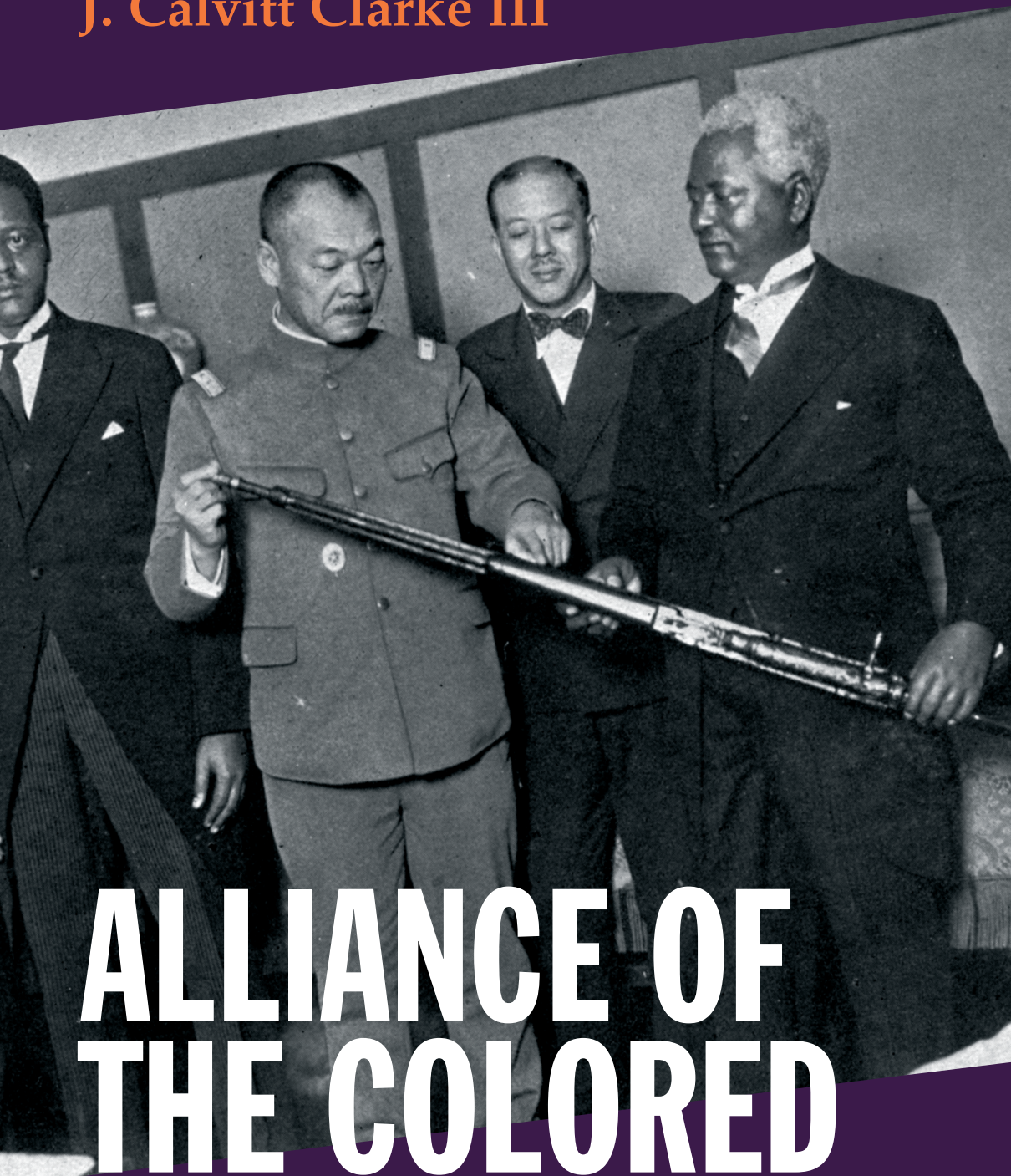


J. Calvitt Clarke III



# ALLIANCE OF THE COLORED PEOPLES

ETHIOPIA  
& JAPAN  
BEFORE WORLD WAR II

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Ethiopia & Japan  
before World War II

J. CALVITT CLARKE III  
*Jacksonville University*



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## *Dedication*

*To my wife, Mariko,  
and our daughter, Tiffany*



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# Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	xi

1	
<i>Early Ethio-Japanese Contacts &amp; the Yellow Peril</i>	1

2	
<i>Ethiopia's Japanizers</i>	7

3	
<i>Japanese Views on Ethiopia</i>	22

4	
<i>Promise of Commercial Exchange 1923-1931</i>	31

5	
<i>Japan's Penetration of Ethiopia Grows</i>	41

6	
<i>The Soviet Union, Italy, China, Japan &amp; Ethiopia</i>	62

7

*The Flowering  
of Ethio-Japanese Relations  
1934*

78

8

*The Sugimura Affair  
July 1935*

101

9

*Daba Birrou's Mission  
to Japan*

131

10

*The End of Stresa,  
the Italo-Ethiopian War,  
& Japan*

148

*Conclusion*

168

*Appendix: The Ethiopian & Meiji Constitutions  
Bibliography  
Index*

171

175

189

---

---

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## Preface

### *Origin of my work*

In February 1991, Greenwood Press published *Russia and Italy Against Hitler*, in which I described the developing relations in the first half of the 1930s between the Soviet Union and Fascist Italy. For the Kremlin, I argued, Italy had a most important role to play in forging the incipient collective security coalition designed to keep Germany in its place and to protect Russian and Italian interests in the Balkans. Until 1936, Italy was the one power with the will and the means to stop in its tracks German expansionism through direct political and military intervention against *Anschluss* in Austria – the gateway to the Balkans.<sup>1</sup>

My current work focuses on Ethio–Japanese relations culminating in the Second Italo–Ethiopian War of 1935 and 1936 and follows on logically from my earlier monograph. How could this be? After all, Ethio–Japanese relations seem obscure and at best tangential to Italo–Russian relations and the momentous events of the 1930s.

Soviet historians as well as many in the bourgeois West have long trumpeted the Soviet Union's principled and altruistic position on the Second Italo–Ethiopian War. Marxism–Leninism, after all, was steeped in anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, and anti-Fascism. These observers say the Soviets consistently and without guile defended Ethiopia's sovereign rights against Italy's colonial predations to the detriment of their relations with Italy.<sup>2</sup> While working on *Russia and Italy Against Hitler*, I found many contemporary accounts in the communist press supporting this opinion. Yet ... occasionally ... there was the odd comment, often using the foreign press to create distance and 'plausible deniability', that Italy's opposition to Japan's penetration of Ethiopia justified its military preparations against Ethiopia. The Japanese, some said, hoped to use Ethiopia as a springboard to attack white civilization in Europe politically, economically, and even militarily. This book is my effort to unravel the meaning of these thoroughly unMarxist–Leninist utterances.

This leads to another question. Why is the Italo–Ethiopian War important to telling the story of Ethio–Japanese relations? Textbooks today quickly glide over the war. They focus on seemingly more important issues: Manchukuo's creation, Japan's invasion of China, the Spanish Civil War, Germany's occupation of the Rhineland, the Munich Agreement after the two Czech crises of 1938, and Czechoslovakia's absorption by Germany in early 1939. Then came the critical negotiations in the summer of 1939 which were consummated in the Nazi–Soviet Pact, the attack on Poland, and world war rather than in an Anglo–Franco–Soviet

alliance. Contemporaries, on the other hand, understood the Italo–Ethiopian War’s importance.

In truth, historians have not ignored the war either. Most of their works, however, describe the diplomacy among Great Britain, France, Italy, and, to a lesser degree, the United States. Those who have written about the League of Nations generally have done so in terms of those players. On the other hand, and reflecting Japan’s continued interest in the war, there is a relatively large bibliography on Ethiopia and the war in Japanese. These contributions largely remain untapped in Western languages and limit a full understanding of the war’s wider implications.<sup>3</sup>

### *A Complex Story*

Mine is a complex story in its detailed narrative and intertwined explanations.

#### ETHIOPIA

Much of the story’s complexity lies in Ethiopia itself. Content to view Africans as little more than pawns to squabble over, relatively few have tried to look at Ethiopians – or other colonial peoples – as independent players in their own histories. The Ethiopians had their own interests, which they sought to advance, and they manipulated the other powers as best they could. By offering commercial opportunities, by seeking military support, and by reaching out to world opinion, Ethiopians tried to soften the stark reality of a stronger Italy seeking to encroach on their country. They adeptly tailored their public message to specific audiences and to the world at large.

Since those writers of 1935 and 1936 who feared an apocalyptic racial war, few have concerned themselves with the war’s effects on Asia’s and Africa’s underdeveloped, colonial countries or on their ‘colored’ populations. Only relatively recently has this changed.<sup>4</sup> The war played a crucial role in developing the post-war, colonial independence movements that destroyed Europe’s empires. The last African territory to fall under European control and the first freed from that status, Ethiopia presaged what was to come in Africa and Asia. In fact, the war galvanized colonial peoples of color to resistance and in important ways changed the nature of that struggle.

#### JAPAN

Japan played an important and a too-forgotten role in Ethiopia’s struggle against colonialism. Japan had surprising and significant contacts with Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular that deeply affected popular imagination.<sup>5</sup> My wife’s grandmother, born in Western Japan, grew excited on hearing that I was working on Japan’s relations with Ethiopia. She recalled:

There was a nationwide atmosphere of friendship toward Ethiopia in the 1930s, and I, then a girls’ middle school student, have a strong impression on the matter. There was a

rumor of a marriage between the Ethiopian royal family and the Japanese nobility. I imagined that Ethiopia must be a wonderful country. The Japanese prewar generation people still feel closeness to Ethiopia even today. In the 1970s, the Japanese people expressed their support for Abebe, an Olympic marathon runner, because he was from Ethiopia.<sup>6</sup>

To this day, Japanese in Kochi Prefecture eat a shiny, brown, sweet, steamed dumpling stuffed with azuki bean paste – an ‘Ethiopia Manjuu’. First created in the 1930s, its makers created the name to show solidarity with Ethiopia.<sup>7</sup> And in the spring of 1999, a popular quiz show on Japanese television asked a question about the proposed marriage of which my grandmother-in-law spoke.<sup>8</sup>

With the Japanese before the Second World War posing as the leader of the world’s colored peoples, many colonials and American blacks turned to Japan for inspiration. Europeans feared Japan’s growing economic and political influence in the colonial world – and in Ethiopia – formerly the sole preserves of European imperialism.

## ITALY

A main player in this story is Italy. Even if its performance in the Spanish Civil War and the World War II often proved inept, in the 1930s all considered Italy to be a Great Power with commensurate interests to protect. Jealously guarding its claimed rights in Ethiopia against all comers, Italians provided the spark to the war.

In 1922, after the World War I, Benito Mussolini and his Fascists came to power. Beyond the rankling memories of the lost Battle of Adwa in 1896 during the First Italo–Ethiopian War and Il Duce’s personal and political needs for imperial prestige, other motivations went into creating and sustaining Italy’s aggressive policy in Northeast Africa.

Justifying the military buildup that eventually enabled Italy to go to war against Ethiopia, Mussolini, in an unsigned article in *Il Popolo d’Italia* in 1935 laid bare his *realpolitik*. He wrote that abolishing Ethiopia’s slavery and bringing civilization would be only consequences, not causes, for war. Betraying much of Fascist propaganda, he also rejected race as a justification for war. Ethiopians, after all, were Semites; besides ‘Fascism would never raise the race question’. Justifying war, he wrote, ‘There are two essential arguments, absolutely unanswerable: the vital needs of the Italian people and their security in East Africa. ... The second is decisive. In 1928, Italy signed a Treaty of Friendship with Abyssinia, and Abyssinia, behind such a treaty, started to organize its army. Instead of entrusting such organization to Italians, however, Abyssinia chose Swedish and Belgian officers.’ After noting the military threat Ethiopia posed to Italy’s colonies, Mussolini asserted, ‘The solution of the problem can only be totalitarian. Military measures must accompany any expansionist action or protectorate. Italy [not the League of Nations] is the only judge of its security in East Africa.’<sup>9</sup>

Il Duce could have added Italy’s need for raw materials and a place to dump its surplus population.<sup>10</sup> Another purpose also loomed large.

Frequently forgotten today, but often cited in the 1930s, was Italy’s perceived

need to blunt Japan's commercial and military advances into Northeast Africa, advances abetted by a sense of racial solidarity between the two 'colored' – yellow and black – peoples. While Italians clearly believed much of their anti-Japanese rhetoric, they, equally as clearly, consciously used it to disarm those who might otherwise oppose Italian moves against Ethiopia.

War led to new friends and enemies for Italy. Italo-Japanese relations had worsened throughout the summer of 1935, especially during the 'Sugimura Affair', in which the Japanese press and foreign minister had undermined Ambassador Yotaro Sugimura's efforts to mollify Italian fears over Japanese perturbations in Ethiopia. Efforts in Rome and Tokyo to smooth over the contretemps laid the foundation for their future alliance.

For Italian Fascists, war against Ethiopia seemed to portend the recreation of the Roman Empire – although a mere five years later, it meant only that this outpost of an overextended imperial regime became the first loss of Axis conquests. On the other hand, Italy's anti-Fascists saw Ethiopia's guerrilla war against occupation as the first blow by Italy's resistance movement after 1943.

#### THE SOVIET UNION & COLLECTIVE SECURITY

From the perspective of the developed countries and the world war to come, Italy's invasion created a crucial turning point in developing notions of how collective security would work. After World War I, and to avoid the ravages of another conflagration, the victors put their faith in the League of Nations, but the Italo-Ethiopian War graphically revealed the organization's impotence before the parochial interests of the Great Powers. Having predicted such impotence, Mussolini in 1933 had inspired the Four Power Pact, a condominium among Britain, Germany, France, and Italy to mediate European and even world affairs. Excluded from Il Duce's proposal, Maksim Maksimovich Litvinov, Foreign Commissar of the Soviet Union, proposed an alternative collective security as the way to prevent war. Throughout 1934 and the summer of 1935, Moscow worked hard and in ways contrary to its claimed ideological imperatives to make this policy work.<sup>11</sup>

By Soviet understanding, Italy had a crucial role in stopping Nazi aggression in Austria and a useful one in harassing Japanese expansion in China. Ethiopia was a small price to pay Mussolini for Anglo-Franco-Italo co-operation against both. Throughout 1934 and the summer of 1935, Moscow repeatedly justified Rome's aggression against Ethiopia by describing it as an appropriate defensive measure against Japan's economic, political, and military inroads in Ethiopia. With alacrity, the Kremlin even wielded the racial club, specifically the 'Yellow Peril' supposedly seeking to unite the colored peoples of the world. Moscow had thus unceremoniously dumped its class-based, anti-imperialist, communist ideology.

In 1935, the communist revolutionary Lev Trotsky perspicaciously predicted that the Italo-Ethiopian conflict 'would be the prelude to a new world war, just as the Balkan War of 1912 was the prelude to the World War of 1914–18.' He added that the war would hasten the formation of coalitions that within three years would be fighting in a coming Russo-Japanese war.<sup>12</sup> In fact, the Italo–

Ethiopian War showed that London, Paris, and Rome could not collaborate productively for long with Moscow. It fatally wounded the League and rendered collective security, in or out of the League, impotent. Indeed, as Trotsky had predicted, the events swirling around the Italo–Ethiopian War helped forge the international combinations that went to war after 1939.

## RACE

‘Yellow’ Japanese and ‘black’ Ethiopian collaboration before the war illuminates the pernicious and flexible use of ‘race’ in international diplomacy. In odious terms, Italians used race to justify their actions as defending Western and white civilization. The Japanese used race to explain their tilt toward Ethiopia. The Soviets agreeably used race to justify their tilt toward Italy throughout most of 1934 and 1935. Ethiopia used race to attract allies and volunteers, and ‘colored peoples’ worldwide rallied to Ethiopia’s call. And they expressed dismay at Moscow’s reticence to back up its anti-colonial, communist rhetoric with diplomatic muscle. As tensions mounted in the summer of 1935, Mahatma Gandhi implicitly threatened that any Italo–Ethiopian conflict might erupt into a larger racial struggle: ‘India can no longer remain unprovoked by Italian Premier Benito Mussolini, who has spoken insultingly of the colored races in general.’<sup>13</sup>

## THE JAPANIZERS & MODERNIZATION

Many Ethiopians faced emotional and more tangible conflicts as they sought modernization for the sake of national independence in a white-dominated and imperialistic world order. Only modernity could provide the economic, political, and military strength necessary to preserve sovereignty. But, modernity’s best teachers were also those who most threatened Ethiopia’s independence. How could Ethiopians with safety and dignity borrow from the West that held them in racial and cultural contempt?

The obvious way to break the conundrum was to turn to Japan. Similar in spirit to other contemporary groups such as the Young Turks and Young Egypt, Ethiopia’s Japanizers sought modern reforms. Opening his school in 1925, its superintendent put the issue plainly. He spoke on the ‘law of nature’ whereby the educated and civilized nations would inevitably sink the uneducated and uncivilized ones. For the Japanese to be successful, they realized they had to ‘imbibe European knowledge and imbibe it fast’. They ‘began to work diligently and were able to reach in sixty years the level of development that others have only been able to attain in centuries. Let us follow this amazing and praiseworthy example of farsightedness and resoluteness of an entire people’.<sup>14</sup> The important Ethiopian publication, *Berhanena Salam*, praised this speech.

Many Japanese, especially those among the rightwing, ultra-nationalists, enthusiastically responded to Ethiopia’s entreaties, and they spoke of leading an alliance of the world’s colored people seeking racial pride and independence.

Japan’s increasing influence on Ethiopia’s modernization, however, struck at the heart of Italy’s pretensions there.

### *A brief note on approach & sources*

Drawing on archives in Tokyo, Rome, and Washington, plus published primary and secondary sources in English, Japanese, Russian, Italian, and French, this narrative monograph describes and explains relations between Ethiopia and Japan from their beginnings and through the Italo–Ethiopian War of 1935 and 1936. It then places those relations in the context of larger world history during the interwar period and raises issues of finding the best routes to political, economic, and military modernization. It also includes significant commentary on intellectual and cultural developments, commercial and economic interactions, and military contacts.

Italian and especially Japanese newspapers are useful sources. The Japanese published three important papers dedicated to foreign readers, the *Japan Times & Mail*, the *Japan Advertiser*, and the *Osaka Mainichi and Tokyo Nichi Nichi*. The last consisted largely of reprints of articles translated into English from the *Osaka Mainichi* and the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi*. Their correspondents – heartily rejecting dispassionate observation – actively intervened in matters normally reserved to diplomatic representatives to promote relations between Japan and Ethiopia.

There are relatively fewer sources. On the Ethiopian side, one useful text is Foreign Minister Heruy Welde Sellase's travelogue describing his visit to Japan in 1931, which was subsequently translated into Japanese.<sup>15</sup> Bahru Zewde has written on Ethiopia's relations with Japan.<sup>16</sup>

The intricate weave of different threads in international diplomacy – this complex story – begins with Japan's early contacts with Africa and the West's negative reaction to Japan's growing influence in the world at the turn of the last century.

### *Notes*

<sup>1</sup> J. Calvitt Clarke III, *Russia and Italy against Hitler: The Bolshevik–Fascist Rapprochement of the 1930s* (New Haven, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991).

<sup>2</sup> Compare, for example, Ivan Fedorovich Ivashin, *Contemporary International Relations* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), pp. 24–7; Ivan Fedorovich Ivashin, *Ocherki istorii vneshnei politiki SSSR* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1958), pp. 246–53; Emile Burns, *Ethiopia and Italy* (New York: International Publishers, 1935), esp. pp. 135–7; E.A. Tarabrin (ed.), *USSR and Countries of Africa (Friendship, Cooperation, Support for the Anti-Imperialist Struggle)* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980), pp. 42–4; Donald Imrich Buzinkai, 'Soviet-League Relations, 1919–1939: A Survey and Analysis' (PhD diss., New York University, 1964), pp. 166–73; and Hugh D. Phillips, *Between the Revolution and the West: A Political Biography of Maxim M. Litvinov* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1992), pp. 155–7. For a post-Soviet Russian interpretation, see I.A. Khormach, *SSSR–Italia, 1924–1939 gg.: Diplomaticheskie i ekonomicheskie otnosheniia* (Moscow: Institut rossiiskoi istorii, Rossiiskaia akademiia nauk, 1995), esp. pp. 169–206. See also see Rosaria Quartararo, *Italia–URSS, 1917–1941: I rapporti politici* (Naples: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> For an overview, see Aoki Sumio and Kurimoto Eisei, 'Japanese Interest in Ethiopia (1868–1940): Chronology and Bibliography', in *Ethiopia in Broader Perspective: Papers of the XIIIth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, K.E. Fukui and M. Shigeta (eds), 3 vols. (Kyoto: Shokado Book Sellers, 1997), 1:713–28. Particularly important are Taura Masanor's works: 'I. E. funsō to Nihon-

gawa taiō: Shōwa 10 nen Sugimura seimei jiken o chūshin ni,' *Nihon rekishi* 526 (Mar. 1992):79–95; "Nichi-i kankei (1935–36) to sono yōtai'. Echiopia sensō o meguru Nihongawa taiō kara,' in *Nihon kindai no saikōchiku*, (ed.) Takashi Itō (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1993), pp. 302–28; and 'Nihon-Echiopia kankei ni miru 1930 nen tsūshō gaikō no isō,' *Seifu to minkan. Nenpō kindai nihon kenkyū* 17 (1995):141–70.

My thanks to Mariko Clarke for translating the Japanese.

- <sup>4</sup> See, for example, the works of William Randolph Scott, 'Malaku Bayen: Ethiopian Emissary to Black America, 1936–1941', *Ethiopia Observer* 15 (1972):132–8 and *The Sons of Sheba's Race: African-Americans and the Italo–Ethiopian War, 1935–1941* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993). See also S.K.B. Asante's works: *Pan-African Protest: West Africa and the Italo–Ethiopian Crisis, 1934–1941* (London: Longman, 1977); 'South Africa and the Italo–Ethiopian Crisis, 1935–36' *Ghana Social Science Journal* 3 (May 1976):47–53; 'The Catholic Missions: British West African Nationalists, and the Italian Invasion of Ethiopia, 1935–36', *African Affairs* 73 (April 1974):204–16; and 'The Italo–Ethiopian Conflict: A Case Study in British West African Response to Crisis Diplomacy in the 1930s', *Journal of African History* 15 (1974): 291–302. Finally, see Joseph E. Harris, *African-American Reactions to War in Ethiopia, 1936–1941* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994); Rodney A. Ross, 'Black Americans and Haiti, Liberia, the Virgin Islands and Ethiopia, 1929–1936' (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1975); and W.E.B. DuBois, 'Inter-Racial Implications of the Ethiopian Crisis: A Negro View', *Foreign Affairs* 14 (Oct. 1935):82–92.

- <sup>5</sup> Richard Bradshaw, 'Japan and European Colonialism in Africa 1800–1937' (PhD diss., Ohio University, 1992); Jun Morikawa, 'The Myth and Reality of Japan's Relations with Colonial Africa 1885–1960' *Journal of African Studies*, 12 (1985):39–46. Also see Furukawa Tetsushi's works: 'Japanese–Ethiopian Relations in the 1920s–30s: The Rise and Fall of "Sentimental" Relations', unpublished paper presented to the 34th Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, St Louis, MO, November 1991; 'Japan's Political Relations with Ethiopia, 1920s–1960s: A Historical Overview', unpublished paper presented to the 35th Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Seattle, WA, November 1992; and 'Japanese Political and Economic Interests In Africa: The Prewar Period', *Network Africa* 7 (1991):6–8. Among his works on Africa, Okakura Takashi has written on Japan and Ethiopia. See, for example, '1930 nendai no Nihon-Echiopia kankei: Echiopia sensō o chūshin ni,' *Afurika kenkyū* 37(December 1990):59–64.

- <sup>6</sup> Yoshiko Makiuchi, Spring 1998.

- <sup>7</sup> Personal communication from Luke Shepherd Roberts, March 20, 1996.

- <sup>8</sup> Personal communication from Mark Caprio, April 9, 1999.

- <sup>9</sup> *Il Popolo d'Italia*, July 31, 1935; *The Times*, August 1, 1935.

- <sup>10</sup> Petr Alekseevich Lisovskii, *Voina v Afrike* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe izdatel'stvo, 1935), pp. 16–20.

- <sup>11</sup> Clarke, *Russia*, pp. 59–199. For more on the Great Powers' reactions to the Italo–Ethiopian War, see Thomas Michael Verich, *The European Powers and the Italo–Ethiopian War, 1935–1936: A Diplomatic Study* (Salisbury, NC: Documentary Publications, 1980).

- <sup>12</sup> *Osaka Mainichi* & *Tokyo Nichi Nichi* (hereafter cited as *OM&TNN*), July 28, 1935; *New York Times* (hereafter cited as *NYT*), July 27, 1935.

- <sup>13</sup> *OM&TNN*, July 28, 1935. See Robert A. Hill (ed.), *The FBI's RACON: Racial Conditions in the United States During World War II* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1995), pp. 507–35; Roi Ottley, *New World A-Coming* (New York: Literary Classics, Inc., 1943), pp. 209, 327–9; Reginald Kearney, *African American Views of the Japanese: Solidarity or Sedition?* (Albany: State University of New York, 1998), pp. 72–127; and David J. Hellwig, 'Afro-American Reactions to the Japanese and the Anti-Japanese Movement, 1906–1924', *Phylon* 38 (1977):93–104; Etsuko Taketani, 'Colored Empires in the 1930s: Black Internationalism, the U.S. Black Press, and George Samuel Schuyler,' *American Literature* 82 (2010):121–49.

- <sup>14</sup> Bahru Zewde, 'The Concept of Japanization in the Intellectual History of Modern Ethiopia', in *Proceedings of Fifth Seminar of the Department of History*, Bahru Zewde (ed.) et al. (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 1990), pp. 6–7; see also Okakura Takashi, *Echiopia no rekishi: Sheba no joō no kuni kara akai teikoku hōkai made* (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1999), pp. 167–8.

- <sup>15</sup> Heruy Welde Sellase, *Dai-Nihon* (Tokyo: Eibumpō Tsuroni, 1934).

- <sup>16</sup> Bahru Zewde, Concept, pp. 1–17.





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# 1

## *Early Ethio-Japanese Contacts & the Yellow Peril*

### *Early Ethio-Japanese contacts*

The historical relationship between Japan and Africa stretches back to the seventh century, when Japanese and Africans presumably met each other in China and elsewhere in East Asia. With the arrival of Europeans by the mid-sixteenth century, encounters between Japanese and Africans in and outside Japan had increased. Japanese contacts with Africa before World War II, however, were always an appendage. Moreover, distinguishing North and Northeast Africa geographically from Black Africa by stressing racial, historical, religious, cultural, and linguistic differences, Japan's foreign ministry officially classified that region as part of the Middle East.<sup>1</sup>

After the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japanese intellectuals began to pay attention to African affairs, initially through European eyes. Later, Japan also got first-hand information by sending official economic missions, setting up consular offices, and using the information networks created by shipping companies and trading houses. European colonialism in Africa made Japan's military and political penetration impossible, and Japan's African interests remained a by-product of expanding economic markets and its political relations with Western countries. Japan designed its economic penetration to capture markets and to secure cheap and stable supplies of raw materials, especially cotton. A latecomer to world politics, Japan accepted Europe's political hegemony over Africa and the colonial, economic system that made this exploitation possible. These limited, exploitative contacts meant that Japan could and did claim clean hands in Africa.<sup>2</sup>

Japan joined the imperialist world dominated by the Western powers with its victories in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 and 1895 to win Formosa (Taiwan) and the Russo-Japanese War a decade later, followed by Korea's annexation in 1910. The Japanese looked to the West's African colonies for a model of how to conquer and control peoples and territories. Many intellectuals discussed and translated into Japanese books about Europe's colonial systems and administrations in Africa. In the 1890s, Japan's government closely followed Ethiopia's colonial dispute with Italy and its implications for Japanese policies in Asia and

Africa.<sup>3</sup> Further, resenting Western claims of superiority, the Japanese looked to Africa for insight, especially in their battles against the ‘unequal treaties’, which European states had imposed on themselves as well as the Chinese and Koreans.<sup>4</sup>

Ethiopia first appeared in the foreign ministry’s documents on April 6, 1896, shortly after having defeated the Italians at Adwa. In the glow of Japan’s own victory over China in 1895, when Japanese military strength and expansionist fever were growing, the army minister wanted to observe Italy’s colonial war. Assuming it would continue, the foreign minister wanted to send an officer, a doctor, and an accountant to follow Italy’s expeditionary force. Rome, however, refused Tokyo’s request.<sup>5</sup>

Many Japanese wished to join the West in Africa’s exploitation, and some came to see Ethiopia as a potential commercial gateway to the continent. In 1899, Dr Tomizu Hirono, a professor of law at Tokyo Imperial University, published a pamphlet entitled *The Future of Africa*. Admiring filibustering imperialists such as Cecil Rhodes, he concluded that Japan had to expand its influence in Africa, before Europeans controlled the continent completely.<sup>6</sup>

Japan’s trade with Africa grew. The Japan Mail Steamship Co. began regular service to Europe through the Suez Canal in 1896. Stopping at Port Said in Egypt, Japanese merchant ships established direct trade connections with Africa for the first time. Sporadic, small-scale, and unorganized trade in commodities with small family ventures exporting to limited areas of the African continent characterized the period between 1898 and 1913. By 1899, silk thread from Japan was entering Ethiopia through Harrar, and by 1918, Japanese cloth had superseded American unbleached muslin, which had dominated Ethiopia’s imports until then.<sup>7</sup>

During World War I, Tomizu’s view of Africa emerged more strongly in Japan. For example, some thought that Japan should send troops to occupy Germany’s territories in Africa, although the project never developed.<sup>8</sup>

As Japan’s political and economic power increased, conditions turned against its expansion, and, citing the Yellow Peril, Western states began criticizing the Japanese, who, in turn, began objecting to white domination of the world. Many Japanese thought they should block the West’s colonial penetration of Asia and should lead all ‘colored’ peoples—including Ethiopians.<sup>9</sup>

### *The Yellow Peril*

The excited alarms of a racial, Japanese threat to European civilization had a relatively short but vigorous history. For many Europeans living in the competitive, Social Darwinist, survival-of-the-fittest world at the beginning of the twentieth century, racial ideas held grave and emotional implications as well as many contradictions and inconsistencies. A sense of white, racial superiority led to condescending, paternalistic attitudes toward the Japanese; yet Japan’s rise as a formidable military power inevitably provoked insecurity and fear of the ‘Yellow Peril’.

The Yellow Peril held different meanings for different commentators, who expressed diverse economic, military, and cultural concerns. All, however,

stressed the need for vigilance, as symbolized by Hermann Knackfuss's drawing 'Yellow Peril', from Kaiser Wilhelm II's own design. In 1895, the Kaiser sent the drawing to his cousin, Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, and it was subsequently reproduced in many newspapers and books throughout Europe. At its worst, the term conjured up nightmares of Asiatic hordes descending on Europe to pillage, burn, and rape – to destroy its civilization and to kill and enslave its population. For Yellow Perilists, China's Boxer Rebellion of 1900 and then the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 and 1905 encouraged fears that a new Genghis Khan might arise. Many saw Russia's defeat by Japan as the fall of the first bastion guarding European civilization.<sup>10</sup>

The German writer, Baron von Falkenegg, added that this terrifying yellow menace had arisen largely from European stupidity. Too many saw 'the little Japs' as 'little schoolboys ... who would always look up obediently and respectfully to their masters'. Europeans had shown them 'all the mysteries of our civilisation', including 'factories and workshops and laboratories', and had 'let them look behind the scenes of the most sophisticated methods of manufacture'. Europeans were 'delighted when the cute, polite little people, who looked so harmless, left with a pleasant smile'. Deluded, Europeans had unwittingly 'armed the hand which one day will fill them with terror'.<sup>11</sup>

Journalist, poet, and fierce advocate of the Yellow Peril, Thomas William Hodgson Crosland scorned the praise his compatriots were heaping on Britain's Japanese allies. 'Since the beginning of the Russo-Japanese war what have you not heard about him? His "pluck", his "heroism", his "amazing adaptability", his "unparalleled zeal", and "energy", his "unquenchable patriotism."'<sup>12</sup> He was, instead, a 'stunted, lymphatic, yellow-faced heathen, with a mouthful of teeth three sizes too big ... bulging slits where his eyes ought to be, blacking-brush hair, a foolish giggle, a cruel heart, and the conceit of the devil'.<sup>13</sup> Holding contempt for the false face the pagan Japanese were putting forward, Crosland wrote, 'Japan has sagaciously put on all the appearance of a civilised nation.'<sup>14</sup> Japan, however, had beaten Russia because of soldiers 'who would rip themselves up rather than suffer defeat, and to whom life is not a matter worth a moment's consideration. They are men, in fact, who believe themselves to be without souls'.<sup>15</sup>

Echoing Crosland, Yellow Perilists generally stressed the theme of Christian against heathen. In the Kaiser's drawing of the 'Yellow Peril', Buddha represented the Peril. The caption read, 'Nations of Europe! Join in the defence of your faith and your home'. By the beginning of May 1905, with Russia's defeat certain, the Kaiser credited Japan's victories to patriotism, family affection, and discipline. This, however, did not mean that Buddha was superior to Jesus Christ, but rather that Christianity was languishing. Meanwhile, the Japanese had shown many Christian virtues. For Wilhelm, being a good Christian meant being a good soldier. Unhappily, however, German Christianity was declining, and if war was to break out, he doubted that Germans had the right to ask God for victory. The Japanese, Wilhelm added, were a 'scourge of God', as Attila had been.<sup>16</sup>

Most Yellow Perilists did not fear Japan alone. The terrifying specter was an alliance of Asian nations under Japan's leadership in a common crusade to confront the West. One journalist, René Pinon, predicted that 'amid fire and

slaughter, Japanese and Chinese hordes' would spread, 'crushing under foot' Europe's capitals and destroying its civilizations 'grown anaemic' from 'luxuries and corrupted by vanity of spirit'. Even if the countries of the West should unite, the Yellow Peril would remain. 'The civilized world,' he added, 'has always organized itself before and against a common adversary: for the Roman world, it was the Barbarian; for the Christian world, it was Islam; tomorrow it will be the "yellow man".'<sup>17</sup>

An American anthropologist and journalist, Lothrop Stoddard, agreed. He provocatively argued in 1920 that Japan's defeat of Russia in 1904 had signaled the dawn of a new era when the white world would succumb to Asia's birthrate. Asia provided the vanguard of the world's black, brown, and yellow hordes, he wrote.<sup>18</sup>

The Oriental soul is always the same, said Yellow Perilists, and the Japanese threat at the turn of the century was the same as in centuries past. 'Mongoloids' had several times shaken the Western world to its foundations and three times they had almost forged a powerful world empire – under Attila, Genghis Khan, and Tamerlane – declared an alarmed Falkenegg. 'The European powers should have realised in good time, that the cunning, skilled and valiant Japanese people would soon be uttering the slogan "Asia for the Asians",' which means 'Japan dominates Asia, and Asia dominates Europe'. Despairing over those rejoicing at Japan's victory over Russia, he caustically added, 'But those whom the Gods wish to destroy, they make blind.'<sup>19</sup>

The Yellow Perilists saw not just political and military threats; they also focused on the economic ramifications of Japan's rise. Ten years before the Russo-Japanese War Ignatius Valentine Chirol of *The Times* of London had warned of the danger. 'The time is not far distant when not only ourselves, but industrial Europe altogether will rue the day when we introduced to the labour markets of the world the enterprising genius of Japan and the countless hosts of Chinese labour.'<sup>20</sup> Japan's victory in 1905 raised the economic threat to new highs. Pinon feared that Japan would organize and industrialize Chinese labor and close East Asian markets to European manufactures and that oriental exports would invade regions now importing Western manufactures. Europe would have to raise 'ultra-protectionist barriers' or face lowering its workers' salaries. The author closed, 'The victory of Japan over Russia will be the starting point of a new era in which the yellow race, under Japanese control will adopt all the processes and tools of our civilisation.' The result for Europe would be 'economic perturbations which will notably delay any solution to its grave social problems'.<sup>21</sup>

Not all feared the Yellow Peril. The rising socialist, social democratic, and other progressive European political movements in particular saw Japan as the 'Yellow Hope', and some even spoke of an imperialist, 'White Peril' in Asia.<sup>22</sup> Those who saw Japan as the Yellow Hope and those who saw it as the Yellow Peril did agree on one point, however, namely that the Russo-Japanese War marked the beginning of the end of Europe's world domination.

Europeans did have legitimate cause for concern. Japan's dramatic victory over Russia in 1905 had electrified those bending under the yoke of European colonialism. Tokyo became the Mecca for nationalist leaders from China,

Vietnam, the Philippines, India, and Burma, and the Japanese founded groups to encourage them.<sup>23</sup> The future Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, from jail wrote to his daughter that Japan had 'entered the charmed circle of the great Powers'. He added that he had shared the excitement of many Asian youths in Japan's victory over a 'great European Power ... Asia could still defeat Europe as it had done so often in the past'. He had heard the inspiring cry of 'Asia for Asiatics'. Young Asians saw that the foundation of Japan's victory was in its 'adoption of the new industrial methods of the West, and these ideas and methods became more popular all over the East'.<sup>24</sup>

Japan inspired Ethiopians as well. Hearing of Japan's victory over Russia, Ethiopia's Emperor Menilek II expressed great satisfaction and said that Ethiopia, in its own way, was trying to copy Japan's example. He and his subjects optimistically drew facile comparisons between Japan's success and Ethiopia's own victory over Italy at Adwa.<sup>25</sup>

## Conclusion

In the years before the Italo-Ethiopian War, officials in Tokyo harbored their own imperialistic ambitions in Asia; yet they also feared Western reaction to appeals to Asian nationalism. Thus, while many Japanese nationalists responded favorably to Ethiopian entreaties for closer relations, the association of Asia's and Ethiopia's nationalists with Japan never entirely pleased the Imperial Government in Tokyo.<sup>26</sup>

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Bradshaw, 'Japan', pp. 46–69; Richard Bradshaw, 'Japanese Interest in Africa: A Historical Overview', *Swords and Ploughshares*, 7 (1993):6–8; Themba Sono, *Japan and Africa: The Evolution and Nature of Political, Economic and Human Bonds, 1544–1993* (Pretoria: HSRC Publishers, 1997), pp. 14–58; Morikawa, 'Myth', p. 45n1.
- <sup>2</sup> Morikawa, 'Myth', pp. 39, 45n6, 45n8; Richard A. Bradshaw, 'Japan and British Imperialism in Africa, 1860–1930s: A Neglected Dimension of Anglo-Japanese Relations'. Paper presented to Conference, 'Japan and Afro-Americans: A Comparative Perspective', Chapel Hill, North Carolina, November 3, 1997; Okakura Takashi and Kitagawa Katsuhiko, *Nihon, Afurika koryūshi: Meiji-ki kara dainiji sekai taishenki made* (Tokyo: Dōbunkan, 1993), p. 29; Sono, *Japan and Africa*, pp. 59–94. For a theoretical and historical analysis of the colonial development policy in East Africa, see E.A. Brett, *Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa: The Politics of Economic Change, 1919–1939* (New York: NOK Publishers Limited, 1973).
- <sup>3</sup> Nishino Terutarō, 'The Beginnings of African Studies in Japan', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1 (1963):385–6.
- <sup>4</sup> *Japan Weekly Mail*, November 17, 1888, pp. 465–66; Bradshaw, 'Japan', pp. 293–5.
- <sup>5</sup> *Japan Weekly Mail*, February 8, 1896, p. 145; May 9, 1896, p. 526; Bradshaw, 'Japan', pp. 296–7; Hidēko Faëber-Ishihara, *Les premiers contacts entre l'Éthiopie et le Japon* (Paris: Aresae, 1998), pp. 7–8.
- <sup>6</sup> Bradshaw, 'Japan', pp. 297–8.
- <sup>7</sup> *Japan Weekly Mail*, March 14, 1896, pp. 298, 313–14; March 21, 1896, p. 322; May 30, 1896, p. 597; William D. Wray, *Mitsubishi and the N.Y.K., 1870–1914: Business Strategy in the Japanese Shipping Industry* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 315–17, 320; Morikawa, 'Myth', p. 40; Bradshaw, 'Japan', p. 297.
- <sup>8</sup> Furukawa, 'Japanese Political', p. 7.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.

- <sup>10</sup> Jean-Pierre Lehmann, *The Image of Japan: From Feudal Isolation to World Power, 1850–1905* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1978), pp. 149–57, 168; the Kaiser’s drawing is between p. 145 and p. 146. Also see Gregory Blue, ‘Gobineau on China: Race Theory, the ‘Yellow Peril’, and the Critique of Modernity’, *Journal of World History* 10 (April 1999):93–139, esp. pp. 119–26, 131–2.
- <sup>11</sup> Lehmann, *Image*, p. 169, quoting Baron von Falkenegg, *Japan Die Neue Weltmacht* (Berlin: Boll and Pickardt, 1905), pp. 11–16. See also Rotem Kowner, ‘Nicholas II and the Japanese Body: Images and Decision-Making on the Eve of the Russo-Japanese War’, *Psychohistory Review* 26 (April 1, 1998): 229–52.
- <sup>12</sup> Thomas William Hodgson Crosland, *The Truth about Japan* (London: Grant Richards, 1904), pp. 1–2.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.
- <sup>16</sup> *The Times*, May 9, 1905; Lehmann, *Image*, pp. 171–2.
- <sup>17</sup> René Pinon, ‘La Guerre Russo-Japonaise et l’Opinion Européenne’, *Revue des Deux Mondes* 21 (May 1, 1904):219; René Pinon, ‘Après la Chute de Port Arthus’, *Revue des Deux Mondes* 27 (June 1, 1905):562–3; Lehmann, *Image*, pp. 172–3, 176–7.
- <sup>18</sup> Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color against White World Supremacy* (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1920), pp. 17–53, 203–7, 236–7; Richard Austin Thompson, *The Yellow Peril, 1890–1924* (New York: Arno Press, 1978), pp. 38, 40.
- <sup>19</sup> Lehmann, *Image*, pp. 173–6, quoting Falkenegg, *Japan*, pp. 16–52.
- <sup>20</sup> *The History of The Times*, Vol. 3: *The Twentieth Century Test, 1884–1912* (London: The Office of The Times, 1947), pp. 193–7, quote, p. 196; Lehmann, *Image*, pp. 177–8.
- <sup>21</sup> Pinon, ‘Guerre Russo-Japonaise’, p. 195; Lehmann, *Image*, p. 178. See the essays in David Wells and Sandra Wilson (eds), *The Russo-Japanese War in Cultural Perspective, 1904–05* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1999).
- <sup>22</sup> Sidney Gulick, *The White Peril in the Far East: An Interpretation of the Significance of the Russo-Japanese War* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1905), pp. 164–79; Anatole France, *Sur La Pierre Blanche* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1904), for example, p. 212; Lehmann, *Image*, p. 150.
- <sup>23</sup> *Japan Advertiser* (hereafter cited as *J.A.*), October 20, 1933.
- <sup>24</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History, Being Further Letters to his Daughter, Written in Prison, and Containing a Rambling Account of History for Young People*, 2nd ed. (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962 [1934]), p. 479.
- <sup>25</sup> Jean-Pierre Lehmann, *The Roots of Modern Japan* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1982), p. 312; *Japan Times and Mail*, November 23, 1934; Taura, ‘Nihon-Ethiopia kankei’, p. 148; Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afūrika*, p. 31; Teshale Tibebu, ‘The Making of Modern Ethiopia, 1900–1975: An Inquiry in Historical Sociology’ (PhD diss., State University of New York at Binghamton, 1990), pp. 14–19.
- <sup>26</sup> Lehmann, *Roots*, pp. 312–13.



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# 2

## *Ethiopia's Japanizers*

### *Rise of an educated elite & the Japanizers*

#### PROGRESSIVE INTELLECTUALS, YOUNG ETHIOPIANS, & JAPANIZERS

From the second half of the nineteenth century, mainly through European missionary schools, a smattering of young Ethiopians began receiving the rudiments of a modern education. Europe impressed these youths, even if most had never been there. They did, however, have contacts with the colonial territories bordering Ethiopia, and most studied foreign languages and other modern subjects in mission schools or in the new state schools. In the early twentieth century, these students with foreign educations often sought positions at court, and many of them refused to share the complacency of their compatriots after Ethiopia's military victory over Italy at Adwa in 1896.<sup>1</sup>

Called 'Progressive Intellectuals', 'Young Ethiopians', or 'Japanizers', their influence peaked in the 1920s and early 1930s. Each label highlighted something different about them. The first simply expressed Ethiopia's need to reform. The other two implied Ethiopia's need to find a suitable model for that reform. European and American observers often used the term 'Young Ethiopians', which evoked parallels with other reforming, secular, nationalist groups such as the Young Turks and Young Egypt. The third designation highlighted the impact that Japan's Meiji transformation had had on Ethiopia's intellectuals. Japan's dramatic and rapid metamorphosis from a feudal society, like Ethiopia's, into an industrial power by the end of the nineteenth century attracted them. The Japanese victory over Russia was a victory of 'peoples of color' over 'white' oppression and dramatized that non-whites could learn European skills and turn them against European colonizers. Italy's invasion of Libya in 1911 and 1912, by contrast, showed the failure of the Ottoman Empire, still in the throes of the Young Turk's early modernization efforts, to meet the challenge. Thus, Japanization was a means to an end – to solve the problem of underdevelopment. Japan's modernization had guaranteed its peace and prosperity, while Ethiopia's

continued backwardness threatened its very survival, the Japanizers argued.<sup>2</sup>

While passionately denouncing archaic feudalism, reformers were not seeking bourgeois capitalism as the alternative mode of production. Ethiopia's backward commercial bourgeoisie could not accumulate sufficient capital, and the imperialist colonizers would not allow the country to develop to such size and weight that it could win its home market for itself. Given the threat from Western, capitalist imperialism, Ethiopia did not have the luxury of time for 'natural' capitalist development. Rather, the Japanizers sought to develop Ethiopia's capitalism with resources available only through state power and revolution from above. The state had to gather capital while actively supporting the commercial bourgeoisie to create conditions for its development. With its poorly developed division of labor, only recently had Ethiopia emerged from feudal anarchy with barons still entrenched in the provinces. Japanization therefore implied more drastic and more vigorous measures than Japan had needed.<sup>3</sup>

Ironically, Europeans often reinforced the idea of a Japanese model. In 1907, for example, the French plenipotentiary minister in Ethiopia spoke with Empress Taytu Betul on Ethiopia's progress. She asked, 'What can we do?' The minister replied, 'See the Japanese .... In hardly fifteen years, from the beginning of their evolution did they not become, in a short time, as strong as their teachers? It is necessary to go to the front in progress and not to escape it. Send some young people to Europe ... and they will come back here to tell their countrymen what they have seen and learned.'<sup>4</sup>

#### ETHIOPIANS DISCOVER MODERN JAPAN

Some Ethiopians themselves tried to answer Empress Taytu's question, 'What can we do?', much as had the French minister.

Shortly before 1900, Gabra Egziabher, an Eritrean intellectual, produced the first Amharic newspaper as a handwritten, weekly sheet with a circulation of about fifty. A keen Ethiopian patriot, he wrote verses extolling unity and modernization as necessary for national independence:

Mr Unity having reigned, if he rule over us,  
No enemy will hurt us; envious persons will be few.  
Do not joke about this matter,  
Lest we become other people's plaything, and plunder.  
Be vigilant; do not be weak!  
Teach knowledge; let counsellors multiply!  
Do not treat this, my advice, as a joke!<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, another patriotic poem pleaded:

Being united, let us reflect.  
Lest we become, like the sheep, the wolf's prey.  
Before the invader comes, on a swift horse,  
Let us remain strong, so that we may be wise  
I pray to you, my country, and my mother.  
Let jealousy vanish; let not Satan enter.  
Lest the foreigner scratch you.<sup>6</sup>

In another poem, Gabra Egziabher wrote:

Let us learn from the Europeans; let us become strong.  
So that the enemy may not vanquish us, on the first encounter.  
Let us examine our history; let us read the newspaper.  
Let us learn languages; let us look at maps.  
This is what opens people's eyes.  
Darkness has gone; dawn has come.  
It is a disgrace to sleep by day.<sup>7</sup>

Modernization, for the sake of national strength, found expression in another of his poems:

He who accepts it, fears no one.  
He will become like Japan, strong in everything.<sup>8</sup>

Ethiopia's Japanization began with its modernization, and Gebre Heywet Baykedagn strongly represented Japanizer ideas.<sup>9</sup> Born on July 30, 1886, near Adwa in Tegray, Gebre Heywet studied first in a Swedish mission in Eritrea, then in Austria, and later in Berlin. Finishing his studies, he returned to Ethiopia and became a private secretary and interpreter to the Emperor. As an interpreter, he accompanied an official mission to Germany in the summer of 1907. From there, he joined a German medical expedition going to Ethiopia to treat Emperor Menilek, who had taken ill. Empress Taytu, however, was suspicious of the Germans, and Gebre Heywet fought with her and other conservatives. In 1909, he exiled himself to the neighboring colony of Sudan, and worked for British intelligence.<sup>10</sup> He returned to Ethiopia in 1912.

Gebre Heywet's polemical writing promoted economic self-sufficiency and radical changes in education, administration, and finances. He laid out the problem: 'In the old days, ignorance held sway. Today, however, a strong and unassailable enemy called the European mind has risen against her. Whoever opens his door to her prospers. Whoever closes his door will be destroyed.' He also promised hope: 'If our Ethiopia accepts the European mind, no one would dare attack her. If not, she will disintegrate and be enslaved.'<sup>11</sup> Modern education was his mantra, and he contrasted Ethiopian and Japanese attitudes toward education. 'The Japanese Government,' he wrote, 'not only does not hunt those who serve it after having finished their studies, but it financially helps those who ready to leave to study in Europe.' Further, Japan encouraged Europeans to set up schools, which had opened the eyes of the Japanese people. Japan became richer, more powerful, and respected. Emperor Menilek should have done the same but did not.<sup>12</sup>

To free itself politically, Ethiopia had to extricate itself from economic dependency by following Japan's example. Until Ethiopians could trade on equal terms with Europeans as the Japanese did, they would never truly be free. During his government career, Gebre Heywet worked as palace treasurer, chief of customs at Dire Dawa, and inspector of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa Railroad. These experiences helped him refine his earlier protest against European manufacturers. He condemned the profligacy common among town-dwellers, and he

warned that as long as the Bank of Abyssinia merely facilitated foreign trade, it was helping merchants bleed the country. When Teferi Mekonnen, the future Emperor Haile Selassie, took the title of Prince Regent at Empress Zewditu Menilek's coronation in 1917, progressives such as Gebre Heywet hoped to begin Japanese-style reforms. Teferi, however, had to share power with other powerful figures at Zewditu's court, and he was unable to move ahead for another decade.<sup>13</sup>

One Ethiopian sought another route toward modernization. After 1896, Emperor Menilek sent six young men to Tsarist Russia. The best known was Tekle Hawaryat, and between 1896 and 1902 he studied military science and agriculture at Mikailovskaia Artillery School in St Petersburg and graduated with the rank of colonel in the Russian army. Staying in Russia for seventeen years, he befriended many prominent Russian liberals.<sup>14</sup>

On his return to Ethiopia, he became responsible for development work and remained influential for decades. He joined the coup that deposed Emperor Iyasu Mikael in September 1916. Teferi's close associate in the 1920s, he became finance minister in 1930, although in 1928 the government briefly imprisoned him for allegedly intriguing with Bolsheviks. Tekle Hawaryat proposed and drafted a Constitution in 1931, modeled on the Meiji Constitution of 1889, which best showed Ethiopia's wish to follow in Japan's progressive footsteps. Drawing on his Russian training, in 1932 Tekle Hawaryat submitted recommendations addressing Ethiopia's military organization. Much to Italy's chagrin, he rejected his country's traditional forces in favor of a regular army with modern equipment, logistics, and organization.<sup>15</sup>

#### HERUY WELDE SELLAASE

Perhaps the most influential of Ethiopia's young Japanizers was Heruy Welde Sellase, and he greatly influenced Teferi Mekonnen.<sup>16</sup> Hailing from the Merhabete District of Shewa, Heruy went to Menilek II's court at Entotto, and he served at the Entotto Raguel Church and as a Secretary to the Emperor. Heruy became a judge of the Special Mixed Court designed to deal with foreigners in Ethiopia. 'He,' however, 'gave too many decisions against his own people, his health began to suffer seriously, and had he not relinquished the post and gone abroad, the grave might have claimed him,' wrote a British representative in 1927.<sup>17</sup> He represented Ethiopia in the League of Nations Assembly in 1925, and published some twenty-eight works, including stories, histories, and social philosophy. A linguist and, after 1930, foreign minister, he served as well in diplomatic missions to Paris, Geneva, Japan, and the United States. Finally, Heruy also edited Ethiopia's civil and ecclesiastical codes.<sup>18</sup>

Of the Japanizers, he most elaborately compared Ethiopia and Japan. Long and uninterrupted founding dynasties had ruled both: Emperor Hirohito was the 124th monarch of the Jimu Dynasty, while Emperor Haile Sellase was the 126th ruler of the Solomonic Dynasty. He compared Emperor Menilek to the Meiji. Throughout the world, only Ethiopia and Japan had preserved the title of 'Emperor' to designate the head of state. Both countries had experienced roving capitals in their histories. He compared the politics of national unity of the Tokugawa

gawa Shogunate (1603–1868) to the Zemene Mesafint (1769–1855). Heruy concluded that, despite these similarities, the two countries had long lived in mutual ignorance of the other – metaphorically, as do the two eyes of one person. And, just as a mirror helps one eye to see the other, his visit in 1931 to Japan had brought mutual awareness.<sup>19</sup>

Given these similarities, if Japan had succeeded in modernizing itself in a short time, Ethiopia could do as much. As did the Emperor whom he served, Heruy understood that European technicians serving as Japan's teachers had forged Japan's rapid evolution, and both now sought Japan's developmental model. Speaking with the French chargé d'affaires in Ethiopia, Heruy praised Japan's transformation and asserted, 'You will see even more extraordinary things here than in Japan.'<sup>20</sup>

Ethiopia's policy was to confine important business to those countries without immediate interests in Ethiopia, for example, the United States, Germany, Japan, and a few small European countries. Heruy understood that Japan was far away and could not threaten Ethiopia's sovereignty, and, indeed, that a Japanese presence could weaken the threat posed by the adjacent British, French, and Italian colonies. Economic interests in Ethiopia might even induce the Japanese to support Ethiopia in case of a European invasion. By the 1930s, these ideas were provoking anxiety and fear in Rome.<sup>21</sup>

British representatives in Addis Ababa spoke well of Heruy in the first half of 1927. One reported he was 'one of the very few Abyssinians who knows anything about England and the English. He recognized 'the importance, from an Abyssinian point of view, of maintaining friendly relations between the two countries'.<sup>22</sup> He officially visited the United States and England in 1919, and accompanied the Regent, Teferi, to England in 1924. His sons received an education at Victoria College at Alexandria and at Cambridge University. Devoutly religious, he befriended 'all the Protestant missionaries, whom he lays himself out to help'. The same report noted that 'He has a great influence for good' with Teferi, who 'listens to him more than to anyone else'. Eager to help the British, he was their 'chief means of influence' in Ethiopia,<sup>23</sup> but by the end of 1927 Britain's representatives had modified their opinion. One wrote, 'I used to find him anxious to help me with my difficulties, but since he became Director-General for Foreign Affairs in the late summer of 1927, I have found him somewhat futile.' Without initiative, he must 'refer the smallest question' to Teferi, and he had become 'Minister for Obstructing Affairs'.<sup>24</sup>

For their part, French diplomats also had thought well of Heruy early in his civil service career. In 1919, when he went to Europe, they saw him as leading Ethiopia's intellectual party. When the government named him President of the Special Court in Addis Ababa at its inauguration in 1922, foreign diplomats showered their satisfaction. One French minister said that he was honest, intelligent, and educated, and that all Europeans were counting on him to guarantee the court's smooth functioning. When the minister's successor reported on Teferi's trip to Europe in 1924, he described Heruy as 'a man of great worth, completely devoted' to Teferi, who was 'Full of common sense and open-minded. [He] understands well modern ideas and understands the necessity that his country come to know them.'<sup>25</sup>

Little by little, however, this positive opinion among French diplomats changed. In a letter of July 25, 1931, the French chargé d'affaires asserted that Heruy was unintelligent and took only superficial care of his job. The government, nonetheless, took no decision without consulting him. His influence on the Sovereign remained great, so important that one observer called him the 'Rasputin' of Ethiopia, and one contemptuous wag called him 'the wizard'.<sup>26</sup>

Why had Heruy's reputation among French diplomats slipped so badly? He was not a Francophile, nor did he trust Europeans in general, although he did wish to draw closer to the English and the Swedes. Many Europeans also blamed Heruy for Japan's advances in Ethiopia, and the French chargé d'affaires criticized Heruy's aggressive policies that, he believed, had isolated Ethiopia before the threat of an Italian invasion.<sup>27</sup>

Even Shoji Yunosuke, a Japanese journalist and philo-Ethiopian, ambivalently described Heruy, who frequently hosted the three Japanese living in Addis Ababa in 1935. He wrote, 'Foreign Minister Heruy is an extreme pro-Japanese. But when we meet him in person, he rarely shows that he likes us Japanese. In other words, he is lacking in affability. His ways are blunt. In certain respects, he appears very unsociable. And yet as one becomes acquainted with him, it transpires that he is very hospitable. Frankly speaking, the first impression of the minister is very unpleasant.'<sup>28</sup>

Always Hayle Sellase's trusted adviser, Heruy went into exile with the Emperor after Ethiopia's defeat, and he died at Hayle Sellase's residence-in-exile in Bath, England, on September 29, 1938.

