day that Canada and China signed the Communiqué agreeing to establish diplomatic relations, the FLQ kidnap the Deputy Premier of Quebec, Pierre Laporte;
- October 12 1970 Federal troops were sent to guard federal property in the Montreal region;
- October 13 1970 the day diplomatic relations were established between Canada and China, Trudeau gave his “Just Watch Me” interview (see link below);
- October 16 1970 at 4:00 a.m. Prime Minister Trudeau made a broadcast announcing the imposition of the War Measures Act allowing for the suspension of habeas corpus, giving wide-reaching powers of arrest to police. Also on October 16 the Government of Quebec requested “military aid to the civil power” leading to Canadian Forces deployed throughout Quebec in a support role to the civil authorities of Quebec;
- October 17, 1970 the FLQ announces that hostage Pierre Laporte has been executed; and
- January 5, 1971: All troops were withdrawn from Quebec.

The links below to cinematic and television material will give the reader a sense of the enormity of the Cultural Revolution in China and the October Crisis in Canada. Despite the turmoil in both countries the negotiations to establish diplomatic relations continued. Little is known about the extent of Prime Minister Trudeau’s direct involvement managing the Canadian side of the negotiations of diplomatic recognition for China. For the Chinese the negotiations “were carefully managed by Zhou Enlai, who was in the midst of complex negotiations of his own with Mao and the four other members of the Politburo”.

(7) The world learned from the papers by Mei Ping and Chen Wenzhao that:

- For the Chinese the central issue in negotiating diplomatic recognition was a matter of principle. They sought international recognition of one China with one government which included acknowledgement that Taiwan was an inalienable part of China;
- The Chinese had followed Trudeau’s 1968 speeches closely;
- They chose to negotiate diplomatic relations with Canada rather than Italy or Belgium, both of which had indicated a willingness to begin negotiations;
- Canada was seen as the preferred option because it was close to the United States, but “somewhat independent” of the US and interested in more than just commercial relations. The latter calculation was based on the view that Trudeau had a view of world order and the Cold War that made him a likely supporter of working with China on issues like UN admission (7); and
- The Chinese leadership hoped that the first renewal of diplomatic relations would establish the conditions for the re-entry of China into the broader international community.

Throughout the negotiations Canada was unwilling to endorse the Chinese position on Taiwan. Their position was that “the Canadian Government does not consider it appropriate either to endorse or to challenge the Chinese Government’s position in the status of Taiwan” and the negotiations eventually produced the “Canadian Formulae” which was acceptable to both sides:

“The Chinese government reaffirms that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People’s Republic of China. The Canadian government takes note of this position of the China government.

The Canadian government recognizes the government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China.”

The full text of Joint Communique of the Governments of Canada and the People's Republic of China concerning the establishment of diplomatic relations on October 13, 1970 was released on October 10, 1970 in Stockholm. It is reproduced below.

The communique is followed on October 13, 1970 with a statement in the House of Commons by the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, the Secretary of State for External Affairs on the establishment of diplomatic relations. The statement reproduces the key paragraphs of the Communique and elaborates on the next steps and Canada's relations with Taiwan. The statement is reproduced below the Communique. Following the announcement in the House of Commons Mitchell Sharp, in a press scrum told Canadians about the diplomatic recognition of China.

With this low key announcement the foreign policy of Canada was changed and a precedent was set for other countries that would lead to major changes in China's role in the world.

Understandably given the news worthiness of the October crisis, it appears that the announcement of the establishment of diplomatic relations with China did not receive in-depth treatment by Canadian news media.

20-1-2-china

Joint Communiqué of the Government of Canada and the Government of the People's Republic of China concerning the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Canada and China

The Government of Canada and the Government of the People's Republic of China, in accordance with the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in each other's internal affairs and equality and mutual benefit, have decided upon mutual recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations, effective October 13, 1970.

