

Pro-Nazi Newspapers in Showa Wartime Japan, the Increase in Anti-Semitism and Those Who Opposed this Trend

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Abstract

A major turning point for Japan during the wartime Showa era was the Japan-Germany-Italy Anti-Comintern Pact in 1937, which led Japan to join the Axis alliance through the Tripartite Pact signed with Italy and Germany in 1940. Until the mid 1930s, Japanese newspapers were severely critical toward Hitler. Then in 1935, the *Asahi Shimbun* became the first to switch to a reporting line that expressed approval of Hitler to the point of glorifying his politics. The *Asahi Shimbun* was soon followed by other newspapers, which were unanimous in welcoming the Tripartite Pact as the beginning of “a new era in the world’s history that is bound to contribute to humanity’s wellbeing” and in sympathizing with Germany in its oppression of Jews. On the other hand, there were liberal activists who were opposed to the anti-Jewish trend and remained critical of Hitler. One of them, Kiyoshi KIYOSAWA, accused Nazism of being an atrociously dogmatic and intolerant religious movement, Hitler’s one-man theater, which would not withstand the test of logical analysis. Other prominent examples of those opposed to Japan’s pro-Nazi trend include Kiichiro HIGUCHI, Lieutenant General of the Imperial Japanese Army, who assisted Jewish refugees in their entry into Manchukuo, and Chiune SUGIHARA, the diplomat who issued Jewish refugees with transit visas against the orders of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The newspaper coverage of the Jews who arrived at Tsuruga with Sugihara visas did not accurately reflect the actual treatment of the refugees by the local residents.

Keywords

Wartime Showa, newspapers, pro-Nazi trend, anti-Semitism, liberalists

Introduction

Historically speaking, Japan has never experienced the so-called “Jewish Question” in the same sense as the West, where Jews have existed as a minority group with significant interactions with local populations in both public and private spheres. In 1933 and onward, as the persecution of Jews by Nazi Germany intensified and the number of Jewish refugees increased, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan began receiving from its overseas diplomatic establishments in Europe, China, and Manchukuo information and advice regarding the Jewish Question, including suggestions for somewhat anti-Jewish measures. Yet, it appears that even in 1935 Japan was unaware of the imminence of the Jewish Question.¹

Japan’s ignorance can be surmised from the orders issued by the Foreign Minister (“On German Refugees”) on March 12, 1935, and addressed to the heads of the overseas Japanese diplomatic establishments, in response to the recommendations made by the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany, mainly regarding the granting of status and travel documents to Jewish refugees:

Keeping in mind not only that there are few German refugees staying in our country but also that this is an issue of a political nature, [the authorities] are contemplating as to what attitude and response our country should adopt with regards to those recommendations. On the other hand, considering that it is possible that German refugees who have this type of status and travel documents issued by different countries will arrive in our country in the future, it is necessary that a policy be determined for the ministries and agencies concerned for handling [such refugees], admitting presently that this is a practical problem.

As a result of deliberations by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs, and Colonial Affairs, the Japanese government fundamentally decided, following the previous cases of Russian and Armenian refugees, that from May 1 of that year to treat “refugees of German nationality as ordinary German nationals as dictated under the domestic law of our country, as unanimously agreed.”²

Soon afterward, the so-called Otpor Incident occurred. In March 1938, Jewish refugees began arriving in Otpor near the Soviet Union-Manchukuo border. The diplomatic mission of Manchukuo refused their entry, but Kiichiro HIGUCHI, the commander of the Harbin Special Branch, played an active role in enabling them to cross

the border into Manchukuo. The situation and consequences of this incident are discussed in Section II. In December 1938, the five principal ministers of the Japanese government (Prime Minister, Ministers of Finance, Foreign Affairs, War, and the Navy) convened and adopted “Essential Points of the Measures Concerning the Jews”.³

Since firmly maintaining friendly relations with both Germany and Italy is the diplomatic axis for the Empire at the present time, we must avoid, as a rule, actively welcoming Jews, who are rejected by our allies, into the Empire. However, adopting the attitude of being willing to reject them in the same extreme manner as does Germany not only disagrees with the spirit of racial equality that the Empire has been asserting for many years but also runs the risk of inviting disadvantageous consequences that must be avoided in view of our need of foreign currencies for the pursuit of warfare and especially for economic reinforcement in the state of emergency that the Empire is currently facing and for preventing deterioration of our relations with the United States. In view of the above, the Jews shall be treated according to the following principles.

The first of three somewhat calculating principles states that “the Jews who reside in Japan, Manchukuo, and China at present shall be treated as fairly as other nationals, and any measures that specifically reject Jews may not be taken.”⁴ At that time in history, when Hitler’s ascent and the resultant persecution of Jews and the emergence of Jewish refugees had become a global issue, Japan still remained noncommittal in this manner.

What then of Japanese journalism? Until that time, the Jewish Question had not been actively covered by Japanese newspapers. It began to appear more regularly in Japanese newspapers as supplementary to the coverage of trends surrounding the Nazi Party administration.

I

On January 31, 1933, the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun* (forerunner of the *Asahi Shimbun* Western Japan edition) reported the formation of the Hitler Cabinet the day before and referred to the Jewish Question in an interpretative article simply stating as follows:

The annihilation of Jews is a representative slogan of the National Socialist

Party. In July 1932, it introduced to the Prussian Parliament a bill for the confiscation of Jewish-owned land. It is inevitable that Mr. Hitler's seizure of power will cause extreme fear to Jews.

On the following day (February 1), "*Tensei Jingo* (Vox Populi, Voc Dei)," the front-page column of the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun*, stating that all political parties that come into power attempt to pay for their tentative declarations made while outside power without funds, made light of the oppression of the Jews: "Can their wisdom and power of money be so easily eliminated? No, it cannot be done." However, after the German general election on March 5, the newspaper had to report on the unconcealed persecution of the Jews in the country. On March 11, the newspaper's Berlin correspondent wrote: "[The persecution of Jews] seems to be spreading nationwide, and the situation looks grave." In April, the newspaper carried several further articles on this subject.

In response to the course of events in Germany, the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun* ran an editorial, "*Doitsu no dan'atsu seiji — kouju-funsho no bokyo ni oyobu* (Germany's oppressive politics — resorting to censorship and thought suppression)," on May 8, taking a strongly critical position. The editorial opens with an analysis of the oppressive policies that the German authorities have taken since the formation of the Hitler Cabinet, describing them as "increasingly outrageous, absolutely impossible to determine where they are headed with my common sense." The author continues:

I am utterly appalled at the absurdity of the German authorities not simply because of the political and economic despotism described above. Their bold and incomprehensible behavior that extends the hand of extermination even towards a source of German culture is truly atrocious beyond description.