#### TEFERI MEKONNEN (HAYLE SELLEASE)

During the nineteenth century, Britain had forced Afghanistan to cede much of its territory and autonomy. Wanting to avoid this fate for Ethiopia, Emperor Hayle Sellase became the crucial force behind its wish to use Japan as a model. His father, Mekonnen Welde Mikael, had studied foreign military literature, and Russia's defeat by Japan's navy at the Battle of Tsushima Strait in 1905 had electrified him. By 1906, when Mekonnen died, the thirteen-year-old Teferi had already developed a mental blueprint for his goal, an essential part of which was to draw on the Japanese model. Japan had proved that a non-European nation could embrace modernization and stand as a cultural and technical equal to Europe.<sup>29</sup>

With Heruy as his closest adviser, when Teferi became Emperor he imitated the 'attitude of exclusiveness' of the Japanese Emperor, because he thought it would help create 'an imperial dignity lacking in Ethiopia'.<sup>30</sup> Later, as the Italo-Ethiopian War was brewing, the British minister to Ethiopia explained that Japan's achievements interested the Emperor and that he imagined similarities between the two countries, dreaming 'of Ethiopia as the Japan of Africa'.<sup>31</sup>

On the eve of Heruy's visit to Japan in 1931, America's minister to Ethiopia, Addison E. Southard, mused on the Emperor's attitudes toward Japan. From their conversations over many years, Southard knew that he greatly admired Japan and thought that outside help had made possible Japan's influential world position. He had toyed with the idea that Ethiopia might reasonably expect to

achieve similarly marvelous results by using foreign advisers. Hayle Sellase was 'unaware, of course, of the vast differences between the two countries and peoples, and their qualifications and resources which place Japan far ahead of what Ethiopia is or ever could hope to be'. Having spent many years in the Far East before entering the Foreign Service, Southard knew Japan and the Japanese well. But, he never thought it 'discreet to attempt the probably impossible, and genuinely delicate, task of convincing His Imperial Majesty of the great difference between the two countries and their peoples.' Southard did suggest 'informally and tactfully' to Heruy ways in which he could make practical comparisons during his visit to Japan.<sup>32</sup>

Hayle Sellase wanted to prevent foreign influences from dominating Ethiopia. Yet, he also understood that his country's modernization required foreign advisers and teachers, and that whites unfortunately retained their foreign nationality and prejudices. The isolated efforts to introduce them into these tasks had led to the white arrogance that so greatly restricted their usefulness.<sup>33</sup>

Tied in with Ethiopian admiration for the Japanese were changing racial attitudes among Ethiopians. Southard understood that the Ethiopians – and Hayle Sellase himself – held complicated views, and by mid-1930, they were increasingly favoring foreigners with darker skins. Southard explained that the late Empress Zewditu and her immediate followers had been contemptuous of non-white foreigners. They had scorned foreign blacks as they had their own black subjects, and the efforts of black foreigners to fraternize with Ethiopians as brother Africans had always aroused resentment. The Empress – like many of her ruling class – had been proud of her Semitic blood, which she believed made her the equal to any white and distinctly superior to any black. Emperor Hayle Sellase had, in Southard's opinion, perhaps even more Semitic blood than had some of his royal relatives. Yet, more influential was his conviction that peoples 'with at least dark skins' were bound to Ethiopia's future and that dark-skinned advisers and teachers were less arrogant and were willing to opt for Ethiopian nationality. Hence, he was 'temporarily' losing existing prejudices – at least toward those foreign blacks with Western educations and the abilities to be advisers and teachers.<sup>34</sup>

The new emphasis on peoples of color encouraged many Ethiopians to want to model themselves after the Japanese and opened Ethiopia to Japanese penetration, to the detriment of the traditional, white, colonial powers. Reinforcing this Japanization, the Japanese began seductively speaking of leading an alliance of the world's colored peoples against white imperialism.

#### ETHIOPIAN PUBLICATIONS & EDUCATION

Despite the obstacles he faced while Regent, Teferi did take some limited progressive measures. Importing equipment from Germany, for example, in 1923, he set up the *Berhanena Salam* printing press on his own initiative and on his own grounds. With the help of Heruy and learned church scholars, he founded a weekly newspaper, *Berhanena Salam*, which by 1929 had built up a circulation of about 500.<sup>35</sup>

From the mid-1920s to the war with Italy, radical intellectuals used the pages

of *Berhanena Salam* to condemn Ethiopia's parasitic feudal oligarchy as the obstacle to progress. The Young Ethiopian progressives who wrote for this newspaper stressed education's role in Japan's advance, and 'education' became their motto. As one explained, Japan had achieved its speedy modernization 'through nothing but concerted efforts .... They were unstinting in their money. They sent their daughters to school. Wealthy Japanese helped the state. Others contributed funds for ... opening ... schools. And because they gave all their attention to education they were able to modernize fast.'<sup>36</sup> A song composed in 1926 encapsulated their attitude. It included the phrase 'We Proceed Following Japan'.<sup>37</sup>

Deresse Amente, who had tried, unsuccessfully, to raise funds from the public for opening a school, was perhaps the most prolific contributor to *Berhanena Salam*. To demonstrate Ethiopia's backwardness, he reasoned, there was no need to compare it with the United States or Europe. Japan, which had many more schools, universities, and printing presses than did Ethiopia, would do. Its people had achieved so much wealth 'thanks to education and knowledge, not because Japan is a more fertile country than Ethiopia .... And I have singled out the Japanese experience because, sixty years ago, Japan was in the same state as Ethiopia.'<sup>38</sup>

Southard saw one article published in April 1934 in *Berhanena Salam* as 'among the more rational and interesting of the bits of propaganda, both oral and written', inspired by the Young Ethiopians. The article called for modern education, industrial development, spiritual advancement, and improved government. Southard further opined, 'Notwithstanding various obvious inaccuracies the article is less radical and visionary than much of the material of the kind ... and does carry a vein of reasonably restrained patriotic sentiment which we must respect.' A plea for national respect, the article added that Ethiopia had to do as respected countries do. After contrasting Ethiopia with various European countries in terms of area and natural resources, it continued, 'Ethiopia does not command the same respect as these countries which have achieved education and knowledge. ... This is not because the God of Israel has given Ethiopians brains smaller than those of others or because we have departed from the Christian law or because we lack the blessing of our King.' Rather, because of a weak educational system, 'our government is suffering humiliation, loss, resentment, and difficulties'. Further, education was the prerequisite for necessary self-sufficiency: 'Can we continue and carry on with borrowed military weapons, with imported clothes and by buying all the things which make us men from outside?' Knowledge 'is gold and diamonds and a good food. It is a good mother and father.' Essential for national development and pride, '[k]nowledge and education honors a nation. ... Ignorant countries suffer'. The article closed with the rhetorical question: 'When all are surpassing us in their science and knowledge why should we remain behind by despising education?'<sup>39</sup>



*Educated Ethiopians & the foreign community*ETHIOPIANS WITH FOREIGN EDUCATION  
& THEIR RESENTMENTS

To learn the tools of modern civilization, foreign advisers of whatever color were not enough. Teferi also actively promoted domestic and foreign study for Ethiopians. In 1926, he told twenty-one students before they left for foreign shores that he took solace in advances made, he offered hope for future progress, and he urged them to behave properly.<sup>40</sup>

In the 1920s, most students studying outside Ethiopia went first to Egypt and Lebanon and then transferred to other countries. France received the largest number – over fifty. French was, after all, Ethiopia's principal foreign language and the language Hayle Sellase himself preferred. These students studied architecture, art, mathematics, civil engineering, radiotelegraphy, political science, law, and economics. More than a dozen attended the French military academy at St Cyr. Slightly more Ethiopians studied in England, including two of Heruy's sons. Almost that number went to the United States. Ethiopia also sent students to Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Belgium, and Spain. Almost forty students under Roman Catholic auspices attended the Pontificio Collegio Etiopico in the Vatican. Some twenty-two Falashas<sup>41</sup> in the 1920s and 1930s went with Jewish backing to Palestine, Egypt, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, and England. Ethiopia also sent some women and Eritrean youths to study abroad.<sup>42</sup>

Most of Ethiopia's returnees were deeply patriotic and wished to turn the tools of Western domination against the West. One student returning from the United States wrote a poem in Amharic:

If the Lord helps me and give [sic] me strength,  
I wish to learn for the good of my country.  
We will study diligently and learn much,  
So that the foreigners will not come to rule us!  
If we think and study with attention,  
We will learn to do what others do.  
We must study as much as we can  
Because, if we do not study, our country will be finished: we will lose it.<sup>43</sup>

While still a student, a future finance minister made a similar observation. 'We young Ethiopians are in duty bound to our country. We are the bridge that the Emperor has thrown across to European culture,' he said, adding that the rising generation would civilize Ethiopia.<sup>44</sup>

There were ironic costs to these foreign contacts. In late 1927, one British report from Addis Ababa decried the recent 'wave of nationalism and xenophobia', which was 'making such rapid strides throughout this country'. The report lamented that the League of Nations had admitted Ethiopia 'on equal terms' with the civilized powers. Europeans were lavishing on Ethiopia 'the most

fulsome flattery', and were 'ignoring or condoning the evils', such as the slave trade. Neither the Ethiopians nor Teferi could digest this obsequiousness 'without their heads swelling appreciably'. The report contemptuously compared Ethiopia to China and India, where some of the younger generation had received 'a smattering of Western education'. Satisfied with 'having scratched the surface', they thought they knew enough. The report sneered that in Addis Ababa these young Ethiopians consorted on equal terms 'with the riff-raff of Armenia and Greece' and sometimes 'even of France and Russia'. They had come to believe that they were 'not only the equal, but the superior of the white man'. Ethiopians displayed this attitude by refusing to pay salaries owed Europeans and 'throwing them penniless into the streets', and by physical violence against them and their property. The report worried that Bolshevism would rapidly advance 'under the guise of nationalism'.<sup>45</sup>

Those Ethiopians who studied in Europe acquired a sense of the need to Japanize their country. One student at the colonial university of Antwerp in July 1930 drew the point, exclaiming, 'Give Teferi a free hand and he will make our dear homeland another Japan'.<sup>46</sup> These outspoken students had formed a loose organization, and they often assumed a schizophrenic attitude toward Europeans and to whites in general. Writing about them for Washington, seldom in praise and frequently with implicit racism, Southard predicted that Young Ethiopian activity promised to raise national resistance to foreign influence.<sup>47</sup>

Southard wrote that the costs of Hayle Sellase's coronation as Emperor on November 2, 1930 had increased xenophobic opposition to foreign influences, especially among the younger Ethiopians educated either abroad or in the foreign Christian missions in Ethiopia. These young men, especially those educated in the French, Roman Catholic missions, held many of the minor but influential executive positions in government. They resented the racial inferiority imposed on them and wished to preserve their own superiority over less-educated natives. They also feared for their own jobs, if more foreigners were to enter Ethiopia's government. They especially resented the lavish and expensive entertainment provided by the foreign delegations sent to attend Hayle Sellase's coronation. Southard feared that the Emperor was falling under the influence of the Young Ethiopians at the expense of their elders. These young men were trying to convince the Emperor that he did not need foreigners to reorganize the government, to develop the country's resources, or to carry out other reforms – Ethiopians themselves had the talent to do these things. Southard suggested that 'To one who can view Ethiopia fairly in the light of modern development such influence or advice appears to be unsound and possibly harmful.' The Young Ethiopians, after all, were 'a bit muddled in their ideas and of how to make them effective'. He added that those 'educated abroad' had 'brought back only superficial knowledge', and had 'not yet learned to think and reason on substantial and tenable bases'.<sup>48</sup>

To prove his point, Southard translated for Washington an article from *Berhanna Salam*. The author decried the foreign influence that was spreading 'just like a shepherd leads his flock', and he asserted that Ethiopians had to disperse foreign influence before it took root. 'Let us destroy foreign influence by our lives and deaths. Living in Ethiopia gives joy, even if the ornaments of other

places are better. For us our country is preferable. The love of our parents raised us thus.<sup>49</sup>

Southard noted that not all Ethiopians thought well of their foreign-educated compatriots. Because of their family rank, the feudal chieftains usually received leading cabinet and related posts, but neither missionary proselytizing nor schoolwork reached the sons of these 'quality' Ethiopians. Whatever their age, they were 'old-fashioned fellows', who, until recently, had disdained foreign languages and modern methods. To carry out the Emperor's progressive ideas, however, they had to get such knowledge themselves or lean on these subordinates. The feudal chieftains saw the returned students as less objectionable than those who had received their foreign education locally. Most of the latter were peasants, and the aristocratic, feudal chieftains looked down on them. The returned students were usually better born, but they often aped Western manners and clothing, which annoyed their elders. The French-speaking subordinates in the various ministries often had direct access to the Emperor, which further chafed their elders and provoked jealousy. These senior heads tried to influence the Emperor against their subordinates by charging that their foreign educations and associations predisposed them toward foreigners and that he could not trust them to protect Ethiopia's interests. Consequently, the natural reaction of the subordinates was to go to extremes to prove that they did not favor foreign interests. Southard suggested that even Haile Sellase himself had occasionally tried to impress his feudal chieftains that he too was a genuine Ethiopian and not captive to foreign influences, as he knew they secretly thought.<sup>50</sup>

Those Ethiopian officials with locally earned foreign educations only haltingly united to resist invading foreign manners, practices, and investments. They were generally content to obstruct easy access to the Emperor for the returned students, whose main ambition was to compete for government jobs. Southard believed that the anti-foreign feelings of many returned students came in part from slights suffered abroad because of their color. These anti-foreign feelings also came from their discovery that there existed 'among white people the poverty and pettiness of existence and conduct' they had not seen in the condescending foreigners they had met in Ethiopia. Refusing to concede that any foreigner was their equal, foreign travel confirmed that sense of superiority. 'When he goes abroad he is served by white men and women in menial positions, he is allegedly on occasion robbed and cheated by white men and women, [and] he has seen foreigners in their slums.'<sup>51</sup> Southard questioned one of his 'young Ethiopian friends' who had made this 'unpleasant' but 'thrilling discovery'. 'You foreigners,' he explained, 'have your peasants and your ignorant classes just as we have. We believe in superiority by birth and intelligence. We do not recognize merely a white skin as carrying with it any kind of superiority, but that is what we see the foreigner of all classes, in his own country as well as here, now trying to assert. We are learning a lot.'<sup>52</sup>

Introducing foreign advisers had further exacerbated anti-foreigner attitudes. These foreigners, 'in their reasonable and understandable loyalty to the Ethiopian interests which employ and pay them, cannot avoid uncovering various formerly unseen or ignored faults and failings of allegedly predatory foreigners

and foreign countries'.<sup>53</sup> This last influence had 'greatly lowered in the past three years the one-time unquestioned prestige of the local Diplomatic Corps'. Except for the Greeks, Armenians, and Asians, whom the Ethiopians classified as inferior visiting neighbors rather than as genuine foreigners, non-official foreigners in Ethiopia had enjoyed a reflected prestige from their diplomatic representatives. 'Obviously this advantage they, too, are losing,' Southard wrote.<sup>54</sup>

Southard decried one clever intriguer and agitator, Kidane Mariam Abera, who had, by 1934, astutely built a following among the discontented returned students and officials having 'home-made' foreign educations. From within the education ministry he unleashed his animus against Italians and all foreigners and whipped his associates into 'crusading zeal by tales of American and Italian color and race prejudices'.<sup>55</sup>

Southard contemptuously dismissed such attitudes, charging that Ethiopia had neither the quality of people nor natural resources to flout foreign interests and assistance. The Emperor knew this, asserted Southard, but he was unable to stem 'the present rising anti-foreign tide'. Southard blamed the loss of 'courtesy and efficiency of the Government' when dealing with foreigners on 'the rise to administrative influence of the officials with a foreign education which appears to give them a chip-on-the-shoulder attitude'.<sup>56</sup>

#### ROMAN PROCHÁZKA'S VIEW OF THE JAPANIZERS

Some Young Ethiopians on returning from study abroad intentionally provoked tensions with the white colony in Addis Ababa. Several incidents at local night-clubs in 1933 proved especially nettlesome. As Southard described it, some Young Ethiopians had 'developed during their sojourn abroad a liking for foreign women, drink, and related entertainment', and sought 'similar distractions here'. Disliking foreigners, Southard added that the 'unnecessarily impudent' Wolde Giorgis, Secretary-General of Ethiopia's Foreign Ministry, had encouraged them in their objectionable attitudes.<sup>57</sup>

Despite a quick and amicable solution of these incidents, the local foreign colony saw these Young Ethiopians as 'troublesome fellows'. Especially incensed was Roman Procházka. A lawyer, genealogist, and author, he was Austria's consul in Addis Ababa from 1932 to February 1934, when he was dismissed for activities incompatible with his diplomatic office. Neither the Special Court nor the Consular Court of the United States Legation recognized Procházka as a practicing attorney, and Southard suggested that he had a bad reputation. On October 30, he circulated a letter to the consulates in Addis Ababa. While he was 'extravagant and bitter' in his allegations, Southard allowed a factual basis for his charges, and the letter shows the concerns the Japanizers had raised among the foreign colony in Addis Ababa.<sup>58</sup>

Procházka warned that the local white population was suffering insults and physical attacks by Ethiopian officials and individuals, especially by a 'clique' of Young Ethiopians. Because of Ethiopia's 'treaty arrangements with Mongolian Japan', they were exercising 'a campaign against foreigners of the white race'. They were stirring up other natives, especially the servants of Europeans. After dismissing their European dress and educations, Procházka added that they now

were acting 'as lords of the country', and taking 'liberties ... with white women'. He especially regretted the behavior of one Belgian woman in the new night-clubs. Her 'numerous notorious relations with natives' were 'publicly conspicuous,' and her misbehavior had added 'to the dangerous circumstances of the white race in general and the prestige of local European women in particular.<sup>59</sup> He claimed that such incidents were throwing a 'harsh light' on *agents provocateurs*, who were threatening foreigners with deportation. Unconcealed, armed threats against whites were too common. They were defenseless because regulations limited their right to have arms and because '[r]eliance on the sleepy, shivering Zabanias [native police] with their uncleaned rifles, against the "Young Ethiopians", warmed with alcohol and quick on the draw is highly dubious'. Procházka concluded that the Young Ethiopians prejudiced good relations between their country and foreign states.<sup>60</sup>

## Conclusion

Clearly, many Ethiopians faced emotional and more tangible conflicts as they haltingly lurched their country toward modernization for the sake of continued independence in a white-dominated and imperialistic world order. Not all elite Ethiopians, however, wanted to see their country change, and many resented the Young Ethiopians and obstructed them the best they could.

Those seeking progress faced further problems. Only modernity could provide the economic, political, and military strength necessary to preserve Ethiopia's sovereignty. But, the best teachers were also those who most threatened Ethiopia's independence. How could Ethiopians with safety and dignity borrow from the West, which held them in racial and cultural contempt? This explains the resentments many of the Young Ethiopians held – and acted out – toward foreigners.

The obvious way to break the conundrum was to turn to Japan, and many Japanese enthusiastically responded to Ethiopia's entreaties.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Bekele Maaza, 'A Study of Modern Education in Ethiopia: Its Foundations, Its Development, Its Future, With Emphasis on Primary Education' (EdD diss., Columbia University, 1966), pp. 54–65.
- <sup>2</sup> Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', p. 1; Okakura Takashi, *Eciopia no Rekishi* (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1999), pp. 164, 166, 199–200; Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, pp. 56–7.
- <sup>3</sup> Addis Hiwet, *Ethiopia: From Autocracy to Revolution* (London: Review of African Political Economy, 1975), pp. 68–76; Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', p. 8.
- <sup>4</sup> Hidéko Faërber-Ishihara, 'Heruy, le Japon et les "japonisants"', in *Les orientalistes sont des aventuriers*, Alain Rouaud (ed.) (Paris: Sépia, 1999), p. 146.
- <sup>5</sup> *Addis Tribune*, October 2, 1998.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> Faërber-Ishihara, 'Heruy', 146; Bahru Zewde, *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia: The Reformist Intellectuals of the Early Twentieth Century* (Oxford: James Currey, 2002), pp. 100–1, 111–16; Alemayehu Geda, 'Ethiopian Macroeconomic Modeling in Historical Perspective: Bringing Gebre-Hiwot and His Contemporaries to Ethiopian Macroeconomics Realm', revised version of paper prepared for

- Western Michigan University, Department of Economics, and Institute of Development Research (IDR) of AAU Conference, Addis Ababa University, July 2003 (revised May 2004); Chris Prouty and Eugene Rosenfeld (eds), *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia and Eritrea*, 2nd ed. (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1994), p. 137.
- <sup>10</sup> Guebrè-Heywèt Baykedagne, *L'empereur Ménélik et l'Éthiopie* (Addis Ababa: Maison des études éthiopiennes, 1993), pp. xv–xvi.
- <sup>11</sup> Gabrahiwot Baykadagn, *State and Economy of Early 20th Century Ethiopia: Prefiguring Political Economy c. 1910* (London: Kamak House, 1995), p. 115; Bradshaw, 'Japan', p. 301.
- <sup>12</sup> Guebrè-Heywèt, *L'empereur Ménélik*, p. 39; Okakura, *Eciopia no Rekishi*, pp. 165–6.
- <sup>13</sup> Bradshaw, 'Japan', pp. 301–2; Andrew D. Roberts, 'African Cross-Currents', in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 7: *From 1905 to 1940*, Andrew D. Roberts (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 265; Prouty and Rosenfeld (eds), *Historical Dictionary*, pp. 332–3; Harold G. Marcus, *Haile Sellassie I: The Formative Years, 1892–1936* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1987), p. 19.
- <sup>14</sup> *Addis Tribune*, September 25, 1993; Prouty and Rosenfeld (eds), *Historical Dictionary*, pp. 162–5, 186–7, 293–4.
- <sup>15</sup> Great Britain, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers From the Foreign Office Confidential Print*, Kenneth Bourne, D. Cameron Watt, and Michael Partridge (eds); Part II: *From the First to the Second World War*, Series G: *Africa, 1914–1939* (cited as *BDEA*), Peter Woodward (ed.) (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1997), 28: Nos 50, 65; Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855–1974* (London: James Currey, 1991), p. 106; Bahru Zewde, 'The Ethiopian Intelligentsia and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935–1941', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26 (1993):274–5; Assefa Chabo, a trained lawyer and a student of Ethiopia's constitutional law, downplays Japanese influence on Ethiopia's 1931 Constitution. He argues that Tekle Hawaryat felt contempt for Heruy and Kasa Darge, who promoted Japanese elements in the Constitution, and therefore was unlikely to have collaborated with them. Chabo believes that, educated in Russia and surrounded by Western-oriented nobility, Tekle Hawaryat drew on European models. Email from Assefa Chabo, July 27, 2009.
- <sup>16</sup> Adrien Zervos, *L'Empire d'Éthiopie: Le Miroir de L'Éthiopie Moderne 1906–1935* (Alexandria, Egypt: Ecole professionnelle des frères, 1936), p. 482; Alain Rouaud, *Le negus contre l'esclavage: Les édits abolitionnistes du ras Tafari* (Paris: Aresae, 1997), p. 124.
- <sup>17</sup> *BDEA*, 27: Nos 111, 246; *BDEA*, Vol. 28: No. 50.
- <sup>18</sup> Prouty and Rosenfeld (eds), *Historical Dictionary*, 166; *Ethiopian Herald*, May 27, 2007.
- <sup>19</sup> Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', pp. 1–2; Faërber-Ishihara, 'Heruy', p. 145. For more on the similarities and differences, presumed and real, between Ethiopia and Japan, see the articles in *Ethiopia in Broader Perspective*: Messay Kebede, 'Japan and Ethiopia: An Appraisal of Similarities and Divergent Courses', 1:639–51; Donald N. Levine, 'Ethiopia and Japan in Comparative Civilization Perspective', 1:652–75; and Merid W. Aregay, 'Japanese and Ethiopian Reactions to Jesuit Missionary Activities in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', 1:676–98. Also see Donald N. Levine, 'Ethiopia and Japan in Comparative Civilizational Perspective', *Passages: Interdisciplinary Journal of Global Studies* 3 (2001):1–31; Prouty and Rosenfeld (eds), *Historical Dictionary*, pp. 330–1; and Okakura, *Eciopia no rekishi*, p. 169.
- <sup>20</sup> Faërber-Ishihara, 'Heruy', p. 145.
- <sup>21</sup> Scammacca, January 30, 1932; Rome, February 12, 1932: Italy, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Direzione Generale degli Affari Politici, Etiopia (Rome). (hereafter cited as MAE Etiopia), b(usta) 8 f(oglio) 1; Faërber-Ishihara, 'Heruy', 145. As a small example of Italian fear of being displaced in Ethiopia, particularly by Japan and the United States, see Italy, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Commissione per la Pubblicazione dei Documenti Diplomatici, *I documenti diplomatici italiani* (hereafter cited as *DDI*), 7th Series, Vol. 11: Nos 42, 148, 177, and 204.
- <sup>22</sup> *BDEA*, 27: No. 111.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid. For more on Teferi's European tour, see *BDEA*, 26: Nos 138–43.
- <sup>24</sup> *BDEA*, 27: No. 154.
- <sup>25</sup> Faërber-Ishihara, 'Heruy', pp. 147–8; Heinrich Scholler, *The Special Court of Ethiopia, 1920–1935* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1985); Richard Pankhurst, *The Ethiopians* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), pp. 210–11.
- <sup>26</sup> Faërber-Ishihara, 'Heruy', p. 148. See also Tedeschi, Salvatore, 'La carrière et les idées de Heruy (1878–1938)', in *Trois essais sur la littérature éthiopienne*, Luigi Fusella, Salvatore Tedeschi, and Joseph Tubiana (eds) (Paris: Aresae, 1984), pp. 39–104.
- <sup>27</sup> Faërber-Ishihara, 'Heruy', p. 148; Tedeschi, 'La carrière', p. 44.
- <sup>28</sup> *OM & TNN*, September 28, 1935.
- <sup>29</sup> Hans Wilhelm Lockot, *The Mission: The Life, Reign and Character of Haile Sellassie I* (New York, St

- Martin's Press, 1989), pp. 31–2, 42; Geoffrey Theodore Garratt, 'Abyssinia', *Journal of the Royal African Society* 36 (1937):37; Prouty and Rosenfeld (eds), *Historical Dictionary*, pp. 219–20.
- <sup>30</sup> Bradshaw, 'Japan', 300; Marcus, *Haile Sellassie I*, pp. 125–6.
- <sup>31</sup> Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', p. 7.
- <sup>32</sup> Southard, October 5, 1931: United States, National Archives (College Park, MD), Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, Decimal Files (hereafter cited as NARA) 033.8411/81.
- <sup>33</sup> Southard, July 30, 1930: NARA 884.01A/8; *The Times*, January 30, 1934; 'Races: To Ethiopia,' *Time* (January 9, 1928):11.
- <sup>34</sup> Southard, July 30, 1930: NARA 884.01A/8; Murray, January 18, 1932: NARA 884.4016 Negroes/2.
- <sup>35</sup> Richard Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia, 1800–1935* (Addis Ababa: Haile Sellassie I University Press, 1968), pp. 679–80; Charles Fernand Rey, *In the Country of the Blue Nile*, (London: Duckworth, 1927), pp. 28–9; Stephen Gaselee, 'The Beginnings of Printing in Abyssinia', in *The Library: A Quarterly Review of Bibliography*, ed. A.W. Pollard (ed.), 4th Series, Vol. 11 (London: Humphrey Milford, 1931):93–6; Faërber-Ishihara, 'Heruy', p. 147; Reidulf K. Molvaer, *Black Lions* (Lawrenceville: Red Sea Press, 1997), pp. 14–15; Prouty and Rosenfeld (eds), *Historical Dictionary*, pp. 243–4.
- <sup>36</sup> Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', 6; Hiwet, *Ethiopia*, 69; Bradshaw, 'Japan', pp. 302–3.
- <sup>37</sup> Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, p. 31.
- <sup>38</sup> Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', p. 7; Bahru Zewde, *Pioneers*, pp. 74–5. See also Faërber-Ishihara, 'Heruy', p. 147 and Molvaer, *Black Lions*, p. 14.
- <sup>39</sup> Southard, June 30, 1934: NARA 884.00/296.
- <sup>40</sup> *Addis Tribune*, November 6, 1998.
- <sup>41</sup> Falashas (Ethiopian Jews). Prouty and Rosenfeld (eds), *Historical Dictionary*, pp. 48–50.
- <sup>42</sup> *Addis Tribune*, November 6, 1998; Southard, July 21, 1934: NARA 884.402/5.
- <sup>43</sup> *Addis Tribune*, November 6, 1998.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>45</sup> *BDEA*, 27: No. 149; Okakura, *Eciopia no Rekishi*, pp. 200–1.
- <sup>46</sup> Faërber-Ishihara, 'Heruy', p. 147; Richard Pankhurst, 'Tedla Hailé, and the Problem of Multi-Ethnicity in Ethiopia', *Northeast African Studies* (1998):81–96.
- <sup>47</sup> In NARA 884.01A see Southard, January 23, 1932: /880; June 1, 1932: /971; February 5, 1934: /1323; see also Southard, February 12, 1934: NARA 884.4016/6.
- <sup>48</sup> Southard, November 24, 1930: NARA 884.01A/14; November 24, 1930: 884.01A/575; November 24, 1930: 884.4016/2.
- <sup>49</sup> Southard, November 24, 1930: NARA 884.01A/14; December 18, 1932: 884.00/283.
- <sup>50</sup> Southard, February 12, 1934: NARA 884.4016/6.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid.; Southard, July 2, 1934: NARA 884.00/297.
- <sup>56</sup> Southard, February 12, 1934: NARA 884.4016/6.
- <sup>57</sup> Southard, November 14, 1933: NARA 884.4016/5; February 12, 1934: 884.4016/6; Alemé Esheté, 'Ethiopia and the Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1935', *Africa* 32 (1977):9–11.
- <sup>58</sup> Southard, November 14, 1933: NARA 884.4016/5.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid.; November 14, 1932: 884.00/282.

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# 3

## *Japanese Views on Ethiopia*

### *Japanese attitudes toward the world's blacks*

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Japanese first met Africans and Indians working as servants for Portuguese and Dutch merchants, who taught the Japanese analogies comparing blacks to animals. Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry's first visit to Japan on the Blackships in 1853 reinforced the denigrating stereotypes of African peoples. When he returned in the following year, he held a reception for his Japanese guests onboard his flagship and the entertainment included a blackface minstrel show, which the Japanese enjoyed. In 1860, a Japanese mission visited the United States to learn about American culture. Its members accepted black slavery in the United States as normal and compared these slaves to their own outcasts. They saw blacks as pitifully ignorant, unsanitary, odorous, bad-mannered, physically repulsive, and sub-human. One samurai wrote, 'I heard that the American term for "Africa" means "monkey", and its natives personify monkeys.'<sup>1</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Japanese were seeing the world through Western, Social-Darwinist eyes and had formed a hierarchical view of the world's peoples. They placed themselves and other Asians between whites and blacks, and they idolized white society as providing the goal for Japan's development.<sup>2</sup>

Japanese attitudes became more diverse as democratic ideas spread, and a few Japanese contacted activists and writers among black poets, activists, and intellectuals, such as W.E.B. DuBois. One Japanese scholar, Hikida Yasuichi, in the 1930s visited Tuskegee University and Hampton Institute. He translated books about lynchings, and he traveled in seats reserved for colored passengers. He wanted American blacks and Japanese to move beyond stereotypes and interact directly.<sup>3</sup> Inspired by such attitudes, some American and Caribbean blacks warmly regarded the Japanese as an ally against white racism, and this attraction later compromised their support of the United States's war effort after Pearl Harbor.<sup>4</sup>

Hikida's enlightened view was only one among many.



### *Commentary on Ethiopia*

OYAMA UJIRO, TANABE YASUNOSUKE, & AMINAKA YASUHIRO

Dr Oyama Ujiro became one of the African specialists in Japan writing and lecturing extensively in the first half of the 1930s, and he played an important diplomatic role in developing Ethio-Japanese relations. Oyama was a former Vice consul-general in San Francisco and a central figure in a philo-Ethiopian group, the Roundtable Conference on Ethiopian Issues. In 1927 he led a research team to seven African countries, including Ethiopia and wrote the investigation team's official report. Responding to popular interest in Ethiopia, he added many photographs and revised his work as a travelogue. Oyama insisted that it was anachronistic to see Africa as the Dark Continent, and he promised to shed light on Ethiopia. He saw that much was unusual and unflattering in Ethiopia's customs, myths, slavery, and court procedures. He also drew similarities between Ethiopia and Japan's Tokugawa period.<sup>5</sup>

Many Japanese views of Ethiopia showed a Western influence. Tanabe Yasunosuke translated Charles Rey's works into Japanese – after deleting denigrating comments about Ethiopia. Tanabe, also a member of the Roundtable Conference on Ethiopian Issues, did write, however, that even those looking favorably on Ethiopians thought of them as 'idlers', reluctant to work because of the hot weather. They saw Ethiopia's Christians as more cultured than its Muslims or those of other faiths in Ethiopia. The animists, for example, were lowly 'barbarians'. Ethiopia had escaped Africa's partition, Tanabe asserted, because the country was modeling itself after Japan in its state-building and because the country was under an imperial monarchy supported by principles similar to those in Japan.<sup>6</sup>

Aminaka Yasuhiro had a more direct experience with Ethiopia. After staying there for about six months, he wrote a book highlighting the country's independence. Of the one hundred million black races, he wrote, only the Ethiopian nation had preserved its independence and glorious history. Never conquered by another, its imperial line had ruled continuously and prosperously for three thousand years.<sup>7</sup>

SHOJI YUNOSUKE, SUMIOKA TOMOYOSHI, NANJO SHINICHI,  
& YAMAUCHI MASAO

A pro-Ethiopian, right-wing, Pan-Asian activist who objected to white domination of the 'colored' world, Shoji Yunosuke finished his studies at the Shanghai Asian School during the Shanghai Incident of 1932, the short war between the Republic of China and Japan between January 28 and March 3. In August 1932, he went to Ethiopia to examine its economy and stayed in Addis Ababa for three months. He then traveled southwest from the capital and spent seven months in the deepest parts of Ethiopia, where no Japanese had been before. During his stay, Shoji developed a close friendship with Araya Abeba

and played an important role in Araya's later effort to marry a Japanese woman.<sup>8</sup>

Before Shoji left Ethiopia, Hayle Sellase personally presented him with a picture, a rhino horn, some musk, and other items. The Emperor also gave him a recent portrait as a gift for Sumioka Tomoyoshi, another philo-Ethiopian, whom one Western reporter dismissed as 'a shyster of uncommon gifts'.<sup>9</sup> When Shoji returned to Japan in September 1933, he handed the portrait to Sumioka – Shoji's first meeting with him. Deeply impressed with 'his excellent understanding and right belief on racial issues and world statecraft', Shoji consulted Sumioka about Araya's proposed marriage.<sup>10</sup>

Shoji excoriated those authorities content with mere a commercial advance in Ethiopia, while refusing to challenge Britain, France, and Italy politically. He argued that since the Manchurian Incident of 1931, which had provoked war with China, Japan had led the small countries of Asia and had reached the stage of being able to take bold initiatives in foreign policy. Shoji celebrated Japan's role in awakening and leading the colored peoples of the world. 'Until now, Caucasian peoples have not regarded whites and colored peoples as equal. ... Colored peoples in Asia and Africa, who number twice as many as whites, have been suffering for a longtime under white oppression.' Japan has 'awakened the idea of independence among all Colored peoples. As we now see the declining path of Western civilization, a strong wave of nationalistic movements is sweeping throughout the world including Asia, Africa, and South America.' He stressed Japan's community of interests with this rising nationalism. 'The safety and dangers facing Eastern peoples, the various peoples of Asia and northern Africa, are as the safety and perils for Japan itself. We call this idea Pan-Asianism.' Japan would lead the oppressed colored peoples, because 'they view Japan as the Asian leader and show their friendly attitude with great reverence toward Japan. ... It is no wonder that friendship between Japan and Ethiopia has rapidly developed in such an atmosphere.'<sup>11</sup>

Shoji praised ethnologists interested in the possibility that Ethiopia's ruling class and Japan's ancient Yamato tribe shared the same racial roots. Shoji favorably quoted one scholar who had written, 'It is uncontroversial that the Ethiopian people a longtime ago had some racial connections with the Japanese people.'<sup>12</sup> When Heruy visited Japan in 1931, Sumioka gave the foreign minister a copy of his thesis, which similarly concluded that the ancient tribes of the Japanese and Ethiopians shared ethnic roots.<sup>13</sup>

Shoji stressed Ethiopia's ancient history and notable culture, its conquests in Arabia and Egypt, and its trade with the rest of Africa. Although Ethiopia after 1931 was formally a constitutional monarchy, in reality it remained an absolute, feudal monarchy, comparable with Japan's Tokugawa period. Ethiopia's emperors had gradually conquered the hereditary, feudal lords in the localities, replacing them with appointed governors who followed the emperor's orders, except in some remote districts. The wide gap between the military resources available to the emperors compared to the localities furthered centralization. Because tax collection remained difficult, developing the national infrastructure of railroads, roads, sanitation, waterworks, and electricity remained urgent tasks. And although the heads of administrative offices such as the post office,

telegrams, telephones, and customs were Ethiopians, they had many foreign advisers working under them.<sup>14</sup>

Shoji worked hard to disabuse Japanese of what he thought was incorrect information on Ethiopia. For example, he rejected 'an unimaginable, vulgar and absurd article' published in *Kokusai Hyoron*, a journal appealing to sophisticated readers: 'The palace where the Emperor lives is a one-story, wooden house with galvanized iron roof, and floors covered with hay. Its tables are of several bits of lumber, with a board laid on them, covered with eulalia grass as a tablecloth. The hall in which the Emperor meets foreign missions and ministers does not even have floorboards.' Shoji retorted that the palace was a European building, just like a Japanese first-class hotel. Although the daily lifestyle of the Emperor was not as luxurious as that of the well-to-do in large Japanese cities, his furniture, decorations, dishes, carpets, and suchlike were magnificent enough to show his dignity and grace as an Emperor. The *Kokusai Hyoron* article continued, 'The Emperor and the Imperial Family walk barefooted. The Emperor and Imperial Family use cups to drink water, while his ministers use empty tobacco cans.' Shoji assured his readers that although Ethiopians had their own style of shoes, they imported leather shoes from France, athletic shoes from Japan, and glass products from Belgium. Even the common people used these products.<sup>15</sup>

The *Kokusai Hyoron* article further described the poor hygiene, worms, and lice that beset Ethiopians. Shoji explained that the Ethiopian people liked meat, usually cooked or grilled, except on special occasions such as holidays and parties. Because they caught worms from their meat-based diets, they sometimes drank decocted leaves of the Koso tree as vermifuge. There were good pharmacies and hospitals in cities, and although the facilities and techniques were not perfect, and there were doctors from Germany, the United States, Italy, Greece, Armenia, and elsewhere in villages with over a thousand people. Ethiopians kept enviously white teeth, because they gargled after every meal and brushed their teeth with twigs from bushes. Ethiopians could bathe in the hot springs in the capital for two copper coins, or in river waters for free. 'Even though' Ethiopians are blacks, Shoji labeled as 'absurd' the notion that they carefully bred parasites.<sup>16</sup>

The Ethiopians had invited a Japanese, Enomoto Seisaku, to cook for the Imperial Household. The *Kokusai Hyoron* article commented: 'The Ethiopians ordered the cook ... to live in a part of a lion cage and cook only omelets'.<sup>17</sup> Again, Shoji criticized the article, writing that although Ethiopia was not a rich country, it was absurd to say that Enomoto, invited for monthly salary of ¥600, stayed in a lion cage. Moreover, even though the Ethiopians were generous, they did not have enough money to pay ¥600 just to have him fix eggs and omelets. Enomoto himself related that the Emperor's household stored Champagne, whiskies, canned food, and other items worth ¥20,000. Shoji concluded that malicious imagination and fabrication filled the article.<sup>18</sup>

Later, in 1935, as the Italians prepared for war against Ethiopia, Shoji wrote sympathetically about Ethiopia from Addis Ababa as a special correspondent of the *Osaka Mainichi* and the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi*. In the autumn, he inserted himself into Daba Birrou's diplomatic mission to Japan.

Nanjo Shinichi was another Japanese journalist who complicated diplomacy

between Ethiopia and Japan. Like Shoji, he promised to enlighten the Japanese about Ethiopia, and he actively promoted the marriage between Araya and Kuroda Masako. He also presumed to promise Japanese commercial and military assistance to Ethiopia. And again, as happened with Shoji, Heruy complained about Nanjo's intrusions into his diplomatic efforts, and Japanese authorities distanced themselves from him. After Italy invaded, Nanjo reported on the war from London.<sup>19</sup>

One last journalist played a crucial role in pushing Japan's interests in Ethiopia. Dr Yamauchi Masao was one of the four Japanese who returned with Heruy after his mission to Ethiopia. In Ethiopia he represented the Ministry of Emigration and later became a special correspondent for the *Osaka Mainichi*. He learned the Amharic language and spearheaded Japan's commercial thrust, which provoked considerable alarm among Europeans. Yamauchi's drive impressed the British minister, who conceded that '[I]t is impossible not to admire the skill and thoroughness with which this reconnaissance of a new field is being carried out. No such effort has, unfortunately, ever been made by the European trading interests, who complain so bitterly of Japanese competition.'<sup>20</sup> While in Ethiopia as a speculative trader, Yamauchi exported rhinoceros's horns to Japan for medicinal use. Several months after the Italo-Ethiopian War, he returned to Japan to speak at a series of meetings throughout Japan to describe his adventures and Ethiopia's plight at Italian hands.<sup>21</sup>

#### TSUCHIDA YUTAKA

A secretary at the foreign ministry, Tsuchida Yutaka officially visited Ethiopia in 1934. Southard described him as a competent diplomat who could speak English and French and who showed 'considerable intelligence and ability'.<sup>22</sup> In November 1935, a month after Italy had attacked Ethiopia, he published an article describing his visit.<sup>23</sup>

He noted that, theoretically, Ethiopia's Emperor had gained centralized control of the diverse localities. In reality, however, an old feudal structure remained with the local lords, now called 'governors'. These petty autocrats held the right of direct taxation and often kept private armies, which made 'those domains look like countries within a country'. Tsuchida added that Ethiopia's Emperor as 'King of Kings' resembled the shogun of Japan's Tokugawa period, and he concluded that each lord was a king and the Emperor mediated among those kings. Every lord presented to the Emperor part of the tax they had collected, and they paid their respects to him every two to three years.<sup>24</sup> Tsuchida stressed the success of Hayle Sellase, 'an admirable individual', in curbing disputes between his lords and in centralizing his government. Europeans agreed that his political skill was 'very sophisticated', and that he was a 'wise Emperor'.<sup>25</sup> He also noted that Ethiopia's Constitution of 1931 had copied Japan's. Acting as his own prime minister, Hayle Sellase had 'despotically' assumed the reins of government and appointed the members of the bicameral legislature, which acted merely as an advisory organ.

Tsuchida reassured his readers that Japanese in Ethiopia held extraterritorial rights, important because Tsuchida was not blind to Ethiopia's 'backward-

ness'. For example, he noted that creditors would chain debtors to one another as they visited friends and relatives. The chains stayed until the debtor had paid his debt. The seeming informality of 'street trials', with elders passing judgment, fascinated Tsuchida. After noting that Ethiopia had a currency-issuing central bank, he expressed concern for Ethiopia's educational system, which had no compulsory schooling. Each legation ran its own school and competed for upper-class children, and every year selected two or three good students to go to schools in their respective countries. After returning, these students would gain government positions, perhaps to the host country's advantage. With no newspapers in Amharic, foreign-language newspapers had many readers, including many Ethiopians.<sup>26</sup>

He described the Ethiopians as half-black Semites. The Christian Amharas formed one-third of the population and were the ruling group, monopolizing the 'respectable' positions in society. Tsuchida noted that one-third of the population were Muslim and below the Amharas in prestige. The final third of the population lived in the south and were 'pure Negroid' and 'ugly'. Tsuchida denigrated their educational and cultural level and the 'terrible stuff' they ate.<sup>27</sup> Ethiopians were 'benign', and '[e]ven those of the ruling class are lazy, possess a character of a half-idle eyes and lack a spirit of effort, seriousness, [or] progress .... [T]hey do not have much ambition. ... Ethiopians do not care much about cultural facilities, either.'<sup>28</sup>

Tsuchida stressed Ethiopia's poor economic development, despite the country's economic resources. 'Afraid whites would overrun their country if they gave out too many concessions', they also refused to let the white, colonial powers develop it. Japanese thus saw Ethiopians 'as a non-productive people'. The blame, he wrote, was Ethiopia's warrior culture, which denigrated commercial, economic, and agricultural pursuits.<sup>29</sup>

Entertainment accentuated Ethiopia's martial spirit. 'Instead of centering around geisha girls as in Japan, old men over sixty reenacted the Battle of Adwa by singing and swinging swords.' Their 'songs celebrate Ethiopia's glorious history [and] adoration of the present Emperor. ... they also sing a song of friendship pointing out likenesses between the old histories of Japan and of Ethiopia, and to encourage co-operation and progress. They do not sing sentimental love songs.' Tsuchida recalled, 'Once, I much enjoyed the entertainment in which people wore armor, sang some songs, and danced. Barefooted, they held spears and wore masks of lion hair. They gave brave cries to dramatize the scene of battlefield fighting with their enemy.'<sup>30</sup>

### *Nationalist Japanese societies and Ethiopia*

Between 1927 and 1937, the Japanese organized some 634 right-wing groups with 122,000 members. Listing assassination among their weapons to influence government policy, they were powerful within the military and bureaucracy, and they exalted their Emperor above the Constitution. Seeking 'Renovation', they wanted to create a 'National Defense State'.<sup>31</sup>

The foreign ministry harbored renovationists, one of whom was Nimiya

Takeo. He wrote an influential booklet which stressed that a Japanese expansionist policy was defensible only if built on racial nationalism and the principle of 'Asia for the Asians'. Further, Japanese morality and racial spirit, not Western imperialism, had to guide expansion. An aggressive diplomacy possibly leading to war was tenable only if based on idealism. The booklet demanded building a new order under Japanese leadership.<sup>32</sup>

Influenced by such thinking on creating a new order, Japan's leading nationalists, especially Pan-Asianists, set up several associations to promote a solidarity movement with Ethiopia. One of these was the Japan-Ethiopian Association, with Inabata Katsutaro, a prominent industrialist and member of the House of Peers, as president. Its office was in the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry building.<sup>33</sup> Other organizations included the Ethiopian Defense Society set up in July 1935 and the Ethiopian Rescue Society established in August of the same year. Other nationalist groups, such as the Pan-Asianism Society, the Japan-Turan Association, Japan Production Party, Volunteers of Nationalistic Populace Party, and the Patriotic Youth Association, strongly supported Ethiopia. Sumioka Tomoyoshi and Shoji Yunosuke were central members of the Great Japanese Turan Youth League. In this super-patriotic mélange of shifting groups and subgroups with overlapping memberships, Ethiopia's most urgent supporter was the Black Dragon Society. Japan's police and the Italian embassy kept track of all of them.<sup>34</sup>

On March 1, 1935, the Japanese-Ethiopian Society and the Great Japanese Turan Youth League offered a prayer for the victory of the Ethiopian Empire. It praised 'the victorious anniversary of Ethiopia's defeat of Italy at Adwa', thirty-nine years before, which was, 'like the Russo-Japanese War, a shining historical record of colored people defeating white hegemony'. Now in 1935, however, 'Italy is trying to achieve its traditional and long-term ambition, Ethiopia's forcible annexation'. Noting Ethiopia's disadvantage compared to Italy in modern weapons, the prayer concluded, 'As the situation is getting urgent, we wish to punish white wrongdoing and our friend Ethiopia achieve victory.'<sup>35</sup>

Despite such enthusiasm, Japanese attitudes to race often reflected their own ambivalent position in the racial hierarchy. Tokyo's ambassador in Berlin, for example, complained to the German foreign minister in November 1933 about the humiliations several Japanese had suffered. He was also upset because head of the German Bureau of Racial Research had listed the Japanese among the colored races, thereby subjecting them to discrimination under Germany's penal code, which forbade the marriage of Germans to Jews and members of the colored races. To the great relief of the Japanese, the German foreign minister assured Tokyo's ambassador that the Nazis did not intend to include the Japanese among the colored races.<sup>36</sup>

## Conclusion

For a time, Japan's philo-Ethiopianism expressed a sentimental solidarity with Ethiopians. Japanese newspapers expressed surprise at the failure of many observers to note the spiritual affinity between the two peoples. The assumption of white superiority in Ethiopia had proved to be as unfounded as it had in Japan.<sup>37</sup>

Solidarity with the world's colored peoples, based primarily on narrow patriotism, grew out of antagonism toward whites. This attitude, however, proved to be only surface deep – whenever challenged by the realities of world politics, hard-nosed businessmen and government officials became skeptical about the utility of close relations with Ethiopia and feared complications of drawing too close. The solidarity movement certainly did not include co-operative action with Africans under colonial rule in its vision and showed little concern for oppressed Asian-Africans or their movements such as that in South Africa.<sup>38</sup>

In the end, Japanese support proved a weak reed for Ethiopia to lean on as the Italian menace developed. However, for a few years, Japanese interests in Ethiopia did appear to be expanding sufficiently to threaten Western interests.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> John G. Russell, *Nihon-jin no Kokujin-kan* (Tokyo: Shinhyoron, 1991), pp. 47–8, quote 48.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49–51.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51. See the works by Reginald Kearney, including *Reconcilable Differences: Issues in African American-Japanese Relations* (New York: Japan Society, 1992), pp. 14–15 and 'Reactions to the First Japanese Embassy to the United States', *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies*, 26 (December 1994):87–99.
- <sup>4</sup> See the works by Ernest Allen: 'When Japan Was "Champion of the Darker Races": Satokata Takahashi and the Flowering of Black Messianic Nationalism', *The Black Scholar* 24 (Win. 1994):23–46; 'Some Notes on Japan and the Nation of Islam: A Work in Progress', unpublished paper presented at the Symposium 'Japan and African Americans: A Comparative Perspective', University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, November 3, 1997; and 'Waiting for Tojo: The Pro-Japan Vigil of Black Missourians, 1932–1943', *Gateway Heritage* (Autumn 1995):39–55. See also the articles by Robert G. Weisbord: 'Black America and the Italian–Ethiopian Crisis: An Episode in Pan–Negros' in *Race and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Ages of Territorial and Market Expansion, 1840 to 1900*, Michael L. Krenn (ed.) (New York: Garland, 1998), pp. 152–63, and 'British West Indian Reaction to the Italian–Ethiopian War: An Episode in Pan–Africanism', *Caribbean Studies* 10 (1970):34–41.
- <sup>5</sup> Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, pp. 19–20.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21–2; Charles Fernand Rey, *Unconquered Abyssinia as It Is Today* (London: Seeley, Service and Co., Ltd, 1923).
- <sup>7</sup> Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, p. 22.
- <sup>8</sup> Shōji Yunosuke, *Echiopia kekkon mondai wa do naru, kaishō ka? Ina!!!: Kekkon mondai o shudai toshite Echiopia no shinso o katari kokumin no saikakunin oyobosu* (Tokyo: Seikyōsha, 1934), Introduction; Yamada Kazuhiro, *Masukaru no hanayome: Maboroshi no echiopia ōjihi* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1998), pp. 59–64.
- <sup>9</sup> Hugh Byas, *Government by Assassination* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), p. 199.
- <sup>10</sup> Shōji, *Echiopia*, Introduction.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37. For a broader perspective on Japanese Pan-Asianism, see Sven Saaler and J. Victor Koschmann (eds), *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism and Borders* (London: Routledge, 2007) and Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World*

*Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

- <sup>12</sup> Shōji, *Echiopia*, p. 5.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23–4.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9–11.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.
- <sup>19</sup> In MAE Etiopia b24 f3, see Circular, January 17, April 19, 1934; Vinci, February 23, May 2, 1934; Suvich, April 6, 9, 1934; and ‘La realtà sui rapporti fra il Giappone e l’Etiopia’. In *OM&TNN* see March 14, 1934 and October 5, 1935.
- <sup>20</sup> Bahru Zewde, ‘Concept’, 3; Faërber-Ishihara in *Premiers*, p. 13.
- <sup>21</sup> Auriti, August 18, 1936: MAE Etiopia – Fondo di Guerra (hereafter cited as MAE Etiopia–FG) b117 f7.
- <sup>22</sup> Southard, June 26, 1934: NARA 784.94/9.
- <sup>23</sup> Tsuchida Yutaka, ‘Echiopia o Miru’, *Chuo Koron* 50 (November 1935):308–15.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 309.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 310.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 311–12.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 313; Prouty and Rosenfeld (eds), *Historical Dictionary*, p. 26.
- <sup>28</sup> Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, p. 21.
- <sup>29</sup> Tsuchida, ‘Echiopia o Miru’, p. 314.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 315.
- <sup>31</sup> Furukawa, ‘Japan’s Political Relations’, p. 10; Furukawa, ‘Japanese-Ethiopian Relations’, p. 10; E. Herbert Norman, ‘The Genyōsha: A Study in the Origins of Japanese Imperialism’, *Pacific Affairs* 17 (September 1944):261–84; Byas, *Government*, pp. 163–212. Also see *JT&M*, March 31, 1934.
- <sup>32</sup> Ohata Tokushirō, ‘The Anti-Comintern Pact, 1935–1939’, in *Deterrent Diplomacy: Japan, Germany, and the USSR, 1935–1940*, James William Morley (ed.) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 10–15.
- <sup>33</sup> Grene, January 17, 1934: NARA 784.94/6.
- <sup>34</sup> Furukawa, ‘Japan’s Political Relations’, p. 10; Okakura, ‘1930 Nendai’, pp. 61–2; John W. Sabey, ‘The Gen’yosha, the Kokuryukai and Japanese Expansionism’ (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1972). A better but less common translation for the Black Dragons would be ‘Amur River Society’, after the Amur River.
- <sup>35</sup> *Turan*, March 1, 1935: Japan, Gaimusho Gaiko Shiryo Kan (Tokyo) (hereafter cited as GSK) A461 ET/I1–2–1.
- <sup>36</sup> *JA*, October 24, 1933.
- <sup>37</sup> Bahru Zewde, ‘Concept’, p. 2.
- <sup>38</sup> Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, p. 23. See also Richard Bradshaw and Jim Ransdell, *The Yellow Peril in Africa: The Cases of Ethiopia and South Africa in the 1930s*, forthcoming.