The Chinese Government reaffirms that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic of China. The Canadian Government takes note of this position of the Chinese Government.

The Canadian Government recognizes the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal Government of China.

The Canadian Government and the Chinese Government have agreed to exchange ambassadors within six months, and to provide all necessary assistance for the establishment and the performance of the functions of diplomatic missions in their respective capitals on the basis of equality and mutual benefit and in accordance with international practice.

Stockholm the tenth day of October 1970

B. Margaret Meagher

B. Margaret Meagher
Representative of the
Government of Canada

王 特

Wang Tung
Representative of the
Government of the
People's Republic of China

Joint Canada-China communiqué (in English and in Chinese) on the establishment of diplomatic relations, signed by ambassadors Margaret Meagher (Canada) and Wang Tung (China), October 1970.

Credit: LAC/BAC, RG 25, vol. 10840. 20-1-2 PRC, pt. 10

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STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

70/19

ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

A Statement in the House of Commons by the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, on October 13, 1970.

I am pleased to announce the successful conclusion of our discussions in Stockholm with representatives of the People's Republic of China, reflected in today's joint communiqué which records our agreement on mutual recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations. The joint communiqué of the Government of Canada and the Government of the People's Republic of China concerning the establishment of diplomatic relations between Canada and China is as follows:

- "1. The Government of Canada and the Government of the People's Republic of China, in accordance with the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in each other's internal affairs and equality and mutual benefit, have decided upon mutual recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations, effective October 13, 1970.
2. The Chinese Government reaffirms that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic of China. The Canadian Government takes note of this position of the Chinese Government.
3. The Canadian Government recognizes the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China.
4. The Canadian and Chinese Government have agreed to exchange ambassadors within six months, and to provide all necessary assistance for the establishment and the performance of the functions of diplomatic missions in their respective capitals, on the basis of equality and mutual benefit and in accordance with international practice."

Officials from my department and from Industry, Trade and Commerce will be leaving for Peking very shortly to begin administrative preparations for the opening of a Canadian embassy in Peking. We hope to have the embassy in operation within two or three months.

The establishment of diplomatic relations between Canada and China is an important step in the development of relations between our two countries, but it is not the first step, nor is it an end in itself. We have opened a new and important channel of communication, through which I hope we will be

able to expand and develop our relations in every sphere. We have already indicated to the Chinese, in our Stockholm discussions, our interest in setting up cultural and educational exchanges, in expanding trade between our two countries, in reaching an understanding on consular matters, and in settling a small number of problems left over from an earlier period. The Chinese have expressed the view that our relations in other fields such as these can only benefit from the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries. They have also agreed in principle to discuss through normal diplomatic channels, as soon as our respective embassies are operating, some of the specific issues we have raised with them.

As everyone knows, the agreement published today has been under discussion for a long time. I do not think it is any secret that a great deal of this discussion has revolved around the question of Taiwan. From the very beginning of our discussions the Chinese side made clear to us their position that Taiwan was an inalienable part of Chinese territory and that this was a principle to which the Chinese Government attached the utmost importance. Our position, which I have stated publicly and which we made clear to the Chinese from the start of our negotiations, is that the Canadian Government does not consider it appropriate either to endorse or to challenge the Chinese Government's position on the status of Taiwan. This has been our position and it continues to be our position. As the communiqué says, we have taken note of the Chinese Government's statement about Taiwan. We are aware that this is the Chinese view and we realize the importance they attach to it, but we have no comment to make one way or the other.

There is no disagreement between the Canadian Government and the authorities in Taipei on the impossibility of continuing diplomatic relations after the Government of Peking is recognized as the Government of China. Both Peking and Taipei assert that it is not possible to recognize simultaneously more than one government as the Government of China. Accordingly, the authorities on Taiwan and the Canadian Government have each taken steps to terminate formal diplomatic relations as of the time of the announcement of our recognition of the Government of the People's Republic of China.