Referring to the violent acts of censorship and thought suppression, the author admits having "no words to express my astonishment" at the fact that they are being "committed today in the 20th century in Germany, of all countries, which takes such great pride in its culture before the whole world." He further writes:

The presence of people like Messrs. Einstein and Haber is stronger than 100 Hitlers, for they have fortified the greatness of Germany on a worldwide scale. Improving the status of one nation through international cooperation or through exclusive nationalism, which is beneficial and which is not is too

obvious to be proven here.

The editorialist indicates that “it is too obvious that the German government’s current policy for reviving its national power will generate results that are the opposite of its objectives,” finally concluding that “it will not be far into the future that Germany regrets, having fallen victim to its own erroneous policy.” On the same day, “*Tensei Jingo*” takes up the irrationality of Nazi book burnings and the inhumanness of the bloody persecution of Jews in a ridiculing tone. Many articles appeared later that adopted a tone of argument similar to that of the May 8 editorial. On the whole, most articles criticized Nazism, saying that it had even become synonymous with cultural destruction.

A survey of these *Osaka Asahi Shimbun* articles written after the formation of the Hitler Cabinet enables us to discern a consistently negative or critical position regarding Nazism. Academics and cultural opinion leaders also wrote for the newspaper. The report titled “*Jujika jo no Doitsu daigaku* (German universities on the cross)” by Kyoji SHINOMIYA, a lecturer at Osaka University of Commerce then residing in Berlin (published June 21-25, 1933), were also written along the same line of argument. In the article titled “*Yudayajin wa naze kirawarerunoka? — Nachisu no Bungei Kanrin’in dan’atsu, keibetsusareta richishugi* (Why are the Jews disliked? — the Nazi suppression of the Academy of Arts, despised intellectualism)” (May 11-12, 1933), its author, Mukyoku NARUSE, Professor at Kyoto Imperial University, presented explicative yet generalized views, explaining that the Jews seemed disliked due to their power and clannish tendency, leading the worlds of arts and sciences and owning and running major newspapers and magazines, for their generally cosmopolitan nature, intelligence, sensitivity, and wealth. At the same time, the author pointed out that the Jews were not monolithic and represented diverse characteristics. Newspaper pieces written by external contributors do not necessarily correspond closely to the opinions of the newspapers. Nevertheless, newspapers do not usually provide their space generously and continuously to contributors who hold views that significantly differ from their own positions. It is generally possible to say that in those days the Japanese newspapers continued to have authors who expressed ideas and opinions that the newspapers wanted to publish.

In 1934, the number of articles treating Nazism or the Jews fell considerably. Yet, the few that appeared continued along the line of argument that had developed the year before.

The *Asashi*’s turning point in its reporting stance manifested itself most clearly in an

article of January 27, 1935 (dispatched the day before). Taking up the greater part of the front page of the newspaper's evening edition and written by Reiji KURODA, the newspaper's special correspondent in Berlin, the article was the harbinger of a new direction that the newspaper would gradually adopt from that time on.

The horizontally composed headline of the article reads "Talk with Führer Hitler/First Interview with Japanese Reporter." This is followed by the body of the article that contains such phrases as "the head of state's majestic bearing! Frank discussion on disarmament," "legitimate armaments for a sense of security," "interest in Japan," "Japanese folding screen in his plain residence," and "a firm handshake with a smile." The article carries a photograph of the correspondent, Kuroda, a three-column-tall photograph of Hitler with a caption, "Führer Hitler frankly expressing his feelings," and another photograph of the "German palace where this reporter had the interview." It seems that this interview was an honorable event for the *Asahi*.

The only foreign journalists whom Mr. Hitler has met since he became the head of state are Mr. Pierre Huss of Hearst Press of the United States and Mr. Ward Price of the British newspaper owned by Lord Rothermere, both dispatched from their home countries for the occasion. As a rule, Mr. Hitler does not grant interviews to foreign correspondents stationed in Germany. Therefore, **the consent to this interview is proof of either the interest that Mr. Hitler personally takes in Japan today or the importance the Asahi Shimbun Company is given abroad.**

It is obvious that the focus of the article is the very fact that the interview took place, rather than its content, as suggested by the bold type preserved in the quotation above as in the original. The journalist reports: "Mr. Hitler nodded a few times with a smile to the respect that I expressed in the beginning for the German people and Germany's supreme head of state in the name of President Ueno on behalf of the Asahi Shimbun Company." This passage is printed in even bolder characters in the article. Kuroda observes that Hitler "looks very serene and has clearly taken on a stately bearing of a contented head of a nation." The journalist concludes the article with his impression that Hitler's "position must be very stable, judging from his words and deportment," finding his way of "efficiently fielding the reporter's questions and brushing some aside in a frank and straightforward manner without resorting to diplomatic language rather pleasant."

Was it possible to expect objective reporting from the *Asahi Shimbun* after this

article, now that its relationship with Hitler seemed definitively determined? The article was indeed a declaration by the *Asahi* of its position as leader in the understanding of Germany and Hitler.

Before long, academics appeared who expressed opinions in tune with the *Asahi*'s new reporting stance. The report series (June 7 to 9 and 11, 1935) titled "*Rodo ni kankisuru 'fukko Doitsu' no seinen* (The Youth of 'revived Germany' awakened to labor)" written by Isao KOKUSHO, Professor at Kyoto Imperial University and doctor of Economics, can be considered as the most straightforward indication of the newspaper's transformation over the past three years. In his report, Kokusho expressed his hopes for the Nazis, who were then seen as striving to overcome the capitalist finance and economics in the hope of reconstructing their nation based on new principles, and praised the "rise of the spirit of labor" that was spurring this endeavor. Considering the perception of other countries that Japan would develop from around this time on, it is intriguing to note that Kokusho cited in this piece the United States as a diametrically opposite example, a country not progressing despite abundant wealth, capital, and population. The long report brims with the author's emotion and enthusiasm.

I saw youths working right before my eyes. Their workload seemed far more than what could possibly be handled by Japanese laborers specializing in outdoor work. Yet, they were all smiles and engaged in their work cheerfully. When I saw this army of youths, though they were of another country, tears welled up in my eyes. I was struck with envy and deep emotion. . . . Two hundred thousand soldiers discharged from the Reich Labor Service all over Germany marched into Berlin. I witnessed this in front of Gedächtnis-Kirche on Tauentzien Street. Seeing this solemn and orderly procession and the shining shovels on the soldiers' shoulders, I felt like bowing my head before those "true warriors of peace" in triumph from their victorious campaign. . . . I so earnestly wish that this noble spirit, this manliness of German youths rejoicing in labor for their nation will be with Japanese youths as well. Truly a nation can prosper only when its young takes delight in work.

Overjoyed, Kokusho declares that a school of thinkers who "hastily conclude that Germany is about to perish under Nazi despotism" are making a "great mistake." He further argues from the same perspective that the Jews, who do not possess the spirit of labor, are incompatible with the Germans, and concludes that "to liberate the people

from the slavery of interest, it becomes naturally inevitable to eliminate the Jews.”