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# 4

## *Promise of Commercial Exchange* 1923–1931

### *First official contacts, 1923*

In 1923, when Regent Teferi Mekonnen sent a delegation to Geneva to seek his country's admission to the League of Nations, Ethiopia's representatives met their Japanese counterparts for the first time. Heruy, then a judge in the Special Court, was one of those delegates. Sugimura Yotaro, later Japan's ambassador in Italy, approached Heruy, who recalled, 'The Japanese representative showed great friendliness to the Ethiopian Empire. And our present Emperor eagerly wished contact with Japan, a great empire in the East.'<sup>1</sup>

While the Western powers had admitted Japan to the League of Nations as a member straight away, they initially refused Ethiopia's wish to join. No information in the Japanese archives reveals Japan's position on Ethiopia's eventual admission to the League in 1923.<sup>2</sup>

In 1924, Teferi traveled to Europe with Heruy. He told the Japanese plenipotentiary in Athens that many Japanese goods were entering Ethiopia through Djibouti, and he added that Ethiopia offered great possibilities for agricultural operations. Interestingly, Japanese officials were unaware of the extent of their trade penetration of Ethiopia since their first inroads in 1912. The Japanese thus began to make commercial and political inquiries.<sup>3</sup>

### *Japanese approaches, 1927–28*

Because Sugimura had reported that Ethiopia could become a good commercial client, the foreign ministry sent its Vice consul in Port Said, Kuroki Tokitaro, to visit Teferi, who had stopped there at the end of his European trip of 1924. He asked to visit Ethiopia and Teferi agreed.<sup>4</sup>

Led by an Egyptian guide, Kuroki arrived at Djibouti on November 16, 1924, and he then proceeded to Addis Ababa. As negotiations progressed, Teferi said he hoped the two countries would sign a treaty of friendship and commerce. Back in Port Said, Kuroki reported on his visit and insisted that, as the only

independent country in Africa and a member of the League of Nations, Ethiopia could be a useful economic partner. Most importantly, to ease Japan's need for cotton supplies, Ethiopia could offer land for cultivation. Unbleached cotton sheeting, much valued for clothing and tents, had first brought Japanese salesmen to Ethiopia. Kuroki quoted trade figures, which surprised his ministry. Japan was supplying Ethiopia with 80 per cent of its cotton goods and sent silk materials, cotton thread, sugar, china, matches, and pottery. Most Japanese goods transited via Bombay, after that Indian, Armenian, and Greek merchants took them through Djibouti, Aden, Egypt, or the Sudan to their final destination in Ethiopia. Wishing to increase profits, Kuroki suggested that Japan should agree with Teferi's proposal and sign the treaty of friendship and commerce with Ethiopia.<sup>5</sup>

After studying Ethiopia's agreements with Britain, France, Germany, and Italy, Japan's foreign ministry on November 26, 1926 sent Kuroki back to Ethiopia to negotiate a treaty of friendship and commerce. This trip resulted in an agreement in principle for signing such a treaty.<sup>6</sup>

The following February, Vice-Consul General Kuroki, now armed with plenipotentiary powers, again visited Ethiopia to explore the economic potential of the Ethiopian and Egyptian regions. While there, he negotiated a treaty of friendship and commerce with Ethiopia. Kuroki wanted to set up a legation as a base for future commercial expansion, centering on opening cotton markets, and he asked permission to secure an estate to set it up. Although Ethiopia would gladly help, he worried that Japan might face difficulties finding a proper site as the United States and Turkey were already selecting theirs. To increase trade, Kuroki recommended that Japanese merchants open local branches instead of dealing through foreign intermediaries. Ethiopia's government looked favorably toward Japan. However, on March 11, Foreign Minister Shidehara Kijuro ordered him to delay, because Tokyo had not yet decided whether to open a legation or not. Kuroki immediately repeated his request, which Shidehara again rejected, insisting that the government had not yet decided on the proper time for opening a legation.<sup>7</sup>

On April 27, Foreign Minister Tanaka Giichi asked Mushanokoji Kintomo, the Japanese ambassador to Romania, for his opinion on establishing a legation. He supported negotiations for an estate. Mushanokoji arrived in Addis Ababa with Kuroki to sign a treaty with Teferi on June 21, 1927 – the first official treaty signed between Japan and a fully independent African country.<sup>8</sup>

Initially written in Japanese and French, at Ethiopia's request the treaty also used Amharic. All three texts were official, but in case of disagreement, the French version was to be the authentic text. On July 9, Japan's Privy Council held up ratification because no one in Japan knew Amharic and could not judge its accuracy vis-à-vis the French text. The government prevailed on Tokyo Imperial University to appoint someone to learn the language, which the 'unfortunate professor' spent the next two years studying.<sup>9</sup>

Mushanokoji telegraphed Tokyo on August 30, advising that it would be best to open a legation in Ethiopia with concurrent jurisdiction of a minister of a nearby country and keep a chargé d'affaires *ad interim* in Ethiopia. Japan needed to get commercial rights so as not to lose its monopoly of cotton sales, and the

government had to protect those Japanese citizens wishing to do business in Ethiopia. Someone in the foreign ministry objected, writing in the margin of Mushanokoji's report that, 'Direct trade is a long way off ... [and] various foreign merchants import Japanese goods. Therefore, setting up a legation to protect the cotton market is premature and objectionable.'<sup>10</sup> Despite urging by its people in the field, the foreign ministry refused to open a legation to expand Japan's role in Ethiopia's cotton market.

Even so, the 1927 treaty provided for diplomatic representation and extended most-favored-nation privileges. With it and the maritime route to East Africa set up by Osaka Mercantile Steamship Company (OSK), commercial opportunities in Ethiopia were opening for Japan.<sup>11</sup>

Reflecting this increasing interest, in 1927 officials decided to send an Economic Survey Party to East Africa. Led by Oyama Ujio, it consisted of seven experts in various fields. Visiting seven countries, they arrived at Mombasa, Kenya, on September 27 and then went to British East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika), Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique), Madagascar, and Ethiopia. For five months, they studied the politics, economies, societies, agriculture, health conditions, and commerce of these territories. The group left Djibouti to return to Japan on February 20, 1928. The foreign ministry's trade department published the survey party's reports.<sup>12</sup>

Oyama reported that India and Japan occupied 97 per cent of Ethiopia's imports of cotton cloth, especially raw cotton cloth. Although many Ethiopians remained naked, he explained, more would wear clothing as civilization rose – 'the promise of its imports is surprising'. Other Ethiopian imports from Japan included artificial silk, ceramics, and glassware. These products, conveyed by Indian merchants, were Japanese-made in Japan itself or in Shanghai. It was necessary to expand commercial routes for Japan's products by sending Japanese trading companies to East Africa and directly exporting through them. For general readers, Oyama revised his report into a travelogue in which he highlighted Ethiopia's potential rather than existing difficulties.<sup>13</sup>

Irye Kanae, head of the Japanese Cotton Thread and Cloth Guild, was more skeptical. In the trade department's report, he foresaw the possibility of East Africa becoming part of the world market. At the same time, Japanese merchants, ignorant of local conditions, were 'fumbling in the dark'.<sup>14</sup> Facing limited growth of international trade during the Depression, Japan had to advance its commercial rights in East Africa. Irye suggested concrete measures, such as encouraging visits and study by merchants and opening a ship-borne exhibition with an inspection group traveling to East African ports. He also wanted to open a consulate immediately and promote a Japanese bank, and he insisted on setting up a system to encourage exports. Irye's report highlighted the problems blocking any Japanese advance into East Africa, and he observed that since Ethiopians lived simply, with few material desires, Japan should not expect any immediate change in their tastes. He also pointed out that 'the largest obstacle' to Ethiopia's development was its lack of direct maritime access. Finally, he urged fabric manufacturers and distributors to move into Ethiopia, where the population used 'low-quality cloth for everything'.<sup>15</sup>

Italy reacted jealously to such intrusions and sought to protect its interests.

On August 2, 1928, Ethiopia and Italy signed a Treaty of Friendship and Arbitration, which declared that 'there shall be unbroken peace and perpetual friendship' between the two states. Each would 'safeguard the interests' and would not 'prejudice or threaten the independence of the other'. To encourage commerce, citizens of each country would respect the laws of the host country. The treaty promised to continue to apply Article 7 of the Franco-Abyssinian Treaty of 1908 to Italian citizens. The two countries would submit all disputes to a conciliation and arbitration procedure without resort to arms. The treaty was to remain in force for twenty years and then would be renewable from year to year.<sup>16</sup>

Keeping modern weapons out of Ethiopia was especially important to Rome, and Ethiopia, France, Great Britain, and Italy signed the Paris Arms Treaty on August 21, 1930. To control the traffic in arms, it provided for publishing information regarding arms and ammunition passing into Ethiopia through the respective colonial territories of the three European powers and for storage warehouses in cities along Ethiopia's border. With this treaty plus the Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of Friendship and Arbitration of 1928, Italy's Duce believed that he had the right to regulate armaments imports into Ethiopia and to act as Ethiopia's military patron.<sup>17</sup>

Spurning Italy's exclusive patronage, however, by the early 1930s, the Ethiopians were looking elsewhere, most importantly engaging a small Belgian military mission to train and organize their army. Later, Italian newspapers – with newspapers and officials the world over chiming in – excitedly and falsely reported that numerous Japanese officers had been retained to replace the Belgians.<sup>18</sup>

Soon after the Italo-Ethiopian treaty, on October 7, 1928 Empress Zewditu at Harrar crowned Teferi as Negus or 'King'. The full title conferred was, 'His Majesty King Teferi Mekonnen, Heir to the Throne of Ethiopia and Regent Plenipotentiary'.<sup>19</sup>

### *Japanese influence increases, 1930*

Spurred by economic collapse with the Great Depression of 1929, and in the face of increasing resistance to Japanese trade in China, Japan sought to develop markets in Africa, including Ethiopia. Japanese trading companies were advancing in East Africa, especially in Kenya and Uganda, and Azumi Isaburo founded the League to Africa in January 1929. In October of the following year, the Osaka Exporting League petitioned Shidehara to open quickly consulates in Mombasa and Ethiopia. Tokyo did open a consulate in Mombasa in February 1932, but remained unrepresented in Addis Ababa.<sup>20</sup>

Planning to remain about two weeks, on March 28, 1930 Kuroki once again arrived in Addis Ababa. He was, he said, to correct a minor inconsistency in the Ethio-Japanese treaty drafted in Addis Ababa in 1927. He allowed that Tokyo would eventually set up a legation in Addis Ababa and had reserved an option on a property in Addis Ababa to construct its buildings. The government, however, had not set a timetable for its opening. It was awaiting the pending treaty's completion and ratification, signatures to the protocol of their exchanges, and,

‘least assured’, the approval of the necessary expenses in budget. Kuroki disparaged the Japanese officials in charge of expenditures, deeming them ‘very miserly’. The treaty’s correction, therefore, was only the first step in a potentially long process. Tokyo’s plans, however, were definite. Kuroki averred that if Ethiopia should send a representative to Japan, he would have to hold a rank equal to that of Japan’s representative in Addis Ababa. However, if Ethiopia could not conveniently provide a minister to Japan, Tokyo would probably accept the alternative of no representative at all.<sup>21</sup>

On April 2, soon after Kuroki had returned to Port Said, Empress Zewditu died. Japan sent a telegram of condolences on April 7.<sup>22</sup>

Kuroki returned to Addis Ababa to express his sympathies – his sixth visit to Ethiopia. He reported on April 6 that political conditions in Ethiopia had stabilized under Teferi’s rule, and he predicted increasing prosperity. He had learned that a couple of Ethiopia’s officials and some well-known young people wanted to organize an inspection party to visit Japan. He added that while Ethiopia was importing Japanese cotton cloth and thread, it was importing other general merchandise largely from Europe because Ethiopians neither knew what Japan was producing nor understood Japan’s high standing in the industrial world. Kuroki therefore supported this proposal for the young Ethiopians to tour Japan in the spring of 1931, to be financed by the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry with co-operation from other chambers. On May 1, he submitted his request to Inabata Katsutaro, the president of the chamber and future president of the Japan–Ethiopian Association.<sup>23</sup>

The foreign ministry passed on the request and Inabata told Kuroki on July 25 that the whole Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry would receive the Ethiopians. He also offered financial aid. Even though the inspection party of Ethiopian youths in the spring of 1931 did not take place, Foreign Minister Heruy’s visit later that year grew out of the same plan.<sup>24</sup>

Kuroki suggested on May 2 that sending representatives from Japan’s Imperial Family to Teferi Mekonnen’s coronation would contribute to mutual friendship. Tokyo decided instead to send as *ambassadeur extraordinaire* its ambassador in Turkey, Yoshida Isaburo, who was returning to Japan for a vacation. Yoshida met Teferi on October 28, 1930, and he attended the coronation, which began on November 2.<sup>25</sup>

The Ethiopians planned the coronation as ‘unabashedly modern, although Ethiopian in execution’.<sup>26</sup> Taking great efforts to impress, they remodeled St George Cathedral and refurbished Addis Ababa by installing telephone and electric lines and paving the streets. They bought horses from Austria to pull a ceremonial coach once owned by Germany’s former emperor, and they outfitted the city police in khaki uniforms from Belgium. A British naval band provided music. Attendees watched the epic movies *Ben Hur* and *King of Kings*. Addison Southard pointed out that the coronation was part of the progress toward consolidating the power of the central government.<sup>27</sup>

Chujo Tsuneshichi of the Nisshin Joint Stock Textile Company was among those attending the coronation. Armed with a letter of introduction from Kuroki, he spoke with Hayle Sellase, who told him, ‘We are glad that Japan sent a special envoy to the coronation. Not many Japanese have visited Ethiopia before; more

have come since Kuroki visited us. We are glad to see that'. He also promised Chujo that Ethiopia would provide extensive commercial facilities to Japan. Chujo wanted to see Japanese trade in the region expand by having Japanese merchants contact Japanese ship companies and trade directly with Ethiopia instead of relying on Indian merchants.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, Wakamatsu Torao of the commerce ministry asked the Japanese Cotton Thread and Cloth Guild about promoting Japanese commerce with Ethiopia. Irye Kanae, one of the members of Oyama's economic inspection party to East Africa in 1927 and 1928, replied by detailing the daunting obstacles to developing trade in Ethiopia. Ethiopia lacked a seaport, a domestic transportation system, stable currency values, financial institutions, and accurate trade statistics. Further, Indian merchants and low purchasing power and living standards hampered native economic activity. After concretely explaining each point, Irye pessimistically judged that Japan could not expect increased trade until Ethiopia's national cultural development had overcome these obstacles. Japan's urgent tasks were to secure its position as virtually the only supplier of cotton cloth to Ethiopia and to expand exports of cotton and other products. He suggested opening a direct sea route between Japan and Djibouti, and he wanted to open immediately a consulate, set up an exhibition of Japanese merchandise, and help industrialists visit Ethiopia.<sup>29</sup>

In line with this opinion, after November 10 Yoshida began working on his second reason for being in Ethiopia – to renegotiate a treaty of friendship and commerce. The negotiations centered on whether the new treaty should use only French in its text. The talks went smoothly, and Yoshida signed the Ethio-Japanese Treaty of Friendship and Commerce on November 15. With terms identical to those of the 1927 treaty, it mutually established most-favored nation status and allowed that each state could send diplomatic representatives to the other. Only the French text was valid. Japan approved the treaty the following year, on October 3, 1931, and the two governments exchanged ratifications in Paris on August 26, 1932.<sup>30</sup>

Having announced the signing, Heruy confessed to Southard that the treaty was not unusual. The foreign minister allowed that it conferred on Japanese residents in Ethiopia the privileges given to local residents of any other foreign nationality, and he added that the treaty should bring about closer trade relations with Japan. Southard himself saw little scope for greater commercial exchange between the two countries. He believed the Ethiopians hoped to get a loan from Japan, and their advances had found encouragement. While Southard worried at the loss to American prestige if Japanese and Egyptian legations opened in Addis Ababa, America's embassy in Tokyo reported that the Japanese did not then intend to set up a permanent legation. There was no money available and the finance minister likely did not want to include it in the next budget.<sup>31</sup>

### *Italian overreaction to foreign inroads*

Rome claimed that the Tripartite Anglo-French-Italian Agreement of 1906 and the Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of Friendship and Arbitration of 1928 had sanctified

Italy's position in Ethiopia. Ethiopia, however, was shunting trade to others, including the United States, Belgium, and Japan. The Negus had also refused to grant a railway concession to Italy wanted, and he had turned down offers of Italian capital in favor of American. The Emperor's efforts to modernize his military by importing non-Italian arms and using non-Italian foreign advisers disturbed Rome. The Japanese had taken advantage of a distracted Europe during the Great War to conquer Ethiopia's market, which especially exercised the Italians. Japanese activity in Ethiopia threatened Europe's political supremacy, 'for the influence of the yellow race is responsible for helping Ethiopia to shake off the yoke of the 1906 Tripartite Agreement'.<sup>32</sup>

Southard amusingly described Italy's touchy concern for Ethiopia. After Teferi had signed a Treaty of Conciliation and Arbitration with the United States on January 26, 1929, Southard received telephone call from an Italian colleague, who 'excitedly shouted over the wires: "What is this, you have signed treaties with the King?"' Southard calmed the Italian by telling him it contained nothing confidential and was similar to treaties with other countries. He noted the Italian's 'apprehensive attitude', which gave 'a most interesting and amusing glimpse of habitual Italian concern in Ethiopian international relations'. The American representative added that his colleague had 'justly preened and plumed himself' over the Italian treaty of 1928 'as the outstanding and single accomplishment of the sort between any of the world powers and Ethiopia'. But now it was 'no longer the "one and only" modern or up to date document of the sort existing'. Italy had lost its 'cherished' and 'uniquely distinguished and favored position'.<sup>33</sup>

### *The Meiji constitution's 'younger brother'*<sup>34</sup>

Italy's fears of Japanese advances in Ethiopia were not without merit. Ethiopia's constitutional development held out Japan's increasing influence on Ethiopia's modernization for all to see and struck at the heart of Italy's pretensions in the African empire. The Emperor himself spoke clearly about the stakes involved at the signing of the constitution on July 16, 1931. 'Everyone knows,' he said, 'that laws bring the greatest benefits to mankind and that the honour and interest of everyone depend on the wisdom of the laws, while humiliation, shame, iniquity, and loss of rights arise from their absence or insufficiency'.<sup>35</sup>

The Emperor had ordered Tekle Hawaryat to draft the constitution, and he examined copies of the constitutions of Britain, Germany, Italy, and Japan for their usefulness to Ethiopia's. He also read works on Japanese history, politics, and economy. His guiding principles were to preserve the monarchy as the basis of Ethiopia's unity and to protect the public from arbitrary rule. He and his advisers, Heruy and Kasa Darge, wrote a draft, which the Emperor changed. Then the leading nobility and rulers of each region approved it. As Finance Minister, Tekle Hawaryat introduced the constitution to Ethiopia's parliament.<sup>36</sup>

The Ethiopians modeled their constitution closely, but not exactly, on Japan's (see Appendix). Both, granted from above, had similar origins. Both consciously

borrowed from outside sources, and long deliberation preceded promulgation, although the process took less time in Ethiopia.<sup>37</sup>

After similar Preambles, even the chapter divisions of the Japanese and Ethiopian Constitutions were largely identical. Moreover, in both cases, nullifiers such as ‘within the limits provided for by the law’ or ‘except in cases provided for in the law’ constrained the guarantees of civil liberties. Both the Japanese and Ethiopians found sovereignty represented in the Emperor and intended their Constitutions to provide a foundation for strong, monarchic government rather than for popular representation. However, Ethiopia’s Constitution concentrated and made more emphatic the Emperor’s traditional, absolute, and Imperial power than did Japan’s. Ethiopia’s Emperor held executive power over the central and provincial governments, and the newly created parliament, which had only powers of discussion, provided no check on him. The Constitution set up no legal or administrative machinery to fulfill its terms, and it had little relevance to a people, whose traditions were largely alien to genuine constitutional development.<sup>38</sup>

There were other significant differences. Even the similar chapters differed in nuances and emphases. With regard to civil liberties and the power of the Emperor *vis-à-vis* the legislative body, the two constitutions diverged, with greater civil liberties and legislative power enshrined in Japan’s. This reflected the bourgeoisie’s political strength in Japan and its relative absence in Ethiopia. Ethiopia’s Constitution had only one clause of vague value on the budget whereas the Meiji model had ten relatively elaborate provisions, indicating Japan’s greater fiscal development.<sup>39</sup>

Facing this increasing Japanese influence in Ethiopia, Italians initially strove to strengthen their friendship with Haile Selassie’s Empire.<sup>40</sup>

## Conclusion

To modernize his people, and to fend off Italy’s efforts to control his country, Haile Selassie by the time of his coronation had clearly chosen Japan as the model for the way forward. His new Constitution dramatized this in black and white. While Ethiopia also sought help from other countries, the approaches to Japan particularly galled Italy’s political, cultural, and racial pride. In Japan’s growing influence, ironically, Italy also had found a new weapon with which to disarm those states, which had long challenged Italy’s struggle for sole dominance in Ethiopia. They, too, feared yellow Japan’s expansion.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon, Afurika*, p. 30; Shōji, *Echiopia*, 1; Faerber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, pp. 8–9.

<sup>2</sup> Faerber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Faerber-Ishihara, ‘Heruy’, p. 143; Okakura, *Eciopia no Rekishi*, p. 165; Alain Rouaud, ‘Le Courrier d’Ethiopie (1913–1936): Un journal éthiopien en langue française’, in *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Bahru Zewde (ed.) et al., 2 vols. (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies Addis Ababa University, 1994), 1:711–24.

<sup>4</sup> Shōji, *Echiopia*, p. 1; Taura, ‘Nihon-Echiopia kankei’, p. 142; Faerber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 9.



- <sup>5</sup> Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 10; Bahru Zewde, *History*, p. 97.
- <sup>6</sup> Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 10.
- <sup>7</sup> Taura, 'Nihon-Ethiopia kankei', p. 143.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>9</sup> Neville, June 4, 1931: NARA 701.9484/2; Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, pp. 10–11.
- <sup>10</sup> Taura, 'Nihon-Ethiopia kankei', pp. 144.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* For Ethiopia's developmental perspective, see Harold Marcus, 'The Infrastructure of the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis: Haile Sellassie, the Solomonic Empire, and the World Economy, 1916–1936', *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 559–67; Furukawa, 'Japan's Political Relations', p. 4; Furukawa, 'Japanese-Ethiopian Relations', pp. 3–4.
- <sup>12</sup> Taura, 'Nihon-Ethiopia kankei', pp. 144–5; Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, p. 19; Morikawa, 'Myth', pp. 41–4, 46 n23.
- <sup>13</sup> Taura, 'Nihon-Ethiopia kankei', p. 145.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 146; Kitagawa Katsuhiko, 'Japan's Economic Relations with Africa Between the Wars: A Study of Japanese Consular Reports', *African Study Monographs* 11 (December 1990):131.
- <sup>16</sup> *BDEA*, 27: No. 183; also see Nos 181; 182; 184, 185, 186; Okakura, *Eciopia no Rekishi*, pp. 201–2.
- <sup>17</sup> 'J. Calvitt Clarke III, 'The Politics of Arms Not Given: Japan, Ethiopia, and Italy in the 1930s', in *Girding for Battle: The Arms Trade in a Global Perspective, 1915–1940*, Donald J. Stoker Jr. and Jonathan A. Grant (eds) (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), pp. 135–6; *Papers of the NAACP*, Part II: *Special Subject Files, 1912–1939*, Series A: *Africa through Garvey, Marcus, August Meier and John H. Bracey Jr.* (eds) (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 1990), microfilm frames 634–43; *The Times*, August 22, 1930; Southard, January 3, 1932: NARA 884.242/3.
- <sup>18</sup> In NARA, see Southard, January 14, 1930: 884.20/6; January 23, 1932: 884.01A/880; March 9, 1933: 884.24/40; March 21, 1933: 884.24/41; April 6, 1933: 884.20/18; December 26, 1933: 784.94/5; October 22, 1934: 784.94/13; October 22, 1934: 765.84/62; and January 16, 1935: 884.242/4. Also in NARA, see 'To Ethiopia', October 12, 1933: 784.94/1; November 21, 1933: 784.94/1a; November 21, 1933: 784.94/1b; January 28, 1935: 884.20/433; Moffat, January 16, 1935: 560.ZL/8; January 16, 1935: 765.84/150; and War Department, October 5, 1933: 784.94/ 1. Finally, see *The Times*, January 16, 1930; August 1, 1935; and *NYT*, December 27, 1934.
- <sup>19</sup> *BDEA*, 27: nos 175, 178; also see nos 174, 176, 177. British representatives had long-reported on conservative hostility to Teferi's modernization plans. As a small example, see *BDEA*, 26: nos 16, 19, 20, 51, 86, 180; 27: nos 105, 232. On Rome's view of Teferi's accession to the throne as beneficial to Italian interests, see Garrett, April 16, 1930: NARA 765.84/22; Garrett, April 16, 1930: NARA 884.00/199.
- <sup>20</sup> Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, pp. 13–14; Taura, 'Nihon-Ethiopia kankei', pp. 146–7.
- <sup>21</sup> Park, April 2, 1930: NARA 701.9484/1; Park, April 2, 1930: NARA 784.942/2.
- <sup>22</sup> Taura, 'Nihon-Ethiopia kankei', p. 147; Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 11.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*; Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 11.
- <sup>24</sup> Taura, 'Nihon-Ethiopia kankei', p. 147.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 147–48; Haile Selassie I, *My Life and Ethiopia's Progress, 1892–1937* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 171–7; *JT&M*, November 23, 1934; Catherine Murray Jacoby, *On Special Mission to Abyssinia* (New York: Argus Graphic Arts Service, 1933), pp. 11, 111; Okakura, *Eciopia no Rekishi*, p. 164.
- <sup>26</sup> Marcus, *Haile Sellassie I*, 114, see pp. 109–13; see also Fan C. Dunckley, *Eight Years in Abyssinia* (London: Hutchinson and Company, Ltd. 1935), pp. 180–213; Asfa Yilma, *Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia: With a Brief Account of the History of Ethiopia with a Brief Account of the History of Ethiopia, Including the Origins of the Present Struggle, and a Description of the Country and Its Peoples* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston and Company, 1936), pp. 208–33.
- <sup>27</sup> Southard, June 6, 1931: NARA 884.01/30; Hengstler, August 13, 1930: NARA 884.001–Selassie I/91; see the documents in 884.001 Haile Selassie I Emperor of Abyssinia. For continuing Belgian efforts to reorganize the police, see Southard, April 26, 1933: NARA 884.20/19. Finally, see Evelyn Waugh, *Remote People* (London: Duckworth, 1931), pp. 11–69.
- <sup>28</sup> Taura, 'Nihon-Ethiopia kankei', p. 150.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>30</sup> Southard, December 17, 1932: NARA 784.9411/1; December 17, 1932: NARA 784.942/1; October 5, 1932: NARA 033.8411/81; Grew, September 14, 1932: NARA 784.9411/–; Japan, September 14, 1932: MAE Ethiopia, b8 f1; Addis Ababa, December 17, 1932: MAE Ethiopia b14 f9; *Courrier d'Ethiopie*, December 23, 1935; Taura, 'Nihon-Ethiopia kankei', p. 148; Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 11; Okakura

- and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, p. 32.
- <sup>31</sup> Southard, December 17, 1932: NARA 784.9411/1; March 9, 1931: NARA 701.8384/1; Neville, June 4, 1931: NARA 701.9484/2; Grene, January 17, 1934: NARA 784.94/6. Southard had long stressed the difficulties attending development of foreign economic enterprise in Ethiopia. He recommended the book by André Armandy, *La Désagréable Partie de Campagne (Incursion en Abyssinie)* (Paris: A. Lemerre, 1930). Southard, August 4, 1930: NARA 884.50/4.
- <sup>32</sup> Francesco Cataluccio (ed.), *Il conflitto italo-etiope: Documenti*, Vol. 1: *Dal Trattato di Ucciali al 3 Ottobre 1935*, Part 1: *Dal trattato di Ucciali al Novembre 1934* (Milan: Istituto per gli studi di politica internazionale, 1936), no. 8; Bordonaro, March 21, 1932: MAE Etiopia b8 fl; *DDI*, 7th, 11: no. 177; *Italy and Abyssinia* (Rome: Società editrice di novissima, 1936), p. 46. In NARA see Southard, January 2, 1930: 884.113/38; Southard, January 14, 1930: 884.20/6; Southard, November 15, 1932: 884.154/62; Park, May 17, 1930: 884.6461-Tsana Dam/166; Park, May 20, 1930: 884.20/9; Park, June 6, 1930: 884.20/7; Alling, November 17, 1930: 884.24/36; Southard, January 5, 1931: 765.84/25; Southard, January 20, 1931: 765.84/26; Southard, February 24, 1931: 884.24/37.
- <sup>33</sup> Southard, February 16, 1929; June 2, 1928: United States, *Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations Between the United States and Ethiopia (Abyssinia)*, 1910–29 (Washington, DC: The National Archives, 1962), Microcopy No. 412, Roll 1.
- <sup>34</sup> Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, p. 56.
- <sup>35</sup> Haile Sellassie I, 'The Constitution of 1931', *Ethiopia Observer* 5 (1962): 362–63. Also see the many documents on the new constitution in NARA 884.011 1931 Constitution.
- <sup>36</sup> James C. N. Paul and Christopher Clapham, *Ethiopian Constitutional Development: A Sourcebook* (Addis Ababa: Haile Sellassie I University, 1967), 340; Abera Jembere, *An Introduction to the Legal History of Ethiopia, 1434–1974* (London: Global, 2000), pp. 167–72; Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, pp. 11–12; Bahru Zewde, *History*, p. 110.
- <sup>37</sup> Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', p. 9; Yoshimitsu Khan, 'Inoue Kowashi and the Dual Images of the Emperor of Japan', *Pacific Affairs* 71 (Sum. 1998): pp. 215–30; George M. Beckmann, *The Making of the Meiji Constitution: The Oligarchs and the Constitutional Development of Japan, 1868–1991* (Lawrence, KA: University of Kansas Publications, 1957), pp. 39–83; Haile Selassie, *My Life*, pp. 178–201.
- <sup>38</sup> Paul and Clapham, *Ethiopian Constitutional Development*, pp. 340–1; Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, pp. 58–60. Also see *BDEA*, 28: nos 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 28; Prouty and Rosenfeld (eds), *Historical Dictionary*, p. 69; Taura, 'Nihon-Ethiopia kankei', p. 148.
- <sup>39</sup> Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', pp. 9–10.
- <sup>40</sup> Southard, July 22, 1931: NARA 765.84/27; July 27, 1931: NARA 765.84/28; July 28, 1931: NARA 765.84/29.

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## *Japan's Penetration of Ethiopia Grows*

### *Heruy's mission to Japan, November–December 1931*

#### ORIGINS & PURPOSES

Heruy remained eager to see if Ethiopia could model its modernization along Japanese lines. On November 19, 1930, he asked Yoshida about sending an Ethiopian mission to Japan to improve relations. Receiving a favorable reply, Hayle Sellase then officially asked Japan to accept an *ambassadeur extraordinaire* to Japan, and the foreign ministry in Tokyo directed Yoshida to discuss details.<sup>1</sup>

Having told an unhappy Rome of his plans, Heruy left Addis Ababa on September 30, 1931. Traveling with him were Teferi Gebre Mariam (Ethiopia's consul in Djibouti), Araya Abeba, and Daba Birrou. Official duties, including ratifying the Ethio-Japanese treaty signed the previous year, would consume only seven days of the longer visit. The Ethiopians sailed on October 5, 1931, from Djibouti.<sup>2</sup>

That same day, Addison Southard reported that Heruy was going to Japan to return the recent official visits while negotiating the commercial and friendship treaty and for attending the Hayle Sellase's coronation. The Ethiopians also wanted to investigate possibilities for opening a legation in Tokyo. Heruy and his Emperor also wanted to manufacture coarse cotton piece goods in Ethiopia, and Southard thought Heruy would propose that the Japanese set up such an enterprise. Southard also believed the Nisshin Joint Stock Textile Company of Tokyo had 'dickered' for a concession that would give them a near monopoly of the local cotton piece goods market, which it already competitively dominated.<sup>3</sup>

#### HERUY'S GROUP TOURS JAPAN

At 9 a.m. on November 5, Heruy's delegation arrived aboard the liner *Andre Lebou* at Kobe in western Japan. High Japanese government officials and several thousand citizens, including members of a young men's association, boy scouts, and schoolchildren welcomed him. Heruy later recounted, 'On our arrival in

Japan, I heard people's joyful cries. Many Japanese citizens awaited us at the port waving Ethiopian and Japanese flags. People acclaiming us flooded the route to the hotel. Everywhere we went, it was the same.<sup>4</sup> The envoy told the approving throng of his hopes for mutual prosperity, closer friendship, and commercial trade to further Ethiopia's development. He stressed that Ethiopia and Japan had much in common. After lunch, the group attended a tea party held at the Zuihoji Temple.<sup>5</sup>

At 9 p.m. that night, Heruy's group boarded a special train bound for Tokyo. Arriving the next morning, Foreign Minister Shidehara Kijuro and other high officials and journalists welcomed them, while the Toyama Military Band played. Escorted by Imperial Honor Guards, the envoy and his entourage then went to the Imperial Hotel.<sup>6</sup>

Heruy had a busy morning. Again escorted by Imperial Honor Guards and motorcycles, at 10:20 a.m. he left the hotel by carriage for the Imperial Palace. Received in audience at the Phoenix Hall, Heruy saluted Emperor Hirohito in Amharic and gave him a royal letter and the Grand Cordon of Solomon with Paulownia Flowers, the highest order of the Ethiopian Empire. In turn, he received the First Order of Merit and the Grand Cordon of the Rising Sun from the Japanese Emperor. Heruy added that Japan's 'remarkable and great progress of the last sixty years' had deeply impressed Hayle Sellase, who wanted 'to push the Great Japanese Empire as the best model for Ethiopia'. He then thanked Hirohito for the honor given him as a guest of state and for the representation at Hayle Sellase's coronation. The Emperor, in turn, expressed gratitude for the decoration and for the visit from such a far-off land. Finally, Heruy presented the Empress with the Medal of Sheba. Leaving the Imperial Palace shortly after 11 a.m., the envoy and his party returned to the Imperial Hotel. With his compatriots, Heruy returned to the Imperial Palace at 12:30 p.m. and attended a luncheon given in the visitors' honor at the Homeiden Hall. The Emperor and Empress, the prince and princess, and more than thirty dignitaries attended.<sup>7</sup>

Heruy visited the foreign ministry on November 7 to formally greet Shidehara, who offered a toast in English. 'The Ethiopian Emperor,' he said, 'invited Japanese representatives to the coronation last year. We enthusiastically sent Minister Yoshida for this honorable mission. Now it is our great pleasure to meet Your Excellency sent to the Japanese Emperor by your head of state. I wish to toast the prosperity of the Ethiopian Empire. Forever for the friendship of both countries! Ethiopian Emperor, *Banzai!*'<sup>8</sup>

Heruy followed a busy schedule. After his meeting with Shidehara, he paid homage at the Meiji Shrine, and several days later he went to the Toshogu Shrine. He visited the Ueno Zoo, the Tokyo Prefectural Art Museum, and the Kabukiza Theater. The Imperial Household Office held a wild duck hunting party for Heruy at the Hama Detached Palace on November 11.<sup>9</sup>

Wishing to modernize Ethiopia's military, Heruy asked to observe the three-day, interdivisional maneuvers to be held in Tochigi Prefecture. Bound for the war games, he left Tokyo on Saturday, November 14 and visited a railway plant at Omlya and the Katakuru Reeling Company en route. The next day, Heruy and his party watched the exercises.<sup>10</sup>

Heruy's official activities consumed only a small part of his time in Japan. He

was also on a trade and goodwill mission, and his private contacts were as important to Ethiopia as his official ones. Reflecting Ethiopia's varied economic needs, in Nagoya he visited the Hattori Poultry Farm, the Japan Rolling Stock Manufacturing Company, and the Mitsubishi Aircraft Manufacturing Plant. In addition to sightseeing, he attended luncheons and dinners in his honor hosted by the Aichi Prefecture, Nagoya City, and the Nagoya Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Heruy and his party left Nagoya early on the November 19.<sup>11</sup>

Heruy and his group arrived in Osaka on the afternoon of November 24. By this time, Kuroki Tokijiro, now consul in Saigon, had joined Heruy. Alighting, Heruy told the eager crowd of prefectural and local officials as well as business and commercial figures, 'By the present tour in Japan I realized more and more that Japan is a nation of the most hospitality. Everywhere I went I ... [received] a hearty welcome and cordial reception, which I shall never forget. I was particularly surprised to find Japan so much developed.'<sup>12</sup> As the envoy left the station, hundreds of schoolchildren and students from girls' high schools lined the open space in front of the station and raised cheers of '*banzai*' while waving small paper flags. Then the suite toured the *Osaka Mainichi*, where they met the newspaper's president and editors.

During his three days in Osaka, Heruy continued the theme of seeking commercial ties interspersed with sightseeing. He visited the prefectural office, municipal office, and Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Japanese held a reception in his honor at the Osaka Club under the joint auspices of the chamber, Osaka Prefecture, and Osaka City. The National Cotton Cloth Exporters' Association in Osaka hosted Heruy at a dinner. The Osaka Exporting League to Africa went one better after their dinner by adding an evening at a geisha house. Heruy found time amid his gastronomical adventures to visit the Osaka Arsenal, the Kanegafuchi Spinning Company in Kanebo, the Toyo Spinning Company, the Sumitomo Copper Works, Shimada Glassware Manufacturing Plant, and the Azumi Insect Powder Factory.<sup>13</sup>

Japanese merchants, particularly those in Osaka, turned their eyes to Ethiopia as a bright prospect for developing markets. The National Cotton Cloth Exporters' Association was encouraging exports of cotton cloths to Ethiopia to drive away foreign goods; already more than 80 per cent of cotton cloth consumed there was Japanese. They also foresaw an increase of the exports of celluloid goods, mosquito sticks and insect powder, rubber boots, enamel ware, knitted goods, aluminum products, and caps and hats. Soap, towels, woolen blankets, glass manufactures, and other piece goods not previously exported to Ethiopia would, the association hoped, find new markets in Ethiopia.<sup>14</sup>

Irye Kanae optimistically commented on Heruy's role in furthering commercial relations and predicted that Japan would drive nearly all other imported cloth out of Ethiopia. An official of the Osaka Association of Exporters of Goods to Africa put it equally clearly. 'We stationed a representative in Ethiopia last January to develop Japan's market', but trade with Ethiopia had languished except in 'cotton cloths, celluloid goods, mosquito sticks, and a few others'. Ethiopians were 'ignorant of the quality of Japanese goods' and therefore had been relying on costly products from other countries. Heruy's mission was changing this fact. 'The visiting Envoy seems to have understood the quality of

Japanese goods and the negotiations for commercial transactions in various lines have become brisk between the Japanese manufacturers and the representative from Ethiopia.<sup>15</sup> In fact, pleased with price and quality, Heruy bought cut glass, soap, and other goods as samples.

Admiring Japan's well-disciplined soldiers, Heruy decided to 'Japanize' Ethiopia's troops by adopting Japanese-style military uniforms. After studying samples from the Osaka branch of the Army Clothing Depot and elsewhere, he informally contracted the Toyo and Kanegafuchi spinning companies to supply cloth for uniforms. To make the uniforms in Ethiopia, Heruy wanted to take back with him some experienced Japanese tailors. Heruy approached Kuroki, but as a government official, he could not help with selecting tailors. Heruy then spoke about uniforms with the president of the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the president of the Toyo Spinning Company thought the Ethiopians would place orders after the envoy returned home. Kuroki was similarly optimistic.<sup>16</sup>

Kobe City heartily welcomed the Ethiopian envoy, who arrived by motorcar from Osaka at 3 p.m. on November 27. The local governor called the group's visit an epoch-making event in developing trade between the two countries. Heruy saw the Naigai Rubber Factory, near Kobe. Later, joined by more than fifty leading businessmen and town officials, he attended a reception at the Kobe Chamber of Commerce and Industry building. In the evening, he and his party were guests of honor at a dinner jointly hosted by the governor, the mayor, and president of the Chamber.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, Hayle Sellase sent two lions to his brother emperor. They arrived at Yokohama at 8 a.m. on December 2 aboard the *Venezia I*. Taken first to the Imperial Palace for inspection, the lions later went to the Ueno Zoo and were placed in a cage next to the zoo's tiger.<sup>18</sup>

Heruy's time in Japan was drawing to a close. After sojourning in Takahama, he arrived at Kobe early on December 3 by the O.S.K. ferry *Murasaki Maru*. He and his entourage then drove to Osaka.<sup>19</sup> When Inukai Tsuyoshi became the new prime minister on December 12, Heruy asked to meet with him, which he did three days later. Heruy's mission left Japan on December 28 by a French vessel bound for Djibouti, and he arrived back in Addis Ababa on January 29, 1932. He had spent about forty days in Japan.<sup>20</sup>

### THE IMPACT OF HERUY'S SOJOURN

Heruy's visit presaged closer relations between the two countries. It clearly affected him and those traveling with him. The month-long sea voyage between Ethiopia and Japan included stops in India, Singapore, Indo-China, and Shanghai. Everywhere along the way, they saw Asians under white, colonial rule. In contrast, Japan was friendly, modern, vibrant, strong – and independent. Especially impressive to the Ethiopians had been the opportunity to be 'wined and dined' with Japan's Emperor – at a time when he lived in god-like seclusion with few having the opportunity to meet him.<sup>21</sup>

Heruy dictated his impressions to Araya every day and published them in 1932. This was most likely the first book by an African that was a serious effort

to introduce Japan to Africans. Oreste and Enko Vaccari translated it into Japanese. Published in Tokyo in 1934, former Foreign Minister Shidehara Kijuro wrote its Preface. Japanese readers eagerly and appreciatively read the account. It is unclear how much this book influenced Ethiopia's intellectuals, but it did provoke fears in the West that Ethiopia would take Japan for its modernization model. Heruy's visit and book visibly raised Japanese–Ethiopian relations to their zenith and encouraged widespread public support for Ethiopia in the summer of 1935, before the Italian invasion.<sup>22</sup>

A couple of years later, the peripatetic journalist Ladislav Farago asked Heruy about his visit and its implications. The foreign minister replied that he would be undiplomatic and tell the truth. 'We had no ulterior motive, and what we wanted was no mystery. Japan has been growing into an influential Great Power, and, while all other important nations had their representatives at His Majesty's court, Japan had not so much as an honorary consul in Addis Ababa. It meant a great deal to us to open up diplomatic connections with Japan, and that was the primary reason for my journey.' Heruy added a second and economic reason. 'Our people are poor, and our export trade has shrunk during the last few years owing to the depression. We had to find a source for cheap everyday goods, and Japan is famous the world over as the country that sells the cheapest goods.' At that point, Ethiopia was importing great quantities of cotton. 'The hackneyed term "Japanese invasion" has a real meaning in this country, for half of our imports is comprised of cotton.'<sup>23</sup>

Heruy was not as straightforward as he claimed. He had also sought arms and munitions. At that time, however, the Japanese were dealing with the Manchurian Incident and had worries other than supplying arms and munitions to Ethiopia.<sup>24</sup>

Naturally, Italy's representatives in Tokyo closely followed Heruy's progress through Japan, though more calmly than did those in Rome who read the reports. In his long communication in late December, Ambassador Giovanni Cesare Majoni explained that Heruy had come to Japan as an *ambassadeur extraordinaire* charged with thanking the Emperor for Japanese participation in the ceremonies for crowning Ethiopia's Emperor. After this task, protocol limited Heruy to the role of a tourist and to the exchange of visits with diverse diplomatic representatives. What he saw had impressed him, as Heruy himself told Majoni. Hoping to develop direct commercial relations, he spent much time in the great industrial centers of Osaka and Kobe, where he received 'rich and varied samples' of textiles, glasswork, porcelains, rubber shoes, and knickknacks. Khaki uniforms especially interested Heruy, but the Italian consul in Kobe doubted that the negotiations for textiles were a 'done deal'. He also doubted that Japanese commercial penetration of Ethiopia, despite possibilities, was significant. The consul continued, 'The proximity of our African possessions, our knowledge of the local customs, and good political relationships favor us. For supplying the Ethiopian market, I think that Italy, despite pressure of some Japanese competition, does not have much to fear.' Although Heruy had spoken with Majoni 'of the cordial existing relations' between Ethiopia and Japan, the ambassador assured Rome that Heruy's activities had not 'developed politically or economically'. He had not 'reached agreements for developing economic

action, although the great local industrialists had made him take catalogs, information, and more'.<sup>25</sup>

While the Italian colonial minister railed against the anti-European nature of Japan's activities, Italy's representatives in Ethiopia also generally downplayed Japanese successes. In the face of fears that Heruy's visit had provided the key to opening the door to massive Japanese immigration, the local representatives noted in early 1932 that Ethiopia's court had employed only two Japanese – a husband and wife – one a cook and the other a maid. Foreign diplomats, including those in London and Paris, also voiced their skepticism to the Italians.<sup>26</sup>

### *Japanese visits in 1932*

Despite such skepticism, some Japanese held high expectations. In fact, the Japanese share of Ethiopia's imports, including indirect trade, increased from 55 per cent to 60 per cent in 1930 through 1931, and to 70 per cent for 1932 and 1933. Further, the foreign ministry's international trade section in 1932 published materials designed to encourage Japanese to go to Ethiopia, and some companies were considering opening local branches there. For example, in 1932 Mitsui Bussan Company, the largest trading company in the world, sent a commercial delegation to see what economic resources Ethiopia had.<sup>27</sup>

On December 11, 1931, shortly after Heruy's departure for Japan, Hara Toemon, a farmer, became the first from Osaka Prefecture to seek a passport to Ethiopia, where he planned to explore possibilities for opening an export business.<sup>28</sup>

Only a few Japanese actually went, however. The Japanese–Ethiopian Trade Association, formed when Heruy visited Japan, planned to send four people to Ethiopia to look at the country and to hold an exhibition and spot sale of cotton cloth and general goods. In the name of their chairman, Hara Fujiemon, they asked Japan's foreign ministry for aid. When refused, the group reduced its plans considerably. The Japan Production Party strongly influenced the group, and one of its members, Tomono Soichi, planned to go to Ethiopia. Uchida Ryohei, a Pan-Asian nationalist and founder of the Black Dragon Society, with the Japan Production Party held a farewell party for the group on December 15. Their Pan-Asian passions and enthusiasms for a new market notwithstanding, the trip proved amateurish. Hara, despite his four-year career managing a textile company, did not take active leadership, and the group lacked entrepreneurship. The four entered Ethiopia on February 2, 1932, but Hara and Tomono left Ethiopia after a month, followed by the two others six months later. They had accomplished little.<sup>29</sup>

With Rome casting a wary eye toward Japanese advances, in 1932 Tokyo and Addis Ababa began to act on the promise in their commercial treaty. First, Ethiopia needed to find an honorary consul to represent its interests. Yamazoe Shinkichi, who was on a mission for Azumi Isaburo, an insecticide manufacturer, brought back a letter from Ethiopia's Emperor asking that Tokyo name Azumi as an honorary consul. The foreign minister reported this to the Emperor on



June 10, and three days later Azumi received a secret appointment as Ethiopia's honorary consul in Osaka.<sup>30</sup>

Azumi asked the foreign ministry not to send a mission but to appoint someone trusted in Ethiopia as an honorary consul. For the position, he proposed an Indian merchant, Mohammed Ali, who had worked with the Osaka Exporting League to Africa and had also received a high decoration from Ethiopia. Japan, however, did not immediately fill the position. Subsequently, Yukawa Chuzaburo, an important Japanese exporter and chairman of Nagasaki's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, succeeded Azumi as Ethiopia's honorary consul.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile, Japan's military apparently began to take steps to begin providing concrete military aid to Ethiopia. Oohara Takekei, a Japanese colonel disguised as a businessman, went to Ethiopia, probably in either 1932 or early 1933. He likely stayed in one of Menilek's former palaces at Holeta, west of the capital. Araya worked with the colonel to facilitate his finding the most effective way to deliver arms to Ethiopia. Oohara visited Berbera in British Somaliland near Djibouti because other ports serving Ethiopia were under much tighter colonial control. Despite their comparatively laxity, the colonel still feared the British would detect Japanese arms shipments and plans for deliveries fell through.<sup>32</sup>

### *Japan's neo-mercantilist commercial policy*

Mussolini told the National Council of Corporations on November 14, 1933 that Japan's international trade advances threatened Italy. Four days later, Italy's press began an active campaign against Japan's trade offensive, highlighted by long editorial articles in the *La Stampa*, *Il Mattino*, and *La Tribuna*. Italy even worried about Japanese supplies of weapons to the Balkan countries. Japan's press opined that these editorials were preparing the Italian public for a trade war.<sup>33</sup>

The Italians did have reason for concern. Two steamship lines from Kobe were setting up bimonthly service to East Africa. To promote exports to 'the South Seas region, India, Egypt, the New East, and elsewhere', the *Osaka Mainichi* from April to August 1934 sponsored a trip by fifteen important industrialists. The newspaper praised the 'miraculous advance' of Japanese manufacturing made possible by 'persistent efforts ... in improving the quality and methods of production', adding that the next 'natural step' would be to find markets to dispose of their goods where they would be most welcomed 'at a reasonably low price, commensurate with the quality provided'. While the group did not visit Ethiopia itself, the *Osaka Mainichi* vigorously promoted Japanese trade with Hayla Sellase's Empire. At the beginning of 1935 in the Imperial Diet, Foreign Minister Hirota Koki listed Africa's importance as equal to that of Central and South America.<sup>34</sup>

Following these successes, the Japanese set their basic commercial policy on October 11, 1934, with a document entitled 'On Japan's Commercial Policy'. It dealt with legislative, commercial, diplomatic, and public relations issues to advance Japan's economic interests by aggressively promoting exports and

limiting imports. Worried that some foreign states were aggressively trying to limit imports of Japanese goods, the foreign ministry foresaw an increasingly severe commercial environment. In the face of this forecast, Japan had to secure current markets and find new ones.<sup>35</sup>

Along the same lines, on March 22 Vice Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru publicly explained that 'commercial issues equal political issues' because the powers had abandoned the principle of free trade. Using compensation and quota systems, they were conducting their commerce 'under state regulation and control'. Japan's legations abroad therefore had become 'spokesmen for our country politically and commercially, making others understand our country's position and protecting our commercial rights'.<sup>36</sup>

### *Kitagawa Takashi & Nikkei-Sha, 1932–34*

#### KITAGAWA TAKASHI & HIS NEGOTIATIONS IN ETHIOPIA

As Italy girded itself for war against Ethiopia in the first half of the 1930s, Emperor Haile Sellase desperately searched for allies to help defend his country, and the Japanese seemed an attractive source of potential aid. After all, many Ethiopians saw Japan as a non-Western, non-white model for modernization, and Ethiopia's Japanizers had long encouraged closer relations with the Japanese Empire. Many Japanese, especially the ultra-nationalists who wished Japan would lead an alliance of the world's 'colored' peoples, responded favorably. Between 1927 and 1935, many governmental representatives and private entrepreneurs visited Ethiopia to explore possibilities for expanding commercial and political ties.<sup>37</sup>

Among the latter were several con men looking for get-rich-quick schemes. One of these hustlers was Kitagawa Takashi, a businessman of an 'adventurous and speculative type',<sup>38</sup> who caused an international scandal. Kitagawa was the director of the Nagasaki Association for Economic Investigation of Ethiopia, which was founded in 1932 to conduct import and export trade. The association was more commonly known as Nikkei-sha.