S/C

The Cinematic Record 1951 to October 1970

- 1960 Two Innocents in Red China. In 1960, China was virtually a closed society. Foreign visitors were rare, but somehow, five French-Canadians were invited to tour the country for 32 days. Among the group were a journalist, Jacques Hébert, and a labour lawyer, Pierre Trudeau. The pair would write a 1961 book, Deux Innocents En Chine Rouge, about their experiences. On the

CBC Radio program Matinee, Hébert describes the paternalistic treatment he and Trudeau received from the Chinese. <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/two-innocents-in-red-china>

- 1966 Mao's Cultural Revolution The Cultural Revolution was officially declared over in April 1969, but many of its practices continued until Mao's death in 1976. These included witch hunts for counter-revolutionaries and actions against peasants who raised pigs and chickens for profit, a "capitalist" practice that, when forbidden, led to starvation for many. In this 1969 program, a CBC crew is taken on a guided tour of China to examine the impact of the Cultural Revolution. <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/maos-cultural-revolution> 40 minutes
- 1966 an 11 minute television interview Charles Taylor, the Globe and Mail's reporter in the Far East and the only North American reporting from there, describes life in the Communist China of the 1960s. In this 1966 clip, Taylor conducts a Q&A session with a group of young adults on the CBC Television program Through the Eyes of Tomorrow. The discussion ranges from the Chinese people to changing western views of communist China, the war in Vietnam, and the possibility of nuclear war. <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/charles-taylor-describes-life-in-1960s-china>
- 1968 Negotiations to restore Canada and China's diplomatic relationship began in 1968, under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Important insights into the Chinese perspectives and leadership of these negotiations were revealed for the first time in a series of meetings on *The Past and Future of Canada-China Relations*, November 10-12 2010 Key papers from those meetings including those of Mei Ping and Chen Wenzhao are produced at this web site. https://sppga.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/04/past_and_future_of_canada-china_relations_2010-11-10.pdf This site also has a replica of the joint communique signed by Canada and China excellent papers.

Oct 10, 1970 Canada and China released a Joint Communique on the Re-establishment of Canada-China Diplomatic relations on October 13 1970. We have not found publically available links to news coverage of the announcement or response.

- October 13 1970 Pierre Trudeau: Just Watch Me <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/just-watch-me-when-pierre-trudeau-confronted-the-october-crisis-1.4676740>

October 1971: The Immediate Effects of Diplomatic Recognition ^(8, 10)

The reaction in the international community to Canada and China establishing diplomatic relations was immediate and positive. Within weeks the Canadian Formulae was being directly copied or approximated as more than 20 countries quickly established diplomatic relations with China. The Chinese viewed the rapid acceptance of the Canadian Formulae as "defeating the U.S led scheme to create 'One China and One Taiwan' and bringing about the third wave of diplomatic initiatives to establish relations with China" ⁽⁸⁾.

Slightly over a year later on October 25 1971, the United Nations General Assembly voted to have the People's Republic of China replaced Taiwan as "the only legitimate representative of China" at the United Nations and filling the seat reserved for China on the Security Council. This was a milestone in the achievement in Canada and China's shared strategic goal to end the isolation of the People's Republic China by rejoining the international community (see CBC debate on China's Recognition).

At a pragmatic level, the two countries quickly put in place the infrastructure and programmes of diplomatic relations. On February 1, 1971 China sent a diplomatic mission to Ottawa to establish an

Embassy. (See CBC reporting below) On the same day in Beijing, Canadian officials were opening their embassy in a two-storey office building that formerly housed the Pakistani Embassy. A Globe and Mail reporter wrote "The Maple Leaf banner is snapping in Peking's chilly wind and the Canadian Embassy is open for business," adding that "the red and white standard stood out brilliantly against the cold blue sky." The event marked the first time in more than 20 years that Communist China had enjoyed diplomatic relations in North America.