In this way, the focus of reporting shifted to what could be learned from Germany in its process of national reconstruction. In addition to the German youth rejoicing in work, women also became an object of interest. Hayami FUJIMORI, Professor of the School of Medicine at Kyoto Imperial University, expounded on Japanese women’s duties, stating that “the touchingly serious manner in which young German women undergo emergency training for their motherhood is what should be emulated by Japanese woman” (*Osaka Asahi Shimbun*, August 21, 1937).

In 1938, an article reported on Germany’s annexation of Austria, describing it as nearly completed, with only the revision of road traffic rules, the abolition of the national flag, and “cleaning-up of Jews left to be done” (*Osaka Asahi Shimbun*, Prague, March 14, Special Correspondent Hamada, published March 16). The same newspaper reported on September 14 (dispatched September 12 from Berlin) that “Führer Hitler the lion roars” that “the Jews and communism must be eliminated,” adding that the democracies should be anxious to decide what to do about Germany.

The editorial on the *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun* on March 13 titled “*Doku-Ou gappei no dai-shinten* (Great progress of the German-Austrian merger)” was praiseful:

There is no other way to describe the brilliance of Führer Hitler’s advance but to compare it to a flying horse soaring up to the sky. . . . He has sacrificed everything and is working for national glory. The recent incident may be a tragedy viewed from one country, Austria, but we send it our blessings for its future, as we see this country liquidate its entire past to enter into a new life and contribute to the prosperity of the German nation.

In the same year, the Japanese youth association, Nihon Seinendan, invited a delegation of the Hitlerjugend to Japan. In his series of articles, “*Hodoku seishonendan kenbunroku* (Record of the visiting German youth group’s experiences),” published on the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun* on October 5, 7, 10 to 12, and 14, Morio MIYAMATO, usually based in Germany, minutely reported the Hitler Youth’s activities in Japan, how the group touched the Japanese public and was warmly welcomed everywhere. This series was sandwiched by other enthusiastic articles such as “*Nachi no wakoudo ni warera wa manabu* (We learn from the Nazi youth)” (*Osaka Mainichi Shimbun*, October 6) and “*Hittora Yugento ni warera wa nani o manandaka* (What we learned from the Hitlerjugend)” (*Osaka Mainichi Shimbun*, October 19).

On November 12, the *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun* ran a long article occupying six columns in the middle section of the front page to advertise the “Great Germany Exposition,” which the newspaper company would hold from November 20. The article opens as follows:

The tie between the *Hinomaru* [Japanese national flag] and the *Hakenkreuz* is stronger than ever as representatives of the flying wheels of the century. But what is our ally Germany like as a country? How have its fearless face, unbreakable bones, and fire-emitting soul been nurtured, and to what rhythm is its heart beating? To respond to such friendly interest and wish to know more, we are holding the “Great Germany Exposition” in partnership with the Embassy of Germany, the Japan-Germany Association, and the Institute for Research in German Culture, with active participation by the German government.

The highlight of the Japan-Germany relations in that year (1938) was the signing of the Japan-Germany Cultural Agreement in November. On November 26, the editorials of both the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun* and the *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun* extolled this event unconditionally. The *Asahi*'s editorial congratulated the signing of the agreement, considering it as “not only contributory to the creation and construction of a new culture dedicated to humanity's progress but also greatly useful for the promotion and maintenance of peace in the world.” In the same tone, the author admits dreaming of “the day when all culturally developed countries in the world will be solidly unified through one cultural agreement.” The *Mainichi*'s editorial, for its part, states that the agreement “has made the bond between the two countries more fundamental by supplementing the existing Anti-Comintern Pact, which is a mere political agreement, on a spiritual level.” The author goes so far as to “acknowledge that it is inevitable that we advance one step further and reach an economic and military agreement, considering the international importance of the bilateral unity” and to assert that the cultural agreement “must be highly appropriate groundwork [for the next step].” Finally, the conclusion reads: “Our country's success lies in our demonstration before the whole world of our unique culture. We are extremely delighted we have taken our first step to this organizational development through the Japan-Germany Agreement.” On the same day, the journalist Soho TOKUTOMI wrote in his column in the *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun* that “we three, Japan, Germany, and Italy, must further harmonize our moves, look squarely at the need

to vanquish these public enemies of the world, and inevitably devise plans to deal with them,” referring to Great Britain and France.

In 1939, on April 29, the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun*'s editorial refuted the argument advanced by the United States, Great Britain, and France that the key to peace or war lay only upon Hitler and Mussolini and that Germany and Italy would be to blame if war should break out, insisting that “it is so groundless that it can be easily and completely argued down.” The author concludes: “Now that Führer Hitler has made it clear that he is willing to grant a security treaty to the countries, Great Britain, France, and the United States are required to repent even more deeply.” On the following day, the *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun*'s editorial exalted in the opening that “Führer Hitler's speech, so long awaited by the world, has now become a public property.” Advocating the speech in question, the editorialist concluded: “The tripartite alliance is as hard as iron. Without this, the anti-communist camp led by the three countries will lose its *raison d'être*.”

Meanwhile, the *Asahi*'s “*Tensei Jingo*” described how the German officials and people took an hour-and-a-half break from work or stopped lessons in school to attentively listen to the speech on the radio, admirably presenting this as proof of “how the Germans consider their country's destiny as their personal destiny and how all individual Germans have the strong sense of being responsible for their country's joys and sorrows.” In Japan, Germany was no longer a mere country among many others.

On July 15, 1939, ten Japanese newspaper companies and news agencies, including the *Asahi* and the *Mainichi*, published a joint anti-British declaration. Against the background of the “British maneuvers to assist Chiang Kai-shek, resulting from the misinterpretation of the Empire's fair intention,” the joint declaration expressed the media organizations' “firm determination to denounce all obstacles on the path to the attainment of the objectives of our holy war” and requested Great Britain to correct its perception of East Asia and “contribute to world peace by cooperating in the construction of a new world order.” The Japanese newspapers could not have made their position clearer. It can be said that they made all the preparations necessary to welcome the following year's Tripartite Pact of Japan, Germany, and Italy. In the meantime, Hitler was elevated to the status of “genius.” The *Asahi*'s special correspondent, Yoshiuchi KITANO, wrote that the German people's respect for Hitler was unshakable and that “the popularity of this great genius” surpassed that of the Kaiser during the last Great War. Kitano concluded that “a great deal is naturally expected of him, who has become the ‘Napoleon of the 20th century,’ and his genius can be regarded as undistorted.” (*Osaka Asahi Shimbun*, January 4, 1940)

The signing of the Tripartite Pact was greeted by the newspapers with congratulatory phrases:

“A new era in the world’s history,” “approaching sound of footsteps of the ‘driving force’ of the century,” “one pledge, Japan-Germany-Italy/Succession of the historic moment of the signing ceremony,” “thunderous cries of ‘banzai,’ an unforgettable evening,” “o, our indomitable resolute,” “returning to the ‘true Japan,’” “two joyful girls,” “international agreement of ‘world revolution’” (*Asahi*, September 29); “souls coming together/inevitable destiny,” “Germany and Italy rejoiced” (*Osaka Mainichi*, September 28).