Seeking to exploit economic resources, develop trade, and open an outlet for Japan's expanding population, in August 1932 Nikkei-sha sent a mission to Ethiopia. Accompanied by three associates, Kitagawa arrived to a warm welcome in Addis Ababa. After studying the economic conditions in the capital, Kitagawa, with perhaps four other Japanese, led a mule caravan carrying samples including cheap cotton fabrics, patent medicines, sundry goods, and agricultural implements. Hoping to sell these cut-priced goods, Kitagawa also explored the market potential for a permanent business. Although this adventure into the interior had nothing specifically to do with Nikkei-sha's plans, Ethiopia's government put an escort of twenty natives at his disposal. Local chiefs warmly received his caravan, but the trip proved disappointing, because the provincial Ethiopians had little cash purchasing power. The group returned to Addis Ababa more or less destitute.<sup>39</sup>

A glib-talking and unscrupulous fixer, Kitagawa in the summer of 1933 negotiated with Heruy for authorization to lease large amounts of land in Ethiopia.

They also discussed a permit to grow cotton, tobacco, tea, green tea, rice, wheat, fruit trees, vegetables, and medicinal plants. Nikkei-sha wanted the exclusive right to cultivate certain plants, including opium poppies, to make medicines for sale in Ethiopia and for export.<sup>40</sup>

On September 18, Kitagawa telegraphed the Nagasaki Chamber of Commerce and Industry to report on his trip. He pointed out that if Nagasaki set up an emigration company, it could send 650,000 emigrants to Ethiopia, with each man receiving two and one-half acres. If the company ended the existing system of indirect trade by trading directly, the Japanese could increase their business with Ethiopia.<sup>41</sup>

That same month, Tokyo asked Ethiopia for authorization for Nikkei-sha to send a survey party in 1934 to search for wasteland for reclamation. Nikkei-sha proposed that for every thirty-seven acres, Ethiopia allow one Japanese family to immigrate. Finally, Nikkei-sha asked for almost 2,500 acres near Addis Ababa as an experimental farm so the investigation party could ascertain what would grow well. Ethiopia agreed to approve lands to grow medicinal plants – apart from those prohibited such as opium poppies – and to discuss later contractual details with permission contingent on final signature of the contracts. Toward the end of September, Japan's foreign ministry granted the application to rent land in name of Nikkei-sha to cultivate medicinal plants – contingent on a negotiated agreement with Ethiopia.<sup>42</sup>

#### INTERNATIONAL CONTROVERSY

Kitagawa had presented his simple negotiations to the public as though Nikkei-sha had already signed the contract. On September 21, 1933, and under a provocative title as was usual for the third page of Japanese newspapers, the *Osaka Asahi* published an article on the agreement. According to the newspaper, Nikkei-sha's representative had telegraphed the Nagasaki Chamber of Commerce and Industry that the company had secured a concession of almost 1.5 million acres with a monopoly for poppy cultivation. This short, fifteen-line story set off an international ruckus.<sup>43</sup>

Later that day, the *London Daily Herald* published a short article by its Tokyo correspondent, who repeated the *Osaka Asahi* story. He asserted that Japan had secured the 'sensational capture of land for thousands of emigrants and new markets for her traders in Abyssinia'. He added that Japanese newspapers were describing Kitagawa's triumph and had announced that Ethiopia had granted Japan concessions on immigration and commerce, 1.6 million acres suitable for cotton planting, and a monopoly for opium poppy cultivation. The Japanese were forming an emigration organization to populate these lands, and soon there would be 'a stream of Japanese moving west'. Exaggerating Kitagawa's success, the correspondent lamented that Japanese salesmen were finding it easy to open new markets for their products in Ethiopia and that official escorts protected them as they moved around the country selling their goods. The stakes were high. Ethiopia served as a buffer between the vast colonial interests controlled by Britain, France, and Italy, and each held important interests within Ethiopia itself. Japan was challenging all three.<sup>44</sup>

The American embassy in Tokyo disparaged the *Daily Herald* article and downplayed the importance of any concessions, monopolies, or other rights and privileges the Japanese might have obtained in Ethiopia. Assuming the concessions had any substantial basis, the military attaché wrote, they would have been chiefly for political rather than for economic or other reasons.<sup>45</sup>

Despite such doubts, the *Daily Herald* article snowballed around the world's press, which denounced Japan's economic and political invasion of Ethiopia. The next day, the *Il Messaggero* excoriated supposed Japanese immigration, economic concessions, and cotton and poppy production, all the result of Kitagawa's visit. Japanese businessmen were salivating over the opportunities in Ethiopia.<sup>46</sup> Between September 25 and December 25, the Paris newspaper *Le Temps* published a series of articles which drew on Italian accounts, chiefly those published in *L'Azione Coloniale*. Without contesting the right of Ethiopia to conclude agreements of its choice, the French newspaper and the Italian journals warned that such agreements threatened Italian, French, and British interests.<sup>47</sup> Alessandro Lessona, Under-Secretary of Colonies, underlined Ethiopia's complete incomprehension that its fate led naturally and inevitably to Rome.<sup>48</sup>

Caught by surprise and fearing diplomatic repercussions, Tokyo took action. The foreign minister on October 4 and again on the twenty-fifth ordered the chargé d'affaires at Port Said, Harada Chuichiro, to look into Nikkei-sha. He twice spoke with Heruy, who explained that Ethiopia had not yet signed the contract with Nikkei-Sha and that until then, the concessions would not come into effect. The proposed contract, he stressed, did not include growing opium poppies. Heruy assured Harada that he had told Kitagawa that Ethiopia would study the possibility of granting a lease if Kitagawa would add to his petition a statement detailing conditions with a draft of the proposed lease. Heruy added that his dearest wish was that commerce and friendship between the two countries would grow. Fueled by poorly informed sources, Britain and other European states were busy condemning Japan's advance into world markets. Heruy placed friendship between Japan and Ethiopia on a high level: 'How anyone else interprets these issues does not concern me, because I long to develop commerce between Japan and Ethiopia and I pray for improved friendship between the two countries.'<sup>49</sup>

Tokyo continued to examine Kitagawa. A journalist active in Japan's contacts with Ethiopia, Shoji Yunosuke, spoke about him with the foreign ministry. He reported that the supposed deal included a monopoly on poppy cultivation as well as more than 1.5 million acres for rent. The foreign ministry also asked Suzuki Shintaro, Governor of Nagasaki Prefecture, to look into Nikkei-sha. When Harada interviewed Kitagawa in Port Said while on his way back to Japan, he said he had obtained from Ethiopia the right to rent more than twelve million acres. Further, Japanese immigrants would receive about 370,600 acres, and Japan would receive a monopoly for cultivating cotton, coffee, and other crops and herbs. The potential deal did not include poppy cultivation. Kuroki Tokitaro, now the acting consul in Colombo, Ceylon, also reported several newspapers had described Japanese advances into Ethiopia and were predicting that, with Japanese aid, Ethiopia would become a new Brazil.<sup>50</sup>

Despite Japan's denials that it had received concessions, Ethiopia's refuta-

tions sometimes seemed more ambiguous. While passing through Cairo, on October 22 he spoke with a reporter from the *La Bourse Egyptienne* and then a week later with a correspondent from *Il Mattino* of Naples. He admitted that a few months earlier a private group of Japanese industrialists without government mandate had studied commercial possibilities in Ethiopia. Despite these visits, enthusiastic Japanese press reports, and Ethiopia's wish for better relations with Japan, Heruy downplayed the results of their commercial ties. He did allow, however, that within reasonable limits, Ethiopia would be willing to grant some small land concessions and help for Japanese industrialists and merchants to establish themselves in his country. Ethiopia would try everything to encourage cotton cultivation and would grant permission to Japanese dealers and workers to come to Ethiopia. Admitting that Japanese competition in Ethiopia would displace India's cotton trade, Heruy wondered why conversations 'with our yellow friends' disturbed Europeans, who depended on Indian middlemen. He assured the correspondents that Ethiopia was not anyone's enemy but wished cordiality with all. Heruy added that diverse discussions were developing that did not exclude the probability of new conditions favoring Japan.<sup>51</sup> Heruy's statements did not ease worried Italian minds.

While Heruy was stirring up international conversation, Japan's representative in Geneva on the League's Permanent Mandates Commission spoke to his Italian counterpart about his country's penetration of Ethiopia. He claimed that Ethiopia had made the first advances, asking 'for the hand of an Imperial Japanese princess' for Crown Prince Asfaw Wossen Taffari. Japan was unwilling to flatly refuse, and to make the proposal more palatable, the Ethiopians had offered 1.6 million acres for cotton cultivation, the exclusive right to cultivate poppies, and permission for unlimited immigration to Ethiopia. All this was part of a larger Ethiopian effort to increase its network of foreign interests on which Ethiopia could call in case of need. Japan, however, had serious obligations elsewhere and had few extra resources to expend on Ethiopia.<sup>52</sup>

Kitagawa returned to Japan on November 4 in the middle of the brewing controversy. Arriving at the port of Moji at night, Kitagawa proudly talked to newspaper reporters about the contract as if Ethiopia had already confirmed it. On November 8, the Nagasaki Chamber of Commerce and Industry and 130 people warmly welcomed him.<sup>53</sup>

Confirming Harada's fears and justifying Italy's concerns, on November 6 and 7, the *Morning Post* of London launched a campaign denouncing Japan's commercial penetration in Africa. Specifically, the newspaper reported that Ethiopia had granted a cotton concession to a Japanese consortium. Although lacking details, the paper feared that the effects of Ethiopia's treating with the Japanese would 'have far-reaching consequences' and warned that a 'long contemplated and carefully planned project of industrial and commercial penetration' was 'in sight'.<sup>54</sup> The newspaper worried that Japan would apply in Ethiopia the same energy and ability shown when invading other markets. Italy's Ministry of Colonial Affairs was carefully examining the matter and was considering calling into action the 1906 Tripartite Agreement among Great Britain, France, and Italy. Japanese advances threatened all three. *L'Azione Coloniale*, 'a vigorous Fascist newspaper devoted to Italy's Africa problem',<sup>55</sup> was emphati-

cally promoting such anti-Japanese collaboration. Ethiopia was modernizing, and Hayle Sellase was suspicious of Europeans and was therefore turning to Japan.<sup>56</sup>

As the *Morning Post* stories broke, Mr Yokoyama, Japan's representative to the Seventeenth Session of the Opium Advisory Committee in Geneva, denied rumors of an Ethiopian concession to Japan to cultivate poppies. He conceded, however, that rumors that Japan had been granted a large concession in Ethiopia for poppy cultivation must have alarmed the committee's members. The problem had begun with the 'tendentious' article in the *London Daily Herald*, which had repeated the story from the *Osaka Asahi*. On October 28, 'an important official' within Ethiopia's government replied to Yokoyama's request for information. Responding to Kitagawa's petition on behalf of Nikkei-sha for leasing land for cultivating cotton and medicinal herbs, the Ethiopians had told him that they would study the possibility of granting a lease, but that he would have to supplement his petition with a statement detailing its conditions. He declared that Kitagawa's telegram was 'a fraudulent move' by 'a young man'. Upset by his complete failure, he wanted 'to restore his personal credit'. Yokoyama then quoted from Harada's report on Heruy's negotiations with Kitagawa. Since then, the negotiations had made no progress. Ethiopia, a League member, could not allow poppy cultivation, and the manufacture of opium anywhere in the Empire was illegal. Harada, having received a 'somewhat' favorable welcome to his proposal, had sent his telegram to pave 'the way for a triumphant return to Japan' by securing further financial support from the Nagasaki Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Yokoyama expressed his regret to the committee that 'a mere intrigue by an adventurer' had led to unfriendly rumors about Japan.<sup>57</sup>

Putting together the results of all its inquiries, Japan's foreign ministry concluded that Ethiopia had not made any concessions, that Nikkei-sha lacked both funding and credit, and that Kitagawa was untrustworthy. The ministry proved the proposed contract differed from the content of the translation made by Nikkei-sha. Further, the lease and the right of cultivation would be effective only after the contract had been signed, and there was no signed contract. On November 27, the foreign ministry sent telegrams relaying these conclusions to Japan's ambassadors in London, Paris, Rome, Berlin, and other capitals with diplomatic establishments in Ethiopia.<sup>58</sup>

Toward the end of November, Addison Southard commented on the *Daily Herald* article. He recognized that similar reports from foreign newspapers had been circulating in Ethiopia for several weeks. His legation had been unable to confirm that the Japanese had received any land concessions, although he believed the Japanese had applied some months before for a small concession for experimenting in growing medicinal plants for sale in Japan. When the Ethiopians discovered the Japanese had proposed to grow opium poppies, however, they deferred action on the application. Southard thought the Ethiopians might eventually grant this small plot of land, but informal inquiry at the foreign ministry had elicited only the fact that the concession was pending. Without mentioning Kitagawa by name, Southard dismissed his efforts as a 'good old "skin" game'.<sup>59</sup>

Why, then, were the British, French, and Italians competing so hard in Ethiopia with the Japanese? Southard thought national pride and jealousy motivated them more than any conviction of great profits in the offing. Southard added, 'The crafty Ethiopian plays on the gullibility of one foreigner or another and thus gets an exaggerated amount of international advertising as to this country's business potentialities.'<sup>60</sup> Southard noted that poor trade statistics made it difficult to appraise the true extent of Japanese inroads into Ethiopia, although recently they had won most of the local market for coarse cotton piece goods. In the last eighteen months, he added, a few minor Japanese had come to Ethiopia to explore opportunities, only to be disappointed. One had opened a small shop in Addis Ababa that sold samples 'of the cheapest kinds of merchandise including mainly cottons, artificial silks, notions, and related knickknacks', but saw little financial reward. We hear that the business done to date has been unimportant'.<sup>61</sup>

Southard insisted that outside the few Ethiopian towns there were few business opportunities. Undeveloped roads, ineffectual government and courts, the peasantry's lack of cash, and limited economic development all constrained the potential for profit, 'unless the Ethiopians offer inducements and liberty of operation which we think improbable'. He estimated the average per capita purchasing power for foreign goods was no more than US\$1 a year and was unlikely to increase soon. Any concession of the size rumors were discussing was too large for the limited Ethiopian market to absorb. Further, the French, Germans, and Belgians had earlier wasted money on cotton-growing experiments. With a 'paucity of water and amenable labor', they had not been able to grow first-class fiber. All foreigners – and Southard confessed he too had fallen prey – for their first few years in Ethiopia entertained delusions about the country's economic potential. Finally, the 'arrogance, obstinacy, and grasping of provincial officials' made running any foreign agricultural enterprise 'unduly costly'. Not optimistic about Ethiopia's economic development, Southard concluded that Japan, too, inevitably would find disillusionment.<sup>62</sup>

Southard elaborated on the difficulties the Japanese would face by adding two anecdotes. The enthusiasm developed by Heruy's visit to Japan and his exaggerations of Ethiopia's economic potential had induced a Japanese dentist to come to Ethiopia. After only a few months, he was broke. He had said that it was hopeless to expect to make a living in Ethiopia as there were too few who could afford dental attention – and many of those who could would not pay their bills. Southard editorialized, 'Procrastination in paying just financial obligations appears to be a national characteristic of the Ethiopians.' Heruy loaned this dentist enough to pay his steamer fare back to Singapore. Southard turned to salacious gossip for his second anecdote. The Emperor had a Japanese cook, Enomoto Seisaku, at the Imperial Palace. The cook's wife, he said, worked as a masseuse and perhaps also rendered 'more intimate services, to certain Ethiopians'. Southard had also heard that Ethiopia's Emperor was considering employing a Japanese jujitsu expert for his palace soldiers. Southard had evidence that there were fewer than eight or ten Japanese in Ethiopia, and not one of them was important.<sup>63</sup>

Given their suspicions of immigration, Southard doubted Ethiopians would

grant important concessions or allow large numbers to come to Ethiopia. Even more, reports in the international press of a 'Japanese invasion' had upset them. On the other hand, they thought a Japanese legation would 'enhance the pride and prestige of their Emperor'. Hayle Sellase felt that the kowtowing before him in public by light-skinned diplomats elevated his position in eyes of his people. 'It is not difficult to imagine,' Southard continued, Ethiopia's nobility 'pridefully remarking, "See how even the great Emperor of Japan sends an important representative to bend the knee to our even greater Haile Selassie!"'<sup>64</sup>

In mid-January 1934, Japan's foreign ministry received a report from Governor Suzuki that Kitagawa and others had been planning to set up an immigration company with a capital investment of about one million yen. They had, however, temporarily suspended plans because he lacked sufficient funds. On January 20, Kitagawa went to the international trade section of the foreign ministry and tried to explain Nikkei-sha's intention to send twenty technicians to manage an agricultural experimental station of almost 2,500 leased acres. The international trade section opposed this plan because Ethiopia had not yet confirmed the land concession. Besides, the plan merely provided for an experiment on agricultural management. It would be better to send a few people to conduct field tests. Trade officials explained to Suzuki the importance Japan placed on the Nikkei-Sha issue. This was Japan's first effort to advance agriculturally in Ethiopia, and its success or failure would influence Japanese development there. The foreign ministry feared 'any negative impression in Ethiopia' which would reflect on the plan itself as well as the total relationship between Japan and Ethiopia.<sup>65</sup>

Despite Tokyo's efforts, official ambivalence, and the realities of doing business in Ethiopia, sensational and exaggerated newspaper articles continued to warn of Japan's economic advance into Ethiopia. Japan's press protested Europe's criticism.<sup>66</sup>

Reporting that Nikkei-sha hoped to send 650,000 emigrants to Ethiopia, Washington's embassy in Tokyo was more alarmist than was its legation in Addis Ababa. In mid-January 1934, the military attaché in Tokyo joined in the extravagant descriptions of Japanese inroads into Ethiopia. Even so, he also thought that the *Daily Herald* had exaggerated the economic importance of any concessions and privileges the Japanese might be granted. If the concessions had any substance, their importance was political, he added. Kitagawa's mission, he wrote, was to exploit economic resources, to develop trade, and to open an outlet for Japan's overflowing population. Mistakenly, the attaché declared that sometime in the summer of 1933, the government had leased to Kitagawa 1.6 million acres of farmland suitable for growing Arabian mocha and cotton. The Ethiopian government had also agreed to grant him monopoly rights to raise opium poppies, he also said.<sup>67</sup>

Likewise, at the end of January 1934, Italy's representatives in Egypt reported that the Japanese had begun to market 'white'<sup>68</sup> drugs in Ethiopia. Italy's representative feared that the Japanese wanted to bend such commercial sales to political ends.<sup>69</sup>



### ITALIAN FEARS & INTERCEPTED LETTERS

In a series of reports from Addis Ababa in late 1933, Count Luigi Orazio Vinci-Gigliucci, the Italian minister, voiced concern over Japan's economic penetration of Ethiopia, and his observations caused alarm in Rome. The minister repeatedly pointed to Japan's negotiations for economic concessions in Ethiopia. These included plans to send engineers to investigate developmental possibilities. The Japanese were to set up factories to produce porcelain, pottery, cement, and reed mats, and they were insisting on a monopoly of production, unless Ethiopia's government itself set up production facilities. Japan would also mine gold and would receive concessions for growing cotton and medicinal plants, including opium poppies. Vinci also raised the possibility that there might be schemes for a massive Japanese migration to provide technical assistance to Ethiopia's agriculture and mentioned discussions about exchanging Ethiopian coffee for Japanese arms. Vinci warned that Toda Masaji, who had arrived in Addis Ababa on December 22, would soon present the projects to a group of Japanese who might provide capital. Vinci also connected Araya's wedding plans to Toda's schemes. He added that nothing yet had been decided, because these projects were meeting some opposition within Ethiopia's government. In any case, nothing would happen until April 1934, when he expected that Japan would establish a legation in Addis Ababa and Ethiopia would set up an embassy in Tokyo. As it turned out, Toda was the sub-managing partner and general inspector of the Chukio Trading Company of Nagoya, and he negotiated an order for fifty cases of matches and discussed erecting a factory for canning meat and peas. He tried to run a retail shop for distributing Japanese goods but, discouraged by the limited trade, the concern soon ended and he left Ethiopia.<sup>70</sup>

Although exaggerated, the Italian's fears were not entirely groundless. Vinci forwarded to Rome a copy of an ominous letter, dated December 6, 1933, to Toda from Wolde Giorgis, Secretary-General of Ethiopia's Foreign Ministry. Wolde Giorgis wrote that after agreeing on the price and quality, Ethiopia would offer its products in exchange for weapons, including heavy and light machine guns, and long and short rifles.<sup>71</sup>

Then, in January 1934, Vinci got hold of a letter in English to Hayle Sellase from Yamauchi Masao, who had been in Ethiopia for a couple of years. This letter doubtless put many Italian fears into focus. Yamauchi suggested that the Japanese could offer help and loans to electrify industries and to build iron works that Ethiopians could use to make weapons. Asking for an audience to discuss the 'Lift-up of Ethiopia', Yamauchi called iron works 'the cradle of civilisation', and with them, he said, Ethiopia would sow the seeds for future greatness. Yamauchi wanted to return to Japan with Araya as soon as possible to secure loans. 'The intended marriage of ... Araya will help us to secure this loan without any difficulty. ... As Your Imperial Majesty is quite aware, I am always trying to cultivate a good link and existing friendship between Japan and Ethiopia.' Japan, Yamauchi explained, had refused Ethiopia a loan during Heruy's visit because the Japanese had not understood how wealthy Ethiopia was. This opinion, he promised, had changed.<sup>72</sup>

Vinci also warned Rome of the imminent arrival in Ethiopia of 170 Japanese who were destined for a concession in the Arussi, among the Oromo people. Any Japanese activity in Ethiopia worried Vinci. For example, Nanjo Shinichi, a Japanese journalist for the *Osaka Mainichi* and the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi*, arrived on January 14; that he was to stay in Ethiopia for only one month and then continue to London was of little solace to the Italian representative.<sup>73</sup>

Vinci was wrong about the arrival of Japanese settlers but was closer to the mark on the threat Nanjo represented. Before leaving for a safari hunt, Nanjo had hosted a banquet to which he invited Ethiopia's royalty, principle dignitaries, and ministers 'to deepen the knowledge and friendship between Ethiopia and Japan'. Toward the end of the banquet, Nanjo spoke in English and stressed the influence wielded by the publications he represented. He added that his company owned fifteen modern airplanes, which sometimes it leased to Japan's government. The company would donate one to Hayle Sellase. This deeply impressed the Ethiopians, as did Nanjo's favorable comparison of the evolution of the Japanese and Ethiopian peoples. Responding to accusations by some that the Japanese were selling a lot but not buying much in return, Nanjo explained that the Japanese knew little about Ethiopia and that purchases would increase once Japanese knew more about Ethiopia and its products. He promised to do everything in his power to supply that knowledge. Nanjo also encouraged the Emperor to defend Ethiopia's interests vigorously. He promised that in case of war Japan could provide the airplanes and poison gas Ethiopia needed.<sup>74</sup>

In mid-March, the *Osaka Mainichi* & *Tokyo Nichi Nichi* published Nanjo's story on a three-week hunt into Ethiopia's hinterland, close to the border with Kenya. 'Little Masao Yamauchi, the only Japanese residing in Ethiopia', accompanied Nanjo on the expedition, and the bulk of the article described 'skirmishes' with hippopotamuses. Their caravan, proudly displaying the Japanese flag, returned to Addis Ababa on March 6. Nanjo noted that Ethiopians along the route in the capital saluted the flag, and Italians soon began complaining about the journalist's encouragement of this implicit anti-Italian, pro-Ethiopian nationalism.<sup>75</sup>

On March 26, the Emperor gave Nanjo a gold medal commemorating his coronation. Nanjo left Addis Ababa on March 28, bade farewell by Heruy's son, who, on behalf of his father, gave him an ounce of gold. According to Vinci, Nanjo left Ethiopia disillusioned, having seen, despite the enthusiasm of journalists and official demonstrations, an undeveloped country. He had also personally experienced the Ethiopian art of beating about the bush in every discussion and refusing to give conclusive answers.<sup>76</sup>

#### ACTUAL JAPANESE ACTIVITIES IN ETHIOPIA

Not everyone in Ethiopia looked to Japan for salvation against Italian aggression. A member of Italy's embassy in Paris maintained contact with the Russophile, Tekle Hawaryat, who made no secret of his skepticism about Japan's usefulness to Ethiopia. He disparaged trade with Japan, arguing that there was no way to distribute Ethiopia's products there. Moreover, efforts to increase trade would likely cause discontent in those European states on whose friendship Ethiopia's fate depended. As for using Japan as a model for modernization, Tekle

Hawaryat argued that Ethiopia had a long tradition of religious and cultural contacts with the peoples of Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean area. He thought it ill-advised for the country to go against these natural currents. Besides, most had greatly inflated and overvalued the reality of Ethio-Japanese relations, which were only commercial in nature.<sup>77</sup>

On April 5, 1934, the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi* wrote that Japan's effort to obtain a land concession had failed. This was, Italy's military attaché averred, the only negative sign appearing in the Japanese press on Kitagawa's concession. He reported that Japan's Ministry of War knew little, even while asserting that the press did not have the whole truth.<sup>78</sup>

Contrary to what the attaché inferred and the European press was asserting, Japanese activities in Ethiopia were modest. In October 1934, Southard again argued that the Ethiopians were willing to accept Japanese commercial enterprises in Ethiopia – should the Japanese offer substantial financial and other inducements. The legation, however, did not see that there was much in Ethiopia commercially or economically attractive to the Japanese. Further, the Emperor and Heruy had assured Southard that they had granted no concessions to Japanese interests, although they expected the Japanese to open a legation in 1935. In 1932, fifteen Japanese settled in Ethiopia, and in 1933, seven more arrived. In 1934, four more. Most soon left Ethiopia after their enterprises had failed. By October, there were only three Japanese in Addis Ababa, one of whom was in the American Seventh-Day Adventist Hospital, where doctors had removed his appendix. For Southard there was no Japanese penetration that his legation could 'see, imagine, or hear about'.<sup>79</sup> He also insisted the Italians knew through their efficient, local legation that there was no real Japanese penetration and there was no chance there would be in the immediate future. He added that in pursuing its political and economic designs against Ethiopia, Italy needed at least an imaginary Japanese penetration, which they based on the flirtatious canoodling of the last several years between Addis Ababa and Tokyo.<sup>80</sup>

Tsuchida Yutaka agreed with Southard's numbers, adding that in 1935 there were only three Japanese in Ethiopia. While Nikkei-sha ultimately managed to get agricultural concessions from Ethiopia, it failed to find the necessary capital and went out of business after only six months. In August 1935, no Japanese shipping company included Djibouti in its list of ports calls, nor were any Japanese there.<sup>81</sup>

Heruy confirmed to Farago the true dearth of substantive Japanese activities in his country. He condemned rumors that Japan was settling 200,000 peasants to work on cotton plantations and to become soldiers in case of war. He said there was no Japanese legation and that there were only four Japanese were in the country. '[O]ur four Japanese guests are little merchants who have built a small shop where they sell Japanese goods to compete with the cheap Czech glassware that the Galli and Somali women like so much. . . . [T]his outpost of the Japanese invasion is not doing well, and its owners are thinking of leaving the country.'<sup>82</sup>

Supposed agricultural concessions, despite many denials and obvious facts, continued to irritate the Italians throughout the summer of 1935. One book published only months before the outbreak of the Italo-Ethiopian War complained that Japan had been granted three quarters of a million acres of

fertile land for cultivating cotton in Ethiopia's highlands and that the first contingent of Japanese farmers, experts in growing cotton, had already set themselves up. Provocatively, the author asserted that they were young but had brought no women with them, because they were to marry Ethiopians.<sup>83</sup>

## Conclusion

Building on contacts built in the 1920s, in 1931 Foreign Minister Heruy introduced Ethiopia to Japan's popular imagination. In the neo-mercantilist world of the Great Depression, the Japanese reciprocated. Government officials as well as Japanese businessmen and commercial agents visited Ethiopia in the first half of the 1930s. The supposed economic possibilities in Ethiopia excited many imaginations beyond the country's capacity to fulfill them. This included those in Ethiopia and Japan who sought to increase commercial exchange, as well as those, especially in Italy, but elsewhere as well, who sought to use rumors of Japanese inroads to further their geopolitical aims.

Other than Italy itself, the Soviet Union became the most voracious consumer of rumors of significant Japanese successes in Ethiopia. Moscow and Rome already had common anti-Japanese interests in China, and the two capitals used their perceived common interests in Ethiopia to build an anti-Japanese edifice that stood strong, at least for a while.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Southard, October 5, 1931: NARA 033.8411/81; Taura, 'Nihon-Ethiopia kankei', pp. 148–9; Faërber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 12; Aoki Sumio, 'Afurika-jin no Nihon hakken-ki: Ethiopia gaimudaijin Herui no Dai-Nihon', *Kokusai kyōryoku* (December 1996):27.
- <sup>2</sup> Colonial Minister, September 11, 1931; Rome, September 24, 1931; Paternò, October 5, 1931, October 19, 1931; Gabelli, October 8, 1931: Ethiopia b8 fl; Heruy, *Dai-Nihon*, Preface; Faërber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 12.
- <sup>3</sup> Southard, October 5, 1931: NARA 033.8411/81; Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', p. 3.
- <sup>4</sup> Heruy, *Dai-Nihon*, 16–17; Faërber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 12.
- <sup>5</sup> *OM&TNN*, November 1, 6, 1931; Heruy, *Dai-Nihon*, 1–15; Taura, 'Nihon-Ethiopia kankei', p. 149.
- <sup>6</sup> *OM&TNN*, November 7, 1931.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.; Heruy, *Dai-Nihon*, pp. 26–30; Shōji, *Ethiopia*, 3; Majoni, November 9, 1931: MAE Etiopia, b8 fl; Faërber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, pp. 12–13.
- <sup>8</sup> Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, pp. 32–3, quote on 33.
- <sup>9</sup> *OM&TNN*, November 8, 10, 12, 1931. For more detail on the visit, see J. Calvitt Clarke III, 'Foreign Minister Heruy's Mission to Japan in 1931: Ethiopia's Effort to Find a Non-Western Model for Modernization', *Selected Annual Proceedings of the Florida Conference of Historians* 14 (March 2007): 17–28.
- <sup>10</sup> *OM&TNN*, November 11, 15, 1931.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., November 19, 20, 1931.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., November 25, 1931.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., November 24, 25, 26, 27, 1931; Bradshaw, 'Japan', pp. 308–10.
- <sup>14</sup> *OM&TNN*, December 1, 1931.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.; Bradshaw, 'Japan', pp. 310–11; Yokohama, November 30, 1931: MAE Etiopia b8 fl.
- <sup>16</sup> *OM&TNN*, November 29, 1931; December 1, 1931; Yokohama, November 30, 1931; Circular, January 1, 1932: MAE Etiopia b8 fl.
- <sup>17</sup> *OM&TNN*, November 28, 1931.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., December 3, 1931.

- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., December 4, 1931.
- <sup>20</sup> Circular, January 12, 1932; Scammacca, January 30, 1932; Tokyo, April 19, 1932: MAE Ethiopia b8 fl.
- <sup>21</sup> Interview with Amde Araya (son of Araya Abeba) and Araya Abeba, Fairfax Lakes Park, VA, and apartment of Araya Abeba, Alexandria, VA, July 7, 2001.
- <sup>22</sup> Zervos, *L'Empire*, pp. 481–2; Anthony Mockler, *Haile Selassie's War: The Italian–Ethiopian Campaign, 1935–1941* (New York: Random House, 1984), p. 16; Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon, Afurika*, pp. 32–5; Faërber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 13; *BDEA*, 27: no. 246; 28: no. 2; Tokyo, September 14, 1931, September 14, 1932; Paternò, October 5, 1931, October 19, 1931; Gabelli, October 8, 1931; Scammacca, January 30, 1932: MAE Ethiopia b8 fl; Addis Ababa, December 17, 1932: MAE Ethiopia b14 f9; De Prospero, February 25, 1935: Italy, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Direzione Generale degli Affari Politici, Etiopia – FG (Rome) b62 f3; *DDI*, 7th, 11: no. 204; *JT&M*, November 23, 1934.
- <sup>23</sup> Ladislav Farago, *Abyssinia On the Eve* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1935), pp. 127–8.
- <sup>24</sup> Faërber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 19; Clarke, 'Politics of Arms', pp. 136–8.
- <sup>25</sup> Majoni, December 22, 1931: MAE Ethiopia b8 fl; *DDI*, 7th, 11: no. 148.
- <sup>26</sup> Manzoni, April 22, 1932; Tokyo, February 5, 1932; April 19, 1932; London, March 1, 1932: MAE Ethiopia b8 fl.
- <sup>27</sup> Bradshaw, 'Japan', p. 314; Walter Goldfrank, 'Silk and Steel: Italy and Japan Between the Two World Wars', in *Global Crisis and Social Movements: Artisans, Peasants, Populists, and the World Economy*, ed. Edmund Burke III (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 218; Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini's Roman Empire* (New York: Viking Press, 1976), pp. 63–4.
- <sup>28</sup> *OM&TNN*, December 13, 1931.
- <sup>29</sup> Taura, 'Nihon–Echiopia kankei', pp. 149–50.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 151–2; Faërber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, pp. 13–14; Scammacca, March 22, 1932; De Bono, April 25, 28, 1932; Circular, April 26, 1932; May 23, 1932; August 8, 1932; Paris, April 28, 1932; Istituto Nazionale per l'Esportazione, April 28, 1932; Tokyo, July 14, 1932: Ethiopia b8 fl.
- <sup>31</sup> Taura, 'Nihon–Echiopia kankei', pp. 151–2.
- <sup>32</sup> Interview with Amde Araya and Araya Abeba; Personal communication from Hiram Youchi, March 4, 2002.
- <sup>33</sup> *La Tribuna*, November 18, 1933; *JA*, December 10, 1933; *La Stampa*, November 18, 1933; *Il Mattino*, November 18, 1933; *Pravda*, June 15, 1934; *Moscow Daily News* (hereafter cited as *MDN*), June 16, 1934; Benito Mussolini, *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, Edoardo and Duilio Susmel (eds), 36 vols (Florence: La Fenice, 1958), 26: pp. 86–96.
- <sup>34</sup> *OM&TNN*, April 21, 1934; Taura, 'Nihon–Echiopia kankei', p. 161.
- <sup>35</sup> Taura, 'Nihon–Echiopia kankei', pp. 161–2.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 162.
- <sup>37</sup> See J. Calvitt Clarke III in the *Selected Annual Proceedings of the Florida Conference of Historians*: 'Seeking a Model for Modernization: The Japanizers of Ethiopia', 11 (Spring 2004):35–51 and 'Mutual Interests: Japan and Ethiopia Before the Italo–Ethiopian War, 1935–36', 9 (February 2002):83–97.
- <sup>38</sup> To Ethiopia, January 18, 1934: NARA 784.94/3a.
- <sup>39</sup> Grene, January 17, 1934: NARA 784.94/6; To Ethiopia, January 18, 1934: NARA 784.94/3a; Southard, November 25, 1933: NARA 784.94/3; 'Una missione commerciale giapponese in Africa', *L'Azione Coloniale* (October 5, 1933): MAE Ethiopia b14 f9.
- <sup>40</sup> Faërber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 14. In this case, almost 12.4 million acres. When discussing the exact amount of land in question, over time different commentators cited wildly different figures, with 1.5 and 1.6 million acres most often mentioned. These vague numbers stem from Kitagawa's vague negotiations, hyperbolic Italian fears, and a genuine lack of good information.
- <sup>41</sup> William C. Grene, America's military attaché in Tokyo reported that Kitagawa visited the governor, but he did not return to Japan until later. The telegram he sent may not have been to the governor at all but rather to the Nagasaki Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Grene, January 17, 1934: NARA 784.94/6.
- <sup>42</sup> Hirota, Sept. 4, 1933, Sept. 28, 1933: GSK E424 1–3–1; Grene, Jan. 17, 1934: NARA 784.94/6; Circular, Nov. 10, 1933: MAE Ethiopia b14 f9; Faërber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, 14–15.
- <sup>43</sup> To Ethiopia, Jan. 18, 1934: NARA 784.94/3a.
- <sup>44</sup> *London Daily Herald*, September 21, 1933; Military Intelligence, October 5, 1933: NARA, 784.94/1; To Ethiopia, January 18, 1934: NARA 784.94/3a; Faërber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, 15; Taura, 'Nihon–Echiopia kankei', pp. 151–2.
- <sup>45</sup> Grene, January 17, 1934: NARA 784.94/6.
- <sup>46</sup> *Il Messaggero*, September 23, 1933.
- <sup>47</sup> See *Le Temps*, September 25, 1933; October 2, 22, 31, 1933; November 6, 7, 30, 1933; and December

- 18, 25, 1933; Guarnaschelli, October 19, 1933: MAE Etiopia b14 f9; Faerber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, 15; Charles Rousseau, *Le conflit italo-éthiopien devant le droit international* (Paris: Éditions A. Pedone, 1938), pp. 33–4; and Taura, ‘Nihon-Ethiopia kankei’, 152.
- <sup>48</sup> Rousseau, *Le conflit italo-éthiopien*, p. 34; *Le Temps*, November 6, 1933.
- <sup>49</sup> Taura, ‘Nihon-Ethiopia kankei’, p. 153; Faerber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, 15–16. For more Ethiopian denials of massive Japanese immigration, see Vinci, October 26, 1933: MAE Etiopia b14 f9.
- <sup>50</sup> Taura, ‘Nihon-Ethiopia kankei’, pp. 151–3.
- <sup>51</sup> *La Bourse Égyptienne*, October 23, November 2, 1933; *Il Mattino*, November 1, 10, 1933; *JA*, November 3, 1933; *JT&M*, February 13, 1934; *Le Temps*, November 7, 1933; *Corriere della Sera*, November 8, 1933; Cairo, October 27, November 3, 1933; Circular, November 10, 11, 1933; London, November 17, 1933; Pagliano, October 24, 1933; Addis Ababa, October 27, 1933: MAE Etiopia b14 f9; Circular, November 14, 1933: MAE Etiopia b63 f3; Rousseau, *Le conflit italo-éthiopien*, p. 34; A. E. Guillaume, ‘Italie, Japon et Abyssinie dans l’avenir prochain’, *L’Europe Nouvelle* (August 25, 1934):853–4; Faerber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 16; Faerber-Ishihara, ‘Heruy’, p. 144.
- <sup>52</sup> Geneva, November 1, 1933; Circular, November 18, 1933: MAE Etiopia b14 f9.
- <sup>53</sup> *Le Courrier de la Presse*, November 8, 1933: MAE Etiopia b14 f9; Taura, ‘Nihon-Ethiopia kankei’, p. 153.
- <sup>54</sup> *Morning Post*, November 7, 1933; *Il Mattino*, November 9, 1933.
- <sup>55</sup> *Morning Post*, November 6, 1933.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid.; *JA*, November 7, 1933. In NARA, see To Ethiopia, November 21, 1933: 765.94/2; To Ethiopia, November 21, 1933: 784.94/1a; To Ethiopia, November 27, 1933: 784.94/1b; Cox, November 13, 1933: 841.00/310; Atherton, December 18, 1933: 841.00/315; Atherton, December 18, 1933: 884.61321/5; Southard, December 26, 1933: 784.94/5. See London, November 9, 1933; London, December illegible, 1933: MAE Etiopia b14 f9; Cataluccio, ed., *Il conflitto*, vol. 1, part 1, nos. 16, 17.
- <sup>57</sup> To Ethiopia, January 18, 1934: NARA 784.94/3a; ‘Africa Beware!’: GSK E424 1–3–1; *Corriere della Sera*, November 9, 1933; ‘Documenti sulla penetrazione giapponese in Etiopia’, *L’Azione Coloniale* (November 16, 1933): MAE Etiopia. b14 f9; Circular, March 30, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>58</sup> Taura, ‘Nihon-Ethiopia kankei’, 153–54; Auriti, November 8, 1933: MAE Etiopia b14 f9.
- <sup>59</sup> Southard, November 25, 1933: NARA 784.94/3.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid.; To President, January 23, 1934: NARA 784.94/4a; Washington, January 26, 1934: NARA 884.0011/443; Phillips, January 23, 1934: NARA 884.61321/6.
- <sup>63</sup> Southard, November 25, 1933: NARA 784.94/3.
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>65</sup> Taura, ‘Nihon-Ethiopia kankei’, 154.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid., 153; Henriette Celarié, *Ethiopie Xxe Siècle* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1934), 126; *Le Temps*, December 18, 1933. In NARA, see Dawson, December 20, 1933: 784.94/2; Dawson, July 24, 1935: 765.94/14; Atherton, December 18, 1935: 884.61321/5; 784.94/1b; 884.602/41a.
- <sup>67</sup> Grew, October 3, 1933: NARA 894.00/70; Grene, January 17, 1934: NARA 784.94/6. Sunday Olu Agbi, ‘The Japanese and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis, 1935–1936’, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 11 (December 1982): 131, argues that the Japanese and Ethiopians did forge an agreement. So did Antonine Zischka. See his *La Guerre Secrète pour le coton* (Paris: Payot, 1934), pp. 150–1. For the threat Japan posed to world cotton markets, see pp. 138–67.
- <sup>68</sup> ‘White’ drugs include heroin – ‘white’ because of their color.
- <sup>69</sup> Tagliano, January 29, 1934; Circular, February 10, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3. For a more skeptical and accurate appraisal, see Duncley, *Eight Years*, pp. 167–8.
- <sup>70</sup> Vinci, November 20, 21, 24, 1933; de Bono, November 23, 1933; Guarnaschelli, November 27, 1933; December 1, 1933: MAE Etiopia b24 f9; Guarnaschelli, December 21, 1933; Istituto Nazionale per L’Esportazione, November 13, 1933: MAE Etiopia b14 f9; de Bono, November 28, 1933; Circular, December 22, 1933; January 17, 22, 1934; Vinci, October 21, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3. The threat to Société Ethiopienne de Commerce et Industrie, which had imported Swedish matches into Ethiopia, fizzled. Despite a signed contract for matches, the Japanese failed to deliver. *OM&TNN*, August 17, 1935.
- <sup>71</sup> Rome, January 17, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>72</sup> Circular, January 17, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>73</sup> Ibid.; Ministry of Colonies, February 12, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3. For more on Italian upset over Japanese encroachments in Ethiopia, see Mario Pigli, *Etiopia, l’incognita africana*, 2nd ed. (Padua: CEDAM, 1935), pp. 170–1.
- <sup>74</sup> Vinci, February 23, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.

<sup>75</sup> *OM&TNN*, March 11, 1934.

<sup>76</sup> Circular, April 19, 1934: MAE Ethiopia b24 f3.

<sup>77</sup> Paris, April 20, 1934: MAE Ethiopia b24 f3.

<sup>78</sup> Frattini, April 14, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.

<sup>79</sup> Southard, October 22, 1934: NARA 784.94/13.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Vinci, March 6, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b101 f4; Zervos, *L'Empire*, pp. 483–4; Faërber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, pp. 16–17; *OM&TNN*, August 18, 1935; Tsuchida, 'Echiopia o miru', p. 312.

<sup>82</sup> Farago, *Abyssinia*, p. 128. 'Galla' is an older name, today generally used pejoratively, for the Oromo people. Prouty and Rosenfeld (eds), *Historical Dictionary*, p. 73.

<sup>83</sup> Giulio Cesare Baravelli, *The Last Stronghold of Slavery: What Abyssinia Is* (Rome: 'Novissima', 1935), pp. 59–63. Also see Edward William Polson Newman, *Ethiopian Realities* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1936), pp. 72–3.

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# 6

## *The Soviet Union, Italy, China, Japan & Ethiopia*

### *Russian & Soviet ties with Ethiopia*

Soviet Russia closely followed Japan's political, economic, and military advances, especially those in Manchuria that threatened Siberia, and they connected those threats with Japan's successes in Ethiopia. Moscow's worries dramatically affected Japan's relations with Ethiopia and Italy.

#### TSARISM & BOLSHEVISM IN ETHIOPIA

State interests, communist ideology, and legacies of earlier Italo-Russian confrontation in Northeast Africa before World War I impacted Soviet policy between the two world wars. Russia's imperial efforts in the region had fallen within the boundary of European power politics, and the Soviets suckled the milk of Tsarist experience. For both the Tsar and Commissars, state interests predominated. Yet, the universalistic and messianic pretensions of both Tsarist Slavophilism and Soviet Communism predisposed Russians to take an active interest in distant territories and justified expanding their influence into Africa. Opportunism, vigorous opposition to British colonial power, recognition of the disruptive potential of indigenous nationalism, and exploitation of black discontent all flowed in post-revolutionary Russian policies. Ideology legitimized *realpolitik* and reassured Russia's leaders that by pursuing state interests they also were marching in step with history's inevitable tune.<sup>1</sup>

In the half-century before World War I, many Russian adventurers – scoundrels and saints – explored Ethiopia and some formed close relationships with the country's rulers. Steeled by this tradition, some White Russian émigrés immigrated to Addis Ababa after their defeat at Bolshevik hands between 1917 and 1922. Despite Ethiopian fears of Bolshevik agents, a few of these Russians advised Ethiopia's government and army and rose to relatively high positions, but most took up humdrum jobs unconnected with their old professions, and many of them lived and died in penury. The number of Russians in Ethiopia had dwindled to fewer than sixty by the time the Italians



invaded in 1935. During the Italo-Ethiopian War, White Russians thus played only a small role.<sup>2</sup>

The new communist state in Russia had its own interests in Ethiopia. In the 1920s, the Third Communist International (Comintern) and the Foreign Affairs Commissariat sent several representatives to explore Ethiopia's revolutionary potential and to seek traditional commercial and political relations. They inevitably returned discouraged. Nor did these approaches impress the Ethiopians. An editorial in March 1927 in one of Ethiopia's two Amharic newspapers, for example, denounced Communism as un-Christian.<sup>3</sup>

In 1929, the Ethiopians deported several resident White Russians, believing them to be Bolsheviks. *Berhanena Salam*, the other Amharic newspaper, declared in an inspired article that in Soviet Russia, 'vagrants, crooks, adventurers, thieves and vagabonds' had overthrown the Tsarist government and that 'blood flowed like water'. Some Bolsheviks 'in the guise of exiles' were seeking to make trouble in Ethiopia. Addison Southard doubted the veracity of the allegations, explaining that the Ethiopians were fanatically religious, instinctively anti-foreign, and thoroughly committed to feudalism. Poor material for the Bolshevik experiment, 'Ethiopia is the last country in the world likely to be affected by, or seriously to tempt, Bolshevik propaganda.'<sup>4</sup>

Ethiopia's hunt for communists continued. The mayor of Addis Ababa feared that they might try to disrupt Hayla Sellase's coronation in November 1930. Then, in 1931, the Ethiopians allegedly discovered that communist cells, directed by Russian residents, still existed in Ethiopia.<sup>5</sup>

#### TRADE CONTRACTS & PROPOSED RECOGNITION

Undeterred by these scandals, the Soviets in 1931 signed a contract with the Société Ethiopienne de Commerce et d'Industrie to sell Russian petroleum products in Ethiopia. A de facto monopoly, the contract was a private agreement, with Ethiopia's Emperor as a silent partner. After 1932, and with no sense of irony, the Ethiopians placed a White Russian in charge of Société Ethiopienne to push Soviet oil products in Ethiopia – despite, Southard asserted, his having no national, political, or social prejudice except anti-Bolshevism. Simultaneously, *Berhanena Salam* began promoting the sale of Soviet petroleum. Plagued by leakages from poor packing, the inferior quality of the Soviet products, and Société Ethiopienne's inexperience in the oil business, a substantial loss fell on the Emperor's private purse. Ethiopians thereafter proved chary of further dabbling in the oil business.<sup>6</sup>

The Soviets, however, did not give up without a struggle. Another Russian representative arrived in Addis Ababa in 1933 seeking further commitments through the Société Ethiopienne. The Soviets and Ethiopians signed a new contract that tried to correct the problems of the old one. For sale on consignment, they added other Russian commodities, including sugar, flour, and cotton goods. Sales, however, did not go well, and Moscow soon decided that it would export nothing more to Ethiopia without suitable diplomatic and juridical support.<sup>7</sup>

In October 1934, Moscow sent a representative to Addis Ababa to negotiate

a treaty of commerce and friendship that would establish the recognition refused by Ethiopia only a year before. The royal family and older feudal chieftains, however, still harbored sentimental memories of the Tsarist regime, as did the two hundred or so generally poor and unhappy White Russian émigrés then living in Ethiopia. The Emperor assured Southard that he would never recognize the USSR.<sup>8</sup>

Even so, two months later, on January 4, 1935, as part of his effort to marshal international support while Italy prepared for war, Heruy wrote Moscow asking to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet state. On February 16, Soviet Foreign Commissar Litvinov responded that he would gladly do so, and he suggested that their respective representatives meet in Paris. The two sides may have begun negotiating there and in Moscow in the spring of 1936, just before Ethiopia's military collapse. They did not formalize relations, however, until April 21, 1943 – only one year before Moscow re-established relations with post-Fascist Italy.<sup>9</sup>

### *Italo-Japanese relations deteriorate over China*

Common anti-Japanese policies in China solidified the Italo-Soviet rapprochement, and Moscow readily sacrificed Ethiopia and its few interests there to its larger political purposes.

From 1922 to 1932, Italy had watched events in East Asia with indifference, and Italo-Japanese relations remained cordial. When Japan invaded Manchuria in the autumn of 1931, Italy was the only great power to remain friendly with both countries. With no particular economic interests at risk, Italy remained neutral and worked within the League of Nations to restore peace. An Italian served on the Lytton Commission of Inquiry sent by the League Council to look into the invasion. When the commission denounced the invasion and determined that Manchuria rightfully remained part of China, Japan withdrew from the League and began to mistrust Rome.<sup>10</sup>

When the Sino-Japanese conflict reached Shanghai in January 1932, Italo-Japanese relations began to decline further. Italy joined other nations and sent a contingent to the International Settlement in Shanghai. The Italians also sent two warships to join their two gunboats already stationed in Chinese waters. In February, the League Council appointed Italy's chargé d'affaires in Nanking, Count Galeazzo Ciano, to chair the Consular Commission of Inquiry set up in Shanghai. After an investigation, the commission issued four reports and proposed establishing a neutral zone in the International Settlement. Japan refused.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, Italy and Nationalist China were drawing closer diplomatically, encouraged by Ciano. After throwing off Soviet influence in 1928, General Chiang Kai-shek set about reorganizing his nation, using Italian Fascism as a model. In May 1933, Mussolini received Chiang's ally, General Chiang Hsueh-liang, whom Japan had ousted as warlord in Manchuria. In the summer, Mussolini assured China's finance minister that Japan's aggression concerned him and that at the proper time Italy would stand to oppose it.<sup>12</sup>

To give weight to their co-operation, the Italians began helping China in improving its military aviation. In October 1933, Rome stationed in Nanchang an Air Mission headed by Colonel Roberto Lordi. He became a chief adviser for Chinese aviation and the twenty Italians in his mission worked with military aviation schools at Nanchang, Loyang, Hangchow, and Nanking. The Italians sent several airplanes to China and were to build an aircraft manufacturing plant in Shanghai. Meanwhile, the head of China's military mission to Europe spent eleven days in Italy. While Italy's naval and air production impressed him, Mussolini left him in awe. The general idolatrously wrote, 'The Italian people, whether young or old, male or female, have come to regard him as a saint, and would not bear to refer to him by name ... the sorrow and happiness of the entire nation is but a reflection of his attitude.'<sup>13</sup>

Italy's press tied together politics in East Asia and Ethiopia and conducted a campaign against Japan's self-proclaimed right to intrude itself – even to occupying the country – into Ethiopia's affairs. Articles decried the Yellow Peril and declared that Europe faced a new form of economic aggression through Japan's theft of Italian 'living space'. *Il Popolo d'Italia* warned that the Japanese economic invasion had begun with Singapore and had spread across India to Ethiopia toward the Mediterranean and Europe. It formed 'the gravest threat' to what little remained of 'European supremacy in the world'.<sup>14</sup> The stakes were clear and Italy could win the battle only if it was fought in the Ethiopian highlands before Japan reached Europe. White civilization had to challenge Japan in its East Asian backyard as well – an attitude encouraged in several European capitals, especially Moscow.