Both countries moved quickly to normalise relations through trade and cultural missions. In August 1971 Mitchel Sharp was in China with a high level delegation to improve both cultural ties and trade. Among other things Sharpe announced that "Canadian authorities have just declared Dr. Bethune to be of national historic significance because of his exceptional humanitarian achievements in Spain and China."

October 1973 Prime Minister Trudeau and his wife Margaret made a state visit to China, where he met with China's political leadership including a private meeting with Chairman Mao, and public and private meetings Premier Zhou Enlai (see news reports below).

For an intimate and very personal perspective on the events please see Margaret Trudeau's reflections on the trip along with many photos from her photo album in this video interview presented by Macleans <https://www.macleans.ca/politics/trudeau-china-memories/#gallery/china-memories/slide-1>

Following the normalisation of diplomatic relations, Gary Evans (Adjunct Professor at University of Ottawa), tells us that "when the first film crews from the National Film Board (NFB) accompanied young Canadian sportsmen and women to China, they discovered the obvious: young people the world over have more in common than not. Yet those same NFB filmmakers ignored or were shielded from the political reality of China in the throes of the Cultural Revolution. This might have been because of linguistic ignorance or perhaps they were succumbing to a very Canadian tendency to emphasize the positive over the negative.

The decade of the 1970s found a number of documentaries exploring the nascent industrial revolution beginning to transform China. They did not focus on the stunning differences between the Chinese socialist model and Canada's capitalist methods, although a viewer likely found him or herself making that obvious comparison in at least one film that had narrator Donald Sutherland describing the Chinese work ethic."⁽¹⁰⁾

The News and Cinematic Record

- February 1, 1971 Two minute audio portion of a television news report on the Chinese delegation coming to Ottawa to establish an Embassy on Monday Feb. 1, 1971 <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/1971-canada-and-communist-china-open-diplomatic-relations>.
- October 1971 In a 2 minutes discussion on CBC's Sunday Morning radio programme panelists debated: how will China's seat at the UN change the global political spectrum? <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/debating-china-and-the-un>.
- 1972 Impressions of China. This 21 minute documentary follows a group of students from Hamilton, Ontario, on a rare three-week "tour" of China in 1972. These teenagers were the first North American students to visit China since 1949, when Mao Zedong's Communists overthrew the Nationalist Government of Chiang Kai-shek. This can be viewed free at https://www.nfb.ca/film/impressions_of_china/.

- July 1973 Ping Pong. The NFB filmed the table tennis competitions between teams of young Canadians and Chinese that took place in the People's Republic of China in the summer of 1973, the first time in twenty-five years that such filming was made possible. Shown are highlights of play at the China-Canada Friendship Meet, as well as some of the sightseeing taken in by the young Canadians--a visit, for example, to the Great Wall of China. This film can be viewed free at https://www.nfb.ca/film/ping-pong_en/.
- October 1973 CBC TV new report with Ron Collister reporting on Trudeau's trip to China and meeting with Mao <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/trudeau-goes-to-china>.
- October 1973 Margaret Trudeau's Memories of The Trudeau's Trip to China, a video interview and photo collection presented by Macleans <https://www.macleans.ca/politics/trudeau-china-memories/#gallery/china-memories/slide-1>
- 1974 Thunder Birds in China. In this 57 minutes documentary, the members of the University of British Columbia's Thunderbirds hockey team travel to China to demonstrate their skills to the new teams in the East. While hockey there still has a long way to go, this film leaves no doubt that the Chinese players are up to the challenge. A film propelled by discoveries, it goes a long way to providing insight into the differences between East and West. The film can be viewed free at https://www.nfb.ca/film/thunderbirds_in_china/.

