The spark for this book came from a group of graduate students led by Pasi Ahonen and Mrinalini Greedharry, from the departments of History and English respectively, who formed the "History of Racialization" reading group (HORG) at the University of Victoria, in Victoria, Canada. The group drew in scholars and students from History in Art, Women's Studies, Political Science, and Sociology, as well as from their own departments.

HORG's objectives were to learn more about the history of race and racialization and to connect their learning to practice in order to do something about racism. The group made connections with local anti-racism organizations and activists, and together they dreamed up a conference to bring scholars, activists, film makers, and other artists into conversation with each other.

Three hundred registrants from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Great Britain, Israel, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, and the United States assembled in Victoria in October 1998 for the conference, "Making History: Constructing 'Race'." They learned about racism/anti-racism from the perspectives of activists, artists, scholars, and victims from different countries, ethnicities, and races. Community-oriented anti-racism workshops were juxtaposed with academic papers and artistic representations of race in our society.

It was the organizers' dream that something of that learning be captured and passed on to others. This collection is a partial fulfillment of that dream. It is part of an ongoing conversation that develops some of the seminal thoughts presented at that remarkable event. It starts with the discussion that kicked off the conference and includes five of the key presentations. The events preceding 1998 – the collapse of Apartheid in South Africa, the first Gulf War, and the end of the Cold War, to name only three – created a fertile backdrop to the conference
discussions. Since then, dramatic events have shaken the world again. Most dramatic were the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and their fallout: the Afghan War, the Iraq War, and anti-Islamic agitation around the Western world.

The authors have all updated their thoughts in light of these changes in the world and the current debates. Among these foundational pieces are a series of newly commissioned papers that round out a collection that is current, provocative, and practical. We present these essays in the spirit of listening, learning, and working towards the eradication of racism.

Jo-Anne Lee
John Lutz