

Genius Jews and Masterful Japanese (part two)
Outsiders Helping Each Other

Staggering Under the International Situation of Racial Discrimination,
The Jews and the Japanese Help Each Other and Overcome Crises

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1. Non-Christian, Non-Caucasian Adversaries

With the successes being achieved by the Jews and Japanese as outsiders in the Western world, the Westerners began to harbor resentment and to fear them. This was spurred on by the fact that both were neither Christian nor of European extraction.

Morality had for such a long time been equated with Christianity that the non-Christian Jew and Japanese appeared as immoral adversaries.... As it was widely assumed that cheating was the only means by which an infidel could get the better of a good Christian, it was believed that the Jews and the Japanese had achieved their fortunes through improper or illicit business practices. (Shillony, p. 76)

The Jews and the Japanese were alien mainly because they were perceived as belonging to different and inferior races. Racism was prevalent in the nineteenth century, supported by what appeared to be scientific and biological fact. According to the racist notions of the day, Western culture was an accomplishment of the Aryan race, which was superior to all other races. The attempt of the Semitic and Oriental peoples to enter the Western world, to compete with Aryans and to better them in fields that had traditionally been reserved for the white race seemed to endanger Western civilization. (Shillony, pp. 76, 77)

Racists in the West asserted they were under a two-pronged attack: from the outside by the unfamiliar Japanese, and from the inside by the crafty Jews.

2. Marcus Samuel, Who Supported the Japanese in the First Sino-Japanese War

A wave of anti-Semitism swept across Europe at the end of the 19th century. In France, there was a financial crisis; and the Dreyfus Affair played out against the background of an increasing hostility against the Jews, who were leaders in the financial community. This was the incident in which Capt. Alfred Dreyfus, an artillery officer, was falsely accused of passing military secrets to Germany.

In Austria, the anti-Semite Karl Lueger (who later would have an influence on Adolf Hitler) won re-election as mayor of Vienna a number of times despite disapproval by the emperor.

The First Sino-Japanese War broke out at the same time. Japan's victory impressed the world, but at the same time the victory provoked envy and a sense of vigilance toward Japan. Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany was the first one to use the phrase "yellow peril" in a letter to his cousin Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, warning him of the menace posed to Western civilization by the "yellow race."

On the occasion of the First Sino–Japanese War, a certain Jew made a great contribution to Japan. This was Marcus Samuel, an English-born Jew who founded Shell Transport and Trading Co., a precursor of the modern multinational petroleum concern Royal Dutch Shell.

Marcus Samuel, born the son of a poor peddler in London, landed in Yokohama at the age of 16 in 1872 with five pounds in his pocket. He had great success making buttons and small toys from Japanese shells and exporting them to England. (The “Shell” in the company name is from those Japanese shells.) After succeeding as a trader, Samuel went on to further success in opening oil fields in Indonesia.

During the First Sino–Japanese War of 1894–5, Samuel backed the transportation of food and munitions to supply the Japanese army. When the Japanese government converted from the silver standard to the gold standard in 1897, he sold Japanese government bonds to support the fundraising. Because of these meritorious deeds, he was awarded the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun by Emperor Meiji.

He founded Shell Co. in 1897 in Yokohama’s Motomachi district. The company later merged into the conglomerate Royal Dutch Shell.

Samuel returned to England in 1902, becoming Lord Mayor of London. It is not known for certain, but one can only conjecture that he worked in the background for the Anglo–Japanese Alliance, which was ratified that year. (Cohen, p.239)

3. Jacob H. Schiff, Who Backed Funding for the Russo–Japanese War

Tsar Nicholas, who received the letter from Kaiser Wilhelm warning him of the “yellow peril,” was a model anti-Jewish and anti-Japanese person. Anxious about possible revolution, Nicholas attacked the Jews as the ones responsible for the revolutionary atmosphere and gave tacit approval for pogroms against them.

At the same time, he hated the Japanese as well, and so much so that he went so far as to use the pejorative term for Jews — *Zhid* — for the Japanese. He regarded the Japanese as a demonic race, and believed that no matter what, Russia absolutely had to prevent Japan from becoming a major power. He called the Japanese “monkeys” and was convinced that if he were to fight Japan and quickly defeat them, he would be able to curb domestic political unrest.