October 2020: Looking Back and to the Future

Over the 232 years that have passed since the Chinese settled on the west coast of Vancouver Island, there has been a dramatic ebb and flow of positive and challenging times between Canada and China. This flow has embraced trading relations; the construction of the most dangerous sections of a railroad deemed essential to the creation of Canada from coast to coast; funding of the Chinese republican revolution; and, harsh and sustained discrimination against Chinese immigration and Canadians of Chinese origin. It has seen Canadian troops fighting along with Chinese Troops to defend against a Japanese invasion of Hong Kong and China; followed 11 years later with Chinese and Canadian troops facing off against each other in North Korea. Diplomatic relations originally established on 1942 and terminated in 1951 began to thaw with prairie grain sales and were finally re-established in 1970.

In seeking diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China in 1970 Canada found itself having to manoeuvre around an intransigent United States determined to keep the communist regime in China in isolation.

Once consummated the diplomatic recognition with China marked the beginning of period of great optimism for the integration of China into the global community and for the future of Canada-China relations. Over the next forty years the shared Canadian and Chinese strategic vision of China emerging from its long isolation came to fruition with undeniable benefits to Canada, China and the world.

We hope that our tour of Canada-China relations and together with the audio, visual and cinematic links have brought these many amazing stories alive, and shed light on the emotions, fears and hopes of the times that often dictate our collective behaviour.

For much of the past fifty years few would contest Pierre Trudeau's vision that:

- "China must become a member of the world community because many of the major world issues will not be resolved completely or in any lasting way unless and until an accommodation has been reached with the Chinese nation;

- It is important to “intensify the contacts between our two countries and thus normalise our relations and contribute to international order and stability; and that
- Canada has “an economic interest in trade with China ... and a political interest in preventing tension between China and its neighbours, but especially between China and the United States”.

In June 2009, Yang Jiechi, China’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, elaborated his vision of the commonality of Canada and China’s strategic interests and where Canada and China could work together to solved the world’s biggest challenges. “China and Canada are respectively the largest developing country and largest developed countries in terms of territory. There is no conflict of fundamental interests between us. Rather we share broad common interests and a good foundation for cooperation. Under the current circumstances, there is more reason for our two countries to enhance cooperation and work together to promote early recovery of the world economy and effectively meet all global challenges...China and Canada should...enrich the strategic content of bilateral relations in the fields of counter-terrorism, justice, law enforcement, science, education, culture and health, and on global issues and regional hotspots such as UN affairs and climate change.

Sadly after close to 50 years of building positive and constructive relations with China, Canada finds itself once again caught in a power struggle between the USA and China, this time seemingly with little room to manoeuvre.

As the world marks the 50th anniversary of Canada and China establishing diplomatic relations and opening the door to China’s rejoining the international community we dare to hope that Prime Minister Trudeau’s words below spoken on October 11, 1973 in a Peking toast to Premiere Zhou Enlai are as applicable to Canada and China’s challenges in October of 2020 as they were in October of 1973.

“The journey which has bought me to Peking has been a very long one. Long when measured in miles. Long when measured in time....

Long journeys are not unknown to the peoples of either of our countries, Mr. Premier. Chairman Mao wrote of one traveller ‘Who made light of a distance of thousands of miles.’ The histories of both Canada and China recount any number of such undertakings. Some have been hazardous and arduous; some have been imaginative and inspired. Some of these journeys have crossed vast tracts of territory and required immense physical effort. Others have crossed the even more difficult terrain of ideas and attitudes, and demanded stamina of a different sort.

The peoples of Canada and China have much to learn from one another and to share with one another. They each want peace and security, social justice, and a life of dignity and well-being. One Canadian, more than any other, dedicated himself to the assistance of the Chinese people in their quest to meet these goals. I dare to believe that the bond he (Norman Bethune) created between our countries remains strong and resilient; that it will be nurtured and enhanced with good will and hard work, creating an entente capable of weathering any storm.” (12)

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Audio Visual, Television, and Cinematic Material

Canadian Pacific Railway: This short documentary tells the political and construction story of building the Canadian Pacific Railway, including the role of Chinese workers.