Despite Chiang's anti-Communism, Italian and Soviet interests coalesced in China. In October 1933, the Soviet ambassador to Italy, Vladimir Petrovich Potemkin, told Foreign Minister Fulvio Suvich that Germany was trying to conclude an agreement with Japan at Soviet expense. Distrusting Britain's presence in East Asia, he insisted that the Soviets wished to forge a pact among themselves, the French, Italians, and Americans to defend China against Japan.<sup>15</sup> The Soviet press, well-vetted by the government, worked diligently to provoke anti-Japanese feelings and repeatedly acted as a megaphone to spread Italy's alarm throughout the world – when it wasn't actually provoking Italy, that is. In the export-driven, neo-mercantilist world of the Great Depression and the international Darwinist struggle to survive, the Soviet press found fertile ground in Italy for its anti-Japanese diatribes.

### *An anti-Japanese, Italo-Soviet rapprochement*

#### MOSCOW'S FIRST APPROACHES AFTER 1931

In casting about for allies in its great power competition with Germany and Japan, Moscow was willing to use any bait, no matter how rank, to hook allies. Other than Great Britain, Italy was the sole power, a much weaker one to be sure, which Moscow could bring to serve its interests against both of the USSR's two enemies, Germany and Japan. Further, Moscow could not count on Britain,

unlike Italy, to risk the diplomatic quicksands of Eastern and Southeastern Europe for long. Surely, the Kremlin did not suppose that Italy's navy could threaten the Japanese in the Pacific, but Rome was actively opposing Japanese expansionism somewhere. This was more than Moscow could bank on from either Great Britain or the United States. And if Rome, Paris, and London could co-operate, Italy could patrol the Mediterranean, and Britain, freed from that chore, could more effectively oppose Japan in the Indian and Pacific oceans – a point the Japanese well understood. Last, not only was it possible to dismiss inevitable Fascist–Bolshevik conflict, many, especially before 1935 and 1936, saw a commonality of ideological interests.<sup>16</sup>

Immediately after Sino-Japanese hostilities began in Manchuria in 1931, Moscow warned the Comintern that this aggression marked the first step toward an invasion of the Soviet Union. Communist officials sought to rally others to oppose Japanese expansion anywhere in the world. The Nikkei-sha affair particularly raised the hackles of Comintern officials. George Padmore, a black American communist and editor of the *Negro Worker*, saw its wider implications. The 'eyes of the white world', he wrote, had focused once more on the black empire, because of an alliance, which had 'tremendous and far-reaching importance, not only for Ethiopia, but for all *Black Africa*'. European powers with colonies in Africa were 'all anxiously watching the new developments between Japan, the most aggressive imperialist state in the world ... and her new African ally'. Padmore saw, on the surface, a natural racial unity between the two peoples, who were both 'independent' and 'jealous of their national freedom'.<sup>17</sup> Based on this psychology, Japan's press had touted the new alliance and had claimed that it was 'in the interest of both of these colored nations to establish the closest ties against white imperialism'. Padmore warned, however, that Ethiopians should 'have no illusions about the Japanese imperialists', who were 'quite as ruthless as the white imperialist nations'. He added, 'The Japanese ruling class, like all other capitalists', did not respect 'race, color or creed, although it might suit their present needs to pose as the "defenders" and "champions" of the darker races'. They had 'too dramatically written' their record 'in the blood of millions of Koreans and Chinese' to doubt 'their true character'.<sup>18</sup> Japan, he continued, was trying to free itself from its dependence on the United States and Great Britain for raw cotton. The Japanese also promised help with industrialization and military reorganization in Ethiopia.

Another black communist, James W. Ford, denounced those American blacks drawn to Japan by a sense of racial solidarity. 'One has only to recall the slaughter of the Chinese people (a colored race) by the Japanese imperialists in 1931, in the invasion of Manchuria, in order to see the fallacy of this darker race theory. Another crushing blow to such an argument is the fact that the Korean and Formosan people (also a colored people) have long been held in bondage by Japanese imperialists.'<sup>19</sup>

Communists were not alone in picking up this theme. The Chinese complained when Bishop Nakada Juji of the Holiness Church of Japan had said that it was up to the Japanese to deliver the Jews from Nazi oppression. The Bible, he had explained, deemed it Japan's task to lead the Jewish people back to the Promised Land. One astonished Chinese magazine sarcastically wrote that

the Japanese had already impressed the Chinese 'with the holiness of their many missions', including the armed occupation of four Chinese provinces. 'Now the Jewish people are to profit', it stated. The magazine suggested that it might be time for Japan to be content with credit for having 'liberated' the Koreans and the Chinese of Manchuria.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, in May 1933, Moscow and Rome signed economic accords, and in September, they signed a treaty of friendship and non-aggression. The agreements focused on erecting a barrier against Germany's intrusion into the Danubian region and Austria, and they fostered their common interests in opposing Japanese aggression in East Asia. A surprising degree of military co-operation dramatized the developing friendship.<sup>21</sup>

Moscow worked hard to make clear its common interests with Italy, also threatened by Japanese commercial advances. On October 24, 1933, for example, the Soviet news agency TASS used the theme of 'imperialist contradictions', to report that Japanese economic expansion in Ethiopia and dumping – selling goods at artificially low prices – in Austria and Hungary rightfully upset Rome.<sup>22</sup> For their part, Italy's representatives in the USSR closely followed the increasing incidents threatening relations between Soviet Russia and Japan throughout 1933.<sup>23</sup>

#### LITVINOV VISITS ROME, DECEMBER 1933

Rome and Moscow consummated their rapprochement with a visit by Litvinov to Rome in early December 1933. This followed his triumphal trip to the United States, where he had signed accords of mutual recognition designed, Moscow hoped, to keep an aggressive Japan in check. Some in Italy characterized the Commissar's trip to Rome as part of a vast European solidarity facing Japan. Meanwhile, the surprisingly sanguine Japanese press portrayed Mussolini as ready to lead the movement to ensure world peace.<sup>24</sup>

In preparation for the forthcoming colloquies, the Italian government tried to understand Soviet positions and how best to deal with them. The year 1933, one significant memorandum pointed out, had been special for the USSR. Both Moscow and Berlin had taken offense at the Versailles Peace Treaty of 1919, which had ended the World War I, and for eleven years they had productively co-operated based on the Rapallo Agreements of 1922. Now, however, Adolf Hitler, Germany's leader, had thrown over Rapallo and fear of Germany and Japan dominated Soviet foreign policy in Europe. In the middle of reorienting its policy away from revolution, the USSR was trying to improve its relations with its bordering states in case of problems in East Asia and also looking for deeper relations with France in case of problems with Germany.<sup>25</sup>

Recognizing that the Soviets had not yet settled their policy directions, the memorandum discussed the topics that Litvinov might bring up. He would want to know if the USSR could count on Italy's support in case of difficulties with Japan. In response, the Italians should state that Italy, as a power with international interests, was worried about Japanese policy. East Asia, however, was not a vital interest. On the other hand, Rome could not ignore Japan's economic offensive, which was hurting Italian interests in foreign markets, and even within Italy itself. Italy's discussants should keep discussion on this topic general, the

report suggested, with the idea of preparing the groundwork for future diplomatic contacts. Finally, the Italians might delve into the possibilities of Italo-Soviet economic co-operation in Asia.<sup>26</sup>

When they met, Mussolini, echoing Padmore's sentiments and TASS's views, told Litvinov that Japan was threatening Italy's interests by competing in the Mediterranean Basin and in Ethiopia, where Tokyo had received economic, land, and immigration concessions. Japan, he stressed, was ruining all chances for disarmament, and he promised to oppose Japanese aggression. Thankful for Mussolini's declarations, Litvinov pointed out the danger of Japanese militarism, which threatened the USSR and Europe.<sup>27</sup>

After his meetings with Litvinov, Mussolini on December 22 described Italy's attitude toward the Far East in a speech to the First Convention of Oriental Students in Rome. Speaking in English, he noted the old saying 'East and West will never meet' and added that history rejected this aphorism. As evidence, Mussolini asserted that ancient Rome had united East and West through its control of the Mediterranean. He then described the current problem with capitalism at its root: 'East-West relations have been merely material and have denied every spiritual tie of creative collaboration. The opinion that Asia was hostile to Europe became widespread ... and Asia was merely a market for commodities, a source of raw materials.... This civilization having its roots in capitalism spread over the whole world during the past century.' Just as had Asians, Italian Fascism rejected this capitalism, 'So we clearly see reflected all our own troubles in the evils of which Asia is complaining.' Finally, Mussolini offered a solution. 'As in other times of mortal crisis when collaboration of Rome with the East saved civilization ... we Italians and Fascists ... want to return to the thousand-year-old tradition of constructive co-operation.'<sup>28</sup>

The Japanese described Italian policy as 'looking to Africa with the right eye and to Asia with the left', and took great umbrage when, after the convention, the Italians organized a federation of Asian students.<sup>29</sup>

On December 29, Litvinov spoke to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union. Lamenting the loss of amicable relations with Tokyo after 1931, when Japan attacked Manchuria, he threw down the gauntlet to the international community, declaring that the 'policy of Japan is now the darkest thundercloud on the international political horizon'.<sup>30</sup>

The Soviet press gleefully chronicled and encouraged the rising anti-Japanese trend in Italy. In a sharply worded article, and displaying an increasing symbiosis between the Soviet and Italian presses, *Il Lavoro Fascista* highlighted the statements by Soviet leaders on the danger of war breaking out in the Far East as being well-founded. *Pravda* reported that the newspaper had stressed that 'Soviet and Japanese policies in the Far East greatly interest us .... [T]he danger of the war in the Far East is an objective reality. But we believe the Soviet Union has a strong will to preserve peace.'<sup>31</sup>

#### 1934 – ANTI-JAPANESE RAPPROCHEMENT GROWS BETWEEN MOSCOW & ROME

This dark characterization of Japan continued in Rome and Moscow. The budget

committee in Italy's Chamber of Deputies reported on naval appropriations on January 2, 1934. In it, Marquis Giacomo Medici del Vascello wrote, 'Today Japan is invading China, and inspired by race hatred she is laying plans for tomorrow against the white race.' He called Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations 'significant and menacing'.<sup>32</sup>

The Soviet press highlighted Vascello's insistence on reinforcing the Italian fleet because of instability in the Pacific. The Soviets blamed Mussolini's violent rhetoric on Japan's penetration of Ethiopia – Italy's sphere of influence. They continued stirring the waters, and over the next couple of weeks the Soviet press found great sport in reproducing articles from the Fascist press, especially those contrasting the Kremlin's defensive posture with Japan's aggressive military preparations in East Asia. Of equal interest to the Soviets were Italian comments on Japanese–American antagonisms in the Pacific, Japanese upset at Italian criticisms, and the possibilities for Franco-Italian co-operation in the Far East.<sup>33</sup>

The Soviet press also gladly wrote that Italy was working to check Japan's efforts to take the Ethiopia's cotton plantations for its growing textile industry and that Mussolini would propose joint action by all European powers against Japanese dumping.<sup>34</sup>

Mussolini built on his conversations with Litvinov in Rome. On January 13, he gave a widely published press interview in Rome in which he drew heavily on Litvinov's speech of December 29, warning of Japan's expansionist dynamism in East Asia. Detailing Litvinov's fears, Mussolini repeated the Commissar's warning that Japanese policies represented 'the darkest thundercloud on the international political horizon'. The *Duce* added that world public opinion held no sway over the militarist psychology of Japan's ruling class, and he rejoiced in Soviet determination to stand firm against the Japanese. 'Highly prolific,' he added, perhaps enviously, 'the Japanese are a sober people with strong warlike virtues and an unlimited capacity for sacrifice. Japan's military forces represent a formidable mass of men and means of land and on seas'. Turning to China, Mussolini recognized the 'profound upheaval' the nation was undergoing. Allowing for the possibility that Japan and China might find common purpose in opposing Europe and the United States, he added that international agreements no longer bound Japan. The white, Western powers would have to collaborate to prevent the Yellow Peril from becoming a reality. Remembering his speech to the Convention of Oriental Students on December 22, the Italian leader promised, however, that Italy remained prepared – as Rome had been in the past – to mediate between East and West.<sup>35</sup>

Internationally, Mussolini's statement understandably met with mixed reactions. The Soviet press favorably recorded his comments. By contrast, Japan's press was upset, and expressed surprise and contrasted Mussolini's statements in December and January with those made by Italy's Embassy in Tokyo. Amau Eiji, a prominent foreign ministry spokesman, warned, 'Many Japanese make Mussolini a hero, but this statement will cause them to change their tune'.<sup>36</sup>

Speaking before the Imperial Diet on January 23 on his assumption of the foreign ministry's portfolio, Hirota asserted that anyone who opposed Japan's march to conquer East Asia threatened peace – a verbal thrust directed espe-

cially at the Soviet Union. Italy's press challenged this claim that Japan was the cornerstone of peace in Asia, declaring that Hirota's statement was peaceful only in appearance. It implied others had to recognize Japan's conquests and give the Japanese full freedom for further expansion. The press also discussed the possibility of a Soviet-Japanese war, ominously declaring that Germany would welcome such an event, as it would create new opportunities in Eastern Europe. The Soviet press favorably commented on Italian press attacks on Japan.<sup>37</sup>

On January 26, Japan's ambassador to Rome, Matsushima Hajime, asked Mussolini to clarify his recent comments and interview and Vascello's naval budget report. Mussolini cordially explained he had not intended 'to cast a bad light' on Japan.<sup>38</sup> Italy refused to consider Matsushima's representations as a formal protest or *démarche*. Unmollified, Japan's press complained that Mussolini seemed obsessed with the old Yellow Peril bogey because of Japan's advance in African markets, Mussolini's conversations with Litvinov, and Italy's arms sales to China.<sup>39</sup>

More Italian publications joined the verbal fray. In February 1934, the official publication of the Italian Navy League wrote, 'Japan is working actively to extend her commercial influence .... [T]he cry ... of the Japanese ... seems to have changed to another more precise though less logical one, "Asia for the Japanese".' Italy was watching developments in the Far East closely. Rome could not take lightly Japan's energetic invasion of Italian markets in its colonies and neighbors.<sup>40</sup>

The international communist press was aware not only of Japan's military threat to the Soviet Union but also its commercial threat to the Western powers. Simultaneously, communists accused Western imperialists of goading Japan in its nefarious imperialism directed against the Soviet Union. Paranoia had become an editorial stance.<sup>41</sup>

Italians shared these fears. Discord in Europe could unchain Japan in Asia to Europe's detriment. Moscow and Rome could point to, for example, the economist Nanjo Hiroshi, who argued that Japan had to be strong in the Social Darwinist international struggle. Japan's destiny was 'to represent the interests of all Asia when the yellow race is forced to fight the white race either in a military, political, or economic competition. If Japan is defeated, it will mean a defeat of Asia, making the emancipation of the Asiatic people impossible.' He then predicted, 'storm and thunder which may destroy our nation, if we do not deserve to exist as the leader of Asiatic nations'.<sup>42</sup> His words rang true for the many Japanese who believed that Manchukuo enshrined Japan's special role in Asia and was a symbol of emancipation and peace appreciated by all Asians.<sup>43</sup>

Drawing back from these mutual recriminations, in mid-March, the journalist and writer on foreign affairs, Inahara Katsuji, said that Italy evidenced neither ill will nor good will toward Japan. No less poor than Germany, Italy was insufficiently armed and in a struggle with France or Soviet Russia it had no chance of victory. Referring to Mussolini's January 13 press interview, Inahara thought Il Duce had spoken about the Yellow Peril as a gesture toward Soviet Russia, whose co-operation Italy needed for its political and economic expansion into the Balkans. Because there were no close economic or political rela-



tions between Japan and Italy, Mussolini probably thought he could slander Japan without consequence. Japan, therefore, ought not to attach undue significance to his article.<sup>44</sup> Inahara's moderation found little support.

As if on cue to justify fears in Moscow and Rome, Amau put the government's stamp of approval on the more immoderate attitudes. On April 18, he proclaimed 'Japan's Monroe Doctrine', also called the 'Amau Doctrine', which demanded that the West keep its hands off China. The Japanese had for two decades occasionally employed the former phrase, but until Amau's statement, its exact content had been hard to pin down because responsible Japanese statesmen had seldom used it and had never been officially defined or explained it. While Amau did not refer specifically to any country, his doctrine held special significance for Italy. The Japanese had issued it as the head of the Italian air mission received an appointment as the chief advisor to the Nanking Government.<sup>45</sup>

### EUROPE, ASIA & AFRICA

The world's diplomacy toward Ethiopia always orbited around larger issues of international diplomacy, and the Soviets encouraged their mutual interests with Rome in Asia, and in Europe.<sup>46</sup> For Moscow, collective security in Europe was to ensnare Germany by stitching together a net of France and Italy plus their respective allies in Eastern Europe – the Little Entente Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia on one hand, and Austria and Hungary on the other. Toward this end, for example, in mid-1934 Ambassador Boris Shtein assured Rome that the USSR wanted to see Paris and Rome solve their problems as part of the Soviet rapprochement with France and the Little Entente. If Moscow could bring Italy and France together, then the countries of the Little Entente would have to co-operate with Austria and Hungary. This grouping would stop Germany in its aggressive tracks by preventing *Anschluss* against Austria. The Soviets eagerly welcomed the Rome Accords of January 7, 1935, in which Mussolini and French Premier Pierre Laval reaffirmed the obligation to respect the independence and territorial integrity of other European states. Specifically, they sought a convention for reciprocal nonintervention between Austria and its neighbors. Italy would join France to prevent further German rearmament and to assure Germany's containment. They agreed to preserve Austria's independence and to collaborate with the Little Entente toward these ends.<sup>47</sup>

Giving force to Italy's new role as a defender of the status quo against Germany, Mussolini promised a 'million bayonets'.<sup>48</sup> Following quickly on this promise and on the heels of the Rome Accords, Italy and France met with Britain at Stresa, Italy, in April 1935. Germany's unilateral denunciation on March 16 of Versailles' military restrictions and introduction of compulsory military service gave urgency to the diplomatic efforts. On the April 14, the three powers agreed to follow a common line in the League of Nations on the German action. They confirmed their tripartite declarations of February 17 and September 27, 1934, supporting Austria's independence and integrity – the price for Italy's co-operation was Ethiopia. Closely watching the events and their implicit connection with military events in Manchuria, Soviet commentary was favorable.<sup>49</sup>

The Rome Accords and the Stresa Agreement, together with the Italo-Soviet agreement of 1933, the USSR's entry into the League of Nations in 1934, and the Franco-Soviet and Czecho-Soviet pacts of May 1935, added more bricks to the wall raised against German expansion. And the Kremlin appreciated these pacts for that reason.

However, in exchange for his participation in collective security, Mussolini demanded and received concessions in Africa. The Soviets understood the strategic necessities driving France to buy off Italy 'with Ethiopian coin'.<sup>50</sup> Italy was, after all, the one power that felt not only its own sense of necessity but also could act quickly and significantly against any German move on Austria. Beyond pandering to a Paris increasingly bound to Italy after Stresa, the Soviets had their own anti-German stake in south-east Europe and anti-Japanese concerns in Asia which, they admitted, were more important than were any revolutionary interests in Northeast Africa. They were perfectly happy to draw on the Japanese threat in Ethiopia to help harden the bond cementing the two Western powers together.<sup>51</sup>

Defying its anti-imperialist ideology and verbiage, Joseph Stalin's Russia began unctuously justifying Fascist Italy's belligerent attitude by claiming that Japanese trade inroads into Ethiopia had naturally offended Italy. The *Moscow Daily News* on January 11, 1935, for example, described Italy's imperialism and sympathetically editorialized that Italy had wanted only a peaceful economic penetration of Ethiopia. The 'intensification of Japanese economic and political influence in Abyssinia', however, had driven Italy to revert 'to the old methods of direct seizure'. The editorial added that Japan's influence in Ethiopia endangered Italy's interests in Ethiopia and Britain's in Egypt and the Sudan, implying the hope that Britain would follow Italy and France on Ethiopia.<sup>52</sup>

For their part, the Japanese closely followed the diplomatic maneuvering enmeshing Ethiopia and European alliances. They refused to take sides in the dispute over Austria, even while contemplating using Italy's example of regional diplomacy as a model for their own diplomacy after withdrawing from the League of Nations.<sup>53</sup>

The *Rassegna di Politica Internazionale* of June 1934 clearly set out the stance Italy's press had assumed. Italy, the journal wrote, was developing an active interest in China, including navigation, Chinese Fascism, and Catholic missions. Italo-Chinese co-operation was important and growing and Chinese Fascism was rising. While Italy was seeking prestige and influence on the 'Yellow continent', Japan had left the League to assert its dynamic imperialism toward the Mediterranean, Ethiopia, China, and the Indian Ocean, where Italian interests needed protection.<sup>54</sup>

In the spring and summer of 1934, and to Soviet cheers, Italy was eagerly backing any vigorous policy curbing Japanese expansion in China. To drive this point home, the Soviets supported Italian claims on the need to build barriers against Japanese expansion and to erect a unified front against Japanese dumping.<sup>55</sup>

## Conclusion

According to the semi-official journal, *Azione Coloniale*, Ethiopia, aided by others, was arming to defy Europeans whose colonial possessions surrounded the country. Italy jealously decried any outside influence other than its own that was brought to bear on Ethiopia. Italy's colonial publications called attention to Japan's ambitions in Ethiopia and warned the Ethiopians that such a combination would not serve their best interests. The Japanese, of course, objected and denied that Japan's penetration of Ethiopia was cause for worry by Italy or any other European power. Italy, in turn, expressed surprise at Japan's self-declared innocence.<sup>56</sup>

For their part, Russians – Tsarist and Soviet – had had a surprisingly long relationship with Ethiopia. Politically, however, the country, offered only sterile revolutionary ground and Ethiopians responded, at best, only hesitatingly toward Soviet advances. Despite its anti-colonial rhetoric, the Kremlin therefore had little to lose in Ethiopia if power politics elsewhere demanded obeisance. Meanwhile, as Italy's relations with Japan deteriorated over China, Rome and Moscow found common interests in Asia against the Japanese and in the Balkans against the Germans. In 1933 and 1934, the Fascists and Bolsheviks had found a solid basis on which to collaborate – collective security. Ethiopia was the price Italy asked and the Soviets willingly paid. Through the first half of 1935, each shamelessly took turns using fears of Japan to provoke the other.<sup>57</sup>

As Moscow railed against reports that the Japanese had moved artillery to the Soviet frontier in Siberia, on January 7, 1935, Lojacono Vincenzo and his wife arrived in Shanghai. He was to become Italy's first ambassador to China, which America's ambassador in Rome saw as a friendly gesture toward Russia.<sup>58</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Carlo Zaghi, *I russi in Etiopia*, 2 vols (Naples: Guida, 1972); Patrick Joseph Rollins, 'Russia's Ethiopian Adventure, 1888–1905' (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1967); Rollins, 'Imperial Russia's African Colony', *Russian Review* 27 (1968):432–51; Czesław Jesman, *The Russians in Ethiopia: An Essay in Futility* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975); Edward Thomas Wilson, *Russia and Black Africa Before World War II* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1974); Milene Charles, *The Soviet Union and Africa: The History of the Involvement* (Boston: University Press of America, 1980), pp. 4–12, 36–9; Quartararo, *Italia–URSS*; and J. Calvitt Clarke III, 'Reds and Whites in Ethiopia before the Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935 and 1936', *Selected Annual Proceedings of the Florida Conference of Historians* 17 (February 2010):35–43.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Pankhurst, 'The Russians in Ethiopia: Aspirations of Progress', in *Africa in Russia. Russia in Africa: Three Centuries of Encounters*, Maxim Matusevich (ed.) (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2006), p. 235; Carleton Stevens Coon, *Measuring Ethiopia and Flight into Arabia* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1935), pp. 69–71; Fedor Eugenievich Konovalov, 'The Konovaloff Manuscript' (Hoover Institution. Stanford University, Stanford, CA), pp. 246–8; Th. Konovaloff, *Con Le Armate Del Negus (Un Bianco fra i neri)* (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1938); J. Calvitt Clarke III, 'Feodor Konovalov and the Italo-Ethiopian War (Part I)', *World War II Quarterly* 5 (Winter 2008):4–37; J. Calvitt Clarke III, 'Feodor Konovalov and the Italo-Ethiopian War (Part II)', *World War II Quarterly* 6 (Spring 2008):23–49; Sergius Yakobson, 'The Soviet Union and Ethiopia: A Case of 'Traditional Behavior'', *Review of Politics* 25 (July 1963):329–42; Esheté, 'Ethiopia', pp. 1–5, 23–7; A. V. Krenkhov, 'Rossiiskaia diaspora

- v Efiopii', in *Rossiiskaia diaspora v Afrike 20–50–e gody: sbornik statei*, A.B. Letnev (ed.) (Moscow: 'Vostochnaia literatura', 2001), pp. 91–108; Petropoulos, September 30, 1935; Quaroni, October 6, 1935; Arone, October 10, 1935; Belgrade, November 5, 1935; Buti, September 10, 1936: MAE Etiopia–FG b13 f8.
- <sup>3</sup> Coleman, October 22, 1925: NARA Microcopy 411, Roll 1; Charles, *Soviet Union*, pp. 9–10; I.A. Zalkind (pseudo. I. Vanin), 'Abissiniia', *Novyi vostok* 2 (1922):525–42; M. Alsel'rod, 'U vrat Abissiniia. Prazdnik "Maskal" (Pis'mo iz Dzheddy)' *Novyi vostok*, 16–17 (1925):329–33; Nikolai Ivanovich Vavilov, *Five Continents* (Rome: International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, 1997), pp. 95–107; Esheté, 'Ethiopia', pp. 12–13.
- <sup>4</sup> Southard, June 17, 1929, July 11, 27, 1929: NARA Microcopy 411, Roll 1; Southard, October 10, 1930: NARA: 884.55/unclear; Southard, October 16, 1930: NARA 884.00B/4; 811.00B House Investigation/126; *BDEA*, 27: no. 193; Esheté, 'Ethiopia', pp. 14–22.
- <sup>5</sup> Southard, October 16, 1930: NARA 884.00B/4; *NYT*, February 4, 1935; Alberto Sbacchi, *Legacy of Bitterness: Ethiopia and Fascist Italy, 1935–1941* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1996), p. 40; Teobaldo Filesi, *Communismo e Nazionalismo in Africa* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa, 1958), pp. 125–31; Bahru Zewde, *Pioneers*, pp. 109–10.
- <sup>6</sup> In NARA 884.6363 Société Ethiopienne see Southard, October 22, 1931: /1; November 18, 1931: /2; January 16, 1932: /3; March 7, 1932: /7; March 8, 1932: /12; March 14, 1932: /13; March 28, 1932: /14; April 16, 1932: /15; May 3, 1932: /16; May 18, 1932: /17; May 28, 1932: /19; June 23, 1932: /21; July 18, 1932: /23; August 6, 1932: /24; Murray, March 5, 1932: /6; June 23, 1932: /18; Alling, March 14, 1932: /10; Henry, March 9, 1932: /9; March 17, 1932: /11; July 20, 1932: /22; To Ethiopia, March 10, 1932: /8; Walmsley, June 13, 1932: /20; and State Dept., February 26, 1932: /4. Also in NARA, see Southard, March 7, 1932: 884.602/32.
- <sup>7</sup> In NARA 884.6363 Société Ethiopienne see Southard, January 19, 1933: /25; February 7, 1933: /26; February 16, 1933: /27; September 21, 1933: /28; October 24, 1933: /29; and Ethiopia, March 7, 1932: NARA 884.602/32. See also the untitled short note in *World Petroleum*, 3 (June 1932):260.
- <sup>8</sup> Southard, October 8, 1934: NARA 761.84/1.
- <sup>9</sup> Without providing documentation, the editors of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ministerstvo Inostrannykh del SSSR, *Dokumenty vneshniaia politika SSSR* (hereafter cited as *DVP*) say that the negotiations did begin. See 18: nos. 59, 64, n 35. Cf. in NARA Bullitt, March 19, 1936: 761.84/2; Bullitt, March 19, 1936: 761.84/2; and Engert, March 26, 1936: 761.84/3.
- <sup>10</sup> Garrett, September 19, 1932: NARA 793.94 Commission/368; Frank M. Tamagna, *Italy's Interests and Policies in the Far East* (NY: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1941), pp. 11–15.
- <sup>11</sup> Garrett, September 19, 1932: NARA 793.94 Commission/368; Tamagna, *Italy's Interests*, pp. 15–16; Agbi, 'Japanese', pp. 131–2.
- <sup>12</sup> Tamagna, *Italy's Interests*, pp. 14–18; Unno Yoshiro, 'Dainiji Italia–Ethiopia Sensō to Nihon', *Niigata Dai Hosei Riron* 16 (1983):190–1.
- <sup>13</sup> Tamagna, *Italy's Interests*, 19; *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1933*, Vol. 3: *The Far East* pp. 93–4; 285, 371–2; *JT&M*, January 16, 1934; *JA*, March 31, 1934.
- <sup>14</sup> Faerber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 16; *Le Temps*, November 29, 30, 1933. Also see Gilbert, July 16, 1934: NARA 500.C115 18th Conf/88 and Claude A. Buss, *War and Diplomacy in Eastern Asia* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1941), pp. 450–1.
- <sup>15</sup> Suvich, October 27, 1933, November 2, 1933: Italy, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Direzione Generale degli Affari Politici, URSS (Rome) (hereafter cited as MAE URSS), b(usta) 8 f(oglio) 4.
- <sup>16</sup> Ishimaru Tota, *Japan Must Fight Britain*, trans. G.V. Rayment (New York: The Telegraph Press, 1936), esp. pp. 153–76; Giorgio Petracchi, 'Bolshevism in the Fascist Mirror', *Telos* 133 (Winter 2005):45–74; and Clarke, *Russia*, pp. 75–121.
- <sup>17</sup> George Padmore, 'Ethiopia Today: The Making of a Modern State', in *Negro: An Anthology*, Nancy Cunard (ed.) (New York: Ungar Publishing Co., 1970), p. 386.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 391.
- <sup>19</sup> James W. Ford and Harry Gannes, *War in Africa: Italian Fascism Prepares to Enslave Ethiopia* (New York: Workers Library Publishers, 1935), pp. 27–8, quote 28. Six and a half years later, Ford was still writing in a similar vein. See his *The War and the Negro People: The Japanese 'Darker Race' Demagogy Exposed* (New York: Workers Library Publishers, 1942), for example, pp. 13, 15. For Japan and blacks in the Western Hemisphere, see Marc Gallicchio, *The African American Encounter with Japan and China: Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895–1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and the works by Fikru Gebrekidan: 'In Defence of Ethiopia: A Comparative Assessment of Caribbean and African-American Anti-Fascist Protests, 1935–1941', Paper presented to the 12th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, East Lansing, MI, September 1994; *Addis Tribune*, June 11, 1999; and *Bond Without Blood: A History of Ethiopian and New World Black Relations, 1896–*

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- <sup>20</sup> *JA*, September 20, 1933.
- <sup>21</sup> Clarke, *Russia*, pp. 123–43; J. Calvitt Clarke III, ‘Italo-Soviet Military Cooperation in the 1930s’, in *Girding for Battle*, pp. 177–99; Richard Lamb, *Mussolini as Diplomat: Il Duce’s Italy on the World Stage* (New York: Fromm International, 1997), pp. 100–7; *Izvestia*, September 3, 1933; January 1, 1934; *Pravda*, September 3, 4, 6, 1933; February 9, 1934; *Il Mattino*, October 1, 1933. For a Fascist summary of Soviet–Japanese relations, see Enrico Bonomi, ‘Russia e Giappone in Estremo Oriente’, *Rassegna di politica internazionale* (October 1938):552–70. Also see *JA*, May 11, 1933; September 4, 27, 1933; *Le Temps*, December 17, 1933; *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1933* (hereafter cited as FRUS). Vol. 3: *The Far East*, pp. 314–15; Long, July 14, 20, 1933; August 18, 1933; September 4, 7, 1933; Barnes, September 14, 1933; Cole, November 11, 1933: National Archives Microfilm Publications, *Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations Between the Soviet Union and Other States, 1930–1939*, Decimal File 761, Microcopy T1247: Roll 4.
- <sup>22</sup> Berardis, October 31, 1933: MAE URSS b11 f1.
- <sup>23</sup> See the documents in MAE URSS b10 f9.
- <sup>24</sup> Donald G. Bishop, *The Roosevelt–Litvinov Agreements: The American View* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1965), pp. 252 n18, 273 n42; Mario Sertoli, ‘Il pericolo giallo’, *Critica Fascista* (January 1, 1934):12; Auriti, November 28, 1933; Moscow Embassy, November 28, 1933: MAE URSS b9 f3; Suvich, October 27, 1933: MAE URSS b8 f4; *JA*, November 27, 1933; Long, November 22, 1933; December 7, 1933: NARA Microcopy T1247: Roll 4; *Il Popolo d’Italia*, November 26, 28, 29, 1933; December 2, 1933; *Corriere della Sera*, November 26, 28, 1933; December 1, 2, 1933.
- <sup>25</sup> Memorandum, December 2, 1933: MAE URSS b8 f4.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid. For more on the trip, see Rosso, November 16, 19, 1933; Suvich, November 30, 1933; Baratona, December 2, 1933: MAE URSS b. 8 f. 4; Marchi, December 2, 1933; To Buti, December 2, 1933; and Baratono, December 2, 1933: MAE URSS b9 f3.
- <sup>27</sup> *DVP*, 16: nos. 405; 419; Mussolini, December 3, 1933: MAE URSS b10 f1; Circular, December 3, 1933; Attolico, December 19, 1933: MAE URSS b. 8 f. 4; Memorandum, December 4, 1933; Stefani, December 6, 1933; Attolico, January 12, 1934: MAE URSS b9 f3; *Izvestia*, December 6, 8, 1933; *Il Popolo d’Italia*, December 3, 5, 6, 1933; *Corriere della Sera*, December 3, 4, 6, 1933; *Le Temps*, December 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 1933; *The Times*, January 29, 1934. For a Japanese perspective, see *JA*, November 28, 1933; December 3, 5, 6, 7, 1933.
- <sup>28</sup> *Il Popolo d’Italia*, December 23, 1933; Mussolini, *Opera*, 26:127–8; *JA*, December 23, 24, 1933; *Le Temps*, December 17, 20, 25, 1933.
- <sup>29</sup> *OM&TNN*, April 5, 1934.
- <sup>30</sup> *Izvestia*, December 30, 1933; *JA*, December 31, 1933.
- <sup>31</sup> *Pravda*, January 8, 1934; Attolico, January 12, 1934: MAE URSS b9 f3; Attolico, January 16, 1934: MAE URSS b15 f2; *MDN*, January 8, 1934.
- <sup>32</sup> *JT&M*, January 28, 1934.
- <sup>33</sup> *Izvestia*, January 8, 9, 16, 15, 1934; *Pravda*, January 8, 9, 15, 16, 18, 1934; *MDN*, January 10, 16, 21, 1934; Attolico, January 25, 1934: MAE URSS b15 f2.
- <sup>34</sup> *MDN*, January 4, 1934.
- <sup>35</sup> *San Francisco Examiner*, January 14, 1934; *Il Popolo d’Italia*, January 17, 1934; Mussolini, *Opera*, 26:153–6; *MDN*, January 16, 1934; Tamagna, *Italy’s Interests*, p. 22.
- <sup>36</sup> *NYT*, January 20, 1934; Grew, February 6, 1934: NARA 894.00/74; Grew, February 3, 1934: NARA 765.94/5; *JT&M*, January 20, 1934; *JA*, January 20, 1934; *MDN*, January 16, 21, 29, 1934; *Pravda*, January 16, 22, 1934.
- <sup>37</sup> *Corriere della Sera*, January 23, 1934; *La Tribuna*, January 24, 1934; *Pravda*, January 27, 1934; February 1, 1934; *MDN*, January 27, 1934; February 9, 1934; *JT&M*, January 26, 30, 1934; February 6, 1934; *JA*, January 27, 1934.
- <sup>38</sup> *JA*, January 28, 1934; *MDN*, January 29, 1934; *NYT*, January 28, 1934; *The Times*, January 29, 1934; *JT&M*, January 26, 28, 1934.
- <sup>39</sup> *JT&M*, January 30, 1934. Also see Makin, *War Over Ethiopia*, pp. 164–5. For Japan’s larger efforts in Africa, see Circular, February 13, 1934; Leopoldville, March 6, 1934: Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>40</sup> Naval Attaché, February 20, 1934: NARA 765.94/4.
- <sup>41</sup> See, for example, in *International Press Correspondence*: Kopp, ‘Fight Against Imperialist War’, 14 (January 19, 1934):70–1; L. M. ‘Mr. Eden’s Mission’, 14 (March 2, 1934):331–2; ‘Communist Statement on the Anglo-Japanese Cotton Negotiations’, 14 (March 23, 1934):492–3; Bela Kun, ‘The Japanese Imperialists in Europe’, 14 (March 23, 1934):493; E. Woolley, ‘Foreign Policy and Cotton Antagonisms’, 14 (March 29, 1934):510–11; L. M., ‘The Hitler Government Offers Germany for the War Against the Soviet Union’, 14 (May 4, 1934):689–90; ‘The Imperialist Conflicts in the Far and

- Near East', 14 (May 11, 1934):758–9; Howard Lindsay, 'The Japanese–American Conflict', 14 (May 25, 1934):810–12; 'Japan', 14 (September 17, 1934):1298–1300; and *MDN*, March 26, 1934.
- <sup>42</sup> *OM&TNN*, March 13, 1934.
- <sup>43</sup> *JA*, February 7, 10, 1934; *JT&M*, April 12, 1934.
- <sup>44</sup> *JT&M*, March 19, 1934.
- <sup>45</sup> Dept. of State, March 5, 1932: NARA 790.94/58; *JA*, April 26, 27, 1934; Tamagna, *Italy's Interests*, p. 23; Agbi, 'Japanese', p. 132; Christopher G. Thorne, *The Limits of Foreign Policy: The West, the League and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931–1933* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972), p. 375; Bradshaw, 'Japan', pp. 327–8, see also pp. 323–6 and 329.
- <sup>46</sup> See, for example, *Le Journal de Moscou*, September 1, 15, 1934; October 27, 1934. For an Italian summary of anti-Japanese actions in co-operation with Moscow, see Charles Loiseau, 'L'Italie contre le Japon', *Le Monde slave*, 196–213: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>47</sup> Clarke, *Russia*, pp. 189–94; Lamb, *Mussolini*, pp. 108–28; Salvatore Minardi, 'Mussolini, Laval e il disimpegno della Francia in Etiopia', *Clio* 22 (1986):77–107; Lisanne Radice, *Prelude to Appeasement: East Central European Diplomacy in the Early 1930s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), pp. 108–9; Nicole Jordan, *The Popular Front and Central Europe: The Dilemmas of French Impotence, 1918–1940* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 32–4; Harvey Joseph Sobocinski, 'Dividing the Dictators: The Italian Dimension in Britain's Policy of Appeasement, 1933–1940' (PhD diss., Marquette University, 1980), pp. 54–70; 79–81; *Izvestia*, January 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 20, 1935; March 17, 1935; *MDN*, September 9, 10, 12, 20, 22, 29, 1934; October 2, 9, 16, 27, 1934; November 5, 10, 14, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 1934; December 9, 16, 17, 28, 1934; January 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 15, 18, 27, 1935; April 15, 17, 18, 1935; May 12, 1935; *OM&TNN*, January 5, 8, 9, 11, 13, 19, 1935; February 5, 20, 1935; July 6, 1935; *JT&M*, September 8, 1934; January 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 29, 31, 1935; February 6, 8, 1935; May 18, 1935; *NYT*, April 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 1935; *Le Journal de Moscou*, January 12, 19, 1935; March 30, 1935; April 6, 13, 20, 1935; Kirk, May 30, 1934: NARA 765.00/74; Long, January 30, 1935: NARA 765.00/69; Bullitt, September 22, 1934: NARA 765.84/46.
- <sup>48</sup> *MDN*, March 24, 1935; *OM&TNN*, February 28, 1935.
- <sup>49</sup> *Izvestia*, April 7, 8, 12, 14, 16, 17, 1935; *MDN*, March 29, 1935; April 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 23, 1935; May 26, 27, 1935; *Pravda*, February 19, 20, 1934; March 26, 27, 1934; *JT&M*, April 7, 9, 1935; *NYT*, April 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 1935; *OM&TNN*, February 24, 1935; H. James Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period, 1918–1940* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), pp. 112–15; Radice, *Prelude to Appeasement*, pp. 128–35; Clarke, *Russia*, p. 191; Sato, February 20, 1935; Saegusa, February 20, 1935: GSK A461 ET/11–2–1; Stampa Sovietica, April 18, 1935: MAE URSS b18 f4; Attolico, April 28, 1935; Circular, June 8, 1935: MAE URSS b16 f1.
- <sup>50</sup> Gaetano Carlo Salvemini, *Prelude to World War II* (Garden City, NY, 1954), p. 183. Also see Leon G. Halden, 'The Diplomacy of the Ethiopian Crisis', *The Journal of Negro History*, 22 (April 1937):169–70, 176.
- <sup>51</sup> *MDN*, May 22, 1935; *Pravda*, December 16, 1934; Attolico, December 20, 1934: MAE URSS b15 f2. For a general look at Soviet and Comintern policy toward Africa, see Roger Edwards Kanet, 'The Soviet Union and Sub-Saharan Africa: Communist Policy Toward Africa, 1917–1965' (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1966). For the problems Italy's adventure in Ethiopia caused the Soviet Union, see *ibid.*, pp. 159–61. See also J. Calvitt Clarke III, 'Japan, Collective Security, and the Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935–36', Paper delivered at the Third Pan-European International Relations Conference and Joint Meeting with The International Studies Association, Vienna, Austria, September 1998; J. Calvitt Clarke III, 'Soviet Appeasement, Collective Security, and the Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935 and 1936', *The Selected Annual Proceedings of the Florida Conference of Historians* 4 (December 1996):115–32; and 'Foreign Political Review of the Week', *International Press Correspondence* 14 (December 15, 1934):1679–80.
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- <sup>54</sup> Livio Chersi, 'Italia e Estremo Oriente', *Rassegna di Politica Internazionale* 1 (June 1934):277–80; Tamagna, *Italy's Interests*, pp. 23–4.
- <sup>55</sup> *Pravda*, April 21, August 13, 1934; *Izvestia*, June 27, August 13, 1934; *La Tribuna*, April 20, 1934; *MDN*, April 22, 1934; Attolico, July 4, 1934; Attolico, August 16, 1934: MAE URSS b15 f2; Aleksander Z. Zusmanovich and Kudriavtsev, 'Iaponskii imperizizm v bor'be za rynki Afriki', *Revoliutsionnyi vostok* 8 (1934):68–72. For more on Japan's trade with Africa, see *JT&M*, July 31, 1934.

<sup>56</sup> *NYT*, September 9, 10, 1934; *Washington Post* (hereafter cited as *WP*), September 10, 1934; To Ethiopia, September 17, 1934: NARA 784.94/11a.

<sup>57</sup> *MDN*, Sept. 12, 1934; *Il Giornale d'Italia*, Sept. 1, 1934.

<sup>58</sup> *OM&TMN*, January 9, 1935; *JT&M*, September 29, 1934; *Il Giornale d'Italia*, January 3, 1935; Long, September 27, 1934: NARA, Microcopy T1247: Roll 4.

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# 7

## *The Flowering of Ethio-Japanese Relations* 1934

In general, leaders in Rome and Moscow could each outdo the other in their opportunism, but they were not entirely cynical in expressing their concerns about Japanese inroads into Ethiopia. Their fears were real, even if exaggerated.

*Haniyu Chotaro & Jacob Adol Mar, early 1934*

### ITALIAN EVALUATION

The year 1934 proved crucial for developing relations between Addis Ababa and Tokyo, and Rome evaluated their impact on Italian policy. One Italian report complained that Japan was dominating the cotton markets in East Africa, including Ethiopia. Further, Tokyo and Addis Ababa were already engaging in ‘important’ negotiations of unknown content, but they probably would not complete them until Japan had established a legation. Since the previous September, Japanese businessmen had been looking for facilities around the country for storing and selling Japanese goods. They were also seeking gold mining concessions in Wellega, a pottery and porcelain factory in Jimma, cement- and mat-making factories, and concessions for plantations to grow cotton and medicinal plants, including opium poppies. All this would require Japanese immigration into Ethiopia. As the Ethiopians wanted to weaken the influence of the tripartite powers – Britain, France, and Italy – in their country, Japanese action in Ethiopia thus transcended mere commercial activity and had assumed political importance. How could Italy stop Japan’s penetration of Ethiopia? Rome could take diplomatic action in Tokyo, but for restraint the Japanese would demand a *quid pro quo* from Italy in Manchuria and primacy in China. Alternately, Rome could work diplomatically in Paris and London to coerce Addis Ababa, but this might impel Ethiopia to draw even more quickly to Japan. Finally, Italy might increase its own economic penetration of Ethiopia to compete with Japan, but this would provoke Ethiopia’s opposition. There was some hope, however, for entente between Italy and Ethiopia.<sup>1</sup>



### HANIYU CHOTARO VISITS ETHIOPIA

While Italians pondered these issues, another shady Japanese businessman, Haniyu Chotaro from Kamakura, visited Ethiopia. His documents said that he was representing the companies of Nishikawa Shoji, Furukawa Electric, Hitachi Electric, and Ito Chu of Tokyo and that he held the title of 'Commissioner of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Japan'. The Italian consul reasonably worried that he had come 'not only representing varied industrial societies, but also as an official of the Japanese government'.<sup>2</sup> Only later did Japan's foreign ministry discover he had faked his credentials.