How did editorialists, who are supposed to remain objective, treat the event? Let us examine this through the *Osaka Mainichi* editorial of the same day:

The Japan-Germany-Italy Tripartite Pact was finally signed. His Majesty graced the occasion with his statement and kindly instructed us how this important development should be treated. His Majesty’s generous solicitude touches us most deeply. While experts had maintained already at an early stage that the three countries would eventually have to choose this stance, judging from the situation of the world . . . the time has come for the three countries to openly acknowledge our essential common position and actively work together to explore our common destiny through cooperation and lead humanity to a bright new future. Our country’s wish and effort to liberate East Asia from the Anglo-Saxon bondage and build East Asia for East Asians and the wish and effort of Germany and Italy to liberate themselves from the Anglo-Saxon oppression to construct a new European regime and realize a future compatible with their forces match perfectly now. The time is ripe.

Concluding that “choosing the path to contributing to humanity’s welfare is the very wish of the three countries,” the editorial appeared to speak on behalf of the governments. Later, the *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun* even faithfully communicated in its column “*Kenteki*” what the German newspapers had to say (November 16, Berlin, published November 17):

The oppression of Jews in Germany has been criticized by the President of the

United States, a country of Jews. Unless Jews of American nationality are concerned, the United States has no business meddling with what the Germans do to Jews, whether they boil and eat them or grill and eat them [*literal translation of the Japanese idiomatic expression meaning “do whatever one pleases”]. In particular, the retaliation that German people took against Jewish temples and shops following the assassination of a German diplomat in France by a Jew is not a matter that should concern the German government. Although the damage caused to the Jewish-owned properties was considerable, possibly about a billion German marks, not even half a Jew was violated, not even a hair, as German newspapers have refuted their British counterparts.

In addition to such base reporting defending Germany, the *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun* carried an explanatory article titled “*Doitsu no Yudayajin dan’atsu* (The oppression of the Jews in Germany)” on November 23. The article explained developments in Germany, Great Britain, and the United States following the assassination of the German diplomat, as well as the history and present situation of the Jews, commenting that “this non-assimilation of the Jews, who have lived as a world-scale special community, so to speak, is the very core of the Jewish Question.” Its conclusion read: “Considering that the China Incident is a holy war aiming to save the Far East from the communism of the Jews, we should not regard the Jewish Question as something irrelevant to us.” The leader of this article, “Evil hand assisting Chiang Kai-shek is also in the shadow of the incident of the ‘stateless people’ who erode the world,” should be considered indicative of this newspaper’s view of the Jews.

Japanese newspapers continued covering speeches by Hitler and other leaders on each occasion. Let us take a look at a few examples:

If young Jews believe that they can eliminate us, they are totally wrong. Those who will be eliminated are the Jews themselves. In the past, many Jews secretly smiled, they can no longer smile. The Jews who are smiling today will soon become unable to smile. (*Asahi* article covering Hitler’s speech on the night before the Beer Hall Putsch anniversary ceremony; November 8, 1942, Berlin; published in the November 10 evening edition)

Goebbels’ speeches were also covered. One delivered in front of the representatives of various sectors of society was reported with an emphasis on the German “policy to

eradicate the Jewish threat, through extreme and thorough means, if necessary” (*Asahi*, Berlin, February 18, 1943; published in the February 20 evening edition). Japanese correspondents in Germany interviewed Goebbels together with other members of the foreign press corps and wrote on the Jewish Question in a definitive tone: “Jews are the germs of infectious diseases within the German nation-state. Unless the Jewish Question is fundamentally resolved, and the germs eradicated, they will quickly spread again” (*Asahi*, Berlin, March 13, 1943; published March 15). Covering Goebbels’ speech at a party rally for Germany’s victory, one article reported that he “declared that clearing Jews from Europe was not a mere ethical issue but a way of national self-defense and that no means will be spared for this purpose” (*Mainichi*, Berlin, June 5, 1943; published June 7).

Those were the words that were pronounced publicly and repeatedly by one nation’s political leaders, and the Japanese newspapers reported them without adding a word of criticism. Rather, it can be said that they continued to play the role of faithfully communicating the leaders’ words to their readership. The historical fact is that the Holocaust took place, exactly as described in their discourse. Did the Japanese public sense a demagogic odor in the newspapers after they switched to the anti-Jewish camp?

Outside written reporting, the newspaper companies also engaged in cultural activities. The *Mainichi Shimbun* organized a lecture meeting on the theme of “International Thought War and the Jewish Question,” featuring as speakers well-known anti-Jewish authorities, Lieutenant General Nobutaka SHITENNO (elected at the top of the list to the House of Representatives in 1942), Kitayama ATAGO, and Masao MASUDA, and drawing an audience of 3,000 at the Osaka Central Public Hall (*Osaka Mainichi*, July 25, 1942). The “Jews and Secret International Society” exhibition, held at the department store *Matsuzakaya* in Osaka, was so successful from the opening day (*Mainichi*, March 5, 1943) that lectures on anti-Jewish themes were held during the exhibition period, which itself was extended eventually (*Mainichi*, March 21). *Kokusai Seikei Gakkai* (lit. Society of International Political and Economic Studies), an anti-Jewish research association, organized a lecture series “Seminar on the Jewish Question” in Tokyo (July 24-26), in which Torashige UEHARA, the editor-in-chief of the *Mainichi*, served as one of the lecturers.

At around the time of the decline of power of the Axis alliance and especially Italy’s surrender, the Japanese newspapers began to further shift from factual reporting to the dissemination of their subjective interpretations. It seems as if they had abandoned the reality of the world, opting to explain everything in terms of a conceptual binary

universe whose components are either Jewish or non-Jewish. Let us cite a representative example of such reporting.

The *Mainichi* editorial titled “*Roma bakugeki to Yudaya minzoku* (The bombing of Rome and the Jewish nation)” (July 29, 1943) associates the air raids on Rome with a Jewish conspiracy. It reads: “There is something unreasonable in assuming that the bombing of Rome was an act of Christians, as we pointed it out in this column the other day,” and the author goes on to say that it has been proved that the bombing was, just as suspected, “planned by Freemasonry, composed of Jews and based on Jewish thought.” The editorial then questions the true character of some anti-Axis alliance leaders such as Roosevelt and Eden, suggesting that they are “more like the leaders, or prisoners, of the Jewish nation.” It concludes that it is finally becoming clear which thought system is “guiding the British and the Americans in the current great war.”