<https://www.cpac.ca/en/programs/telling-times/episodes/21253229/#>

Nitro. In this Heritage Minute a young Chinese worker volunteers to set a dangerous nitroglycerine charge at a CPR construction site in British Columbia in the 1880s.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EE3ISzalVuo>

The Unsung Heroes, A touching musical tribute to the thousands of Chinese men, who lost their lives building the western section of the C.P.R. connecting British Columbia to the rest of Canada.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=DERmPDKwi3M&feature=youtu.be>

In The Shadow of Gold Mountain Karen Cho's touching documentary explores the impact of the Head Tax and the Chinese Exclusion Act on Chinese Canadians and their struggle for recognition and equal treatment. Free at https://www.nfb.ca/film/in_the_shadow_of_gold_mountain/

The forgotten Canadian history of the Chinese Labour Corp: A very informative 11:45 minute item on CBC's The Current about the Chinese Labour Battalions in France during World War I. In addition to the interview there are photographs and an extensive description of the events.

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-nov-11-2019-1.5355337/the-forgotten-canadian-history-of-the-chinese-labour-corps-1.5355602>

Tricks on the Dead: The Story of the Chinese Labour Corps BC filmmaker Jordan Patterson's docudrama of the story Chinese Labour Corp in WW I. The trailer and film are at this link

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/130341>

In the Name of the Emperor The brutal occupation of Nanking by Japanese soldiers during the Second Sino-Japanese War (aka World War II) is captured with documentary footage in the film. NB: Warning this film contains brutal documentary footage.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFGu7K_9cuU&has_verified=1&bpctr=1600914377

Bethune with Donald Brittan is a National Film Board docudrama. Free at

<https://www.nfb.ca/film/bethune/>

Adrienne Clarkson on Norman Bethune. Surgeon, inventor and political activist Norman Bethune headed the Canadian Medical Unit during the Spanish Civil War, developing the world's first mobile medical unit. He later went to China to help the Red Army fight the Japanese, where he died of blood poisoning in 1939. Born in Hong Kong the same year Norman Bethune died, Adrienne Clarkson's family fell victim to the Japanese invasion and lost their property. Clarkson and her parents came to Canada in 1942. She was appointed Governor General of Canada in 1999. In this 23 minute documentary Clarkson takes us through Bethune's life, accomplishments and formative experiences. Free at

<https://www.cpac.ca/en/programs/extraordinary-canadians/episodes/47279974/#>

Norman Bethune. On June 29 2009 Former journalist, Canadian Governor General and most recently, author, Adrienne Clarkson sat down on QTV to talk about her book "Norman Bethune" a biography on the extraordinary Canadian. In her book Clarkson provides fresh insights into Bethune's personal life and the factors that shaped his beliefs. Free at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLc1wAK1GJQ>

Savage Christmas: Hong Kong 1941 is a National Film Board documentary. Several veterans return to Hong Kong and recall the story of Canadian soldiers who surrendered to Japanese forces and spent the rest of the war as prisoners in horrendous conditions. Free at https://www.nfb.ca/film/savage_christmas_hong_kong_1941/

Communists Poised for Victory in China. A civil war is nearing its end in 1948 as Chinese Communists under Mao Zedong and the Nationalist Kuomintang party under Chiang Kai-shek struggle for control of the country. Which party would make a better government for the country of 540 million? In this a 6 ½ minute clip from the CBC Radio program Citizens' Forum, three Canadian observers of the situation debate the merits of each side. <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/communists-poised-for-victory>

Will Canada recognize Communist China? October 1949. Canadian ambassador, T. C. Davis, says there's no reason why Canada and China can't do business after the communist takeover. 3 minute clip from CBC radio <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/will-canada-recognize-communist-china>

World Reacts to Chinese Revolution Jan. 6, 1950: CBC Radio 2 minute news report. Britain is the first world power to recognize China's new Communist regime under Mao. <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/world-reacts-to-chinese-revolution>