Haniyu himself told a member of Southard's legation that he was not permanently attached to the ministry but was an exporter who wanted to look into business conditions in Ethiopia. Describing him as elderly and fluent in the English language, Southard reported that Haniyu had said he was skeptical about trade possibilities in Ethiopia. He did not think he could build any business or business connections in Addis Ababa on his own. Southard inferred that Haniyu felt many Japanese were exaggerating Ethiopian business possibilities and added that 'any competent Japanese investigator' would decide likewise.<sup>3</sup>

Arriving in Addis Ababa on February 7, another Japanese, a representative of the Kanegafuchi Spinning Company, Bombay, accompanied Haniyu to Ethiopia and helped create a 'flurry of excitement'.<sup>4</sup> He wanted to look into the demand for his firm's cotton piece goods, and he hoped to discuss possibilities for growing cotton in Ethiopia and for building a local spinning mill. He spent about a week in Ethiopia and likely did not enter into any negotiations with Ethiopia's government.<sup>5</sup>

Back in Japan after five months in Ethiopia, in mid-April 1934 Haniyu publicly praised Ethiopia as a promising market for Japanese goods, despite those problems he had confided to Southard. He said, 'While in Ethiopia, I was granted an audience by the King. I also saw the Foreign Minister and other high government officials. I conducted negotiations with influential French and Indian businessmen in that country. I was accorded an enthusiastic welcome.' Haniyu granted that Italy, France, and Great Britain had extensive interests in Ethiopia and that their influence was strong and could challenge any Japanese advance. He noted that Ethiopia's principal exports were coffee and animal hides and their main imports were cotton piece goods. The nation's purchasing power, however, was low. To avoid 'unnecessary competition with foreign firms', Haniyu suggested it would be better in Ethiopia to market Japanese cotton piece goods through foreign businessmen. He continued, 'Ethiopia ... promises to be a potential market for Japan, and I will advise the foreign office to establish either a legation or a consulate in Ethiopia.' He added that the false report that Ethiopia had granted more than a million acres to a Japanese had perplexed both Addis Ababa and Tokyo. The Ethiopians had asked him to report truthfully on things 'as they are'.<sup>6</sup>

### JACOB ADOL MAR'S PROPOSALS

Inspired by Haniyu's visit, Jacob Adol Mar, the holder of a large land concession and self-proclaimed friend of Ethiopia's foreign minister, wrote what appears to be a semi-official letter to Haniyu in March 1934. He asserted that all 'logical thinking' Ethiopians wanted to see Japanese come to Ethiopia for industrial and commercial purposes. Ethiopia, he wrote, felt squeezed between the colonies of Britain, France, and Italy. He added, 'In this critical situation we all hope that the presence of many Japanese may encourage your government to give us a political help in difficult circumstances.' He lamented the 'regrettable faults' by those in both Ethiopia and Japan that allowed European powers to oppose mutually friendly relations between their two countries. Every important Ethiopian governmental officer had received instructions against making such missteps, but the Ethiopians feared that Japanese journalists, manufacturers, and traders knew so little about Ethiopia that new blunders might again trouble relations.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, continued Mar, his friends had suggested he go to Japan to build sympathy for Ethiopia. He proposed that he would explain to the foreign ministry the best way to open political relations with Ethiopia and how Japan's bankers, exporters, and manufacturers could establish successful enterprises. The necessary first step would be to set up an Imperial Legation in Addis Ababa, and Japan could do this cheaply. One diplomat would be enough, and he could let a residence from Ethiopia's government for a low rent. Ethiopia's government would let Mar act officially as an adviser for Japan's legation. He thought the legation's diplomat ought to be in Ethiopia at the beginning of Japan's business activity. If Tokyo could not send one immediately, Mar suggested letting an important merchant act as a consul or consul-general until a permanent representative arrived. A special committee of bankers, exporters, manufacturers, and men of science would make up an investment corporation, which would control commercial and industrial relations and would be the 'Mother-Companie' of all new Japanese enterprises in Ethiopia.<sup>8</sup>

In the commercial sphere, Mar wanted to show Japan what goods Ethiopia wanted, and he suggested that Japan's manufacturers and exporters could then decide where they could best compete, although he offered strange advice: selling too cheap 'is as bad as selling to [sic.] dear!'<sup>9</sup> Mar promised to inform the Japanese of banking conditions and the best way to assure payment. Haniyu should then encourage the Japanese to form a trading company with sufficient capital to keep a reasonable stock of Japanese goods in different towns for wholesale and to export from Ethiopia hides, skins, coffee, beeswax, ivory, and more.<sup>10</sup>

Ethiopia, assured Mar, was rich in gold, platinum, and all minerals, and he could offer a mining concession under 'favorable conditions for the best known claims'. If Japanese bankers wanted to produce gold in their own mines, Japan could get the best claims 'quick and cheap'. Japan could then form a mining company to organize prospecting. Two or three mining engineers and one chemist with two miners would be enough for the initial work, which they could do in six months. Upon discovering gold, mining could begin with Japanese machinery and up to five hundred Japanese men.<sup>11</sup>

Mar held out more opportunities. The most attractive industry near Addis Ababa, he said, was the steam-driven sawmill of a Swiss national who wanted to return home. Mar promised to send Haniyu samples of rare woods. In agriculture, Mar offered a concession in a forested district of 62,500 acres, where the Japanese could find liana-rubber, wild coffee, and rare woods. They could plant rubber, coffee, tea, and any other plants. Mar suggested that Japan might want also to set up a paper factory in that district. He further promised that he could obtain for Haniyu the right to exploit the alcohol monopoly and that Japan could buy the tobacco monopoly at a reasonable price.<sup>12</sup>

Mar said that he had connections with the banking group that held the majority ownership of the Société Nationale, the Second Bank of Ethiopia. The general manager had recently died and Mar promised that the Japanese could acquire 51 per cent of the shares while 49 per cent would remain with Ethiopia's government. Many Europeans had failed at organizing similar businesses, Mar closed, because they acted as if Ethiopia were a colony. Ethiopians would support Japanese enterprises, because Ethiopia wanted to reduce Europe's influence by introducing Japanese capital and workers. Mar promised to work to develop Japan's interests in Ethiopia.<sup>13</sup>

What were the chances of success for such an ambitious proposal? Foreign Minister Heruy had a more realistic sense of the possibilities. When asked if Ethiopia had common interests with Japan, he replied, 'We shall never have an important exchange of trade with Japan, for we have hardly anything that they can buy from us. Our first export is coffee, but the Japanese drink tea. ... We export agricultural goods and skins, but Japan cannot use these. ... We only buy from Japan because her goods are cheap and we have not enough money to pay for the perhaps superior but considerably dearer European and American products.'<sup>14</sup>

Amid the international hullabaloo, some few commentators continued to downplay the importance of Japanese inroads. In 1934, one argued that Emperor Haile Sellase was 'too intelligent and too prudent to accept the Japanese offers that would risk creating difficulties from nations with which Ethiopia' wanted to 'preserve friendly relations'.<sup>15</sup>

### *Japanese penetration continues, 1934*

Japanese competition, supported by cheap labor and promoted by trade delegations, was challenging the world's other industrial powers. Additionally, Italian diplomats worried that Japanese and Ethiopian representatives in Paris had signed a military accord.<sup>16</sup>

Ignoring such threats, at Rome's Opera House on March 18, 1934, Mussolini proclaimed Italy's destiny for expansion. 'Italy's historical objectives,' he said, 'have two names: Asia and Africa ... justified by geography and history.' Il Duce added that of Europe's powers, Italy lay closest to Africa and Asia. He then set before himself and future Italians the completion of Italy's centuries-old task, territorial expansion, not for its own sake, 'but a natural expansion leading to collaboration between Italy and the Near East and the Middle East'. This would bring civilization to Asia and especially Africa. Mussolini also warned, 'We do not

intend to claim either monopolies or privileges', but the satisfied colonial powers 'should not try to block on every side the spiritual, political, and economic expansion of Fascist Italy.' He then specifically justified his military buildup in Eritrea and Somaliland by denouncing Japanese penetration of Ethiopia and the modernization of its military with airplanes, howitzers, machine guns, tanks, and field artillery. In addition, Ethiopia's cavalry was 'one of the finest bodies of its kind in the fighting world'. Italy, Il Duce claimed, had to arm its colonies enough so they could defend themselves in case Italy should become preoccupied in Europe. Meanwhile, Austria could count on Italy, and relations with France had improved.<sup>17</sup> Italians continued Mussolini's themes into the autumn, as the Japanese noted.<sup>18</sup>

Some sought to calm the waters. Even as Italy's ambassador to Tokyo, Giacinto Auriti, complained to Hirota about Japan's press coverage, and he expressed his hope to avoid polemics with the newspapers.<sup>19</sup> In mid-April 1934, the Italian minister in Ethiopia, Vinci, assured Rome that news stories asserting that Japan had begun wide-scale marketing of white drugs in Ethiopia had no foundation. He inferred that the story had grown out of rumors that the Japanese had received concessions to cultivate medicinal plants in Ethiopia that produce opium and other pharmaceuticals.<sup>20</sup>

An exchange of naval visits highlighted the mutual wish in Tokyo and Rome to limit their animosity. While its band played, the Italian cruiser *Quarto* arrived at Yokohama in mid-April, and its captain plus Italy's naval attaché in Tokyo called on Japan's naval minister, Osumi Mineo. Meanwhile, the Japanese training cruisers, the *Iwate* and *Asama*, plus a flotilla destroyer and several hundred cadets under Vice Admiral Matsushita Hajime anchored at Naples from April 23 to 29, and at Livorno on April 30. Matsushita and his staff officially visited Rome, while some of the crew visited the city on April 25.<sup>21</sup>

Rome was not happy, however, when the two vessels sailed into Djibouti on June 7. With an eagerness that amused the foreign colony in Addis Ababa, Emperor Hayle Sellase sent an official delegation to the port to greet the ships and to offer salutations and gifts. His three envoys included the governor of Harrar Province and the 'famed Araya Abeba whose yearning for a Japanese spouse' had 'provided much copy for the international press'.<sup>22</sup> Received 'on board cruisers with gun salvos and rituals with honors greater than those due',<sup>23</sup> the governor of Harar awarded Admiral Osumi the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Star of Ethiopia and gave another three decorations to the officers of the two ships. He also presented a beautiful elephant's tooth to the admiral. The captain of the *Asama* hosted a party for Araya. The governor, wishing to emphasize the Japanese nature of his visit, refused an invitation from a French admiral to come aboard his vessel then also at Djibouti. Some believed that the Japanese disembarked two officials to visit Ethiopia and that the Japanese admiral was secretly visiting Addis Ababa. While these rumors were untrue, the Japanese consul, Keizo Nambu, was in Harar in June for several days, and he worked to promote Japanese trade with Ethiopia. The Italian consul also reported on rumors of another projected marriage. For many, the visit highlighted the possibility of a Japanese stamp on Ethiopia's modernization process, and it presaged the visit of Tsuchida Yutaka to Ethiopia that same June. While Southard did not

believe the Japanese and Ethiopians had discussed anything of official importance, he did see the event as showing the energetic and persistent wooing by the Japanese since Heruy's visit to Japan.<sup>24</sup>

Rumors of Ethio-Japanese military co-operation continued to haunt Italy, including, for example, alleged Japanese plans for building aerodromes in their cotton concessions in Ethiopia. There was even talk that Mussolini had initiated discussions with London which resulted in an accord for common resistance against Japan's military plans in the Red Sea.<sup>25</sup>

Other Japanese visitors in 1934 were a correspondent of the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi*, a surgeon from Tokyo Imperial University of Medicine, and a young tourist who gave a jiu-jitsu exhibition.<sup>26</sup>

### *'Strange and sweet is how the knot of love is tied'*

Of the many reasons that eventually led Italy to decide on war against Ethiopia, one stands out for its importance to contemporaries and for the oblivion to which most later commentators consigned it. Heruy's visit to Japan had given rise to an interesting – and mysterious – marriage proposal. For statesmen in Europe's capitals in 1933 and 1934, it vexingly personified the threat of Japanese political, commercial, and military intrusions into Ethiopia and justified Italy's military preparations against Ethiopia. The historian Bahru Zwede has called it '[p]erhaps the most dramatic episode' in 'the amalgam of intensity and futility marking Ethio-Japanese relations in the early 1930s'.<sup>27</sup>

Many mistakenly believed that this was to be a royal wedding, and many Europeans saw its genesis in Ethiopia's wish to model its modernization after Japan and in Japan's romantic vision of Ethiopia. While this sufficiently explains the motives of the two principals, those around them had other causes in mind. Most important were several Pan-Asian, nationalist Japanese who promoted the marriage to leverage a prominent role for themselves in the potential commercial exchange between Japan and Ethiopia. Interestingly, neither Tokyo nor Addis Ababa promoted the marriage idea, and both suffered international complications because of it. Nor did either lament when the proposal died sometime in 1934.<sup>28</sup>

### THE MARRIAGE IDEA

Araya Abeba was at the center of the marriage proposal. A figure of underestimated importance in the Japanizer movement, he was a member of Hayle Sellase's extended family and a friend of Heruy's. Seeing the Japanizers as 'visionaries', he admired Japanese courtesy, development and modernization, and, wanting to facilitate Japanese trade and investment in Ethiopia, he advocated the unity of all colored races against white hegemony. Araya had been an unofficial member of Heruy's mission, and as 'many another sojourner in Japan, [he] found the Japanese women pleasing and memorable'.<sup>29</sup> Even before his trip to Japan in 1931 with Heruy, Araya had expressed his wish to marry a Japanese woman. He explained to a Japanese reporter in February 1934, 'It has been my

long-cherished ambition to marry a Japanese Lady. Of all first-class nations, Japan has the strongest appeal.<sup>30</sup> Later, he spoke of wanting to marry a 'subservient woman'.<sup>31</sup> Of the elite of the peoples of the world, the Japanese looked most like the Ethiopians, and he wanted, through his descendants, to introduce Japanese blood into Ethiopia and make Ethiopians among the first peoples of the world. The foreign minister was aware of Araya's interest, but restrained him, fearing the marriage would adversely affect Ethiopia's relations with Europe's colonial powers and complicate his mission to Japan.<sup>32</sup>

Araya always argued that he had initiated the proposal, and by March 1933 Hayle Sellase and Heruy were discussing finding a Japanese woman for him. Araya spoke to Yamauchi Masao, who then wrote to Sumioka Tomoyoshi, who had been eager to find a bride for Araya since the autumn of 1932. Yamauchi also included a photograph of the twenty-one-year-old Araya, 'the handsomest youth in Ethiopia'.<sup>33</sup> Heruy also unofficially approached Sumioka, who agreed to mediate. In fact, he stage-managed the 'odd affair'.<sup>34</sup>

In May, Sumioka publicly announced Araya's wish to marry a Japanese woman. The next month, he telegraphed Heruy to say that he could not take care of this matter until he had received an official request from a responsible official. If Heruy thought it advisable, Sumioka wrote, he planned to ask for help from the foreign ministry and the Imperial Household Department vis-à-vis appointing a special committee to select the bride. Sumioka said he expected to be able to send Araya a photograph of the chosen candidate with a health and lineage certificate by October, and the wedding could then take place by February 1934.<sup>35</sup>

In late June, Sumioka reported that an enthusiastic press had written that the twenty-three-year-old prince liked sports and history and was popular with his people. He was also reassuringly light-skinned, monogamous, and Christian, and about sixty young Japanese women had applied. Some of the maidens who saw Sumioka came alone and some brought their parents; some wrote letters, several signing in blood to testify to their sincerity.<sup>36</sup>

In early August, Sumioka received the official document seeking a marriage: 'As you know, the prince is a relative of the Emperor, therefore, please search for a lady of suitable family status. If you fortunately have good candidates, please send pictures.'<sup>37</sup> From Ethiopia, on September 20, Yamauchi wrote a letter saying that as soon as Hayle Sellase received an official response from Sumioka, the Emperor would decide whether Araya would go to Japan or the Japanese woman would come to Ethiopia. Araya's parents had agreed to the process.<sup>38</sup>

On October 28, after whittling down the list to ten women, Sumioka sent their photos and resumé's to Heruy.<sup>39</sup>

Myriad rumors confounded Westerners. In late 1933, America's representative in Addis Ababa tried to unravel the gossip. Southard suggested that the hubbub in Japanese newspapers had made its way back to Ethiopia. The legation's interpreter had heard it bandied about that Araya had joked about marriage with the Japanese dentist living in Addis Ababa. The dentist suggested the 'picture-bride' idea and played up in his contacts with Japan's press. He described him as a page at the Imperial Palace and a distant relative of the Emperor. He did not, however, approach the rank of a prince. Southard

explained that 'Lij', Araya's title, was an appellation given to young men of good birth and was something like the 'Honorable' used by the offspring of British nobility. Young Ethiopians who traveled abroad, whether of noble or ordinary birth, he added, often called themselves princes. Araya's income did not exceed \$50 a month, and Southard added that if he won a Japanese bride, she would not find her life in Addis Ababa luxurious. Remembering conditions in Japan he had seen during his many visits there between 1907 and 1915, Southard continued that Ethiopian standards of living and cleanliness were far below those of the Japanese. He added, 'Neither does the average Ethiopian compare favorably with the average Japanese in intelligence, efficiency, initiative, and ability in general.'<sup>40</sup>

Italians followed news of the coming nuptials closely, and the increase to the ties of friendship between Japan and Ethiopia sparked alarm among those fearing Japanese competition in East Africa. Many commentators had confused Araya with the Crown Prince of Ethiopia and thought it was Haile Sellase's son who was to marry. Some were worrying that the Emperor, satisfied with the progress of the marriage idea, had decided to grant 1.6 million acres to Japan and was planning to allow Japanese immigration. These observers thereby directly connected, incorrectly, the proposed marriage with Kitagawa's schemes.<sup>41</sup>

In his memoirs, the Emperor clearly understood that the Italians were using the marriage idea for their own purposes. To quash these rumors, Heruy summoned Count Vinci and asked him, 'Why does the Italian press bring out mendacious news of this kind about our heir to the throne? Are you yourself not well aware that our Crown Prince is married to a wife from his own country?'<sup>42</sup> Vinci promised to rectify the matter and a week after the conversation, he notified the Ethiopians that the Italian press had corrected the mistake.<sup>43</sup>

Not all Japanese were dizzy with marriage fever. On January 18, *Juo Hyoron* argued that countries with deep interests in Ethiopia, such as Italy, France, and Britain, would understand Japan's ambitions in Africa. The journal then dismissed Britain and France as unworthy of trust in a crisis, while Italy and Germany were 'still somewhat the allies of an isolated Japan. It would be capricious of Japan to undertake an adventure which could hurt Italy's feelings.' The article cynically but sensibly concluded that Japan should reject its dreams in Ethiopia and refute rumors 'for the sake of the integrity of the Japanese lady who is to be sacrificed for the concessions worth only 500,000 yen.'<sup>44</sup>

Shoji rejected the article in *Juo Hyoron* and sought to 'report a true picture of the marriage issue and Ethiopia'. He could do this because he had 'read the correspondence on the marriage issue'.<sup>45</sup> To those Japanese who saw Italy as an ally, Sumioka retorted that, given the current state of relations, Japan could not count on Italy, while those writing that Japan could, Shoji charged, were no better than 'spies purveying treason'.<sup>46</sup> Denying the political implications so many wanted to ascribe to the marriage, Shoji dismissed complaints that Ethiopia, by working through an attorney, had gone over the head of Foreign Ministry. He argued that Heruy saw Sumioka 'as a trustworthy and most suitable person' to deal with 'the most important issue in Prince Araya's life'.<sup>47</sup> He sarcastically protested that no foreign ministry had 'a section to mediate international marriages', and he pontificated that governments concern themselves with poli-

tics and economics, while individuals take care of 'ethical issues such as marriage'.<sup>48</sup>

To Shoji's pleasure, the marriage idea progressed quickly. Through books, photographs, and conversations with Japanese, Ethiopians had studied the rank, education, culture, and appearance of the candidates. Araya made two preliminary choices, and on January 19, 1934, Yamauchi sent Shoji a telegram announcing them. One was Tabata Chiiko, the twenty-two-year-old third daughter of a millionaire businessman. A few days later, Heruy called Yamauchi to the palace and asked him to cable Sumioka that they had turned to Kuroda Masako, their other choice. They then drank champagne toasts to Ethiopia and Japan. Reports suggested that Araya would be in Japan in February and would meet Kuroda then. They would hold the wedding according to Christian rites in April or May, first in Japan and then again on the couple's return to Addis Ababa.<sup>49</sup>

The 'taffy-colored'<sup>50</sup> Kuroda was the twenty-three-year-old second daughter of Viscount Kuroda Hiroyuki of the Forestry Bureau of the Imperial Household. Although descended from the former Lord of Kazusa, the Kuroda family lived in a tiny suburban house in Tokyo. Among the first applicants to marry the 'chocolate prince of the blood imperial',<sup>51</sup> she had presented her picture and other credentials to Sumioka without her parents' knowledge. A high school graduate, she spoke English fluently, and was one of the first Japanese girls to win a prize in an English oratorical contest. After applying to be a bridal candidate, she studied the habits and customs of Ethiopia through books and conversations with those familiar with conditions there. She admitted she had not met 'Prince' Araya when he had visited Japan, but added, 'I have firmly decided to go to his country and I am willing to put up with whatever circumstances come along.'<sup>52</sup>

At five feet three inches, she was taller than average, and in school Kuroda had been a keen athlete who enjoyed swimming, basketball, volleyball, and tennis. In an interview in February 1934, she enthusiastically remarked, 'I understand that the people of Ethiopia are extremely interested in sports, and I believe that I shall be able to indulge my taste for athletics when I go there.'<sup>53</sup>

Amid popular talk of uniting the colored races against whites, Kuroda believed that, given its ever-increasing population, Japan would have to settle many colonies abroad, and she regarded herself as the first of many who would immigrate to Ethiopia. Kuroda wanted to take four or five women with her, and so many applied for positions as her servants that she had to move to another residence to avoid the crowd. Kuroda also hoped that by living in Ethiopia she could help reduce the Anglo-French-Italian rivalries in that country. This could help preserve political equilibrium in Africa, where Japan wanted to penetrate peacefully by co-operating with European powers. 'I will go to Abyssinia as a woman of Japan determined to uphold the dignity of Japan in the court there,' she told a reporter. 'My duties will be difficult, I know, but I am preparing myself to do well.'<sup>54</sup>

Japan's press began carrying stories that Araya had already obtained permission for the marriage from the Emperor, who had supposedly granted him a large tract of land. Araya, armed with two books on Japanese architecture and Nanjo



Shinichi's advice, was 'joyful and busy' planning to build a Japanese-style bungalow in which he and Kuroda would live. Nanjo visited the palace and told Araya that the Viscount Kuroda would be accompanying his daughter to Ethiopia. The prince in turn told the Emperor, who said he would ask the viscount to stay four or five months and go on a big game hunt.<sup>55</sup>

#### SKEPTICAL OBSERVERS

Despite the excitement, by early February many observers were expressing doubts about the viability of the proposed nuptials. America's ambassador in Tokyo, Joseph Grew, noted the dearth of information available from governmental sources, and he believed the marriage was without political significance for the Japanese. Two weeks later, Auriti reported that a 'high official' in Japan's foreign ministry had expressed doubt the two would marry. Apparently, Japan's aristocracy and the Imperial Court opposed the project.<sup>56</sup>

In fact, difficulties had arisen by late February 1934, when Kuroda's mother admitted that the Imperial Household Department had not yet sanctioned her daughter's trip or betrothal. Because Kuroda's father was a peer, the family had to get its consent. She added that Araya had planned to come to Japan in May but had indefinitely postponed his visit. The family had received no direct word from Ethiopia's royal family, but Sumioka was negotiating the matter. As for Kuroda herself, she pledged, 'I will go to Ethiopia even in the capacity of a private citizen, if the Imperial Household authorities should disapprove of my trip.'<sup>57</sup>

In March, Grew reported that marriage seemed about to fall through because of intervention by Japan's government, even though the press continued to print colorful stories about Ethiopia and the international romance. Newspapers were even rehashing an idea, based on a letter from Enomoto Seisaku, in which the chef had written that Ethiopia's imperial family would seek a Japanese bride for the crown prince.<sup>58</sup>

Not only the Japanese were hesitating. In early March, Vinci reported that Heruy had asked him to oppose the marriage. Rumors in Italy and Japan that the Crown Prince was to be the groom had offended Ethiopia's imperial house. Heruy also denounced rumors about negotiations with Japan and that Ethiopia had granted concessions and was allowing Japanese immigration.<sup>59</sup>

Southard now reappraised the proposed marriage, which, he wrote, had begun as a joke but had now taken a more serious turn. The Ethiopians were unusually reticent about the proposal, but Southard had learned that Hayle Sellase believed the marriage would help cement political and economic relations with Japan to Ethiopia's profit. Flattered and impressed how the idea had seized the fancy of the international press, Heruy and Hayle Sellase were proud so many had linked Ethiopia with a people as eminent as the Japanese. Accordingly, the Emperor inclined toward providing the financial help without which Araya could not pursue his venture. Southard opined that Hayle Sellase was not likely to commit himself indefinitely to subsidizing Araya, who was 'neither actually nor nearly a Prince.' Beyond Araya's inability to provide on his own the standard of living suitable to a Japanese woman of good birth and upbringing, there was a vast

distance between Ethiopians and Japanese in thought and customs. 'Perhaps we shouldn't expect too much' of Araya's 'sense of responsibility in such matters now that he is a national hymeneal hero in the making!' Southard supposed the Japanese also hoped the proposed marriage would improve their political and economic interests, but predicted they would find 'a mighty jolt of disappointment and disillusion'. He concluded the Ethiopians had little to offer economically or politically because they always expected to get more than they intended to give. The Japanese doubtless did not yet know this, he insisted, but they would learn, just as had others once hopeful for favor and profit in Ethiopia.<sup>60</sup>

Ignoring such doubts, women's magazines in Japan seized upon the topic. For instance, one in its March issue carried a round table discussion entitled 'Fairyland Ethiopia that Will Receive a Bride for the Royal Nephew from Japan' and explained how Sumioka had selected Kuroda. It quoted her, 'When I heard the report – "It is decided to be Kuroda. Please take means accordingly" – my heart filled with joy and I exclaimed, "Banzai!"'<sup>61</sup> Reflecting the popular excitement, a set of dolls for the traditional Girls' Festival holiday on March 3 was made especially for her to take to Africa when she got married. Her dolls bore the crests of the Kuroda family and the prince of Ethiopia. Long after the marriage proposal had fallen apart and through the beginning of the Italo-Ethiopian War, women's magazines continued to report on Ethiopia.<sup>62</sup>

In the third week of March, Auriti assured Rome that Japanese authorities had investigated and determined that Araya was not a direct relation to the Emperor and that he merely worked in the royal court 'in a minor capacity'. He added that Japan's press was reporting that the imperial court was working to prevent the marriage. Further, the ambassador wrote, Araya had posed as a prince three years before when visiting Japan as Heruy's secretary. 'We understood ... while the young man occupied only a minor secretarial position, he was actually a prince traveling incognito and that he had joined the mission to get diplomatic experience.' The Imperial Household had notified the Kuroda family of their new understanding.<sup>63</sup>

#### THE MARRIAGE IDEA IS CALLED OFF

As the public's excitement reached its peak, the would-be betrothal was actually dying, and in ways not entirely clear. The Japanese press on April 2 abruptly reported its cancellation and played up reports from Nanjo that Italian intervention had stopped it. The world's press quickly picked up the story. Charged with keeping the aristocracy pristine, the Peerage Bureau had discovered just in time that Araya was only a 'page', and the Tokyo government announced it had broken off the engagement. In yet another version, Ethiopia's foreign ministry revealed that the Emperor had squelched the project. While Shoji grumbled that he had heard nothing from either Heruy or Yamauchi, Heruy complained to Vinci that Nanjo's interference in Ethiopian affairs, including the marriage, had surprised him.<sup>64</sup>

Vinci described Nanjo as disgusted at seeing the marriage between Araya and Kuroda 'dissolve into smoke'. He explained that the philo-Japanese Heruy had at first supported the marriage but had backtracked when the Japanese had

discovered that Araya was not a prince of the blood. Further, public opinion in Ethiopia wondered how, Araya, a Christian, could marry a pagan. Then the Emperor turned against the marriage after the foreign press confused Araya with the Crown Prince. Nanjo did understand, Vinci opined, that Kuroda would do better to look for a husband elsewhere. In his embarrassment, after the commitments assumed by the two parties, Heruy resorted at first to the puerile excuse that Araya could not marry because he suffered from 'Celtic disease',<sup>65</sup> to which Nanjo replied Japan had top-notch specialists for this illness. In any case, the engagement was broken off, and on April 6 Sumioka telegraphed Heruy that Japan did not bear a grudge, finishing in English, 'We love Ethiopia', and 'Araya remains a constant friend in any difficulty'. Vinci called Nanjo's attribution of blame to Italy's legation for the collapse engagement 'most comical', and Rome assured Tokyo that it had not interfered with the projected marriage. Turning to the tie many had believed, he repeated Heruy's claims that Ethiopia had not granted any concessions to Kitagawa, but he allowed that there had been negotiations and that something might yet materialize.<sup>66</sup>

Nanjo was complicating matters, and Auriti complained that the journalist was clouding Italy's relations with Ethiopia and was simultaneously hurting Ethiopian pride by making it seem they were willing to submit to Italy's approaches. Italians believed he had connections with the armaments industry and that he had reinforced Ethiopian nationalism by telling Hayle Sellase that, in case of conflict, Japan would supply airplanes and poison gas to Ethiopia. Sugimura assured Foreign Minister Fulvio Suvich that he was unfamiliar with Nanjo and that, in any case, he was a private citizen and his newspaper's responsibility. Japan's government was playing no role in Nanjo's activities.<sup>67</sup>

Worried that the spoiled marriage might ruin relations between Ethiopia and Japan, at the end of the first week of April Sumioka reassured Heruy with a telegram promising that 'Even if difficulties arise, our friendship will not change'<sup>68</sup> and that Japan did not bear any grudge. He finished in English, 'We love Ethiopia', and 'Araya remains a constant friend in any difficulty.'<sup>69</sup> Two days later, Sumioka wrote to Mussolini expressing sorrow if Italy was obstructing the marriage and asking for his co-operation in promoting it. On April 28, the same day the letter arrived in Rome, Yamauchi wrote to Sumioka stating that Araya was facing difficulties at court and the marriage scheme was falling apart.<sup>70</sup>

On his return from Ethiopia in April 1934, Haniyu Chotaro had a keener appreciation of the situation than did most. He declared that although the marriage had created a sensation in Japan, Ethiopians were paying scant attention to it. He threw cold water on those enthusiastic for the marriage, noting that Araya was not a prince and that the foreign ministry had nothing to do with the marriage. He added, 'Some time ago, an Italian newspaper sarcastically remarked that Japan intends to invade Africa with "kisses between the dark and the black by having a daughter of a Japanese peer married to an Ethiopian"'. Noting that Ethiopia's press from the outset had been taciturn, he finished in Southard-like terms: 'If Miss Kuroda really wants to marry Ababa, she had better, I think, personally inspect the actual conditions of Ethiopia.'<sup>71</sup>

Shoji, on the other hand, passionately argued against such thinking. He pointed out the irony that Ethiopia's representative in Italy, Afewerq Gebre

Iyesus, had married an Italian woman, leaving no room for Rome to oppose Araya's marriage. Shoji then stressed the private nature of the marriage proposal and referred to the old saying, 'Strange and sweet is how the knot of love is tied.'<sup>72</sup> The betrothal had sprouted as an expression of mutual warmth developing between the Japanese and Ethiopian peoples, and the marriage proposal was merely one of its fruits, and friendly relations between the two would increase regardless of its success or failure. Shoji understood the diplomatic and racial implications of the marriage issue. Those loving Japan, he wrote, and wanting to promote Ethiopia's rapid development, had to 'understand that this ethnic issue is not contingent, temporary, or imagined', but rather was purposeful with 'important economic, political, and cultural meanings. ... Whites still discriminate against colored peoples. We must understand that the success of this Ethiopian marriage issue embodies the first practical step toward racial equality and the unity of Oriental peoples.'<sup>73</sup>

On October 6, Rome's embassy in Tokyo issued a communiqué declaring its friendship with Addis Ababa. The Italians again rejected the idea that Italy desired aggression against Ethiopia or had been interested in the marriage.<sup>74</sup>

Despite assurances toward the end of the year from Japan's Imperial Household Department that the romance between Kuroda and Araya had died, the issue continued to rankle and confuse. Enemies of Ethiopia and Japan continued to write about the threat the proposed union posed long after the quasi-betrothal had withered away and they had every cause to know that it had never carried the policy implications feared. Some believed that Emperor Hirohito was bitter toward the Italians because their protests had broken off the proposed marriage. Others such as the British minister in Addis Ababa argued that Ethiopia's Emperor did not want to support his financially not-so-well-endowed relative. Heruy, in fact, later spoke of the marriage rumors as 'Fairy-tales! Goodness knows where they sprang from!'<sup>75</sup>

Roman Procházka, as hyperventilated as ever, feared that the Ethiopians and Japanese had hatched plans for 'marriages between the [2,000] eligible Japanese settlers ... and native Abyssinian women'. They 'intended to produce a new race of leaders in the united revolt of the coloured peoples against the white races'.<sup>76</sup> The marriage between 'princess' Kuroda and 'prince' Araya was to have jump-started the plot.

Always willing to provoke tensions, the international communist press asserted that it was Rome's diplomatic pressure that likely quashed the projected marriage between the 'wealthy' Japanese girl and the Ethiopian 'prince'.<sup>77</sup> The president of the National Council of Trade Unions of Japan, the largest group of workers in the country, declared so while visiting the United States in July 1935. As another example, one book published in 1936 thundered against Japanese imperialistic advances throughout the world and added that the 'marriage of an Abyssinian prince to the daughter of a Japanese noble' enabled the Japanese 'to equip airdromes in Ethiopian and to receive a cotton concession there'.<sup>78</sup> The Soviets helped create a symbiosis with Italy's press by, for example, repeating an article discussing Japan's claims on Australia, India, and Indo-China and detailing Japanese dumping, particularly in Ethiopia. The *Moscow Daily News* laid out the stakes, concluding that 'The Japanese policy [on]

Abyssinia constitutes an exceptional danger to Europe'.<sup>79</sup> Clearly, for Moscow, the truth was less important than was the need to draw on any potential anti-Japanese argument.

In Japan, as well, the marriage idea limped on for some time. As late as November 1935, the press continued to play up the romance as well as the agricultural concession, the opium monopoly, and Japanese immigration to Ethiopia.<sup>80</sup>

#### MARRIAGE EPILOGUES

Several epilogues drove home the point the American legation in Addis Ababa had made some time before, namely that the proposed marriage was but a 'comic touch'.<sup>81</sup> At 8 p.m. on July 24, 1935, a policeman noted a suspicious-looking woman in black afternoon dress who had been walking up and down the street near Ueno Park in Tokyo for two hours. He disguised himself as a worker and arrested her. As it turned out, she had earlier reported to this same policeman that she had lost her purse and a little money. Giving a false name, she had borrowed a small sum from him. Although she disclosed her real name when arrested and explained she had been waiting for a friend, the policeman still suspected she was a communist and took her to the Ueno police station. The police, however, shortly released the twenty-three-year-old Kuroda.<sup>82</sup>

She was not through making news for behavior uncommon among well-bred Japanese women. In February 1936, newspapers reported that she had disappeared from her father's Tokyo home in September in 1935. The family had kept her disappearance secret until a report surfaced that she had personally applied for a job in Tokyo. Why had she left her home? Her father had begun negotiations for her marriage with the son of a Japanese millionaire from Korea, but Kuroda herself rejected the idea, telling a former teacher that she did not want to marry a man of property or position, but wished for a man leading a sincere life. Because her parents did not want her working for a living, they could have forced her to accept the marriage if she had remained at home. Having left, she eventually wrote a letter to her mother to tell her she was living with a school friend and was looking for a job. If her parents thought this too disgraceful to family dignity, she continued, she would willingly agree to having her name removed from the family registry.<sup>83</sup>

Araya, for his part, fled Ethiopia with Hayle Sellase when the Italians took over in May 1936. Amid rumors of an Italian-sponsored effort to bribe Ethiopians to assassinate their Emperor, he was among the three sent to check on the loyalty of Ethiopians then in Europe. He left the Emperor's suite and took the train to Paris and then to Calais. In the meantime, the Emperor went directly to England. Araya met him in London and went with him to Bath in 1937. That same year, Araya went to New York to mobilize support for an independent Ethiopia. In 1938, while he was back in Bath, Kuroda invited him to stay in a family home in the countryside until he decided what to do. Although he did not accept, he long remained grateful for the offer.<sup>84</sup>

*Tsuchida Yutaka's inspection tour of Ethiopia,  
May-July 1934*

By dramatizing the potential for increasing Japanese influence in Ethiopia, the marriage, although unconsummated, complicated their diplomacy with all states also having interests in Ethiopia. Consequently, Tokyo could not leave unwatched those ambitious individuals, for example, the director of Nikkei-sha, who were going to Ethiopia with inadequate planning and searching for Pan-Asiatic adventures. In February 1934, the foreign ministry decided to send an official to examine conditions in Ethiopia and publicly explained why. Japan was facing reports that Ethiopia intended to approve an extensive land lease to Japanese businessmen and that Ethiopia's royal family wished to arrange a marriage with a Japanese noble family. Noting Ethiopia's pro-Japanese attitude, the explanation continued, 'When Japanese extend their business to Ethiopia, we need to understand the domestic conditions of this country and carefully consider its delicate international position. Otherwise, our plans will fail, or we will unnecessarily invite the envy and misunderstanding of other major countries.'<sup>85</sup>

On May 3, the foreign ministry ordered Tsuchida Yutaka, Embassy Secretary and Consul at Geneva, to go to Ethiopia, and Tokyo would let his report determine its future relations with the East African country. Tsuchida left Geneva on May 13, and, traveling via Marseilles and Djibouti, he arrived in Addis Ababa on June 15. Calling at all the local legations, he told Vinci that, while Japan had made economic advances in Ethiopia, it was "inconceivable" that his country had received any concessions. Southard deduced that Tsuchida was to report to the foreign ministry on the advisability of quickly setting up Japanese diplomatic and consular representation in Addis Ababa.<sup>86</sup>

Although the Emperor delayed in seeing him, with Tsuchida's arrival, the Ethiopians regained hope in Japan. Heruy promised him that Ethiopia would 'maintain its complete open-door policy to Japan and Japanese people'.<sup>87</sup> He hoped Japan would quickly accept his proposal for giving privileged conditions to Japan, and he declared that he would help the Japanese to open a legation. On July 2, the Emperor told Tsuchida of his wish for co-operation and that he wanted to open discussions with Japan. Hayle Sellase inquired about cheap automobiles, which the Japanese could deliver to Addis Ababa for about 20 per cent of the retail cost of a Ford. The head of the Ethiopia's industrial department proposed to Tsuchida that Japan set up a munitions factory in Ethiopia. The day before Tsuchida's departure from Ethiopia, Heruy officially asked to send ten Ethiopian pilots to Japan. Heruy also placed an official order for 7,000 infantry rifles, 3,000 cavalry rifles, and 350 light and 48 heavy machine guns.<sup>88</sup>

Vinci reported that Hayle Sellase had given a dinner in Tsuchida's honor and had awarded him a medal in addition to the usual gifts of lion and monkey skins. Vinci saw the major impact of Tsuchida's visit as the decision to set up a Japanese legation in Addis Ababa in January. Japan's government, he wrote, had already

approved the project, but for budgetary reasons the Diet had temporarily suspended it.<sup>89</sup>

On his return to Japan, Tsuchida produced a devastating report. The Ethiopians had several complaints, he wrote. Japan's press, they grumbled, had written about the Nikkei-sha affair as if Ethiopia had signed a concession land to cultivate poppies and the League's Anti-Opium Bureau had discussed the issue. Japan's press had covered the betrothal as if Araya were the heir to Ethiopia's throne. These articles had harmed Ethiopia's relations with other states and had provoked complaints from Mussolini. Further, Japanese merchants had disclosed confidential arrangements through which Ethiopia was foregoing their customs duties, drawing protests from vexed legations in Addis Ababa. Even worse, Haniyu had gone to Ethiopia in 1933 with a fake commission from the Foreign Ministry. He had signed a few contracts with Ethiopia's government but never fulfilled them. Feeling swindled and having expected much from the Japanese, Ethiopian disappointment had turned to distrust and even hatred.<sup>90</sup>

Tsuchida's report turned to Ethiopia's trade. The head of the Japanese Cotton Thread and Cloth Guild, Irie Kanae, had pointed out the inefficiency and immaturity of Ethiopia's administration, which made preparing official statistics impossible. The Japanese had to deduce Ethiopia's trade by using the export-import statistics of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa Railroad and then subtracting those figures from the general statistics for French Somaliland. Japan could thereby fix the quantity of goods, but it remained difficult to demonstrate prices. According to the statistics for 1933, the price Ethiopia's imports of 'cotton low-quality cloth' and 'cotton textile goods and thread' was about 56 per cent of the country's entire imports. Among these, Japanese goods made up 85 per cent of the low-quality cloth and 65 per cent of the cotton thread. In monetary value, Japanese goods occupied about 45 per cent of Ethiopia's entire imports. Japanese goods held 'decisively overwhelming power' in low-quality cotton cloth.<sup>91</sup>

Those diplomats who had visited Ethiopia, such as Kuroki, Mushanokoji, and Yoshida, had pointed out Ethiopia's importance exclusively from its possibilities as a cotton market. If Japan's merchants captured Japanese goods imported by Indian, Armenian, and Greek merchants, they could profit. There was, however, no guarantee of increasing the quantity of exports of cotton cloth itself, and there was no outcry among Japanese entrepreneurs for their government to set up a diplomatic establishment. This explains Irie's reticence toward Ethiopia. Even Japan's diplomats saw opening a consulate in Ethiopia as only developing and securing a future market.<sup>92</sup>

Tsuchida, however, added a political nuance to this economic argument – to protect Ethiopia's independence from the imperialist predations of Britain, France, and Italy. 'To promote Ethiopia's development, make Japanese policy aid Ethiopia economically, developmentally, and culturally. ... [T]he hope is to take a pragmatic position to protect Ethiopia's independence and thereby protect established Japanese interests, in case European countries, especially England, Italy and France, express their traditional ambitions in Ethiopia in the future.' Tsuchida confessed that the three would object; yet he was optimistic. 'The Great Powers cannot oppose this policy openly, if we lead Ethiopia gradually,

without haste, as a developing and independent country in Africa and if we try to advance ourselves into Ethiopia without political ambitions.' Tsuchida noted that the penetration of Japanese goods into world markets had become a global matter. He continued, 'Ethiopia is the only independent, sovereign state on the African continent that eagerly expects the spread of Japanese goods and welcomes with an open door our advances.'<sup>93</sup>

Tsuchida recommended Japanese advance in all areas. Concerning commerce, the issue was to what degree Japanese merchants could replace existing foreign merchants and establish better control over their exports. On industry, he confessed that its development by the Ethiopian people themselves might prove difficult because of their customary disdain for labor. 'There is no doubt', however, 'that it will be advantageous for us to run various industries extensively.' On mining, he saw that there was an untouched treasury of raw materials, Ethiopia having granted few concessions to foreigners. Timber also had 'a bright future', and extensive fertile lands would stimulate profitable plantations after finding out which crops suited the climate.<sup>94</sup>

Having concluded that 'Opportunity favors our advance into Ethiopia, and we must act now',<sup>95</sup> Tsuchida advised that Japan should immediately set up a legation in Addis Ababa and send a plenipotentiary minister, who would become Ethiopia's most important adviser. He proposed opening a consulate at either Djibouti or Aden as a second option. Tsuchida stressed that Ethiopia could serve as a strategic base for advancing into nearby regions, especially East Africa and the Middle East. Creating a presence would provide the foundation for all other initiatives and would be essential for negotiating with Ethiopia in case other countries tried to stop Japan's advances. An official presence would also help control irresponsible Japanese merchants and companies. At the end of his report, Tsuchida suggested that all Japanese ministries should co-operate and encourage civilians to increase their activities in Ethiopia. Tsuchida advised that Tokyo immediately send scholars to research Ethiopia's languages.<sup>96</sup>

In the third week of November, Vice Foreign Minister Shigemitsu approached Auriti and 'spontaneously' told him that rumors of a Japanese military going to Ethiopia were as false as those about land concessions. Japan, he asserted, had no political aims in Ethiopia and its economic interests were not much more than a little business through commercial agents in Ethiopia. Japan wanted to establish a legation in Addis Ababa in order to keep an eye on these agents.<sup>97</sup>

### *To the WelWel incident & the end of 1934*

It is unclear how the government in Tokyo received Tsuchida's report. The Japanese never built a munitions manufacturing plant in Ethiopia, and the Ethiopians could legitimately claim they had neither purchased Japanese arms nor granted concessions to any Japanese. Japan's finance ministry in August 1934 at last budgeted for establishing a legation in Ethiopia in 1935.<sup>98</sup>

Many in the West continued riding the theme of Japanese trade inroads. They noted that the Japanese had exported money and flattery to Ethiopia and that they had vast plans to make it a modern, industrial, and independent nation.



The Japanese had promised to perform this miracle within a few years – just as they had transformed themselves. They wanted to colonize this distant land because, as a maritime power, they wished to deny Britain free passage through the Red Sea. Britain could not allow Japan to have a maritime, commercial, and industrial base in Africa and would do everything to destroy it. The Italians were feeling the competition of Japanese textiles in Ethiopia's market. As the sole surviving independent, native African state, Ethiopia, twisting Europe's tail, was drawing toward Japan.<sup>99</sup>

Aggressive Japanese sales threatened Italian and European interests not only in Ethiopia but also in Europe. For example, in early autumn 1934, Italy forbade imports of Japanese rayon and imposed quotas on other goods.<sup>100</sup> Bitter because Japanese competition had nearly killed their toy industry, in December the Germans discovered another perfidious threat to white supremacy. Yellow Japanese dolls were flooding the world at low prices and were replacing white dolls in the hands of Asia's and Africa's children. One newspaper predicted that the ultimate psychological effect would be enormous.<sup>101</sup>

On December 30, 1934, the *Egyptian Mail* editorialized on Italy's expansionist aims in the Red Sea and Ethiopia and on the attitudes of the interested powers. Britain and France were tacitly supporting Italy's developing economic sphere of interest, and Italy wished to share control of Djibouti with France. Neither Japan, which had plans for economic penetration with low-priced goods, nor Great Britain could view such a development complacently. The paper continued, 'Abyssinia serves at present as a useful buffer State between possessions in the hinterland on the one hand and expansionist ideas on the other, and any weakening of the country's position would be regarded with considerable misgivings.' The editorial remarked that Japan had 'been putting her finger in the pie' and implied that the long-simmering conflict between Italy and Ethiopia was coming to a head because of Japan's entry into Ethiopia's market.<sup>102</sup>

Meanwhile, Tokyo announced that former Under-Secretary General of the League of Nations, Dr Sugimura Yotaro, would succeed Matsushima as its ambassador in Rome. Sugimura admired Mussolini, and his daughter would later convert to Catholicism while in Italy. A pragmatist, he believed Japan's relations with Rome were more important than its relations with Addis Ababa. Sugimura left Japan on October 4 by passenger ship, bound for the United States and Canada and thence to London, where he arrived on November 9. From there, he sailed to Rome.<sup>103</sup>

While Sugimura was still at sea, Afewerq Gebre Iyesus declared that Ethiopia held no aggressive intentions toward Italy and would adhere to the 1928 Treaty of Friendship and Arbitration. In response, on October 6 Italy's embassy in Tokyo issued a communiqué declaring its friendly intentions. The Italian embassy also took the opportunity to deny formally that the proposed marriage between a 'notable' Ethiopian and 'a Japanese young lady' had ever interested Rome.<sup>104</sup>

Southard, meanwhile, analyzed Ethiopia's military preparedness that Italy found so threatening. He reported that the Belgian military mission had partially trained fewer than 10,000 Ethiopian troops. These natives, although brave, had

no uniforms or related equipment, wore neither shoes nor hats, and shuffled along with no more marching order or organization 'than flocks of sheep'. Medical, sanitary, commissary, and related branches of military organization were elementary and inadequate. The Ethiopians had to import all military supplies at great cost of time and money – and through European-controlled ports. The strength of Ethiopian artillery and its air force was negligible. In guerilla warfare, on the other hand, Southard thought they might acquit themselves well. Italians, fixated on outside help to Ethiopia, especially from Japan, were ignoring this military reality.<sup>105</sup>

At last in Rome, on November 28 Sugimura spoke with Fulvio Suvich about Japan's trade relations, including opening a legation in Addis Ababa. He explained that China and India could not absorb all the goods Japan was exporting, and the excess was flowing elsewhere, including Ethiopia. Sugimura expressed his hope for better trade with Italy.<sup>106</sup>

Rome connected Japan's policies in Asia and Ethiopia. Explaining why Italy recently had militarily reinforced its colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland, Alessandro Lessona, Under-Secretary of Colonies, clarified Italy's position in a speech at Naples in late 1934. 'In the Far East,' he said, 'the political situation tends to get worse'. Europe had complex and important interests in Asia, but Japan was challenging them. 'Japan,' Lessona added, 'for the first time in history, offers the example of a people of 80,000,000 inhabitants extraordinarily developed economically, industrially and in a military way.' He got to the nub: 'The birth rate, energy and spirit of sacrifice of the Japanese, the imperious necessity for always seeking new markets – all these combine to make Japan a very great danger for Europe. ... The more one restrains the Japanese expansion in the East, the more she will try to expand in other sectors and in other continents, as is proved already by Japan's activity in Ethiopia.' Lessona ominously added that Africa could represent the final objective of Japanese expansion. 'To draw the Dark Continent into her own orbit would signify for Japan not so much [an] acquisition of power [but] as a means of depriving Europe of the possibility of using Africa for the defense of her civilization.'<sup>107</sup>

On December 5, 1934, the WelWel Incident broke headlines around the world. WelWel was an important watering hole sixty miles inside Ethiopia's border, where Italian and Ethiopian troops fired on each other. Mussolini chose to make the incident a *casus belli* by demanding unacceptable reparations. As part of this campaign, Italy's leader Mussolini cited the Yellow Peril and merged his wrath toward Ethiopia with his suspicions toward Japan.<sup>108</sup>

Not everyone trembled before Il Duce's power. Within a week after WelWel, a group of Jews and Turks in Istanbul, all veterans of trade missions to Japan, met at a restaurant. They mocked Italian ambitions, and they looked to Japan, which had 'many officers and even a navy to send' for Ethiopia's salvation.<sup>109</sup>

Fearing Mussolini was angling for war, Afeverq visited the Japanese ambassador on December 21 to seek help. He said that Japan was Ethiopia's last resort given the League's immobility. Following his instructions, Sugimura explained he had no authority to commit Japan to providing weapons to Ethiopia. He threw him a sop – Japan wished to expand its economic interests there. While Japan was sensitive to any Italian effort to monopolize economic relations with Ethiopia,

official Japan would not do more. Despite this cold water, Afewerq continued his contacts with the Japanese.<sup>110</sup>

The storm of right-wing-fanned popular opinion aside, the Japanese government had set its policy to remain neutral in the crisis. In his meeting with Sugimura on December 23, Mussolini complained that Japan was actively supplying weapons and ammunition to Ethiopia. As instructed, the ambassador assured the incredulous Il Duce that Japan's plans to open a legation in Ethiopia were merely to normalize diplomatic and commercial relations between the two countries. Sugimura clearly told Mussolini that Japan had no political ambitions in Ethiopia. This meeting marked the beginning of Sugimura's assiduous efforts to placate Italy over Ethiopia as well as to dampen his own country's ultra-nationalists.<sup>111</sup>

## Conclusion

In 1934, and encouraged by Pan-Asianist exhortations to racial solidarity, some Japanese businessmen saw Ethiopia as a potential market, a source for raw materials, and an opportunity for concessions and colonization. Many Ethiopians responded positively to these approaches, even as Westerners became alarmed. The proposed marriage between Araya and Kuroda personified the great expectations and the profound disappointments of Japanese and Ethiopians alike – as well as the incredible paranoia of the Italians. Defying these hopes and fears, Tsuchida Yutaka's report detailed the problems facing the Japanese in exploiting Ethiopian markets.

Tsuchida proved correct. The coming year put Japanese notions toward Ethiopia to a harsh trial in the crucible of *realpolitik*. Pan-Asiatic romanticism failed this test.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> 'Relazione per S.E. Il Sottosegretario di Stati', January 16, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3. See also Ministry of Colonies, February 12, 1934; Circular, March 1, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.

<sup>2</sup> Rome, January 17, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.

<sup>3</sup> Southard, February 14, 1934: NARA 784.94/7.

<sup>4</sup> George, March 22, 1935: NARA 784.94/17; Vinci, February 23, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.

<sup>5</sup> Engert, August 24, 1935: NARA 784.94/23; Southard, Sept 10, 1934: NARA 765.84/53.

<sup>6</sup> *JT&M*, April 22, 1934.

<sup>7</sup> March 4, 1934: GSK M130 1–1–2.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. See also Park, April 15, 1933: NARA 884.6172/1 and Jerusalem, February 14, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.

<sup>14</sup> Farago, *Abyssinia*, p. 128.

<sup>15</sup> Maurice Martelli-Chautard, *L'Expansion Japonaise en Afrique* (Paris: Publications du Comité de l'Afrique Française, 1934), pp. 31–3, quote 33.

<sup>16</sup> *JT&M*, February 12, 1934; Vinci, February 23, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.

- <sup>17</sup> *Il Popolo d'Italia*, March 20, 1934; Mussolini, *Opera*, 26:185–93; Charles F. Delzell, *Mediterranean Fascism, 1919–1945* (New York: Walker and Co., 1971), pp. 186–90; Jean Bastin, *L'affaire d'Ethiopiet les diplomates (1934–1937)* (Paris: Desclée of Brouwer, 1938), pp. 59–61; Long, March 23, 1934: NARA 865.00F/218; *JT&M*, April 17, 1934; *OM&TNN*, March 21, 1934.
- <sup>18</sup> See, for example, *JT&M*, October 3, 1934.
- <sup>19</sup> Auriti, April 6, 1934: MAE Ethiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>20</sup> Vinci, April 13, 1934: MAE Ethiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>21</sup> *JA*, April 18, 1934; *JT&M*, February 19, 1934; April 18, 19, 21, 1934; *OM&TNN*, April 14, 1934.
- <sup>22</sup> Southard, June 21, 1934: NARA 784.94/10. Amde Araya says that his father was not there, but his father's memory was likely at fault. Interview with Amde Araya and Araya Abeba. British observers also thought him there. *BDF4*, 28: no. 86. Also see Circular, June 14, 1934: MAE Ethiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>23</sup> Circular, Aug. 29, 1934: MAE Ethiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>24</sup> Engert, August 24, 1935: NARA 784.94/23; Tagliano, May 14, 1934; Vinci, June 8, 14, 23, 1935; July 11, 1935; Astuto, June 11, 1934; Circular, August 29, 1934: MAE Ethiopia b24 f3; Shōji, *Echiopia*, p. 6. Italians also worried about Ethio-Japanese contacts in Ankara, Turkey. Vinci, July 11, 1935; Ankara, July 18, 30, 1935: MAE Ethiopia-FG b62 f3.
- <sup>25</sup> Marneli, April 7, 1934: MAE Ethiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>26</sup> George, March 22, 1935: NARA 784.94/17.
- <sup>27</sup> Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', p. 4; Circular, January 22, 1934: MAE Ethiopia b24 f3. Agbi sees the marriage idea as proof of Japan's economic and political commitment to Ethiopia. Agbi, 'Japanese', p. 133.
- <sup>28</sup> J. Calvitt Clarke III, 'Marriage Alliance: The Union of Two Imperiums: Japan and Ethiopia' *Selected Annual Proceedings of the Florida Conference of Historians* 7 (December 1999):105–16; Kurosawa, January 24, 1936: GSK A461 ET/II–6.
- <sup>29</sup> Grene, January 17, 1934: NARA 784.94/6.
- <sup>30</sup> *NYT*, February 18, 1934. For Heruy's comments on Japanese women, see Yamada, *Masukaru no hanayome*, p. 114.
- <sup>31</sup> Interview with Amde Araya and Araya Abeba.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.; Faërber-Ishihara, 'Heruy', p. 147. Many of America's blacks cheered on such motives. See, for example, *Chicago Defender*, July 13, 1935.
- <sup>33</sup> *JA*, June 30, 1933.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid.; Shōji, *Echiopia*, p. 22; Yamada, *Masukaru no Hanayome*, pp. 113–15, 123.
- <sup>35</sup> Shōji, *Echiopia*, p. 22; Yamada, *Masukaru no Hanayome*, p. 126; *JA*, June, 30, 1933.
- <sup>36</sup> *NYT*, February 18, 1934; *JT&M*, January 21, 1934; Grew, July 6, 1933: NARA 894.00/67; Grew, July 6, 1933: NARA 884.0011/61; Grene, January 17, 1934: NARA 784.94/6.
- <sup>37</sup> Shōji, *Echiopia*, p. 23.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 25; Yamada, *Masukaru no Hanayome*, p. 128.
- <sup>39</sup> Shōji, *Echiopia*, pp. 25–6.
- <sup>40</sup> Southard, December 16, 1933: NARA 884.0011/62; *WP*, April 8, 1934. Also see Military Attaché, January 17, 1934: NARA 884.0011/7153. Shōji and Yamauchi denigrated those Japanese who claimed Araya was not a 'prince'. Shōji, *Echiopia*, pp. 17–18, 25, 28.
- <sup>41</sup> Shanghai, April 7, 1934; Tagliano, February 2, 1934: MAE Ethiopia b24 f3; *Bourse Egyptienne*, January 24, 27, 1934; *Il Giornale d'Oriente*, January 25, 1934; Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, 37; Unno, 'Dainiji Italia-Ethiopia', p. 190.
- <sup>42</sup> Haile Selassie, *My Life*, p. 209.
- <sup>43</sup> Vinci, January 12, 1934; 'Una smentita ufficiale del Governo Etiopia': MAE Ethiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>44</sup> Shōji, *Echiopia*, pp. 14–15, quote, 15.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 15.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 24.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp. 24–5.
- <sup>49</sup> Grew, February 6, 1934: NARA 894.00/74; Southard, December 16, 1933: NARA 884.0011/1290; Grene, January 17, 1934: NARA 784.94/6; Auriti, January 21, 1934; Circular, February 16, 1934: MAE Ethiopia b24 f3; *OM&TNN*, January 21, 1934; *JT&M*, January 21, 1934; *NYT*, February 18, 1934; *JA*, February 4, 1934; Shōji, *Echiopia*, pp. 25–6; Yamada, *Masukaru no Hanayome*, pp. 137–41; Unno, 'Dainiji Italia-Ethiopia', p. 190.
- <sup>50</sup> 'Smooth Show', *Time* (January 21, 1935):29.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid.; Yamada, *Masukaru no Hanayome*, pp. 128–9.
- <sup>52</sup> *JT&M*, February 25, 1934; also see January 21, 1934 and February 23, 1934; *NYT*, February 18, 1934; Grew, February 6, 1934: NARA 894.00/74; Yamada, *Masukaru no Hanayome*, pp. 15–19.
- <sup>53</sup> *JT&M*, February 25, 1934.