Newspaper articles at that time were full of passages that seemingly declared that Italy’s surrender was a positive development for the Axis, a source of great joy:

“Tragedy of a soul-less entity — succumbed to persistent enemy schemes” (Yataka NAKAOKA, Lieutenant General of the Army), “Germany is relieved of a heavy burden” (Taneji HISA, Second Lieutenant of the Navy), “with one role over, the German war force is fortified” (Toshio SHIRATORI, former Ambassador to Italy) (*Asahi*, September 10); “be ready for enemies’ thought warfare — Italy’s fall is rather advantageous” (Ryotaro NAKAI, Lieutenant General of the Army), “with the Axis’ cancer removed, we the productive camp are sure to win” (Kiyoshi GOUKO, advisor to the Cabinet) (*Mainichi*, September 10); “Good news in Berlin/Führer’s speech in high spirits” (*Mainichi*, September 12).

Where did all the enthusiasm with which the newspapers had heralded the tripartite alliance, calling it “as hard as iron,” go?

Before long, the newspapers turned to arguing that the main cause of Italy’s surrender was enemy schemes. A *Mainichi* article on September 12, 1943, concludes decisively that “Badoglio’s betrayal was indeed due to a Jewish conspiracy, just as the former Prime Minister Mussolini fell into Jewish clutches.” It continues: “this terrifying secret international society, Freemasonry, the Jewish blood and dollars that control the headquarters of our American and British enemies, the original instigator of a world revolution disguised as the goddess of peace. Roosevelt and Churchill are mere elements

of this group.” The article then declares that “the army that constructs a new order must indeed fight to eradicate the Jews from the surface of the earth,” and cites Taizo HASEGAWA of *Kokusai Seikei Gakkai*: “It is essential to crush the invisible enemy, Jewish conspiracy.” Later, the *Mainichi* carried a series of articles under the common title of “*Bouryaku* (Schemes),” contributed by Toshio SHIRATORI, Toyō OHGUSHI, and Yahei OHBA (September 14 to 15 and 17). The main message of the series was that Japan and Germany, having overcome their weaknesses so as not to fall into schemes as did Italy, must nevertheless carefully prepare themselves, keeping in mind that the Anglo-Saxon-Jewish enemies were about to implement demonic plots. In particular, Shiratori wrote: “It is extremely important to clearly acknowledge this, if you wish to know anything at all about schemes — that it is totally off the mark if you do not know how the Jewish forces are running the world today.” According to him, Italy lacked this insight. He wrote emphatically that “against the opponents’ Jewish ambitions for world hegemony, we must erect the Japanese philosophy and strive to enlighten humanity and the world.” As if to succeed this article, Torashige UEHARA wrote an article titled “*Kokumin ni uttau* (Appealing to the nation),” following the same logic and using similar terms (*Mainichi*, September 16, 1943).

At around the time of Italy’s surrender, newspaper editorials treating the theme of the Jews and their schemes appeared frequently. Such editorials elaborated on the main points of Goebbels’ speeches, starting with the warning that “the cunning, treacherous and persistent false propaganda by the Jewish-Anglo-Saxon camp” should not be lightly taken (*Mainichi*, “*Sendansen o saikentou seyo* [Reexamine the propaganda war],” February 8, 1943). Passages that stand out in those editorials include the following: “The United States and Great Britain have been branded as traitors of the human race,” considering that the United States will “end up in the not too distant future as miserable slaves of money-powered Jews and red Jews” (*Mainichi*, “*Gebberusu shi no enzetsu* [Mr. Goebbels’ speech],” February 20, 1943); “the Americans, who are about to be defeated abroad, have deeply sunk to the status of slaves at home” under Jewish control (*Mainichi*, “*Beikoku ni kunrin suru Yudaya zoku* [The Jewish nation reigning over the United States],” March 6, 1943); “the nation founded on international money politics trying to overthrow the German people’s resistance with conspiratorial propaganda as it did in Italy is like a child’s play” (*Mainichi*, “*Kizentaru Doitsu* [Resolute Germany],” September 12, 1943); “our enemy is a demon; we cannot live with a demon” (*Mainichi*, “*Teki no shotai o miyo* [Watch the true color of the enemy],” September 20, 1943); “the propaganda and schemes on the enemy side will rapidly vanish like mist before our spirit

of justice confronting humanity's enemies, the United States and Great Britain" (*Asahi*, "Hibou o jihakuseru teki bouryaku [Enemy scheme proven inappropriate by itself]" on the theme of the Cairo Conference, December 9, 1943). As for Badoglio's declaration of war against Germany, it was, needless to say, a betrayal, and the newspapers continued to insist that it happened "as a result of the influence of the American and British Jewish forces on the Italian Jews" (*Mainichi*, April 3, 1944).

About one month before Germany's defeat, responding to the news of Germany's cease-fire, the newspapers insisted in their editorials that it was only disinformation and that the general situation was still favorable for Germany: "the low morale in Great Britain is more widely known," "that is to say, the enemy is extremely pressed, as it is clear both in Europe and in the Pacific," "probably the enemy has no other choice but to resort to the schemes and disinformation," "we must strive to bring the true intention of the enemy into broad daylight" (*Mainichi*, "Bouryaku senden ni bottosuru teki [Enemy absorbed in conspiratorial propaganda]", March 21, 1945).

All this clearly demonstrates that in those days the Japanese newspapers were no longer transmitters of facts, but they had become a medium for dispensing far-fetched arguments founded on distorted facts. It is even questionable whether the authors of those newspaper articles attempted to obtain factual information. Rather, it seems as if they tried to avoid facts, bound by the concept of the absolutism of the Axis allies. They weaved into their texts their one-sided ideas of events and phenomena as they wanted them to be, forcing their arguments in a definitive manner. When the newspapers ceased to report facts, their arguments (editorials) ceased to be truthful and became extremely dogmatic and dishonest. For the Japanese public, who had never had any personal contact with the Jews as neighbors, the events and people described in newspaper articles must have appeared unfathomable, abstract discussions on matters of distant foreign countries by major newspapers detached from the everyday reality of their readership. Thus, anti-Semitism in Japan, unrelated to ordinary Japanese people, meaninglessly left its traces only in the wartime newspapers. These pathetic traces, so to speak, are just the result of unconditional admiration for another country and the proclaiming of anti-Jewish propaganda on its behalf.

II

In 1939, when the Japanese newspapers were praising Hitler, Satoshi NISHIMOTO, LL.D., commented on *Mein Kampf* in his "Yudaya minzoku no houshiteki kenkyu (A

legalistic historical study of the Jewish national characteristic) (1)” (*Hougaku Ronso* [Journal of the Kyoto Imperial University Society for Legal Studies], Vol. 41, No. 3) as follows:

This book has become a recent masterpiece naturally because of his abundant genius and careful preparation but also because it is based on a thoroughly nationalist consciousness. . . . It was none other than a grand overture to the establishment of the Nazi regime, which signifies the revival of the German nation and the decline of the Jewish nation within Germany. As the Nazis have since been steadily pursuing the development of the German nation and the elimination of Jews, wherever there is a black-white-red party flag with a hooked cross, Jews are condemned to lose their place of truly peaceful living.