In point of fact, Russia (alongside France and Germany) brought about the Triple Intervention against Japan, who had just won the First Sino–Japanese War. Russia interfered with China’s cession of the Liaodong Peninsula to Japan, and later was able to work out a lease on Port Arthur and Dalian at the southern tip of the peninsula. In 1900, Russia occupied all of Manchuria; and in 1903 it militarily occupied the Yongam Inlet (the Aplok River estuary) in Korean territory, and began fortifying it.

With Russian territory extending into the Korean Peninsula, Japan felt it would be impossible to maintain independence, so finally she declared war on Russia. Once again, Jewish capital came to the aide of Japan. This time it was Jacob Schiff, an American Jewish leader and the head of Kuhn, Loeb & Co., one of America’s largest investment corporations. Schiff deplored the violence and massacres against Jews in Russia, so to help his brethren he rose to support the Japanese.

Schiff visited Japan in 1906 (the year after Japan won the Russo–Japanese War) and was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun by Emperor Meiji. Schiff was the

first foreigner to receive the Order. Afterward, the Bank of Japan held a reception for him at Kôrakuen, and many in and outside of government welcomed him warmly.

4. “The Father of the Israeli Army”

Next came Joseph Trumpeldor, who has been called the “Father of the Israeli Army.” He was taken prisoner during the Russo–Japanese War and brought to Osaka, where his awareness as a Jew was awakened.

Originally Trumpeldor blended into the Russian society. He wanted to become a dentist, but due to the discrimination in Russia, he didn’t do so.

The Russo–Japanese War broke out when he was 24, and Trumpeldor volunteered for the Russian Army. There was discrimination in the army, too, but he fought valiantly to show that he could be a good Russian soldier even though he was a Jew. At the battle for Port Arthur in 1904, he lost his left arm to a Japanese cannon; but he then applied to return to the front even though he had but one arm.

With the surrender of Port Arthur in January the next year, he was taken prisoner. Along with 28,000 Russian prisoners of war, he was taken to the camp in Osaka’s Takaishi city. Trumpeldor was given permission to start a newspaper in the camp. He wondered, “What kind of country is Japan, who can defeat a mighty country like Russia?”, and in several months had learned Japanese. He was amazed at Japan’s military government and the population’s literacy rate. He also said he was deeply impressed by the courteous treatment of prisoners that the spirit of bushidô inspired.

5. Awakening as Jews

Trumpeldor had 500 Jewish compatriots in the camp. Here it was different that in Russia: they could worship freely as Jews, and they were allowed to live in accord with Jewish customs.

Thanks to this experience, Trumpeldor’s own awareness of his Jewishness began to blossom. The next year he was allowed to return home to Russia, and Trumpeldor then relocated to Palestine. Jews from all over the world were moving there to live in a number of small settlements, but they were under frequent attacks from surrounding Arabs.

Trumpeldor called on his experiences in the Russian army and formed the Jews into a military unit. This was the first Jewish army since the Romans had defeated the Jews 2,000 years before. Trumpeldor settled in a village in the north and fought the Arabs, eventually being killed in battle in October, 1920.

Trumpeldor’s death was the spark that lit the flame all over the world of a movement to create of a state of Israel.

6. The Japan that Rejected Anti-Semitism

Due to the extreme anti-Semitism in Germany after the birth of the Nazi government in 1933, a large number of Jewish refugees emerged in Europe. Even England and America, who had been compassionate to the Jews, failed to accept any of the refugees as the persecution continued.

Meanwhile, since the Great Depression Japan had been shut out of the export markets in the British Commonwealth, the United States, and the Netherlands. Then, with the rejection of Japanese goods in China, Japan fell into an economic crisis.

The Japanese, having endured racial discrimination themselves at the hands of the international community, called upon everyone to be treated with impartiality. They did not think the persecution of the Jews was just “someone else’s problem.”

In March, 1938, about 20,000 Jews fleeing Nazi persecution arrived at a Siberian train station seeking entry into Manchukuo. Maj. Gen. Higuchi Kiichirô, head of the Harbin Special Agency, allowed them to cross. The majority of the refugees fled on to America via Dalian and Shanghai, but about 4,000 settled in the hinterland of Harbin to work as pioneer farmers. Germany, as an ally of Japan, issued a forceful protest; but Gen. Higuchi rebuffed the complaint, saying, “Persecution of the Jews goes against humanity.”