- <sup>54</sup> *JA*, February 4, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3; *JT&M*, February 23, 25, 1934.
- <sup>55</sup> *JA*, February 4, 1934; Auriti, February 5, 1934; Vinci, February 23, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>56</sup> Grew, February 6, 1934: NARA 894.00/74; Auriti, February 24, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3; Yamada, Masukaru no Hanayome, pp. 165–66.
- <sup>57</sup> *JT&M*, February 25, 1934.
- <sup>58</sup> Grew, March 8, 1934: NARA 894.00/75; Neville, December 11, 1935: NARA 894.00/96.
- <sup>59</sup> Vinci, March 7, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>60</sup> Southard, March 15, 1934: NARA 884.0011/65; Southard, March 15, 1934: NARA 884.0011/1341.
- <sup>61</sup> Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, pp. 37–8, quote, 38.
- <sup>62</sup> *JT&M*, February 23, 1934; Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, p. 39. See also *OM&TNN*, March 16, 1934.
- <sup>63</sup> Auriti, March 20, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>64</sup> *WP*, April 8, 1934: NARA 884.0011/no number; To Ethiopia, April 17, 1934: NARA 884.0011/65a; To Ethiopia, September 17, 1934: NARA 784.94/11a; Japan, April 1, 1934; Stefani, April 3, 1934; Rome, April 6, 1934; Vinci, May 2, 1934; Frattini, April 14, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3; Shōji, *Echiopia*, p. 28; Yamada, *Masukaru no hanayome*, pp. 174–9; ‘The Last Partition of Africa’, *The Round Table* (June 1935):512; ‘Abyssinia: Impenetrable’, *Time* (April 9, 1934):24; *OM&TNN*, April 5, 1934.
- <sup>65</sup> It is unclear what Vinci meant as the ‘Celtic disease’. He could have meant Rosacea or an excess level of iron in the body. More likely, he was referring to Celiac disease, which can be caused by parasites. Symptoms include diarrhea, abdominal discomfort, weight loss, and anemia. On the other hand, Marco Rimanelli of St Leo University in Florida has pointed out to me that ‘Celtic’ was Italian slang for ‘French’; thus the ‘Celtic disease’ could have been the ‘French disease’, that is, syphilis.
- <sup>66</sup> Circular, April 19, 1934: MAE Ethiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>67</sup> Rome, April 6, 1934; Suvich, April 9, 1934; ‘La realtà sui rapporti fra il Giappone e l’Etiopia’: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>68</sup> Shōji, *Echiopia*, pp. 29–30.
- <sup>69</sup> Circular, April 19, 1934: MAE Ethiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>70</sup> Shōji, *Echiopia*, pp. 29–30.
- <sup>71</sup> *JT&M*, April 22, 1934.
- <sup>72</sup> Shōji, *Echiopia*, p. 36.
- <sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36–8, quotes 37–8.
- <sup>74</sup> *JT&M*, October 7, 1934; Grew, November 12, 1934: NARA 894.00/83; December 11, 1933: NARA 894.00/72.
- <sup>75</sup> Farago, *Abyssinia*, p. 128; Grew, November 12, 1934: NARA 894.00/83; Grene, January 17, 1934: NARA 784.94/6; *BDEA*, 28: no. 105; *Chicago Defender*, July 13, 1935; *NYT*, September 9, 1934; *OM&TNN*, December 18, 1934; Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, p. 39. For Kuroda’s recognition that the marriage proposal had failed, see Yamada, *Masukaru no Hanayome*, pp. 209–10.
- <sup>76</sup> Roman Procházka, *Abyssinia: The Powder Barrel* (London: British International News Agency, 1936), p. 60.
- <sup>77</sup> ‘Imperialism in Abyssinia’, *International Press Correspondence* (December 22, 1934):1722–23; Unno, ‘Dainiji Italia-Echiopia’, p. 190.
- <sup>78</sup> O. Tanin and E. Yohan, *When Japan Goes to War* (New York: International Publishers, 1936), p. 14.
- <sup>79</sup> *MDN*, February 14, 1935.
- <sup>80</sup> See Albert Edward Hindmarsh, *The Basis of Japanese Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936), p. 119 n4. General Eric Virgin dismisses such claims. See his *The Abyssinia I Knew*, (London: Macmillan, 1936), pp. 135–6.
- <sup>81</sup> Engert, August 24, 1935: NARA 784.94/23.
- <sup>82</sup> *OM&TNN*, July 26, 1935; Yamada, *Masukaru no Hanayome*, pp. 214–15.
- <sup>83</sup> *OM&TNN*, February 4, 1936.
- <sup>84</sup> Interview with Amde Araya and Araya Abeba.
- <sup>85</sup> Taura, ‘Nihon-Echiopia kankei’, p. 154.
- <sup>86</sup> Southard, June 26, 1934: NARA 784.94/9; Engert, August 24, 1935: NARA 784.94/23; Circular, June 28, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3; Taura, ‘Nihon-Echiopia kankei’, pp. 154–5; Faërber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 17.
- <sup>87</sup> Taura, ‘Nihon-Echiopia kankei’, pp. 154–5.
- <sup>88</sup> Southard, July 19, 1934: NARA 784.94/11; Southard, July 19, 1934: NARA 884.113/1395; Vinci, October 10, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3; Faërber-Ishihara, ‘Heruy’, p. 144; Faërber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, pp. 18–19; Taura, ‘Nihon-Echiopia kankei’, p. 155; *Wall Street Journal*, June 13, 1934. Ford’s sales to Ethiopia upset Italians, who feared the military uses of trucks. *DDI*, 8th, 1: no. 82, 98, 124.
- <sup>89</sup> Vinci, August 19, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.

- <sup>90</sup> 'Africa Beware!': GSK E424 1-3-1; Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, pp. 17-18.
- <sup>91</sup> Taura, 'Nihon-Echiopia kankei', pp. 155-6.
- <sup>92</sup> Ibid., 156; George, March 22, 1935: NARA 784.94/17; Grew, July 12, 1935: NARA 784.94/19; Long, March 22, 1935: NARA 765.84/249. See also *JT&M*, June 26, 1935.
- <sup>93</sup> Taura, 'Nihon-Echiopia kankei', pp. 156-7.
- <sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 157.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>96</sup> Ibid., pp. 157-8; Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 21; Taura, 'Nihon-Echiopia kankei', p. 158.
- <sup>97</sup> Auriti, November 23, 1934: MAE Etiopia-FG b62 f3; see also Auriti, October 3, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>98</sup> Taura, 'Nihon-Echiopia kankei', pp. 158-9; Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, pp. 19, 21-2; Long, July 27, 1934: NARA 701.9421/2; Long, July 27, 1934: NARA 762.94/45; *NYT*, Oct 21, 1934.
- <sup>99</sup> *NYT*, September 10, 1934; *WP*, September 10, 1934; *OM&TNN*, December 18, 1934; To Ethiopia, September 17, 1934: NARA 784.94/11a; Auriti, September 29, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3; 'Foreign Political Review of the Week', *International Press Correspondence* 14 (September 28, 1934):1337-8.
- <sup>100</sup> *MDN*, September 9, 1934.
- <sup>101</sup> *OM&TNN*, December 22, 1934.
- <sup>102</sup> Fish, December 30, 1934: NARA 784.00/3.
- <sup>103</sup> *JT&M*, May 2, 1934; October 3, 23, 28, 1934; November 11, 1934; *The Times*, November 28, 1934; *OM&TNN*, November 13, 1934.
- <sup>104</sup> *JT&M*, October 7, 1934; *Il Giornale d'Italia*, October 4, 1934; Stefani, Oct, 5, 1934; Suvich, October 5, 1934; Guarnaschelli, October 11, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>105</sup> In NARA see Southard, October 22, 1934: 784.94/13; Southard September 20, 1934: 884.20/22; George, November 28, 1934: 765.84/94; George, November 28, 1934: 884.24/47; and Moffat, January 16, 1935: 560.Z1/8. See also *NYT*, December 27, 1934.
- <sup>106</sup> Suvich, November 28, 1934: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>107</sup> *NYT*, December 2, 1934. See Mario dei Gaslini, 'Il Giappone nell'economia Etiopica', in Federazione Provinciale Fascista Milanese, *Corso di Preparazione politica per i giovani* (Milan: Tipografia del 'Popolo d'Italia', 1935), pp. 99-107.
- <sup>108</sup> Prouty and Rosenfeld (eds), *Historical Dictionary*, pp. 318-19. In NARA 765.84 see: George, December 6, 1934: /64; December 6, 1934: /95; December 7, 1934: /65; December 12, 1934: /71; December 16, 1934: /76; Kirk, December 7, 1934: /66; December 8, 1934: /67; December 9, 1934: /68; December 12, 1934: /69; December 14, 1934: /89; December 15, 1934: /75; December 17, 1934: /78; Murray, December 7, 1934: /72; December 10, 1934: /166; Military Attaché, December 10, 1934: /135; December 10, 1934: /136; December 11, 1934: /134; December 12, 1934: /133; Farrell, December 12, 1934: /70; December 17, 1934: /104; To War Department, December 13, 1934: /69; December 15, 1934: /71; Alling, December 14, 1934: /157; Gilbert, December 15, 1934: /73; and December 18, 1934: /82. Also see Moscow, December 13, 1934: MAE URSS b15 f2 and *JT&M*, June 13, 1934.
- <sup>109</sup> di Giura, December 11, 1934: MAE Etiopia-FG b62 f3.
- <sup>110</sup> Sugimura, December 24, 1934: GSK A461 ET/1-2; Circular, January 17, 1935: Etiopia - FG b62 f3; Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, pp. 19, 24; Valdo Ferretti, *Il Giappone e la politica estera italiana, 1935-41* (Rome: Giuffrè, 1983), p. 4; Agbi, 'Japanese', p. 132; Sunday Olu Agbi, *Japanese Relations with Africa* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press, 1992), p. 52.
- <sup>111</sup> Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, 39; Taura, 'Nihon-Echiopia', pp. 158-61; Bradshaw, 'Japan', p. 330; *OM&TNN*, July 20, 1935; *NYT*, December 27, 1934.

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# 8

## *The Sugimura Affair*

July 1935

The eventual rapprochement between Italy and Japan, marked first by the Anti-Comintern Pact of 1936 and ultimately by a common war against the Allies between 1941 and 1945, began with the Sugimura Affair in July 1935.<sup>1</sup>

### *Italo-Japanese tension continues to build*

EARLY 1935

In the first half of 1935, the world's newspapers published many excited rumors about Japanese intrigues in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa and Tokyo, by contrast, consistently stressed the limited nature of their relations. For example, Ethiopia's consul in Egypt told the press that several Japanese had negotiated to start businesses in Ethiopia but had failed. He insisted that Ethiopia was not favoring Japan at the expense of any other country. In fact, Japanese economic interests in Ethiopia were 'nil', and their colony consisted only of 'three individuals: one dealer in bric-a-brac, one clerk, and one porter'.<sup>2</sup>

While diplomatic representatives of many nations were insistently reporting to their respective ministries the limited nature of Japanese inroads in Ethiopia, many governments, especially the Italian and Soviet, rejected this. It would be easy to dismiss their bloviating as mere Machiavellian duplicity designed to maneuver others into either an anti-Ethiopian or an anti-Japanese front. Easy, but only half true. Documents, especially Italian foreign ministry documents, also suggest the real – even if paranoid – fear that the rumors represented reality.

In early January 1935, the French government reported that as many as a thousand Japanese families a month were immigrating to Ethiopia to settle land concessions of one million square kilometers. Despite disorder and difficult communications, they had settled in the provinces of Shoa, Arusi, Ara, Adal, and Wollo, as well as a notable settlement at Sidani, where they supposedly had under-

taken considerable cultivation, road building, and irrigation work. The French further reported that the Japanese were helping reorganize Ethiopia's army.<sup>3</sup>

Sugimura, trying to dispel such nonsense, gave an interview to the *La Tribuna* of Rome on January 22. He emphatically denied that the Japanese army had sent instructors to Ethiopia. On Japan's economic penetration of Ethiopia, Sugimura explained that 'certain middlemen – mostly Jewish' – in Kobe had bought Japanese goods, which they were exporting to Ethiopia. He also rejected rumors of a projected marriage between a Japanese princess and an Ethiopian prince. The ambassador reassuringly added that Italy could pursue its interests in Asia without fear of Japanese opposition. There was a vast Chinese market to exploit, provided China enjoyed peace and tranquility. Sugimura added that Manchukuo now had a stable government and currency and therefore the question of Italy's recognition of Japan's client state was unimportant. He averred that Japan and Italy might well come to a mutually profitable, reciprocal trade agreement, specifically suggesting that Japan could import Italian wine. Finally, after expressing admiration for the Duce and Italian institutions, Sugimura said he favored student and faculty exchanges between his country and Italy.<sup>4</sup>

Amid these increasing tensions, sometimes the Italians and Ethiopians showed signs of wanting peace. While Mussolini assured Afewerq that he wanted an amicable solution of Italy's problems with Ethiopia, Ethiopia swore peaceful intentions toward Italy. Tekle Hawaryat, however, acknowledged that false rumors of cheap Japanese goods, including war materials, pushing their way into Africa as they had into Europe and the Americas disturbed Europeans. In truth, there were fewer than a dozen Japanese in the whole country, Ethiopia was not superseding Belgian military instructors with a Japanese military mission, and no Japanese had any political influence.<sup>5</sup>

Vinci from Addis Ababa supported the demurrals of Japan and Ethiopia. He again rejected assertions that Japanese technicians were in Ethiopia or that a Japanese military mission would replace the Belgian one. Vinci did allow, however, that a Japanese naval delegation might come to negotiate for supplying Ethiopia with airplanes. When one of America's representatives in Addis Ababa told the Italian minister he had seen no evidence of Japanese penetration, he also asked why this concerned him. Vinci replied that he was constantly receiving inquiries from Rome based on press reports. More denials in March, however, did little to quell the international excitement.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, Italian fears had some foundation. In mid-February, Italians worried about the interest Japan's military was taking in Ethiopia and Italy's military buildup. And when Sugimura asserted that the British, French, and Italians had exaggerated the pro-Japanese atmosphere in Ethiopia, his statements upset Japan's Pan-Asian nationalists, who were hostile to Rome, and its policies in China, and sympathetic to Ethiopian resistance against white aggression. Wishing to control the vast potential sales to Ethiopia's millions, these Japanese asserted that Italians feared Japan's salesmen in Ethiopia unloading their 'cheap gimcracks which so fascinate semi-civilized populations'.<sup>7</sup>



## SIGNS OF ITALO-JAPANESE CO-OPERATION

All between Japan and Italy was not sour. Several minor but symbolically important matters pointed to the possibility that Italy and Japan could co-operate, despite tensions over Ethiopia and China.

Both Rome and Tokyo wanted to host the Twelfth Olympiad of 1940. Before leaving for Oslo, Norway, on February 19, 1935 to attend the meeting of the International Olympic Committee, Ambassador Sugimura assured the press in Rome that Japan would not help Ethiopia in the event of hostilities with Italy. Three days later, Italy said it would waive its claim to hold the 1940 Olympics at Rome in favor of Tokyo on condition that the 1944 games take place in Rome. Despite diplomatic wavering over the coming months, the Italians did with reasonable grace give way to the Japanese on this decision.<sup>8</sup>

The Japanese and Italians also co-operated in long-distance radio transmissions. Exchanging musical broadcasts on February 24, La Scala Grand Opera Company broadcast from Milan a comedy by Ruggero Leoncavallo, *Pagliacci*, and the Japan Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra reciprocated with a selection from Yamada Kosaku's grand opera *Ayame*. Japan's papers favorably noted other musical connections, for example, commenting on a Japanese singer, married to an Italian, who had sung in Italy for thirteen years.<sup>9</sup>

There was more. The Italians were actively seeking Japanese tourists, and Mussolini wished to further friendly relations through exchanges of professors and students. In early July 1935, newspapers announced that a law professor from Tokyo Imperial University and an authority on commercial law was to be a visiting professor at the University of Rome. The proposal for the exchange of scholars had come in the name of the Central Asia-Far Eastern Society, organized in Rome with the patronage of Italy's leaders. Japan also opened direct phone communications with Rome.<sup>10</sup>

There were other expressions of good will. *La Stampa* sent a correspondent, Dr L.M. Rea, to Japan. He was to stay there for about two months and then proceed to Manchukuo and China. Speaking to the Pan-Pacific Club of Tokyo, he noted that Italy and Japan were young nations, both having relatively recently achieved independence and having large young populations. Both were seeking to increase their population size and were marching along the same political road. Calling it an 'eye-opener' for those more sympathetic toward China than to Japan, the Japanese also praised a book by Francesco Tomaselli, who had been a Far Eastern correspondent. From March 1934, he had spent four months touring through the Japanese islands and the remote corners of Manchukuo.<sup>11</sup>

## MORE TENSION

Most of the world, however, primarily saw tension between Rome and Tokyo. Adding fuel to Europe's fears, in March, Sugimura publicly announced that Japan would open a legation at Addis Ababa.<sup>12</sup>

In early March Joseph Grew disparagingly noted that European newspapers were still writing that Ethiopia wanted to promote mixed marriages between

Japanese and Ethiopians and that the Japanese wanted to penetrate Ethiopia. Hirota had assured Grew that beyond their treaty of commerce, no other treaties bound Ethiopia and Japan, and he described rumors of preferential rights, cotton cultivation, land concessions, opium cultivation, and secret negotiations as myths. There were only a few Japanese tradesmen in Ethiopia, plus an intermediary for the Kuroda marriage proposal, 'this little sentimental but fruitless romance'. The idea that anyone would promote mixed marriages was 'utter rubbish'. Hirota told Grew that since arriving in Rome in October, Sugimura had been explaining Tokyo's views. He was pointing out 'the inanity of the legends about Ethiopia' Europe's press was absurdly propagating. Hirota further assured Grew that Mussolini knew how matters stood.<sup>13</sup>

Ethiopia was offering similar assurances to the Americans. On March 6, Heruy told them that Ethiopia had not granted any concessions, nor had any Japanese applied for one. To foil the influence of Ethiopia's three neighboring colonies, Hayle Sellase had encouraged various powers to set up legations and consulates in Ethiopia. Likewise, he had urged the Japanese to send an official representative, but Tokyo had not yet considered it worthwhile to do so. While 'a wealthy Japanese merchant, acting in an honorary capacity' represented Ethiopia in Japan, there was no Japanese representative in Ethiopia – despite several official missions and talk of setting up a Japanese legation. Blaming Rome for spreading falsehoods, Heruy emphatically rejected rumors in the foreign press of Japanese penetration and colonization in Ethiopia.<sup>14</sup>

In late April, the Rengo news agency acknowledged that Hayle Sellase was interested in Japanese help because it was far away and posed no threat. The Japanese news agency, however, rejected claims in the Soviet and Italian press that Ethiopia was granting special facilities to Japanese imports. The agency debunked all the familiar canards such as the marriage plans and plantations to cultivate cotton and opium poppies. Where price was the predominant consideration, European goods could not compete on equal terms, and Japan had acquired a predominant share of Ethiopia's imports. The total volume of trade, however, was small, and transportation in and out of Ethiopia was 'scanty' and 'expensive'. Besides, Manchuria was closer. Rengo wrote that the Soviet Union had joined Italy in denouncing Japan's alleged designs on Ethiopia.<sup>15</sup>

Rome's representatives in Tokyo concurred, insisting that Japan was not funneling any military help to Ethiopia, although on May 15 Auriti visited the foreign ministry to protest an article written by Shoji, which sympathized with Ethiopia. By late April, Shoji had left Bombay on his way to Djibouti and thence to Addis Ababa.<sup>16</sup>

In Addis Ababa on May 11, Emperor Hayle Sellase spoke with a correspondent from the *Osaka Asahi* newspaper. He said that Ethiopia would try to keep the peace. Facing Italy's military buildup, however, 'The Ethiopian nation is ready to rise and fight to the last man,' said the 'descendant of King Solomon'. Ethiopia would not bow to 'unjust threats'. The Emperor insisted that Ethiopia had kept a 'disadvantageous peace' in adhering to its 1928 treaty with Italy and the League of Nations Covenant. Italy, however, was continuing its 'malevolent propaganda' and was massing its troops on the border despite promising to await arbitration. The Emperor doubted that Italy would keep the peace.<sup>17</sup>

The Emperor was not wrong. Mussolini provocatively blamed the tension on Ethiopia's trade discrimination and obstruction of normal business relations. He charged that Ethiopia's concessions granted to foreign powers endangered Europe, when those concessions favored an 'Oriental power', that is, Japan. 'We have tried conciliation and a policy of patience in East Africa. Now we work for peace and security in our colonies by impressing our African neighbors that we are in Africa to stay with all our forces and to play our full part in its inevitable economic development.'<sup>18</sup>

In May, Japan's foreign ministry received a military report on Italy's brewing conflict with Ethiopia. Despite Ethiopia's wish to resolve border issues through League action, Italy would not hesitate to use force, and the report predicted that Italy and Ethiopia would not be able to resolve matters peacefully. The military's report added that Italy's efforts to assume a friendly attitude toward Addis Ababa would fail because Ethiopia's public opinion was strongly anti-Italian. Italy, however, would not immediately start a large-scale military action, which would invite British and French intervention, but would pull strings according to well-prepared plans. To protect its interests in Ethiopia, Britain with France would try to mediate the conflict, and Italy would have to consider seriously mediation because military action without British approval would cause problems. Japanese goods were damaging Italy's economic advance into Ethiopia, and Ethiopian sentiments favoring Japan were antagonizing Italians against Japan. Italian successes in Ethiopia would thwart Japanese advances; Japan, therefore, needed to move quickly. Therefore, Japan needed to move quickly. Further, because the Djibouti-Addis Ababa Railroad provided the only modern transportation to Ethiopia, Japanese goods would suffer discrimination if Italy assumed even partial control over the railroad. Finally, Ethiopian intellectuals, worrying about the power of white peoples, had a strong sense of nationalism and wished that Japan should become Ethiopia's friendly teacher. The report bluntly concluded that if Japan did not intervene, Italy would destroy the 3000-year-old black empire.<sup>19</sup>

Confirming Sugimura's denials, Italy's Royal Consul in Kobe in late May found no evidence that Japan was shipping arms to Ethiopia.<sup>20</sup> Italy's intelligence service determined that Ethiopia's arms suppliers were European, with Spain, Sweden, Germany, and Belgium the lead culprits. Italy, in fact, was already attacking Germany as a supplier of weapons to Ethiopia. Such paranoia over weapons and military advisers for Ethiopia excited Italy's diplomacy. Although Mussolini had admitted that Japan had no military and political ambitions in Ethiopia, paranoia over weapons, military advisers, and race issues continued to excite Italy's diplomacy.<sup>21</sup>

In this atmosphere, Japanese nationalists continued to try to move Tokyo's policy. About sixty Black Dragon nationalists held a meeting in Tokyo on June 4. Having decided that Italy was sending troops to Africa and was tenaciously taking a hard diplomatic line to thwart Japan's economic advance, they talked about sending a group to Ethiopia. The membership saw the conflict between Italy and Ethiopia as pitting white and colored peoples against each other, and Japan had to support Ethiopia, which admired, praised, and respected Japan. Their resolution encouraged the Ethiopians to show their traditional military

and diplomatic spirit, and it called on Italy to solve the Ethiopian problem according to international justice and world peace. The members visited Italy's embassy in Tokyo to report their resolution, and they also sent it to the British, American, German, and French ministers in Addis Ababa as well as to Heruy. The society also organized the Ethiopian Crisis Committee. Over the coming months, the Black Dragons sponsored public lectures about Ethiopia and sent donations to Ethiopia.<sup>22</sup>

In the third week of June, Auriti spoke with foreign ministry officials about rumors of a consignment of ammunition and machine guns ready to leave Japan for Ethiopia under false declarations and rumors that Japan was sending military instructors. Vice Foreign Minister Shigemitsu replied that Japan had the right to send help, just as Italy was supporting China. Auriti retorted that he was not speaking about law but to the assurances to him from the foreign minister and to the declarations to Italy's military attaché by the minister of war. According to Auriti's account, his statement took the vice minister aback, and he put aside legalities and confirmed that Japan did not intend to send weapons or instructors – especially because Ethiopia could not pay for such help.<sup>23</sup>

As Japan's press printed anti-Fascist diatribes,<sup>24</sup> the *Japan Times* on July 3, explained that Japan's success in defying the world over China had inspired Italy, which wanted as complete control over Ethiopia as Japan was getting in China. It went on to predict, however, that Ethiopia would not be easy prey.<sup>25</sup> As if to dramatize this point, Haile Sellase and his Minister of War defiantly promised to resist Italian encroachments on Ethiopian territory and sovereignty.<sup>26</sup>

#### THE ROLE OF SOVIET RUSSIA

The Soviet press continued to highlight Italian upset with Japan, reporting that Italy's military action against Ethiopia was a demonstration aimed more at Japan than Rome because Japan was backing Ethiopia against Italy. The press also printed that Japan's ambassador in Rome had protested against Italy's mobilization of troops and had sharply asserted that Japan would oppose Ethiopia's occupation. The invasion of Japanese colonists settling land concessions and increased Japanese exports to Ethiopia had led Britain to worries about the future of its place in East Africa. Further, the Japanese in Ethiopia posed a strategic danger to British routes to India and Singapore. Reflecting the Kremlin's hopes, *Izvestia* wrote that British politicians believed that it would be easier for them to find a bilateral solution with Italians than with the Japanese. While noting that Italy was aggressively asserting its sovereignty over disputed border areas, the organ of the Soviet state devoted more space to describing Ethiopia's transgressions.<sup>27</sup>

Ambassador Bernardo Attolico's reports from Moscow sympathetically explained the contradictions the Rome Accords securing Italy's guardianship of Austria had imposed on the Kremlin's policy. Despite Moscow's claims that only it could be impartial in conflicts between the white race and others, he noted that for some time the Kremlin had been diffident toward the brewing Italo-Ethiopian conflict. According to their verbiage, ideology, and intense interest in the conflict, Attolico continued, the Soviets should have been enjoying the

struggle of a colonial people against a great power. But they were not.<sup>28</sup>

Moscow continued to promote Italy's petulance toward Germany and Japan and believed that Italy would work in harness with the USSR against Germany in the Austrian and Danubian regions and against Japan in East Asia and North-east Africa. Although acrimonious articles also sparked tensions, mutual recriminations in truth lay on the edge of Italo-Soviet relations until the second half of 1935. For example, in mid-May, when Mussolini complained about the hostility in the Soviet press toward Italo-Ethiopian incidents, Ambassador Boris Shtein denied any official antagonism: 'It is something which does not regard Russia,' he said.<sup>29</sup> Then, in May, Litvinov, as President of the Eighty-Sixth Session of the League's Council and Assembly sessions, carefully avoided any statement condemning aggression committed by League members. He made it clear that the USSR preferred to keep Italy in the front against Germany rather than to protect the rights of small nations. In late June, Shtein reassured Suvich that the USSR would not interfere in Italy's plans for East Africa; Moscow only wanted that Italy avoid war.<sup>30</sup>

Coming from a different perspective but arriving at similar conclusions, George Padmore in May noted that Litvinov was refusing to raise his voice in the League to help Ethiopia. The Commissar feared offending Laval and antagonizing Mussolini, said Padmore. He blamed Ethiopia's problems on its relations with Japan and racism by the white powers.<sup>31</sup>

Drawing favorable comment from Moscow, by the end of June Rome and Paris had signed a pact of general military co-operation over Austria, which allowed the French army to plan the withdrawal of seventeen divisions from south-east France and North Africa and reposition them above the Maginot Line. With improved Franco-Italian relations, the Kremlin had good reason in the first half of 1935 to hope that collective security could continue to work as it had in the summer of 1934. Then Italy had moved its troops to the Brenner Pass and forced Germany to back down from its planned takeover of Austria.<sup>32</sup>

Clearly, Rome –and others – had to understand that the Kremlin was prepared to side with Italy in the coming struggle with Ethiopia. Likewise, Tokyo assured Rome that it did not object to Italy's taking Ethiopia and would not join in any protest.<sup>33</sup>

#### THE UGAKI AFFAIR, JULY 1935

Japan was well along the same road as were the Soviets in dashing Ethiopian hopes, but sometimes Japanese officials clouded the issue by speaking out of turn. Most notably, General Ugaki Kazushige, Governor-General of Korea and a former minister of war, publicly implied the possibility of Japanese aid to Ethiopia in case of an Italo-Ethiopian war.<sup>34</sup>

The international press jumped on the story. For example, the *Chicago Defender* breathlessly declared that with 'the suddenness of a tropical thunderstorm news broke' that Japan would not allow 'Mussolini to rape and plunder Ethiopia'. The paper then passed on a series of rumors and declared that Ethiopia had long had a secret agreement with Japan. If war should break out, the paper expected that thousands of highly trained Japanese with modern

equipment would 'go tramping through African hinterlands to the aid of their darker brothers on the lofty plateaus of Ethiopia'.<sup>35</sup> The newspaper further claimed that Japan's navy had been conducting maneuvers in the Red Sea within easy reach of the port of Massawa. It predicted that within a week's notice, scores of 'swift relentless cruisers from the third largest navy in the world can dump tons of explosives under Mussolini's very nose in Africa'. Bitter toward the Italians because their protests had broken off the proposed marriage of Araya and Kuroda, Emperor Hirohito was working to stave off war. The *Chicago Defender* told its black readers that Italy and Japan were clashing for Ethiopia's raw materials and for commercial and population outlets. Thousands of Japanese cotton planters were already in Ethiopia, and put among a people friendly toward them, Japan's traders and planters had nearly ruined what little trade Italy had. Embittered, Mussolini had charged that the Japanese colonists were growing poppies to make opium, and that Japan had received almost unrestricted immigration privileges. The paper described Ethiopia, cut off from the sea, as the world's largest undeveloped market for manufactured articles.<sup>36</sup>

Flabbergasted at such outlandish rumors, the Japanese government denied Ugaki's statement, and the Governor-General himself declared it a lie. Tokyo unctuously blamed false rumors of excessive Japanese interference in Ethiopia on Italian and Soviet sources.<sup>37</sup>

Despite Ugaki's perturbations, by July, Japan's policy of watchful waiting began to clarify, although Japan's ambivalent press was only beginning to fall in line with official policy. On one hand, Japan's press charged that Italy would start 'an unjustifiable war against the weak',<sup>38</sup> and promised that Tokyo would protect its rights in Ethiopia against Italian obstructionism. On the other hand, press articles also sympathized with Italy's quest to solve its population problem and feared the world would misunderstand Italy, just as it misunderstood Japan's experience with the Manchurian Incident.<sup>39</sup>

On July 10, repeating themes often raised over the last several months, the 'famed'<sup>40</sup> Amau flatly denied that Emperor Hirohito was considering any move to support his Imperial Brother in Ethiopia. His government had no diplomatic contacts in Ethiopia or special agreements, and Ethiopia had not requested its support. Amau rejected rumors that Japan was shipping munitions to Ethiopia, and he strongly denied that Japan had persuaded Ethiopia to buy Japanese products in preference to Italian: 'We are making headway in the Abyssinian market only because our merchants are out-competing others by selling goods that are cheaper and better in quality.'<sup>41</sup> Amau blamed exaggerated notions of Japanese interests in Ethiopia on the 1933 report in the Soviet press on the Nikkei-sha deal. Kitagawa had, on returning home, failed to interest financiers and had abandoned the project, Amau explained. If war, increasingly unavoidable, broke out, Japan would protect its commercial interests.<sup>42</sup> *Il Giornale d'Italia* took great solace in Amau's statement.<sup>43</sup>

On July 12 while visiting Montreal, Viscount Mushanokoji Kintomo, who had negotiated Japan's treaty with Ethiopia in 1927, repeated that his country had only a commercial interest in Ethiopia. Comparing Italy's confrontation with Ethiopia to Japan's operations in Manchuria, he said the world should feel each 'was a domestic matter' vitally important 'only to the two nations concerned'.<sup>44</sup>

The next day, *Il Giornale d'Italia*'s editorial writer, Virginio Gayda, spoke long-distance, 'via the ether', with Japan's press. He declared Italy's wish to settle the Ethiopian issue. In reply, Japan's press offered a 'friendly' warning to Italy. While Il Duce was 'right and justified' in challenging Ethiopia, he should be cautious, because military operations in Ethiopia would be a 'difficult mental and physical hazard' for whites, who had 'grown used to the comforts of civilization'.<sup>45</sup>

The Black Dragons sponsored a roundtable on July 16, and the attending patriots decided to telegraph Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Heruy that they would send medical equipment and medicine. A police report noted that the society had an irregular sea route to East Africa, paid by the Osaka Mercantile Steamship Company.<sup>46</sup> Such groups and activities made Sugimura's job in Rome more difficult than it should have been.

Even worse for Sugimura, the Italo-Ethiopian conflict was breaking into international headlines just when tensions between the Control Faction and the Imperial Way Faction in the Japanese army were boiling over. The pragmatists of the Control Faction advocated a cautious foreign policy and wary concern for the Great Powers. The ultra-nationalists of the Imperial Way Faction, on the other hand, called for a more assertive, independent, and Pan-Asiatic foreign policy. For the pragmatists, the question was not whether to join the colonialists or the colonized but with which colonial powers Japan should align. The patriots, for their part, eagerly cultivated relations with non-European powers and wished to join with the oppressed masses to overcome the white man's domination.<sup>47</sup>

These philosophical differences sometimes left Japanese policy seemingly adrift. And in mid-July the Italians received news that Tokyo still did not know when it would set up its long-planned-for legation in Addis Ababa.<sup>48</sup>

### *The Sugimura Affair, July 1935*

#### SUGIMURA'S ASSURANCES, JULY 16, 1935

Amid this ambivalence emanating from Tokyo, and in the face of increasing Italian intransigence, Sugimura, tried to quell the storm. The 'hefty' ambassador, towering above Mussolini 'like a giant',<sup>49</sup> visited Il Duce at 5:45 p.m. on Tuesday, July 16. He asserted that Japan, despite its commercial interests, had no political stake in Ethiopia and would preserve its neutrality in Italy's looming war. The grateful Italian press prominently published a communiqué on the meeting: the Japanese ambassador had 'declared officially on instructions' that Japan had 'no intention of interfering in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict' and had 'no political interest in Ethiopia'.<sup>50</sup>

Claiming to be mystified by the Italian communiqué, Japan's foreign ministry rejected Sugimura's statement that Japan lacked political interest in Ethiopia and would not interfere under any circumstances. Japan was merely watching developments as a disinterested outsider and wanted to see the dispute resolved without the intrigues of other states wanting to involve Japan – a pointed reference to Italy and Soviet Russia. This watchful waiting, the ministry insisted,

resembled the attitude of 'vigilant attention' Italy had assumed on the Manchurian question.<sup>51</sup>

Sugimura explained to a Japanese correspondent on July 17 that Tokyo had authorized him to assure Il Duce that Japan did not intend to intervene in the Italo-Ethiopia dispute with troops or warships. Approving Italy's official statement, he explained, 'I saw Il Duce to clear up the misunderstanding that prevails about Japan's intentions regarding the Italo-Abyssinian dispute and for no other purpose.'<sup>52</sup>

Drawing on the ambassador's comments, Rengo reported that Italians were seeing three obstacles to securing a free hand in Ethiopia: Japan's interests in East Africa; the League of Nations; and the 1906 Tripartite Agreement with France and Great Britain. Sugimura's assurances to Mussolini had removed the first. Rengo reminded its readers that Rome had been charging that Haile Sellase had granted economic concessions to Japan and that Tokyo was encouraging Ethiopian resistance. Drawing parallels between Japan's action in East Asia and Italy's in Ethiopia, Italy's press had been arguing that neither the League nor Great Britain had responded to Japan's advance on the Asian continent. This parallel had created genuine sympathy between Japan and Italy, culminating in Sugimura's official assurances. The foreign ministry, however, was denying having told Sugimura to assure Rome that Japan would not intervene in the Ethiopian controversy.<sup>53</sup>

#### SUGIMURA'S 'SLIP OF THE TONGUE'

Although what Sugimura had said was not much different from what foreign ministry spokesmen had long been saying, a schizophrenic storm soon engulfed Japan. The Italians called it a 'strange, sudden, artificial' campaign'.<sup>54</sup> Some Japanese suggested that the Italians had misconstrued Sugimura's statement, while others sympathetically compared Italy's position with Japan's during the Manchurian affair. Most, however, accused the ambassador of having exceeded his instructions by telling Mussolini that Japan held no political interest in Ethiopia and would not interfere. These Japanese sympathized with an Ethiopia attacked by an aggressive bully and believed Sugimura had blundered in suggesting Japan approved of Ethiopia's subjugation to white imperialism.<sup>55</sup>

Reflecting this latter opinion, reactionary leader Toyama Mitsuru, in the name of the newly formed Ethiopian Problems Society, telegraphed Heruy, exhorting him to defend his country.<sup>56</sup>

Denying he told Sugimura to do what he had done,<sup>57</sup> on July 18, an upset Hirota asked his ambassador why he had spoken so clearly. Sugimura again said that he had agreed to the Italian communiqué. While it was natural to feel sympathy for Ethiopia, Mussolini was using the Yellow Peril to justify his actions. Therefore, Sugimura said, he had assured him that Japanese policy had no military or political ambitions directed toward Ethiopia – Japan wanted to expand its power merely through commerce and emigration in the Pacific and East Asia.<sup>58</sup>

Not wishing to tie Japan's hands in the future, Amau first tried sitting on the fence. He noted that his government was watching developments in Ethiopia and wished to know what signatories of the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact and the



League were doing to avert war. Japan, he added, would consider any representations intended to promote peace, but Tokyo had not received any from Italy, Ethiopia, or Britain. He insisted that the foreign ministry had not sent Sugimura special instructions; the ambassador was only to dispel suspicions about Japan's political aims in East Africa. Amau expressed confidence that Sugimura had not exceeded his instructions and that Tokyo would not recall or reprimand him.<sup>59</sup>

On July 18, *Il Giornale d'Italia* affirmed the Italian version of Sugimura's statement, and other Italian papers continued to comment favorably on it, gratified that Sugimura had spoken so plainly in this test of foreign sentiment toward Italy. In Rome, many were speculating about Sugimura's motivations and some suggested that Italy would spurn its friendship with China and would compensate Japan for its declaration of neutrality. Others argued that Sugimura had engineered the declaration to dispel problems caused by rumors of Japanese inroads in Ethiopia, and he wanted Il Duce to accept him personally.<sup>60</sup>

Italy's ambassador to Tokyo, Giacinto Auriti, called on Hirota on the afternoon of July 19 to clarify Japan's 'real' designs given Tokyo's reaction to Sugimura's statement. The foreign minister confirmed that Japan's interest in Ethiopia was mainly commercial and not political. The previous October, Hirota allowed he had told Sugimura to dispel rumors that Japan wanted to sell arms and ammunition to Ethiopia and that Japan was politically active in East Africa, even though Japan was contemplating setting up a legation in Addis Ababa to strengthen its commercial ties with Ethiopia. Yet, Hirota denied he had told Sugimura 'to make the statement ascribed to him'. Adding that he did not understand whether there would be peace or war between Italy and Ethiopia, Hirota's provisional tone differed from Sugimura's. Japan was going to watch developments and would reserve the right to comment in future. Interested in world peace and increased trade with Ethiopia, and as a friend to both Ethiopia and Italy, Japan wished to see their problems resolved peacefully and quickly.<sup>61</sup> Hirota's comments to Auriti conflicted with Sugimura's and marked 'the greatest about-face in the history of diplomacy',<sup>62</sup> charged a shocked and indignant Rome.

Auriti complained to Rome about the 'unjustified noise' Japan's press and nationalists were making over Sugimura's declaration. He did not expect public opinion to change because of general sympathy for 'peoples of color fighting against whites'. To this, Auriti added that Japanese liberals – including many high foreign ministry officials – were Anglophiles and anti-fascist, which meant they opposed Italy as well as their own military. Auriti editorialized that the greatest sympathy for Italy in Japan was among the opponents of the liberals, that is, among the anti-British and pro-fascist military. And while Italy's military attaché was apprising Japanese military men of the true state of the controversy with Ethiopia, these military figures remained skeptical toward Italy because of its actions in China. Auriti hypothesized that in their meeting Hirota had not known exactly what to say. Sugimura's declaration had annoyed him because his ambassador had said publicly what he – for internal reasons – wished to be kept discreet.<sup>63</sup>

Answering the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi*'s radiophone call to Rome on July 19, Sugimura explained he had wanted to speak to Mussolini on other matters on

July 16 but the conversation had turned to Ethiopia. Noting Il Duce's intransigence, he had tried to correct misunderstandings about General Ugaki's declaration and Japan's plans to help Ethiopia. Sugimura said he had explained that Japan, friendly with both Italy and Ethiopia, would send neither sea nor land forces in case of war. He had assured Mussolini that Japan had not yet decided on its attitude, pending clarification of the Italo-Ethiopian crisis. Tokyo was watching developments because Japan had commercial and other interests in Ethiopia. Sugimura insisted that he had conformed to his instructions before his departure from Japan. 'I have repeated more than once this same statement here in Rome in order to make the Japanese stand clear,' he said.<sup>64</sup> The interview then turned to the old news of the marriage proposal. Asked if Italy had interfered in the proposal, Sugimura assured the newspaper that Italian authorities had not taken the matter seriously. The *Nichi Nichi* then asked if he thought Italy would concede the 1940 Olympic Games to win Japan's good will. Interestingly, Sugimura denied that the Italians had issued an official communiqué.<sup>65</sup>

Amau and Luigi Mariani, the embassy counselor, met on the evening of the nineteenth and again the next morning. To Mariani's complaints about Japanese press coverage, Amau turned the tables and insisted that Italy's newspaper had attacked Ethiopia for welcoming Japanese goods and obstructing the entry of Italian products. Amau asserted, as he had many times before, that the influx of Japanese goods came from their good quality and low cost. Charging that Italy's press had estranged the Japanese people, he added that a July 13 report from Rome had informally declared that although Japan had occupied Chinese territory, the Kellogg-Briand Pact was still in place to oppose Japan in China. He asked whether officials had made those statements; if not, given Italy's strict censorship, did they still reflect government opinion? Amau hoped that Italy would curb articles that alienated the Japanese. Denying his government had anything to do with the news despatches, Mariani promised to tell Rome that such reports upset the Japanese and that he would see that Rome controlled such news items more strictly.<sup>66</sup>

Later that day, Auriti spoke with Vice Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru, who denied any knowledge of Japan's sending arms to Ethiopia. Ignoring Sugimura's advice, Shigemitsu pointedly added that Japan had a right to send weapons to Ethiopia just as Italy was sending weapons to China – a particularly sore point for the Japanese.<sup>67</sup>

Amid calls from younger officers for his immediate recall, the foreign ministry studied the conflicting reports from Rome on Sugimura's 'slip of the tongue'. If Rome had circulated an exaggerated report, the ministry wanted to protest. The Japanese did not understand why the Italians had allowed a news agency to state that the government had issued a communiqué. They feared some Italians were twisting facts to make it seem Japan had pledged non-interference in the Italo-Ethiopian dispute. Further, by declaring that the advance of Japanese goods had made it difficult for Italian products to compete in Ethiopia's market, Italy had justified its demands for lower freight rates on the railroad from Djibouti. Finally, by supplying arms, ammunition, and airplanes to the Chiang Hsueh-iang faction in China, Italy had opposed Japan.<sup>68</sup>

Responding to the foreign ministry's investigation, Sugimura said that he had

not exceeded his authority. This led the officials to believe that the ambassador had misinterpreted his instructions and to fear that his words might limit Japan's future freedom of action. If he had merely said that Japan for the moment would keep aloof from the Italo-Ethiopian dispute, the fuss would not have arisen. While there was no need for Japan to concern itself with it, nothing justified countenancing Italy's expansionist policy.<sup>69</sup>

Concerned at the uproar back home, on July 20 Sugimura sped telegrams to Tokyo. He again explained he had told Mussolini that Japan did not intend to interfere in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict and held no political interests in Ethiopia. He asked if his statements had conformed, in fact, to policy. He said he had tried to clarify Japan's attitude to rid Il Duce of suspicions that Japan was sending military supplies to Ethiopia. When Mussolini suggested publicizing his statements as a communiqué, he had agreed, hoping to end rumors rife in European newspapers that Japan would intervene.<sup>70</sup>

The hornet's nest stirred up by the Japanese press continued to buzz, and cabinet ministers questioned Hirota about his ambassador's remarks. After their meeting, Prime Minister Okada Keisuke met with Hirota for half an hour and lamented the bad impression created abroad and in the foreign ministry. Worried that the Diet would likely raise the matter, the prime minister asked Hirota to repair the damage.<sup>71</sup>

On Sunday, July 21, Japan's press editorialized extensively on the diplomatic kerfuffle. Japan had economic, not political interests in Ethiopia; even so, Japan could not remain indifferent. Trade with Ethiopia was growing rapidly, and Japan had become Ethiopia's chief supplier of sundry manufactured goods. Italy's military occupation and suzerainty over Ethiopia would damage Japan's economic interests, and Japan would have to respond. The gist of the editorials suggested that what Sugimura had told Mussolini did not commit Japan, although the ambassador warranted censure for having said enough to cause an international furor. At the same time, the press denounced Rome for having misrepresented Sugimura's words and, given Italy's press censorship, such statements had to have governmental approval. If Italy's government had distorted the ambassador's statement, Japan's press expected the foreign ministry to make a strong representation to Rome. These editorials also commented that Hirota's clarification to Auriti on July 19 and Sugimura's statement were similar in color and tone. Further, the Japanese hoped that Ethiopia and Italy would, for the sake of world peace and Japanese economic interests, settle their dispute peacefully.<sup>72</sup>

#### THE PRESS BATTLE HEATS UP – JULY 22 1935, & AFTER

Amid this growing contretemps, many of Osaka's philo-Ethiopian educational and business elite on July 22 met at the Hotel New Osaka. These included a member of the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Executive Director of the Osaka Exporting League to Africa, and Ethiopia's present and past honorary consuls – Yukawa Chuzaburo and Azumi Isaburo respectively. All these men had visited Ethiopia or had met Heruy when he had visited Japan in 1931. Their comments expressed the amalgam of personal ties, the sense of common destiny, and economic interests they believed tied Japan and Ethiopia together.<sup>73</sup>

As Japanese editorials on the twenty-second continued to rail against Sugimura's assurances to Mussolini, leading Italian newspapers ran front-page stories on Japanese perfidy, and provocateurs plastered the front pages of the most rabble-rousing newspapers on walls throughout Rome. Alarmed authorities placed uniformed policemen supplemented by Fascist Blackshirts around the Japanese embassy.<sup>74</sup>

Italians resented Japanese attitudes championing the colored races against whites, and newspapers vied with one another in their violent criticism of Hirota's declarations, and Rengo quoted many of these inspired comments at length. In truth, however, Japan's position represented an unexpected bonanza for Italy's propaganda in Europe. In its efforts to enlist the sympathy of 'civilized' nations to support its preparations for a war against Ethiopia, Italy was insisting that, by gaining control over Ethiopia, Italy would forestall Japan, which for many years had planned to turn Hayle Sellase's empire into a vast economic offensive against Europe. Italian also thought that the white race should present a united front against the colored races, which, especially in Asia, were seeking to undermine European civilization.<sup>75</sup>

Japan's press, for example, noted that *Il Messaggero* of July 22 had violently attacked Tokyo's disavowal of Sugimura. Given Japan's hostility and 'the Japanese mentality' of deception, the change in policy after Sugimura's declaration held no surprises. The paper condemned the fury expressed by large posters hung in Japan with police permission and designed to incite Japanese against Italy. Meanwhile, thousands of Japanese pamphlets appealed to racial solidarity, one reading, 'We, Japanese, who belong to a so-called colored race, cannot allow Italian troops to tread upon Ethiopian ground.' *Il Messaggero* explained that the Japanese hated the white race for commercial reasons, always important 'for those who are avaricious, covetous, and sordid like the Japanese'. The newspaper complained that Japanese sympathy for Ethiopia would increase their moral prestige and their political and commercial influence among Africans and Asians. It also raised the specter of the Yellow Peril and race war: 'With an impudence that may be termed temerity, Japan takes upon herself the task of protecting all colored peoples against the white race.' This threat was important to those who, as the Italians, had 'not yet lost all sense of dignity of the white race'. The paper starkly pointed out that 'one-fifth of the white race is scattered over the face of the earth and must defend four-fifths of the whites' territories against the pressure of the colored races, who are numerically eleven times as strong'. Whites had to view the Italo-Ethiopian conflict against this imposing, grandiose, and apocalyptic background. *Il Messaggero* pungently and sarcastically denounced as effrontery Japanese statements that they would follow with interest the attitudes of the various powers toward enforcing the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Japanese actions in Manchuria and China, and along Siberia's borders, had revealed that the pact had not constrained them.<sup>76</sup>

Other Italian newspapers chimed in, and Japan's press parsed every lurid word. *Il Piccolo* excoriated the possibility of Japanese intervention in the East Africa as 'queer and impudent'. Japan's attitude was proving Mussolini's wisdom and the need for 'Italy's speedy action for safeguarding European civilization'.<sup>77</sup> *La Stampa* feared that Japan's success in Ethiopia would endanger Europe's

colonial possessions, and Britain, already 'ingloriously retreating from the Pacific', would be the first to suffer. If Japan established itself in Africa, its empire would 'fatally' surround Britain's 'on all sides'.<sup>78</sup> *Il Giornale d'Italia* saw France supporting Italy's fears of Japanese economic expansion. Throughout the spring and summer of 1935, Italian newspapers had repeated and would repeat these themes many times.<sup>79</sup>

Trying to warn Europe of the dangers whites faced, Italian newspapers frequently brought up Japanese aggression in China. *Il Tevere* of Rome caterwauled, 'The recent history of Japan is nothing else but a series of nameless piracies, of untellable cruelties, of subtle cynicism, and contempt for so-called inferior races.' War against China was 'part of a plan of hegemonic conquest'. The newspaper laid out the foundation for the Italian press attack – the conflict between the statements by Sugimura and the foreign ministry – and provocatively added more. 'One has the sensation of finally learning why so many races have been created with only one in the image and likeness of the Creator and why, among other variously colored ones, one is of the color of betrayal.' *Il Tevere* said that the Japanese believed that 'scandalous European inertia' would allow them to expand even into Africa. 'But Africa is contiguous to Italy, the country of a white race and the champion of the race.' The paper rejoiced, 'The Japanese will for a long time to come sell their false pearls in the slums of all Europe before succeeding in crossing the road of Italy.'<sup>80</sup>

Amid this tempest, and to explain his statement that Japan had no political interests in Ethiopia, Sugimura told *La Tribuna*, 'All that I have said corresponds to the thought of the Imperial Government. Word of an Ambassador!' Tokyo could not accept unfair discrimination against its exports to Ethiopia: 'Japan demands fair play in the economic field'. Further, he said he had told Mussolini that Japan would set up a legation at Addis Ababa to regularize relations with Ethiopia and to control the 'adventurers' pursuing commercial relations between Japan and Ethiopia. He repeated that Japan had no political interests in Ethiopia nor cared what the League might do. He rejected Japan as a defender of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and he stressed that Japan was not among the signatories of the 1906 Tripartite Agreement on Ethiopia.<sup>81</sup>

Apparently taking Sugimura's assurances to heart, *La Tribuna* blamed the sad state of Italo-Japanese relations on British and American correspondents of Japanese news agencies. Rengo's representative in Rome, for example, was an Englishman who had intentionally reported that Sugimura had declared that Japan 'had no interest in Ethiopia' instead of 'no political interest', which naturally had aroused Japanese opinion.<sup>82</sup>

After his interview with *La Tribuna*, a sanguine Sugimura, not 'laboring under any distress of mind',<sup>83</sup> spent the day enjoying his favorite sport, swimming, at Castel Fusano, an aristocratic seaside resort near Rome.