From this perspective, this paper presents a history of the Jewish nation and proposes how the Jewish nation should be treated today. Such was an academic paper published in the journal of the Faculty of Law of Kyoto Imperial University.

At about the same time, Kiyoshi KIYOSAWA wrote an article titled “*Hittora wa naze ninki ga arunoka — Doitsu ni kite Nachisu undo o miru* (Why Hitler is popular — coming to Germany and observing the Nazi movement)” for the February 1938 issue of the magazine *Chuokoron*. In this article, the journalist and social commentator stated that Nazism was a religious movement that would not withstand the test of logical analysis, that “it has become Hitler’s one-man theater, and that religious fire keeps burning until it burns itself out, and Germany’s religious flame is now furiously blazing as Hitler’s chorus leader.” In another article, “*Hittora no gosan* (Hitler’s miscalculation)” (*Chuokoron*, October 1939), Kiyosawa analyzed the German situation against the backdrop of the annexation of Austria and of the Sudetenland, stating “Hitler has no mental leeway to listen to what his enemies have to say. As in the past, his desire has inflated like a rubber ball. [...] Whether Hitler has miscalculated or not is for future historians to decide. [...] Miscalculation is perhaps an inevitable product of an adventurous hero.” Kiyosawa, viewing Nazism as a religious movement, stated that it was “atrociously dogmatic and intolerant, as manifested in the persecution of Jews and contention with the Church” and argued why Jews had become the target of Nazi attacks. This article is in stark contrast to the major newspapers glorifying Hitler with such phrases as “a new era in the world’s history” and “taking humanity to a brighter new life and well-being.”

At that time, Kiyosawa was a regular contributor to such magazines as *Chuokoron*, *Kaizo*, and *Kokusai Chishiki*. In February 1941, however, he was registered on the list of banned authors of the Bureau of Intelligence Section II (in charge of publications, established 1940), along with Tadao YANAIHARA, Kisaburo YOKOTA, Koutaro TANAKA, Hironori MIZUNO, and Tsunego BABA. At about the same time, the Metropolitan Police Department prohibited the sale of the published works of Yukio OZAKI, Hitoshi ASHIDA, Tsunego BABA, Toshiyoshi MIYAZAWA, and Kiyoshi KIYOSAWA, who were considered as liberalists. In 1944, *Chuokoron* and *Kaizo* were discontinued on the recommendation of the military authorities. While under the surveillance of the Special Higher Police, Kiyosawa wrote *Ankoku Nikki (A Diary of Darkness)*, to “keep a record to write a modern history later.” Needless to say, his diary contained his criticism of the pro-German, anti-Jewish discourse of the newspapers.

With regard to Japan’s actual treatment of Jews in flesh and blood, Kiichiro HIGUCHI in the Otpor Incident, which occurred in March 1938, and Chiune SUGIHARA, Vice-Consul at the Japanese Consulate in Kaunas, Lithuania, who issued so-called “Sugihara visas” to Jewish refugees from July to August, 1940, should be mentioned.

One day in March 1938, 18 Jewish refugees arrived at Otpor Station on the Trans-Siberian Railway near the Soviet Union-Manchukuo border. More refugees arrived later, and their number increased considerably. The diplomatic mission of Manchukuo refused their entry. However, Kiichiro HIGUCHI, the commander of the Harbin Special Branch attached to the Kwantung Army negotiated with the diplomatic authorities, succeeding in having visas issued to the refugees and thereby opening the “Higuchi route.” Germany responded to this by sending a statement of protest to the Japanese government. Within the Kwantung Army, Higuchi’s initiative came to be regarded as problematic, and calls for his punishment grew loud. Higuchi reported to the headquarters of the Kwantung Army and appealed to Chief of Staff, Hideki TOJO, saying, “it is unconceivable to submit to such inhuman German treatment.” Tojo listened to this and decided not to subject Higuchi to disciplinary punishment. Tojo’s decision diffused the criticism surrounding Higuchi within the military, and “the German protest was overlooked.”⁵ The year before this incident, in December 1937, Higuchi attended the First Conference of Jewish Communities in the Far East held in Harbin, where he criticized the Nazis and defended the Jews on behalf of the guest attendees and was generously applauded. However, Japanese newspapers did not write even a single line about this conference.

Against the orders of the Foreign Ministry, Chiune SUGIHARA wrote transit visas to Jewish refugees from Poland for humanitarian reasons. The situation surrounding the issuance of so-called Sugihara visas has come to be well known in recent years, thanks to extensive research. Because of this, we shall refrain from examining this subject in detail here; instead, let us direct our attention to the Jewish refugees who actually received Sugihara visas.

III

The number of Jewish refugees who, during one year from the summer of 1940, travelled to Vladivostok on the Trans-Siberian Railway and crossed the sea to arrive at Tsuruga Port, Fukui Prefecture, with Sugihara visas is estimated to be about 6,000. How did local residents in Tsuruga City receive the refugees, and how did the Japanese newspapers report their arrivals?

In March 2006, the Sea of Japan Topographical Survey and Research Association launched a research project to study the traces of the Jewish refugees who landed at Tsuruga. The Association interviewed 28 persons and collected 32 testimonials.

Many of those surveyed vaguely remembered seeing groups of miserably dressed Jews traveling on foot from the port to the railway station. Their accounts included: “Asahi-yu (local public bathhouse) closed one day to let the Jews take a bath free of charge”; the boy who said “he had given apples and other fruits” to the Jewish refugees is “almost sure to have been my brother, who was six years older than me”; “my parents had a watch and jewelry shop in front of the train station. Each time a ship arrived at the port, Jews with no luggage would come into the shop. . . . [my parents] bought many watches and rings. The Jews would take the money and go to the *udon* noodle shop near the station to eat”; “my father felt sorry for the Jews and often gave them the food in the shop. I also gave a steamed potato that I had once.” The survey report presents various testimonials, including one by an interviewee who vaguely remembered listening to the principal’s talk during a morning assembly at Tsuruga Normal Elementary School: “The foreigners who arrived here yesterday on Europe-Asia ferryboats and went on to Kobe and Yokohama are the Jews, who have no country of their own. They might have looked miserable, but many of them are rich. They are foreigners who are forced to travel for various reasons.”⁶

On the other hand, the newspapers also reported on the arrivals of Jewish refugees. While the newspapers did describe the Jewish refugees, it can be said that the articles

were already biased on the basis of stereotypical views of the Jews.