With the Canadians in Korea 1950 This National Film Board short documentary shows the intensity of this war through a record of the living conditions and military operations of the 25th Canadian Infantry Brigade on the front lines against Chinese troops. The film reviews the unfolding of the war and presents a soldier's account of front-line conditions. https://www.nfb.ca/film/with_the_canadians_in_korea/

China Mission: The Chester Ronning Story 1945-51. This National Film board documentary tells the life of Chester Ronning. Ronning was a Canadian diplomat to China from 1945 to the termination of diplomatic relations in 1951. This film reveals the life and many accomplishments of an outstanding Canadian and provides a window into the life of one of many devoted Christians born to missionaries in China. Throughout his many careers, Ronning's lifelong ambition was to explain China to the western world. Free at https://www.nfb.ca/film/china_mission_the_chester_ronning_story/,

Two Innocents in Red China. In 1960, China was virtually a closed society. Foreign visitors were rare, but somehow, five French-Canadians including Jacques Hébert and Pierre Trudeau, were invited to tour the country for 32 days. The pair would write a 1961 book, Deux Innocents En Chine Rouge, about their experiences. On the CBC Radio program Matinee, Hébert describes the paternalistic treatment he and Trudeau received from the Chinese. <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/two-innocents-in-red-china>

Mao's Cultural Revolution 1966 The Cultural Revolution was officially declared over in April 1969, but many of its practices continued until Mao's death in 1976. These included witch hunts for counter-revolutionaries and actions against peasants who raised pigs and chickens for profit, a "capitalist" practice that, when forbidden, led to starvation for many. In this 40 minutes 1969 program, a CBC crew is taken on a guided tour of China to examine the impact of the Cultural Revolution
- <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/maos-cultural-revolution>

Charles Taylor describes Life in 1960s China 1966. This is an 11 minute CBC television interview with Charles Taylor, the Globe and Mail's reporter in the Far East and the only North American reporting from there. He describes life in the Communist China of the 1960s. Taylor conducts a Q&A session with a group of young adults. The discussion ranges from the Chinese people to changing western views of communist China, the war in Vietnam, and the possibility of nuclear war.

Oct 10, 1970 Canada and China released a Joint Communique on the Re-establishment of Canada-China Diplomatic relations on October 13 1970. Unsurprisingly given the October crisis in Quebec, there was limited Canadian TV news coverage of the announcement. We have not found publically available links to news coverage of the announcement or response.

Just Watch Me interview with Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau October 13 1970
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Debating China in the United Nations October 1971 in a 2 minutes discussion on CBC's Sunday Morning radio programme panelists debated: how will China's seat at the UN change the global political spectrum? <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/debating-china-and-the-un>

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Ping Pong July 1973 The National Film Board filmed the table tennis competitions between teams of young Canadians and Chinese that took place in the People's Republic of China in the summer of 1973, the first time in twenty-five years that such filming was made possible. It includes highlights of play at the China-Canada Friendship Meet, and some of the sightseeing taken in by the young Canadians. Free at https://www.nfb.ca/film/ping-pong_en/

Trudeau Goes to China October 1973 CBC TV new report with Ron Collister reporting on Trudeau's trip to China and meeting with Mao <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/trudeau-goes-to-china>

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada%E2%80%93China_relations

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Canadian Steel Chinese Grit: A 48 minute documentary on the construction of the western section of the Canadian National Railway on Chinese workers <http://www.sfu.ca/davidlamcentre/research/past-projects/chinese-canadian-history-public-education-project/canadian-steel-chinese-grit.html>

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Unsung Heroes: A musical video tribute to the thousands of Chinese men who lost their lives building the Canadian Pacific Railroad. It's also about how Chinese people were so poorly treated in Canada's early years, and yet they overcame hostilities and hardships to create communities that contribute richly to our lives <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=DERmPDKwi3M&feature=youtu.be>

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