As retribution for the assassination of a German embassy secretary in Paris by a young Polish Jew on November 7 of the same year, most of the synagogues all over Germany were set afire or despoiled, and 7,500 Jewish-owned businesses were destroyed. This was called Kristallnacht (or “Night of Broken Glass”) after the splinters of shattered panes of glass in the streets. 26,000 Jews were dispatched to concentration camps.

A month later, on December 6, the Japanese government held the Conference of Five Ministers (the prime minister, foreign minister, minister of finance, the army minister, and the navy minister) and settled on “A Policy Prospectus vis-à-vis the Jews.” Stating, “we are in agreement with the time-honored assertion of the spirit of equality for all people,” they defined Japanese policy to treat the Jews with the same impartiality as citizens of other countries.

7. Japanese People Who Rescued Jewish Refugees

The person who made the arrangements for the decision by the Conference of Five Ministers was Col. Yasue Norihiro. As a specialist on dealing with Jewish issues for the Japanese army, he pleaded the case for protecting the Jewish refugees. Later, as an advisor for the Manchukuo government and as a commissioner in the office of the president of Manchurian Rail, he continued to work to protect Jews in China and Manchukuo.

The navy’s expert on Jewish matters was Capt. Inuzuka Koreshige. Capt. Inuzuka had been posted to Shanghai since the summer of 1939, and the Hongkou district of Shanghai, protected by the Japanese navy, was the only place in the world where Jews could come without visas. 18,000 Jewish refugees squeezed into Hongkou, and including the original residents, 30,000 Jews were able to live their lives freely there. Germany appealed for the extinction of the Jewish presence in Shanghai, but this was refused by the Japanese.

Col. Yasue and Capt. Inuzuka hoped to protect the Jewish refugees using American Jewish capital, with an eye toward attempting a rapprochement with America. There were some positive results, but their plan ended without realizing success with the outbreak of war with America.

In July, 1940, a group of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi-occupied Poland advanced on the Japanese consulate in the small Baltic state of Lithuania. Lithuania had been annexed by the Soviet Union, and persecution of the Jews began again. They came seeking visas to allow them to travel to the United States or Palestine by way of Japan.

Consul Sugihara Chiune issued visas to over 6,000 Jewish refugees, saving their lives. It wasn’t just Lithuania, however. Japanese consulates in 12 European cities including Vienna, Prague, and Stockholm, issued visas for Jewish refugees.

Over the ten months from Oct. 6, 1940, to June of the next year, 15,000 Jews crossed over to Japan.

8. Auschwitz and Hiroshima

In World War II, the Jews and the Japanese experienced suffering unequalled in human history. The Nazis slaughtered six million Jews, and Hiroshima and Nagasaki were leveled by atomic bombs.

...[T]he tragedies of Auschwitz and Hiroshima were similar in that in both cases advanced technology was employed in the indiscriminate mass killing of civilians. In neither case was there a pressing military necessity to commit these horrors; and in both cases a previous racially based dehumanization of the victims permitted their mass annihilation. (Shillony, p. 94)

Auschwitz and Hiroshima were the pinnacle of racial discrimination against the successful outsiders.

9. Contributions by the Genius Jews and Masterful Japanese

The Jews and Japanese overcame crises during the Second World War that put their survival as a people in crisis, and after the war both came back to thrive again. In Israel the Jews finally got their own country, and Japan became a major nation in the international scene where the Japanese formerly had been locked-out.

Through their tragedies and triumphs they crushed the racial prejudice of the West that had branded them as outsiders. In today's international society, the regarding of specific races as outsiders just because of racial or cultural characteristics has disappeared. On this point alone both races have made a great contribution to human civilization.

It can only be hoped that if the Jews who are geniuses in ideology, science, and commerce, and the Japanese who are masters at various technologies, can work together in the new international society, they can contribute all the more to dealing with problems that threaten mankind — such as the global environmental crisis and international disputes.

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<http://www2s.biglobe.ne.jp/~nippon/jogindex.htm>