In early 1941, a certain direction of reporting began to appear, starting with the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun* article of February 2, "Floods of wandering Jews / Over 100 in Tsuruga at each arrival of ship." According to this article's summary, 50,000 travelled from Northern Europe to Siberia in 1940, and some 1,200 of the 1,500 passengers from Vladivostok to Tsuruga were Jewish. From 1941 to 1942, about 200,000 travelled from the Soviet Union through the services of Intourist, and a sizable percentage of them are believed to have passed through Japan in transit. To this influx, the article writes in conclusion: "Tsuruga Prosecutor's Office is watching closely to prevent the infiltration of international spies who might attempt to engage in maneuvers amid those groups of travelers." In the sequel to this article, the Jewish refugees are described as follows: "Some are flush with cash, and some do not even have enough to buy cigarettes. Yet, they all have the same troubled expression chiseled with wrinkles of worry. When they spoke, they were unanimous in praising the peaceful atmosphere of Japan as if unaware of the war and the warm kindness of Japanese people." The article also reports that the journalist spoke with a Jewish refugee who said, "How happy I would be if I could be allowed to stay on in Japan, even as a beggar" (*Osaka Asahi*, February 6). The *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun* reported with the headline, "Jews pouring in at Tsuruga/Impudence of the people driven away" (February 14).

Let us compare some minor articles of this kind. One *Osaka Asahi* article reports the arrival of Jewish refugees at Tsuruga, describing them as "showing a smile of relief and turning on their charm, saying just-learned 'arigato' repeatedly to those around . . . creating a cheerful, cosmopolitan scene." The article also relates, with a photograph, that later in Kobe they attended a prayer meeting before going to their respective lodgings for the night: "Just as expected from 'God's chosen people,' they prayed devoutly" (February 15). The *Osaka Mainichi* reports the same event under the headline "Troops of wandering Jews pass through Osaka to Kobe/Disorderly and uncontrolled" and with phrases such as "cramming into third-class cars, oblivious of others in the same condition," "slightly soiled" and "down and out" describing their appearances, "optimist with only an accordion as the only personal property, and some colorfully dressed ones . . . leaving much to be talked about on the platform," and "finally settling down at a reception facility" in Kobe (February 15).

During this period, the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun* ran a series of articles titled "*Rurou no Yudayajin* (wandering Jews)" for six days (February 9-14), something that the *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun* did not do. This series was a detailed, generally objective presentation

of the current situation of the Jews and its background, with some passages showing a slight hint of pity. The author also asks himself a question: "Is the thought of worldwide conspiracy that is nosily discussed in Europe with regard to the Jews also entertained in the depth of these Jews' hearts?" However, regarding some crucial questions, he does not deny that the instigator and victor of the First World War "is said to be the Jews" and that "the Jews are said to have conspired" to commit all sorts of unscrupulous acts amid the post-war confusion. He also refers to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, easily finishing off: "Those terrifying words tell the truth about the feared and detested Jewish nation."

The *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun* carried an interesting report about two groups of foreign refugees who were staying in Japan at that time (July 24, 1941). One group consisted of some 400 Germans who had been taken in custody in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) since the Dutch-German war broke out, and the other group was some 800 Jewish refugees. The headline of the report is already stereotypical: "Mothers disinfect tableware for children even in a hotel/Efficient and disciplined German women/Jews beat down prices to XX (NB: official prices)." The two photographs accompanying the report create a striking contrast, with one captioned "a pleasant afternoon tea for German women and girls in Kobe," and the other, "wandering Jews receiving rationed bread at the Jewish Association of Kobe." The report says that the refugees of the first group stay at high-grade hotels in Kobe, Arima, Nara, and Kyoto and private residences of their compatriots living in Japan, that their living expenses of 10 to 16 or 17 yen per day are entirely covered by the Embassy of Germany, and that they get together to enjoy one another's company at various locations in Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe. With these descriptions, the report tells the reader that the Germans have many virtues that the Japanese should emulate. On the other hand, the report's descriptions of the other group of refugees are as follows:

For a while [following their arrival in Japan], they stayed in hotels to show off their high spirits, but at present most of them share rented houses around Aotani and Nozaki Street, relying on the lifeline of 1.50 yen per person and per day offered by the Jewish Association of Kobe to prepare meals at home. Although making do with small fish and vegetables at home, they are so vain that they come out to the Oriental Hotel and order a cup of tea in the lobby, which is shared by two or three persons. Or, one staying in the hotel invites other Jews from outside to take a bath in the hotel room at 0.50 yen per person. These are the ways they fully act out their Jewish characteristics. The Jews

living from day to day in group are desperate to obtain travel documents to go to a third country.

It is possible that these descriptions were in fact accurate. However, it is also possible to surmise that the report was written to use traditional stereotypical Jewish images to explain various situations, to “demonstrate” that the stereotypical images were accurate. The journalist might have forced himself to not notice anything that did not correspond to those images. This tendency can be more clearly found in the *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun*’s coverage of Jewish refugees in Japan than in that of the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun*.

Around May 1941, newspaper articles began to cover the departure of Jewish refugees from Japan more frequently. Both the *Osaka Mainichi* and the *Osaka Asahi* depicted tragic scenes of departure, suggestive of anticipated hardships. The *Osaka Mainichi* reported: “Passengers and well-wishers completed a gloomy picture of departure at the pier, both sides thinking of all the difficulties and danger that might come their way in the future.” Most of the Jewish refugees in Japan were forced to move to Shanghai for the time being, without knowing where their final destination would be. One factor for this was a freeze on Japanese assets by the United States, Great Britain, and the Dutch East Indies, in succession, in late July, causing a sudden tension between Japan and the United States. One newspaper covered this development in the article, “*Touketsu’ no kage ni Yudayajin* (Jews behind ‘freeze’) (*Osaka Asahi*, August 2). If this article were accurate, it brought about the ironic consequence of putting the Jews in Kobe in a predicament. On both August 20 and 30, some 300 Jewish refugees left for Shanghai. The remaining 850 or so, the *Osaka Asahi* reported: “We have the prospect of getting completely rid of the migratory birds — that since last year have flooded the International Section — from Kobe by the end of September.” The *Osaka Mainichi* reported the departure of the first group of 289 Jews from Kobe on August 20 in a ridiculing tone:

Since they do not neglect to look after their appearances in spite of being wanderers with no money on their persons, they have bravely put on a formal winter jacket or a frock coat in this summer heat to look dignified, although soaked with sweat. Some have put on a spring coat over winter clothes, and some don a felt hat or a Panama hat, which they must have gone through great trouble to purchase in Motomachi, to look summery only on the head. There is

a young Jewish girl carefully holding a traditional Japanese umbrella to her chest. . . . the party marched to the Motomachi 1-chome tram station, biting a pear or apple . . . (August 21)

The *Osaka Asahi* described the departing Jews without ridiculing:

They were variably dressed, some wearing a thick winter overcoat and some a frock coat, and some trying to take with them everything they could, from pots and pans to even kegs for pickled vegetables. . . . their expressions were full of anxiety as they were about to embark on another voyage, showing their wistful feelings for what they are leaving behind. (August 21)

The *Osaka Asahi*'s article at the end of the month, "*Kobe no Yudayajin zokuzoku Shanhai e* (successive departures of the Kobe Jews for Shanghai)" (August 29), explains the end of the adventure.

As sequels to the articles cited above, there are those covering the Jewish refugees after their arrival in Shanghai, namely "Wandering Jews infesting Shanghai / Jews outshining Chinese merchants in negotiations" (*Osaka Asahi*, September 25, from Special Correspondent Shinoda) and an article with a photograph, stating "Kobe Masonic Club, de-facto Japan chapter of the Jewish secret society, Freemasonry . . . is in danger of destruction and secretly struggling in its secret world behind its firmly closed doors" (*Osaka Mainichi*, "'*Kaiki no dendo*' *kaimetsu e* ['Hall of mystery' on its way to destruction]," October 4). It can be said that the problem of dealing with actual Jews in Japan, excluding Japanese-occupied cities such as Shanghai and Tianjin, terminated by the time of the outbreak of war between Japan and the United States in December. After that time, issues involving Jewish refugees, whether in Manchukuo or China, did not appear in Japanese newspapers, except for one miniscule article two years later reporting "the arrival in Teheran of 5,000 Polish Jews from the Soviet Union on the 30th, who are continuing on to Palestine" (*Asahi*, Istanbul, September 22, 1943).

Conclusion

After the departure of the Jewish refugees from Japan, no actual Jewish persons were kept in custody in Japan, and the Japanese newspapers reverted to playing with conceptual Jewish images. Based on the same logic as the anti-Semitic ideologue, a

range of cultural events were organized, and newspaper editorials repeated discussions on the theme. Moreover, since the Japanese newspapers adhered to the opinion that “it goes without saying that the arrival of world peace will be accelerated, as the relationship between Japan and its allies becomes closer and firmer” (*Osaka Asahi* editorial, November 10, 1942), they were reduced to being mere transmitters of news from Germany about “Jewish calamity swept away” (*Asahi*, January 24, 1943, reporting Hans Hinkel’s “One path to new ideals”) and “eradication of Jewish evil” (*Asahi*, January 24, 1943, reporting “Führer Hitler’s proclamation”). The attitude of the newspapers toward Italy has already been stated above.

Tracing the entry of Jewish refugees into Japan, their stay in and departure from the country, we can say that the national government, Hyogo Prefecture, and Kobe City and other municipalities handled the situation generally calmly, despite the ongoing reinforcement of the Japan-Germany alliance. It can be also assumed that ordinary people in Tsuruga and Kobe did not behave aggressively toward Jewish refugees at all, although they might have appeared strange to the local residents. Rather, there are testimonials attesting to humane and compassionate reception of the Jewish refugees, which seem credible. On the other hand, major Japanese newspapers, seemingly sympathetic toward them, continued depicting the Jews in a sarcastic, caricatured manner. Furthermore, they revealed their preconceived notions about the Jews in their interpretation of the background of the massive emergence of refugees, falsely linking all sorts of problems throughout history with the Jewish nation. The newspapers reported and commented the Jewish Question solely conceptually, in their desperate dedication to Germany. After this phase, they had their own way. The result was the detachment of the newspapers from the governments in the treatment of the Jewish refugees and from the general public in the perception of reality.

Notes

¹ There was a small number of Jewish scholars, business people, etc. of various nationalities who lived in Japan. However, they did not necessarily make known their Jewish identity, and the circles in which they moved did not regard them specifically as Jewish. Following the Siberian Intervention (1918-22), some military personnel opposed to the pro-democracy movement of the Taisho era (1912-26) introduced the anti-Jewish discourse into Japan. Basing their argument on *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and blaming the collapse of the imperial system of Germany and Russia on a Jewish conspiracy, they argued that the next target of the Jewish conspiracy would be the Empire of Japan, rather than the British monarchy, which had

already been weakened by the same plot. Sakuzo YOSHINO and other liberals criticized this argument, but the newspapers did not participate in the debate.

- ² *Gaimusho Kiroku - Minzoku Mondai Kankei zakken - Yudayajin Mondai* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Records / Miscellaneous Cases Related to National and Ethnic Issues / Jewish Issue), Vol. 3 (January 1934 - end May, 1938)
- ³ While it is generally said that the “Essential Points” were adopted by the five principal ministers in consultation, “(Strictly Confidential) Essential Points of the Measures Concerning the Jews” bears a notation handwritten in red at the end, which reads: “The above is not the decision made by the Council of the Five Ministers; the Prime Minister spoke of this proposal, presented by the Foreign Minister, to the principal competent ministers, that is, the Ministers of War and Home Affairs, and since both of these ministers accepted it, it was adopted as orders to be issued to the overseas diplomatic establishments” (*Gaimusho Kiroku - Minzoku Mondai Kankei Zakken - Yudayajin Mondai* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Records / Miscellaneous Cases Related to National and Ethnic Issues / Jewish Issue), Vol. 5 (December 1-31, 1938)). The “Essential Points” were later issued to the overseas diplomatic establishments as “Decision by the Council of the Five Ministers dated December 6, the 13th Year of Showa.”
- ⁴ Many scholars simply state that the “Essential Points of the Measures Concerning the Jews” were abolished as war broke out between Japan and the United States. To be sure, remarks to the “Measures for the Jews in View of the Current State of Affairs (draft adopted by the Liaison Meeting)” of January 1942 read: “The Essential Points of the Measures Concerning the Jews adopted by the Council of Five Ministers shall be abolished.” Moreover, the 1942 measures show greater severity toward the Jews: “All entry of Jews shall be forbidden, except for those entering for special reasons” (Item 1); “their residences and commercial operations shall be placed under strict surveillance, and their hostile maneuvers shall be eliminated and suppressed” (Item 2); “all that appears to support the Jewish national movement may not be conducted” (Item 3). Yet, the explanatory section of the same text contains the following passages: “However, actions that appear to completely eliminate the Jews not only go against our national ideal of worldwide unification but also are sure to be used by the British and the Americans for their propaganda; therefore, in principle, the Jews shall be treated in the same way as those who have the same nationalities as they. . . . Not conducting the required surveillance is acknowledged to be appropriate.” While its motivation might have been idealistic or calculating, Japan did continue a line of measures for the Jews that clearly differed from that of Germany or Italy.
- ⁵ Takashi HAYASAKA, *Shikikan no Ketsudan — Manshu to Atsu no Shogun Higuchi Kiichiro (Commander’s Determination: Kiichiro Higuchi, Shogun of Manchukuo and Attu)* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunju’u, 2010), p. 149.
- ⁶ Sea of Japan Topographical Survey and Research Association, *Jindo no Minato Tsuruga — Inochi no Biza de Tsuruga ni Jourikushita Yudayajin Nanmin Sokuseki Chosa Houkoku (Humanitarian Port, Tsuruga: a report of the follow-up survey of Jewish refugees who landed at Tsuruga with Sugihara visas),* 2007.