By July 23, the press and diplomatic exchange over Ethiopia promised to stir up vigorous public controversy that spilled into the Japanese Diet, where the minority People's Party threatened to make problems. Their delegates asked foreign ministry officials to explain Sugimura's statements. A government spokesman, commenting on the Italian press barrage and responding to the problems in the Diet, said Tokyo was not planning any protest and had warned

its diplomats not to allow inflammatory press reports to lead them astray.<sup>84</sup> The next day, the ultra-patriotic Japan Production Party under Uchida Ryohei's leadership passed a resolution denouncing Italy's armed pressure on Ethiopia and calling on Mussolini to withdraw his troops. The group then presented its resolution to Japan's war, naval, and foreign ministries.<sup>85</sup>

Amid the hurly burly of battling newspapers, Japan's foreign ministry at last confirmed that the press reports on Italy's communiqué about the Sugimura–Mussolini colloquy were mostly correct. Sugimura had consented to it. Japan was watching developments and wanted to protect trade relations with Ethiopia.<sup>86</sup>

Ambivalence, however, always lurked, and on July 23, Emperor Hirohito sent a congratulatory telegram to Emperor Haile Selassie for his forty-fourth birthday. He also instructed Japanese representatives abroad to avoid intruding themselves into the Italo-Ethiopia dispute and to prevent anyone from using them.<sup>87</sup>

Despite the foreign ministry's confirmation, the *Osaka Asahi* on July 23 was still complaining. The paper charged that Italian newspapers had misrepresented Sugimura's statements to Il Duce and had tried to create the impression that Japan had abandoned the right to have a voice in the East African imbroglio. Italian papers were ignoring Hirota's statement to Auriti and were spreading propaganda purporting to show that for the past fifty years Japan had been hostile to the white race. 'There can be no doubt but that there is a plot to have the Italo-Abyssinian dispute develop into a conflict between the white and colored races.' The *Osaka Asahi* asserted that the attacks in the Italian press were part of the propaganda designed to drag Japan, Britain, and France into the African dispute and force the two Western powers to support Italian policy. Hence, the need for discretion among Japan's diplomatic representatives, a point on which the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi* agreed.<sup>88</sup>

Defying popular Japanese sentiment, the *Fukuoka Nichi Nichi* saw no reason to drag Japan into the Italo-Ethiopian dispute. Despite Japan's economic expansion in Ethiopia and interest in the racial question, it was essentially a question for Africa. It would be better for Japan to state its lack of political ambition in the dispute. While some Japanese admired Italian Fascism, others, 'admiring the valor of the negroes', opposed it. The newspaper dismissed this difference as 'a matter of individual opinion' and rejected the 'silly' efforts in the Foreign Ministry to accommodate 'the sentimental interests of individual citizens'. Japan had emphasized its position in the Far East and had rejected interference of other powers in the region. It warned that putting Japan's 'finger in the Ethiopian pie' would weaken its stand on the Far East. Sugimura's pragmatic statement to Mussolini was 'pertinent and justifiable'. His diplomatic clumsiness was but 'a trifle'.<sup>89</sup>

Japanese commentators now began repeating another theme by warning Italy of the difficulties it might face trying to conquer Ethiopia. Early during the Sugimura Affair, Shoji had reported that Ethiopia was making great strides in modernizing, especially in its military and communications. Ethiopia was importing munitions and was training its army and air force. He promised that an Italian conquest of Ethiopia would not be easy.<sup>90</sup> Then, the honorary principal

of the Osaka School of Foreign Languages suggested that Ethiopia posed difficulties for a modern army. Basing his observations on his extensive exploration of Ethiopia in 1927, he noted that the only target vulnerable to air attack was the palace in Addis Ababa. A guerrilla war was certain. Because of the terrain, mass campaigns were out of the question. Transport would prove difficult; in fact, 'civilization' would 'bow before nature'.<sup>91</sup>

Sumioka Tomoyoshi agreed. Speaking at his Tokyo home in front of a large autographed photograph of Haile Sellase, he suggested that both geography and economics would counsel Mussolini not to undertake a major and costly campaign in Ethiopia. Mussolini knew, he said, that the rainy season of July, August, and September followed by the dry season and epidemics, especially in the lowlands, would make fighting difficult. He stressed the transportation difficulties, chiefly for water, as well as the practical problems in deploying modern tanks and planes in a harsh environment with few roads. Even with its infantry, Italy faced handicaps. Physically, its soldiers could not clash on even terms with Ethiopians acclimated to their own country. 'Naked and bare-footed, the Abyssinians are a swarthy lot, each one of them confident enough to take on 30 opponents.' Nor was Italy financially prepared for conflict, and Italian policy was creating an anti-Italian bloc among France, Great Britain, Germany, and other European countries.<sup>92</sup>

As Italians complained about Japanese press attacks,<sup>93</sup> Virginio Gayda set the pace for the counterattack. In an editorial in the semi-official *Il Giornale d'Italia* on July 23, the Fascist polemicist declared that Japan was showing hostility in denying the ambassador's statement. Henceforth, Gayda reasoned, every government could doubt statements made by Japanese ambassadors and ministers. The question would always be, 'Do they speak for themselves or as their government's true representatives?'<sup>94</sup>

For Gayda, the Sugimura Affair had highlighted 'a pugnacious and audacious demonstration of the yellow races'. The world's 'civilized' nations, he wrote, understood Japan's methods of imperial conquest, 'violating in Korea and China the national and territorial rights of peoples claiming standards of civilization much older and more refined than its own'. Japan was also threatening Australia and Soviet Russia and was aggressively sending its military and commercial agents throughout the world. Europe would resist. Gayda thought Japan was foolish to think that Britain and the League could halt Italy's program in North-east Africa. Having abandoned the League to free its hands in China, Japan had invented its attitude toward Ethiopia 'to seed new confusion in Europe', to divert the world's attention from its policies and to divide the powers on action in the Pacific. Striking at the vital points of Anglo-Saxon power in Asia and India, it was 'moving toward the Red Sea and the African continent, which could become the base for a great economic offensive against Europe'. Fearing Japan's 'insidious influence' on Africa's blacks, Gayda saw a need for European solidarity in Africa, and he promised that Italy would 'proceed on her road with tranquility'.<sup>95</sup>

Accompanying Gayda's front-page editorial, *Il Giornale d'Italia* also noted that Sugimura had irritated Japan's press and some papers were demanding his recall. Placards, it said, adorned Japanese roads, demanding that 'Japanese people rise up to help Ethiopia', and leaflets proclaimed that 'Ethiopia, awaits help from

Japan ... we will defend the commercial rights of Japan.... Ethiopians and Japanese ... cannot remain indifferent to a matter of life and death of the colored races.' Taking the edge off a bit, these newspapers noted that observers were admitting Japan's business in Ethiopia was not enough to provoke intervention. While Japan could not openly reject all interest in Ethiopia's fate, these observers believed that Japan's support for Ethiopia would increase Japan's moral prestige and influence among black and Asian peoples. To increase its prestige, Japan wanted to co-operate with others in solving the dispute, but no government had approached it.<sup>96</sup>

Seeking allies in its anti-Japan campaign, Italy's press ridiculed British insistence on following League procedure toward the Ethiopian dispute and elaborated on a frequent theme that Great Britain did not understand its own best interests. Was it better, *Il Piccolo* asked rhetorically, to have astride the highway of her possessions 'a trusted ally' or 'the armed apostles of arrogant imperialism who hides in the folds of the humanitarian flag of "Asia for the [Asians]?"'<sup>97</sup>

*Il Messaggero* of July 23 bitterly charged Japan with 'hypocrisy, double-dealing and bad faith'. Tokyo, the newspaper wrote, had deceived its own ambassador to mislead Italians, and unscrupulous correspondents had joined the deception. Motivating the Japanese was 'the instinct, at the very source of nature: It is the millenary antagonism of races which have not forgotten centuries of slavery'. They had assimilated European technique, 'but nothing of the European culture'. An 'abyss' separated the Japanese from Europeans, and they saw an 'enemy' in every white man. Egoistical Japanese worshipped only themselves, believing themselves 'destined to rule the world'.<sup>98</sup>

Mussolini's own newspaper, *Il Popolo d'Italia*, repeated the charges leveled by Italy's other newspapers on July 23. It accused Japan's press of inciting Japanese 'to help the negroes of Abyssinia'. Japan, it wrote, wanted to evade the League of Nations and the Kellogg-Briand Pact to get a free hand for aggression and expansion. '[T]his sudden solidarity of Japan with Ethiopia uncovers the truth about ... [Japan's] highly ambitious aims of endless economic and political expansion.' Japan was seeking a base in the Red Sea for expansion against European interests. The newspaper denounced the country's 'mechanical simulation' of 'white' civilization. 'Japan, in its megalomaniacal imperialistic dream', wanted to become the 'paladin for the negroes of Abyssinia', and take the place of white colonialism. In the face of Japan's efforts to break the Italo-Franco-British front, *Il Popolo d'Italia* promised: 'Fascist Italy faces with virile serenity the new situation and proceeds on its way with decision and stubbornness in taking up the highest role of defending its prestige together with leadership of white civilization.' Japan's new attitude toward the dispute contradicted the assurances that Tokyo had no political interest in Ethiopia. The paper continued: 'If there is any country less chosen to mix in the Italo-Ethiopian affair in the name of justice and peace, it is precisely Japan. For some time, Japan has proved how it is possible to evade the League of Nations to have a free hand in a policy of expansion, aggression and overrunning civilized lands, such as China.'<sup>99</sup>

The international press prominently displayed Mussolini's interview with *L'Écho de Paris* on July 21. He said that Ethiopia had raised questions whether Europe 'could accomplish its world mission, colonization, which for centuries



has been Europe's source of greatness'. He rhetorically asked if the League of Nations was to be 'a tribunal before which Negroes [and] backward savage races of the world' could 'bring the great nations, which have revolutionized and transformed humanity?' Was the League a parliament before which Europe 'would succumb to the law of numbers and proclaim its decadence?' If Europe proved unworthy, then 'its hour of decadence has struck'. Mussolini noted that Austrian Nazis, hoping to see a racial war, were supporting Ethiopia, and with Italy potentially encumbered in Ethiopia, Germany seemed ready to reopen its drive on Vienna. Facing this threat, Il Duce described his European responsibilities to defend the Stresa Agreement. 'Acts are more significant than words,' he said. 'At the end of August I shall order great manoeuvres in North Italy with 500,000 men. In October, there will be more than 1,000,000 Italians under arms. I have nothing to fear from anyone.'<sup>100</sup> This promise reassured the French, and Ethiopia remained a small price to pay to keep Italy on the Brenner to protect Austria and European peace.<sup>101</sup>

Italian authorities increased their guard against demonstrations provoked by the violent anti-Japanese campaign in the press, and heavy forces protected the Japanese embassy. There were, however, no signs of demonstrations in Rome, where Sugimura was personally popular, especially in sporting circles. Anti-Japanese demonstrations, however, did burst out in Milan, Genoa, Turin, and Bologna, where speakers bitterly denounced Japan's East African policy.<sup>102</sup>

Sugimura failed to make his scheduled call with Fulvio Suvich on July 23. Some had expected he would formally protest the press campaign, but he disavowed any such intention. He insisted that his mission was 'to preserve good relations between Italy and Japan and his policy was to postpone any action' when feelings seemed 'at fever heat'. Because their excited comment was so similar, Italian newspapers were undoubtedly acting on orders from above. He said he had not relayed all the press comments to his government and would not until the situation had calmed.<sup>103</sup>

America's embassy in Paris warned that Japan's attitude would tighten links between Italy and Russia. Moscow's fears in Asia were affecting its attitude in Europe. Il Duce believed in the Yellow Peril, but conflict was not inevitable, if the Great Powers of the white West collaborated.<sup>104</sup>

On July 24, the *Japan Advertiser*, a newspaper designed for the foreign community residing in Japan, wrote a long and sensible editorial on the Sugimura Affair. With reports in Italian newspapers inflaming public opinion, 'we get the full force of one of the most striking examples in modern history of international friction over essentially nothing at all', the newspaper marveled at Italy's furious reaction to Hirota's 'mild corrective'. Noting 'differences in emphasis' between Sugimura's and Hirota's statements, the newspaper added, 'essentially the policy indicated by both was identical'. Japan would not intervene in the Italo-Ethiopian dispute. Japan's interests in Ethiopia were few compared with those of Britain and France, also worried about collective security in Europe. Sugimura had spoken to Mussolini, to counteract talk about 'the insidious advance of Japanese influence on the African continent'. The *Japan Advertiser* rejected the suggestion that Sugimura had hoped to strike a deal by which Italy would protect Japanese interests in Ethiopia. Whatever the ambassador's

intentions, 'the obvious logic of the situation' had imposed on him the need to give his 'assurances'. Italy had given them wide publicity in its search for moral support. Some thought the foreign ministry had been unwise in its mild corrective, because it had discredited its representative, had inflamed Italian opinion to no good purpose, and overnight had made Japan an enemy.<sup>105</sup>

The *Japan Advertiser* added that there was in Japan 'a good deal of vague racial and sentimental feeling toward Ethiopia', but it was 'neither particularly strong' nor 'unmixed' and not enough to prompt intervention. It was, however, 'just strong enough to resent the implication that Japan was supporting Italy'. Further, the foreign ministry could not ignore Japan's economic interests in Ethiopia. The newspaper deplored the consequences of the Sugimura Affair for Italo-Japanese relations and concluded that the affair had dragged forward all 'the bogeys about Japan's aggressive policy in the Far East, and her economic penetration of the world at large'. This was part of 'a renewed attempt' to show that Italy was 'not only bearing the White man's burden but also fighting the yellow peril'. It gave the Italian adventure 'a new heroic quality'.<sup>106</sup>

Vinci, from Addis Ababa, continued to downplay rumors of arms, pilots, and airplanes coming from Japan. The Emperor, after all, had told the American chargé d'affaires that he knew nothing about Japan's opening a legation.<sup>107</sup> Despite inflamed passions, Rome had good reason to understand the limited nature of Japan's contacts with Ethiopia.

At the height of tensions during the Sugimura Affair, *Le Temps'* correspondent in Rome on July 24 wove together several threads binding Africa and China. He declared that Italy had worked hard to expand its influence in China, and the Chinese had responded by welcoming civil and military missions, which 'appeared as defiance hurled at Japan'. The correspondent then connected Asia and Ethiopia. Japan's industry, its commerce, its dumping, and its 'strangle-hold' on China threatened the West. Moreover, 'its aims on the African markets, including Ethiopia', and 'its advance into the West as far as the Mediterranean Basin, appear in the eyes of Italy as the gravest menace against what remains of European superiority in the world'. After quoting Mussolini at some length, he then discussed Sugimura's role in improving Japan's relations with Italy. To assuage Rome's fears, Sugimura had told *Le Temps* that Japan had no military or other aims in Ethiopia and that Italy had nothing to fear from Japanese interference in the situation developing in East Africa. Japan wished only to protect its commerce. Italians had noted the hypocrisy of Japan's taking sides with Ethiopia by appealing to the rights of peoples, to justice, and to the Kellogg-Briand Pact. After all, Japan had destroyed Korean independence, had invaded vast regions of China, and was trying to penetrate Russian territory. Italians were discussing tightening relations with the Soviet Union and were floating rumors that Litvinov would again visit Rome. Motivated by Mussolini's thesis of the Yellow Peril, Italians were seeking a more effective European solidarity to oppose Japan.<sup>108</sup>

Japanese nationalists continued to meddle. On July 25, Sumioka telegraphed Japan's foreign ministry that Sugimura's declarations in February supporting Italy did not match the feelings of the Japanese people. The Italian navy intercepted the telegram and brought it to Il Duce's attention.<sup>109</sup> That same day, Auriti reported that three representatives of a small nationalist circle were asking

him to send Mussolini their protest on the Italo-Ethiopian controversy. Auriti replied that the Royal Embassy was in Tokyo only to guard Italian interests and, despite their persistence, he refused to accept their protest.<sup>110</sup>

*Il Giornale d'Italia* took this moment of tension to publish prominently a review of Roman Procházka's *Abyssinia: The Powder Barrel*. Stretching the truth by calling him an 'illustrious' legal authority, the article luridly echoed Italian propaganda: the Ethiopians were a barbarous, oppressive, slave-owning, megalomaniac, imperialistic, and an ill-governed people. Their anti-European and anti-white policies threatened the civilized world. Further, the Ethiopians had secretly granted concessions to the Japanese for cotton and opium plantations along their borders and had granted preferential customs to Japanese imports. The government had hired many Japanese to work in Ethiopia, including engineers to build an airport.<sup>111</sup>

On July 25 at 5.30 p.m., Shoji and Yamauchi Masao, a veteran resident in Addis Ababa, spoke with Hayle Sellase. Meeting at his luxurious palace, completed only six months earlier, the Emperor shook their hands and told them, '[T]he people of Abyssinia feel a deep sense of gratitude toward the people of Japan for their sympathetic understanding of Abyssinia's position', and that 'I intend to instruct the foreign minister to convey my gratitude to the Japanese nation.' Shoji replied that he was grateful for the goodwill the citizens of Addis Ababa were showing him: 'Whenever a Japanese is seen on the streets, the people shout "Japan, Japan!" in a very friendly way.'<sup>112</sup> After the thirty-five minute audience, the Ethiopian foreign ministry gave Shoji a statement: 'It is reported that thanks to the friendly gestures of various nations toward Ethiopia, the dispute with Italy is on the verge of settlement. Abyssinia must not be satisfied, however, with a patchwork solution that will leave a lasting source of evil. Thus it cannot relax its preparations for defense.'<sup>113</sup>

On July 25 in Rome, Italians staged a mass demonstration of 100,000 shouting, 'Ethiopia for Us'. The demonstrators carried placards denouncing England and Japan as 'nigger lovers'. One banner depicted two soldiers, one English and the other Japanese, drinking and smoking at a table while a brawny Fascist soldier entered the scene, a big club in hand. One placard depicted an English and a Japanese soldier on either side of a black woman, caressing her. Others promised, 'We will settle all accounts' and 'Rome will save Europe'. The crowd first gathered near the foreign ministry on Piazza Colonna, where General Achille Starace, Secretary of the Fascist Party, harangued them. He provoked a 'particularly frenzied shout' when he promised that Italy would 'be ready for war against blacks and yellows and, if necessary, blonds'.<sup>114</sup> The throng then marched through the streets singing Fascist revolutionary songs and shouting 'Down with England, Ethiopia, and Japan'. They arrived at the Palazzo Venezia and cheered for Mussolini, but he did not appear. Fearing demonstrators would get out of hand, authorities closed the streets in front of several embassies to all traffic except for the regular bus lines. They also threw heavy guards around the Ethiopian, Japanese, and British missions as well as Afewerq's official residence. Despite their enthusiasm, the crowd showed neither violence nor an inclination to move toward the embassies. The following day, the Italians reduced the guard around Japan's embassy to only six.<sup>115</sup>

The American embassy in Japan now tried to evaluate the Sugimura Affair, commenting that the ambassador's efforts to soothe Mussolini had disturbed the normally cordial relations between Rome and Tokyo. The embassy agreed with Auriti that Sugimura's assurances had been among general instructions given him on his departure. It seemed that he had acted, however, without specific instructions and that the foreign ministry's spokesman had felt it necessary to point this out. Italy's press immediately interpreted this as disavowing Sugimura's assurances, which Italians had hailed as a diplomatic victory in their maneuvers to clear the ground before hostilities broke out. Sugimura's statement had been a blunder, because it had forced Tokyo, which did not want to jeopardize its freedom of action, to disavow partially his assurances. Even Japan's growing tradition as a champion of the rights of the colored races was not enough to cause Tokyo to intervene in a purely local dispute on the other side of the world. The American embassy remarked on the superficial similarity between the situation in Manchukuo and Ethiopia, and it also passed on the notion that the stories of Ethio-Japanese co-operation that had aroused Rome's acerbic attention had originated in London. Mussolini then called Sugimura to discuss the question, and Sugimura had made a statement.<sup>116</sup>

America's representatives in Rome also tried to unravel what lay behind the affair, and the embassy proposed two lines of explanation for Sugimura's statements. Assuming he had not relied on specific instructions, he had made the remarks during a conversation with Mussolini solely to ingratiate himself, and the ensuing publicity had amazed him. Another possibility was that Sugimura had deliberately made a statement to improve Italo-Japanese relations, which had deteriorated because of Japanese aggression in Manchuria and its advances in Ethiopia. Tokyo had told him to counteract these influences and to that end he had spoken to the Italian press and had refrained from acquainting Tokyo with the anti-Japanese articles published in Italy. On the other hand, some in Italy thought that Tokyo had specifically told its ambassador to make a statement in Rome, which it intended all along to disavow. Italy's press inclined toward this view. The Japanese were hoping to gain the gratitude of the colored races and to ingratiate themselves with Britain and others opposed to Italy's action. Tokyo, however, had not foreseen rancor fomented by their ambassador's declaration.<sup>117</sup>

Toward the end of July, Italy's newspaper editorials began turning some of their fire on Great Britain and away from Japan, and Japanese papers began to respond in kind. Nonetheless, Italian publicists continued trying to enlist white sympathies by reviving the Yellow Peril bogey threatening the Soviet Union, Britain, the United States, and France. This message proved potent throughout Europe, as many Japanese noted. Italy's press and government were vehemently rejecting similarities between Japan's conquest of China and Italy's action in Ethiopia. China, after all, was the depository of perhaps the most ancient human civilization, while Ethiopia was a 'medley of barbaric slave-dealing tribes and chieftains'.<sup>118</sup>

The only important editorial on Japan on July 26 was Gayda's response to a telegram the Black Dragon Society had sent Mussolini protesting his aggressive Ethiopian policy. Gayda retorted that Japan had subjected Manchuria, a country of high civilization, to unprovoked aggression, and he concluded that

Japanese interference in the Ethiopian dispute would be an act of hostility toward Italy and proof of Japan's intention to gain control of East Africa for anti-European purposes. He also denounced League zealots who were passive toward Japan and the Manchuria affair.<sup>119</sup>

On July 27, Sugimura, always the voice of placid practicality, and still justifying his conversation with Mussolini, reiterated that Italian public opinion toward Japan had deteriorated because of commercial competition with Japanese goods in Ethiopia. Italy's government, he believed, had exaggerated reports of Japanese weapons exports to Ethiopia and right-wing protests. By publicizing Japan's political ambition toward Ethiopia as a general conflict between the colored and white races, he suggested that Italy was trying to use London and Paris to aid to Italy. He added that Japan should calmly watch the conflict and act cautiously. 'Based especially on its racial concerns, Japanese public opinion naturally sympathizes with a weak country and tries to help Ethiopia.' The ambassador warned, however, that Japan could not easily project military and political power in far-away Africa. Therefore, it was unwise for Japan 'to stiffen' its attitude toward Italy by reserving the right to speak out in the future and by asserting the right to supply munitions. 'Moreover, it sounds fine, but it is not wise to attempt to extend our commercial rights based on the racial argument, which directly puts us into a confrontation with England, France, and Italy.'<sup>120</sup>

Japanese nationalists, meanwhile, continued to provoke the Italians. On July 27, representatives from the Floating Clouds patriotic organization presented a resolution to the British embassy in Tokyo. It expressed, 'the hope that Great Britain, for the sake of her reputation as a progressive country, will fulfill her mission as a leader of weak and small peoples and that she will put a stop to interference with the liberty of Abyssinia.'<sup>121</sup> And Yamauchi and Shoji added more grist to the Italian propaganda mill by giving a party in Addis Ababa for to leading Ethiopians and founding the Ethiopian-Japan Association. The participants received rosettes of the Rising Sun and Ethiopian green, yellow, and red.<sup>122</sup>

The *Osaka Asahi* on July 29 reacted editorially to the contretemps of the previous ten days. With his 400,000 troops and more than fifty planes mobilized in North Africa, Mussolini was threatening not only Ethiopia but also those powers opposed to Italy's activities. Italy was trying to check Japanese goods from finding their way into Ethiopia. Thus, Italy found itself confronted politically by Britain and economically by Japan. The paper feared that Italy's propaganda about race was unfortunately sowing seeds of international unrest. Nor was it politic for Italy to utilize such prejudices for encouraging anti-Ethiopian or anti-Japanese sentiments in Europe, because such a movement would seriously embarrass Britain and France, which had their own colonies in Africa and Asia. 'Mussolini has since last autumn been apparently following a diplomacy which any great nation would feel ashamed to follow'. Its economic interests, the cause of world peace, and racial attitudes enshrined by the Versailles Treaty lay behind Japan's 'passive concern' on the Italo-Ethiopian issue and Sugimura's recent declaration of Japan's 'political unconcern'.<sup>123</sup>

Other Japanese newspapers seconded the *Osaka Asahi*'s disdain for Italy's efforts to draw a 'connection between the dispute and the racial problem and to twist world opinion', which had 'only invited the ridicule of cool-headed third

parties'. Italy's effort was a 'cowardly and unjustifiable action for purposely disturbing the world's tranquility'.<sup>124</sup>

At the same time, anti-Japanese agitation left Japan's brewers unfazed, at least in Italian Somaliland. In the first half of 1934, shipments of Sakura and Union beer to Mombasa in British Kenya, a neighbor of Italian Somaliland, had amounted to only 52 tons. Beginning in 1935, brewers saw a sudden beer boom and by July had exported 352 tons, or 123,360 bottles, much of which ended up in Italian Somaliland. Japan's press exalted, 'Whatever misunderstanding there may be is being liquidated there – by made-in-Japan beer. ... [W]hile resting in the equatorial sun, the Italian soldiers are tickling their parched throats with foaming beer, and Japanese beer at that.'<sup>125</sup>

Meanwhile in Rome with Mussolini and behind the closed doors of the League Council, Litvinov pressed hard for a peaceful settlement in Italy's favor of the brewing conflict. When told, for example, that London was insisting on a Council meeting for July 29 to discuss the dispute, the Commissar told Shtein to warn Rome and to suggest that Italy formally request a delay, which he would officially support. The Italians thanked Shtein for the friendly gesture and took his advice. Rome and Moscow were buying time to get the Council adjourned without any real concessions. Sugimura blamed Litvinov's attitude on the deterioration in Italo-Japanese relations.<sup>126</sup>

The Soviets and Italians stepped up their symbiotic complaints about the neo-mercantilist nature of Japan's economic policy and Japan's supposedly supplying arms to Ethiopia. The Soviet press had eagerly followed the Sugimura Affair, seeing an advantage to the Soviet Union in any conflict Japan might have with anyone.<sup>127</sup> The Soviet Union continued its pro-Italian and anti-Japanese stance at least to September 1935, one short month before Italy attacked Ethiopia. Even then, Moscow raised only nuanced opposition to Italian aggression.<sup>128</sup>

Italian fears, once again, were not completely groundless. In late July, Shoji asked Ethiopia's minister of war if Ethiopia had prepared for gas attacks. The minister replied by asking Shoji to write for catalogs from Japanese manufacturers of gas masks. When Shoji assured him that the Japanese understood Ethiopia's position, the war minister stated that he knew that this was true and he expressed his gratitude for Japan's sympathy.<sup>129</sup>

## *Conclusion*

Relations between Italy and Japan in the first half of 1935 were rocky despite some efforts at co-operation. Comments by the Soviets and diverse Japanese in and out of government exacerbated tensions, and the flurry of documents in the foreign ministry archives shows Rome's concern. Rumors provoked frantic queries leading to local investigations that unearthed little substantial. Supposed Japanese arms shipments and other military assistance to Ethiopia especially concerned Italians, despite vigorous and persistent denials in Tokyo and Addis Ababa.

Interestingly, even if the worst of Italian fears were true – and they were not

– the impact of arms transfers would have been slight. Rome’s representatives made enormous efforts trying to identify and track supposed shipments in single, occasional vessels of limited tonnage. Even if they existed, military supplies had to unload at Zeila, Berbera, or Djibouti, all ports controlled by the British and French. Then they would have to go by either the French-controlled Djibouti–Addis Ababa Railroad or camel caravan. In other words, supposed Japanese arms sales to Ethiopia, paid for by non-existent concessions, could never have significantly challenged Italy’s overwhelming logistical advantages.

Since his appointment toward the end of 1934, Ambassador Sugimura, living in a *realpolitik* world, had earnestly worked to dispel Italian fears and to improve relations between Rome and Tokyo. Sparked by vituperative presses in both countries, his efforts in mid-July exploded into the Sugimura Affair. The height of the storm lasted about a week, and the diplomatic efforts to calm the ruckus eventually laid the foundation for Italo-Japanese co-operation in World War II.

It was in this dawning rapprochement that Ethiopia made its last significant effort to corral Japan’s support in its looming war with Italy. Daba Birrou’s diplomatic visit to Japan in September found enthusiastic Japanese nationalists, but little more than polite deflection from the government and military – Sugimura’s *realpolitik* was winning the day.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> J. Calvitt Clarke III, ‘Japan and Italy Squabble Over Ethiopia: The Sugimura Affair of July 1935’, *The Selected Annual Proceedings of the Florida Conference of Historians* 6 (December 1999):9–20.
- <sup>2</sup> George, March 22, 1935: NARA 784.94/17; Linnell, January 14, 1935: NARA 765.84/162.
- <sup>3</sup> *JT&M*, January 11, 1935; To Ethiopia, January 28, 1935: NARA 784.94/14a; ‘Italy–Abyssinia: “Intolerable Presumption!”’ *Time* (May 27, 1935): 23–23. For a more calm – and accurate – look at the situation, see *Cape Times*, January 4, 1935: GSK E424 1–3–1.
- <sup>4</sup> *La Tribuna*, January 23, 1935; Kirk, January 25, 1935: NARA 765.94/9; Naval Attaché, March 13, 1935: NARA 765.94/10; George, March 22, 1935: NARA 784.94/17; *JT&M*, January 24, 1935. See also Toenbreker, February 13, 1935; Servizio della Stampa Estera, April 1, 1935; Suvich, n.d.; and The Hague, June 6, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3.
- <sup>5</sup> *JT&M*, February 17, 1935; May 2, 1935; *OM&TNN*, February 24, 1935.
- <sup>6</sup> Vinci, February 9, 1935; Suvich, Feb. 15, 1935; Stefani, February 26, 1935; Aden, March 17, 1935; Circular, March 26, 1935; De Bono February 21, 1935; Circular, March 7, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3; Rava, February 25, 1935; Circular, February 17, 1935; Guarnaschelli, March 14, 1935; March 19, 1935; Vinci, March 15, 1935; March 29, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b72 f3; George, March 22, 1935: NARA 784.94/17; George, March 22, 1935: NARA 884.20/29; *JT&M*, January 12, 1935; *The Times*, February 28, 1935.
- <sup>7</sup> *JT&M*, February 13, 1935; March 1, 1935; May 2, 1935; *NYT*, December 23, 1934; February 24, 1935; Sugimura, February 19, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–7; Scalise, February 14, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3; Auriti, February 16, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG 101 f4; Ferretti, *Giappone*, p. 42.
- <sup>8</sup> *OM&TNN*, February 7, 12, 14, 15, 16, 20, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 1935; *JT&M*, February 20, 23, 25, 27, 28, 1935; March 1, 2, 1935; April 1, 1935; May 20, 1935; August 7, 1935; November 2, 1935; January 5, 1936; February 4, 1936; March 18, 20, 21, 24, 1936; ‘Japan’, *Time* (October 14, 1935):31; *DDI*, 8th, 1: no. 587; Grew, April 16, 1936: NARA 894.00 P.R./100; Sandra Collins, ‘Conflicts of 1930s Japanese Olympic Diplomacy in Universalizing the Olympic Movement’, *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 23 (November 2006):1128–51.
- <sup>9</sup> *OM&TNN*, February 20, 1935; *JT&M*, February 26, 1935; May 20, 1935.
- <sup>10</sup> *JT&M*, April 1, 1934; May 28, 1934; *JA*, April 17, 1934; July 6, 1935; *OM&TNN*, April 6, 1934.
- <sup>11</sup> *OM&TNN*, January 18, 1935; Francesco Tomaselli, *Ecco il Giappone*, 2nd ed. (Milano, A. Mondadori, 1935); Mussolini, February 28, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3. Also see *OM&TNN*, January 13, 1934; *JT&M*, March 18, 1934; *JA*, March 10, 20, 1934.

- <sup>12</sup> Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, pp. 21–2; Taura, ‘Nihon-Echiopia kankei’, pp. 160–1; *Le Temps*, March 17, 1935; *NYT*, April 7, 1935; March 19, 1935; Auriti, April 8, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3.
- <sup>13</sup> Grew, March 8, 1935: NARA 784.94/16; Grew, July 12, 1935: NARA 784.94/19; *Le Temps*, March 17, 1935.
- <sup>14</sup> George, March 22, 1935: NARA 784.94/17.
- <sup>15</sup> *JA*, May 1, 1935. Also see Coon, *Measuring Ethiopia*, pp. 142–4; Kweku Ampiah, ‘British Commercial Policies against Japanese Expansionism in East and West Africa, 193–1935’, *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 23 (1990):641.
- <sup>16</sup> Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, p. 40; Pasqualucci, April 4, 1935; Pasqualucci, unclear, 11, 1935: b62 f 3; Guarnaschelli, April 25, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3; Guarnaschelli, April 26, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b101 f4; Guarnaschelli, April 26, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b72 f3.
- <sup>17</sup> *JA*, May 14, 1935.
- <sup>18</sup> *NYT*, May 24, 1935.
- <sup>19</sup> Military Administration, May 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–7. For Japan’s press forecasts, see *JT&M*, May 22, 1935.
- <sup>20</sup> Auriti, May 31, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b72 f3. For Italian fears of arms shipments—and Japanese denials, see Scalise, June 26, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3; Circular, July 3, 4, 1935: Etiopia–FG b72 f3; Auriti, July 10, 1935: Etiopia–FG b101 f4.
- <sup>21</sup> Sugimura, May 31, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–7; Edward B. Westermann, ‘In the Shadow of War: German Loans and Arms Shipments to Ethiopia, 1935–1936’, *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies: Papers of the 12th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Michigan State University, 5–10 September 1994* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1994), pp. 1036–52; Lockot, *Mission*, pp. 41–2; *Il Giornale d’Italia*, June 2, 5, 6, 1935; July 23, 1935; *JT&M*, July 5, 1934; Bastin, *L’Affaire d’Éthiopie*, pp. 61–2. As a small sample of Italian paranoia, see *DDI*, 8th, 1: nos. 61, 82, 170, 174, 177, 195, 205, 217, 220, 304, 436, 528, 552, 601, 607, 628, 641, and 701. Also in NARA 765.84 see Eastern Affairs, April 27, 1935: /294; Phillips, May 9, 1935: /285; Dodd, June 6, 1935: /383; Kirk, June 6, 1935: /388; June 15, 1935: /382; August 3, 1935: /737; George, June 27, 1935: /641; Johnson, July 26, 1935: /716; and To Ethiopia, December 18, 1934: /83a. Also in NARA 884.24 see Southard, January 18, 1934: /43; Brady, May 31, 1935: /55; and Nulsen, July 11, 1935: /57. Finally, see Pillow, February 5, 1935: 884.20/28 and Swift, November 23, 1934: NARA 884.223.
- <sup>22</sup> Oguri, June 5, 1935: GSK 461 ET/II–2–1; *DDI*, 8th, 1: no. 338; Auriti, June 5, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3; Byas, *Government*, pp. 193–205.
- <sup>23</sup> Auriti, June 21, 1935, MAE Etiopia–FG b13 f10. For an example of a knowledgeable and judicious report from Italy’s military attaché, see Scalise, June 12, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3. For more of Rome’s worries, see Pasqualucci, April 4, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3; Circular, April 13, 1935; n.d. 1935; Guarnaschelli, May 10, 1935; June 4, 1935; June 8, 1935: ‘Forniture all’Etiopia...’, n.d.; and Graziani, July 23, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b72 f3. Vinci and Rome worried about possible shipments of armored cars to Ethiopia. Vinci, May 15, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b72 f3.
- <sup>24</sup> Auriti, June 28, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b42 f1; Auriti, July 21, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3.
- <sup>25</sup> *JT&M*, July 3, 1935.
- <sup>26</sup> *OM&TNN*, July, 3, 4, 5, 1935; see also White, June 19, 1935: NARA 765.84/610.
- <sup>27</sup> *Izvestia*, February 14, 1935; March 1, 16, 1935; *Pravda*, December 11, 16, 1934; *MDN*, February 14, 1935; *JA*, May 1, 1935.
- <sup>28</sup> Attolico, February 16, 1935: MAE URSS b17 f2; Attolico, March 21, 1935, April 11, 1935: MAE URSS b18 f4; Suvich, January 24, 1935; Suvich, January 28, 1935: MAE URSS, b16 f1.
- <sup>29</sup> Suvich, May 16, 1935: MAE URSS b16 f1; *MDN*, April 10, 1935; May 21, 1935. For Japanese commentary on the Danubian connection and its implications for Ethiopia, see *JT&M*, May 9, 10, 28, 30, 1935; June 4, 8, 14, 25, 1935.
- <sup>30</sup> Suvich, June 26, 1935: MAE URSS b16 f1; Scott, *Sons*, 124; *NYT*, May 23, 1935.
- <sup>31</sup> George Padmore, ‘Ethiopia and World Politics’ *Crisis* 42 (May 5, 1935):156–7.
- <sup>32</sup> Cedric James Lowe and Frank Marzari, *Italian Foreign Policy, 1870–1940* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 259; Mario Roatta, *Il processo Roatta* (Rome: Donatello de Liugi, 1945), pp. 30–1, 200–1; Salvatore Minardi, ‘L’accordo militare segreto Badoglio-Gamelin del 1935’, *Clio*, 23 (April–June 1987):271–300; Franklin D. Laurens, *France and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis, 1935–1936* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), pp. 51–4; William I. Shorrock, *From Ally to Enemy: The Enigma of Fascist Italy in French Diplomacy, 1920–1940* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1988), pp. 117–40 *passim*; *MDN*, April 10, 1935; Attolico, March 23, 1935: MAE URSS b16 f5; Gilbert, May 24, 1935: NARA 765.84/332.
- <sup>33</sup> Bullitt, July 6, 1935: NARA 765.84/451.
- <sup>34</sup> Okamoto, August 26, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–2; George, July 11, 1935: NARA 765.84/477;



- OM&TNN, July 6, 1935; JT&M, July 7, 1935.
- <sup>35</sup> *Chicago Defender*, July 13, 1935.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>37</sup> Okamoto, August 26, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-2; *Chicago Daily News*, July 10, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-2-1; JT&M, July 21, 1935; NYT, July 11, 1935; MDN, July 28, 1935; *Corriere della Sera*, July 26, 1935.
- <sup>38</sup> JT&M, July 10, 1935.
- <sup>39</sup> JA, July 7, 9, 1935; JT&M, July 10, 1935; NYT, July 11, 1935; *Asahi Shinbun*, July 11, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-2-1.
- <sup>40</sup> 'Ethiopia's Week', *Time* (July 22, 1935):19.
- <sup>41</sup> OM&TNN, July 11, 1935.
- <sup>42</sup> JT&M, July 11, 1935; NYT, July 11, 1935; *The Times*, July 20, 1935; Neville, August 9, 1935: NARA 894.00/92; Grew, July 12, 1935: NARA 765.94/679; Grew, July 12, 1935: NARA 784.94/19; *Chicago Daily News*, July 10, 1935; *Asahi Shinbun*, July 11, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-2-1; Okamoto, August 26, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-2. Total Japanese exports to Ethiopia were worth only ¥2,213,000 (\$675,000), less than 0.33 per cent of all Japanese exports.
- <sup>43</sup> *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 12, 1935.
- <sup>44</sup> NYT, July 13, 1935; Grew, July 12, 1935: NARA 765.94/679; Ottawa, July 17, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b62 f3.
- <sup>45</sup> OM&TNN, July 14, 1935.
- <sup>46</sup> Oguri, July 20, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-2-1.
- <sup>47</sup> Bradshaw, 'Japan', 320, 361-62.
- <sup>48</sup> Vinci, July 16, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b62 f3. See also Guarnaschelli, May 16, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b62 f3.
- <sup>49</sup> JT&M, July 16, 1935.
- <sup>50</sup> *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 18, 1935; OM&TNN, July 18, 1935; *Le Temps*, July 18, 1935; DDI, 8th, 1: no. 555; Neville, August 9, 1935: NARA 894.00/92; Kirk, July 17, 1935: NARA 765.84/545; Kirk, July 18, 1935: NARA 765.84/718; MDN, July 21, 1935; JT&M, July 18, 21, 1935; NYT, July 17, 1935; Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', p. 4; Taura, 'I.E. funso', pp. 79-80; Taura, 'Nichii Kankei', p. 305; Tamagna, *Italy's Interests*, pp. 24-5.
- <sup>51</sup> Grew, July 18, 1935: NARA 765.84/557; Tamagna, *Italy's Interests*, 25; OM&TNN, July 18, 1935; Ferretti, *Giappone*, pp. 43-4.
- <sup>52</sup> JA, July 19, 1935.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid., July 18, 19, 21, 1935; JT&M, July 20, 1935; *Le Temps*, July 18, 1935; Auriti, July 18, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b62 f3; Ferretti, *Giappone*, pp. 42-3. See also 'The Abyssinian Trouble', *Japan Chronicle* (July 18, 1935):74-5.
- <sup>54</sup> The Italian Historical Society, *The Italo-Ethiopian Controversy* (New York: The Italian Historical Society, 1935), p. 26.
- <sup>55</sup> NYT, July 19, 1935; JA, July 20, 1935; Neville, August 9, 1935: NARA 894.00/92; Taura, 'I.E. funso', 80.
- <sup>56</sup> *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 23, 1935.
- <sup>57</sup> DDI, 8th, 1: no. 555.
- <sup>58</sup> Taura, 'I.E. funso', pp. 80-1; MDN, July 21, 1935.
- <sup>59</sup> NYT, July 19, 1935; *The Times*, July 20, 1935; JT&M, July 20, 1935; JA, July 20, 1935; Neville, August 9, 1935: NARA 894.00/92.
- <sup>60</sup> *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 18, 1935; *La Tribuna*, July 18, 1935; JT&M, July 18, 1935; Kirk, July 18, 1935: NARA 765.84/567.
- <sup>61</sup> DDI, 8th, 1: no. 569; Gabinetto, n.d.: MAE Etiopia-FG b62 f3; NYT, July 20, 1935; *The Times*, July 20, 1935; MDN, July 21, 1935; JT&M, July 21, 1935; OM&TNN, July 21, 1935; *Le Temps*, July 20, 1935; JA, July 20, 1935; *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 23, 1935; Taura, 'I.E. funso', pp. 82-3; Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', p. 4.
- <sup>62</sup> Pillow, July 25, 1935: NARA 765.84/938.
- <sup>63</sup> DDI, 8th, 1: nos. 570, 571; Auriti, July 19, 1935; July 21, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b42 f1.
- <sup>64</sup> OM&TNN, July 20, 21, 1935; NYT, July 20, 1935; JT&M, July 21, 1935; JA, July 20, 1935. For Ambassador Auriti's description of the *Nichi Nichi* story, see DDI, 8th, 1: no. 587 and Auriti, July 20, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b62 f3.
- <sup>65</sup> JA, July 21, 1935.
- <sup>66</sup> NYT, July 21, 1935; JT&M, July 22, 1935; OM&TNN, July 20, 21, 1935; JA, July 20, 21, 1935.
- <sup>67</sup> Taura, 'I.E. funso', p. 83.
- <sup>68</sup> OM&TNN, July 21, 1935; Grew, February 6, 1934: NARA 894.00/74.

- <sup>69</sup> *OM&TNN*, July 20, 1935; *JA*, July 21, 1935.
- <sup>70</sup> Sugimura, July 20, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-7-1; Taura, 'I.E. funsō', pp. 80-1; Ferretti, *Giappone*, p. 43.
- <sup>71</sup> *JA*, July 20, 1935; *JT&M*, July 24, 1935; Taura, 'I.E. funsō', 83; Auriti, September 19, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b101 f4.
- <sup>72</sup> *OM&TNN*, July 21, 1935; *JT&M*, July 21, 22, 1935; *JA*, July 21, 1935.
- <sup>73</sup> Bradshaw, 'Japan', pp. 345-6; *OM&TNN*, July 24, 1935.
- <sup>74</sup> Kirk, July 20, 1935: NARA 765.84/590; Kirk, July 22, 1935: NARA 765.84/591; Kirk, July 26, 1935: NARA 765.84/762; *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 23, 1935; *NYT*, July 23, 1935; *JA*, July 23, 24, 25, 1935; *JT&M*, July 24, 1935; *OM&TNN*, July 24, 1935; Taura, 'I.E. funsō', p. 82; Bradshaw, 'Japan', pp. 334-42.
- <sup>75</sup> *NYT*, July 23, 1935; Sugimura, July 23, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-7-1; *Chicago Daily News*, July 22, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-2-1; J. P. Cope, 'Ethiopian Fear War', *Natal Mercury*, June 4, 1935: GSK E424 1-3-1; Pillow, July 25, 1935; NARA 765.84/938; *JT&M*, July 24, 1935; *NYT*, July 23, 1935.
- <sup>76</sup> *JA*, July 23, 1935; *NYT*, July 23, 1935; *The Times*, July 23, 1935; *JT&M*, July 24, 1935; Pillow, July 25, 1935: NARA 765.84/938; Kirk, July 26, 1935: NARA 765.84/762; Auriti, September 12, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b42 f1; Ferretti, *Giappone*, pp. 47-8.
- <sup>77</sup> *JA*, July 23, 1935; *JT&M*, July 24, 1935.
- <sup>78</sup> Kirk, July 26, 1935: NARA 765.84/762.
- <sup>79</sup> *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 23, 1935; Kirk, July 26, 1935: NARA 765.84/762.
- <sup>80</sup> *JA*, July 23, 1935; *NYT*, July 23, 1935; *Corriere della Sera*, July 22, 1935; Pillow, July 25, 1935; NARA 765.84/938; Auriti, September 12, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b42 f1.
- <sup>81</sup> *La Tribuna*, July 23, 1935; *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 23, 1935; *The Times*, July 23, 1935; *Le Temps*, 24, 1935; Kirk, July 26, 1935: NARA 765.84/762.
- <sup>82</sup> *La Tribuna*, July 23, 1935; Kirk, July 26, 1935: NARA 765.84/762.
- <sup>83</sup> Kirk, July 26, 1935: NARA 765.84/762.
- <sup>84</sup> *NYT*, July 24, 1935; *JA*, July 24, 1935.
- <sup>85</sup> *The Times*, July 25, 1935; *NYT*, July 25, 1935; *Le Temps*, July 25, 1935.
- <sup>86</sup> *OM&TNN*, July 24, 1935.
- <sup>87</sup> *NYT*, July 24, 1935; *JA*, July 24, 1935; *OM&TNN*, August 18, 1935; *MDN*, July 24, 1935; *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 25, 1935; *Le Temps*, July 24, 1935.
- <sup>88</sup> *JA*, July 24, 1935; Kirk, July 23, 1935: NARA 765.84/602.
- <sup>89</sup> *JA*, July 24, 1935.
- <sup>90</sup> *OM&TNN*, July 17, 1935.
- <sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, July 21, 1935; August 8, 1935; *JT&M*, June 5, 1935.
- <sup>92</sup> *JA*, July 23, 1935.
- <sup>93</sup> See, for example, *Il Popolo d'Italia*, July 23, 1935.
- <sup>94</sup> *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 23, 1935. For comments on this important article, see *JT&M*, July 24, 1935; *JA*, July 24, 1935; *MDN*, July 24, 1935; *NYT*, July 23, 1935; Kirk, July 22, 1935: NARA 765.84/599; Kirk, July 23, 1935: NARA 765.84/602; Kirk, July 26, 1935: NARA 765.84/762; and Pillow, July 25, 1935; NARA 765.84/938.
- <sup>95</sup> *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 23, 1935. For a similar sentiment, see *DDI*, 8th, 1: no. 743.
- <sup>96</sup> *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 23, 1935.
- <sup>97</sup> Kirk, July 26, 1935: NARA 765.84/762.
- <sup>98</sup> Pillow, July 25, 1935; NARA 765.84/938; Kirk, July 23, 1935: NARA 765.84/603; *JT&M*, July 25, 1935.
- <sup>99</sup> *Il Popolo d'Italia*, July 23, 1935. See also *NYT*, July 24, 1935; *JT&M*, July 25, 1935; *Corriere della Sera*, July 24, 1935.
- <sup>100</sup> *L'Écho de Paris*, July 21, 22, 24, 1935; *NYT*, July 23, 24, 25, 1935; *JT&M*, August 26, 27, 1935; *OM&TNN*, August 10, 25, 1935; *La Tribuna*, July 23, 1935; Mussolini, *Opera*, 27:106-10; Kirk, June 30, 1935: NARA 765.84/418; Kirk, June 30, 1935: NARA 765.84/420; Kirk, July 2, 1935: NARA 765.84/428.
- <sup>101</sup> *NYT*, July 24, 1935; Aug. 25, 1935.
- <sup>102</sup> *NYT*, July 23, 1935; *JT&M*, July 25, 1935; *JA*, July 24, 1935; *OM&TNN*, July 24, 1935; *MDN*, July 24, 1935.
- <sup>103</sup> *NYT*, July 23, 1935; *JT&M*, July 24, 1935; *OM&TNN*, July 24, 1935; *JA*, July 24, 1935.
- <sup>104</sup> Dawson, July 23, 1935: NARA 765.94/13.
- <sup>105</sup> *JA*, July 24, 1935.
- <sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>107</sup> Vinci, July 25, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b62 f3.

- <sup>108</sup> Dawson, July 24, 1935: NARA 765.94/14; *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 18, 19, 1935; *Le Temps*, July 24, 25, 1935; *JA*, July 28, 1935; Sato, August 31, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-2.
- <sup>109</sup> Ferretti, *Giappone*, p. 43.
- <sup>110</sup> Auriti, July 25, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b101 f4.
- <sup>111</sup> *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 25, 1935. See also *Corriere della Sera*, July 25, 1935.
- <sup>112</sup> *JA*, July 28, 1935; *OM&TNN*, July 28, 1935.
- <sup>113</sup> *JA*, July 28, 1935.
- <sup>114</sup> *NYT*, July 26, 1935.
- <sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*; *JA*, July 28, 1935; *JT&M*, July 27, 1935; Sugimura, July 31, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-7-1; Pillow, n.d.: NARA 765.84/883.
- <sup>116</sup> Neville, July 26, 1935: NARA 765.84/798. See also Sato, July 24-25, 27, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-7 and *L'Écho de Paris*, July 29, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-2.
- <sup>117</sup> Kirk, July 26, 1935: NARA 765.84/762.
- <sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*; see also Kirk, July 25, 1935: NARA 765.84/638; *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 26, 27, 1935; *OM&TNN*, July 25, 1935; *JT&M*, July 26, 27, 1935; *JA*, July 26, 1935; Auriti, July 26, 1935: MAE Etiopia b42 f1; Fujita, July 30, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-2-1.
- <sup>119</sup> *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 26, 27, 1935; *OM&TNN*, July 25, 1935; *JT&M*, July 26, 1935; *JA*, July 26, 1935; Kirk, July 25, 1935: NARA 765.84/638; Kirk, July 26, 1935: NARA 765.84/762.
- <sup>120</sup> Taura, 'Nichi-i kankei', 305; Sugimura, July 27, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-1-1; *JT&M*, July 29, 1935.
- <sup>121</sup> Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', p. 4.
- <sup>122</sup> *The Times*, July 29, 1935.
- <sup>123</sup> *JT&M*, July 30, 1935.
- <sup>124</sup> *OM&TNN*, July 25, 1935.
- <sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, July 28, 1935.
- <sup>126</sup> Quaroni, July 29, 1935: MAE URSS b16 f2; *DDI*, 8th, 1: no. 630; Sugimura, July 27, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-1. In NARA 765.84 see Bullitt, July 11, 1935: /494; Bullitt, July 13, 1935: /546; Kirk, July 18, 1935: /566; and Gilbert, August 3, 1935: /732. See also *La Tribuna*, July 28, 1935; *NYT*, July 19, 31, 1935; *OM&TNN*, July 24, 1935; August 2, 3, 4, 6, 1935; *JA*, July 20, 26, 1935; *Journal de Moscou*, August 9, 1935; *The Times*, August 1, 1935; and Salvemini, *Prelude*, p. 253. For more on anti-Japanese attacks in the Soviet press regarding concessions in Ethiopia, see Kitada, August 21, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-2.
- <sup>127</sup> *MDN*, July 24, 1935.
- <sup>128</sup> J. Calvitt Clarke III, 'Periphery and Crossroads: Ethiopia and World Diplomacy, 1934-36', in *Ethiopia in Broader Perspective*, 1:699-712.
- <sup>129</sup> *OM&TNN*, July 31, 1935. For an impression in Buenos Aires of Japan's policy toward Ethiopia, see Yamazaki, August 10-11, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II-7-1.



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## *Daba Birrou's Mission to Japan*

### *Backdrop: rumors of military assistance*

At the Majestic Hotel in Addis Ababa on August 1, the *Osaka Mainichi* & *Tokyo Nichi Nichi* sponsored a roundtable discussion, 'Ethiopia in Danger'. Araya, Heruy, and thirteen other prominent Ethiopian officials attended, as did Iwabuchi Yosikazu. Yamauchi Masao, well-versed in Amharic, acted as chair. Iwabuchi, a correspondent for the *Osaka Mainichi*, took charge of the reception, and the 26-year-old Shoji recorded the proceedings. Although arranged in secret, British, American, and German journalists came to the hotel seeking information.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, rumors continued to move beyond the facts of Ethio-Japanese relations. On August 2, reports claimed that demonstrators in Rome had carried placards which had insultingly placed the Fascist Littorio on the Japanese flag. Pompeo Aloisi, head of the Italian delegation at Geneva, quickly denounced these rumors as baseless.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviets and Italians stepped up their symbolic complaints about the neo-mercantilist nature of Japan's economic policy and that Japan had long been supplying arms to Ethiopia. In early August, Italy again inserted the racial argument into the armaments discussion, claiming that certain European states were betraying white civilization by supplying arms to Ethiopia. Further, according to the accusations, the Japanese had opened an official trading agency at Aden, which was selling munitions and textiles.<sup>3</sup> The world's press joined Italy's to print reports from London and elsewhere on supposed Japanese arms shipments to Ethiopia. These extravagant worries about Japan's sending weapons, military advisers, and volunteers to Ethiopia, however, had no basis in reality.<sup>4</sup>

Japanese newspapers replied by asserting that imperialist Italy, charged with a sense of racial superiority, intended to make Ethiopia its protectorate. Asians had to throw off white supremacy and the Yellow Peril calumny. While Japan's observer at the League worried that war would become a racial conflict, the *Hochi* wrote that it did not want to 'pour oil on the fire of racial prejudice', but the Japanese had to make the white race see its injustice and errors.<sup>5</sup>

Despite popular Japanese attitudes, the emotional uplift of roundtables and repeated requests from Addis Ababa for help, a circumspect Tokyo carefully tried

to preserve a neutral position. Officials made this clear to the Ethiopians. On August 2, Afewerq, Ethiopia's chargé d'affaires in Rome, visited Sugimura for an hour and spoke about Italy's military strength, Ethiopia's military disorder, the League's powerlessness, and his skepticism of British or French support. Further, Ethiopia was importing only some few weapons from Kenya and Sudan by camel, because the Djibouti–Addis Ababa Railroad had refused their transport. After this sad litany, he asked for Japanese backing, although he conceded the difficulty of importing weapons from Japan. He hoped Japan might provoke difficulties for Italian shipping in the Far East, and, revealing his desperation, Afewerq even suggested that Japan send submarines to sink Italian transport ships. He tearfully pleaded that, if this aid were not feasible, Japan should officially support Ethiopia and allow volunteers to fight. Sugimura offered only a vague and noncommittal response. Hayle Sellase's hopes for Japanese arms were doomed.<sup>6</sup>

Putting an exclamation point to Sugimura's judicious response to Afewerq, a high official publicly asserted on August 6 that Japan's own army program made it unthinkable that Japan would divert munitions stocks to Ethiopia. This was especially true, he continued, because the government controlled the arms industry and was devoting its energies to the mission of keeping peace and order in East Asia. Even though Japan's public strongly sympathized with Ethiopia, Tokyo would retain its freedom of action in Northeast Africa. *Il Messaggero* expressed gratification at this statement and promised that 'no shadow can darken the cordiality of Italy's and Japan's friendship'.<sup>7</sup>

Simultaneously, Ethiopia's foreign ministry formally denied rumors that a Japanese military mission would visit Addis Ababa and that Japan was supplying arms to Ethiopia. Hayle Sellase himself in an interview with United Press News Agency declared that Ethiopia had not received any assurance of Japanese support. He added, however, that no international practice prevented Ethiopia from obtaining weapons from Japan. An official communiqué added that Ethiopia's relations with Japan were normal and correct. Ever paranoid, Rome feared that these statements did not reject an arms deal in the future, and official denials that Ethiopia had arranged military contracts with Japan failed to squelch rumors of such aid.<sup>8</sup>

Despite their exaggerations, the Italians were not completely off base. On August 7, as Daba Birrou was preparing to leave for Japan, Afewerq Gebre Iyesus gave Sugimura a letter from Hayle Sellase addressed to Japan's Emperor, asking for help. Noting that the letter was from the Sovereign and not the government, Sugimura explained in his report that confusion and disunity reigned in Ethiopia.<sup>9</sup>

As Hayle Sellase desperately combed the world for credits and equipment, Daba Birrou readied for his trip amid rumors of a 'secret' mission and that he would establish a consulate in Japan. He reportedly was to try to negotiate for large arms purchases by receiving credits of at least 50 per cent of the value of the orders. By contrast, on August 8 Amau stated that Japan had heard nothing of the reported Ethiopian arms-purchasing mission coming to Japan. He added that Ethiopia had not asked for visas, and Japan had not granted any, nor had Japan received any proposals regarding munitions. Behind closed doors, both the foreign ministry and the army had rejected offering any military aid to Ethiopia. While the 1934 decision to establish a legion in Addis Ababa on

January 1, 1936, still stood, the Japanese denied reports they had appointed Toshiharu Harima, a secretary to the embassy at Rome, to be chargé d'affaires in Addis Ababa.<sup>10</sup>

Ethiopia's minister in London visited Japan's chargé on the eighth and asked about newspaper reports that Japan had exported many weapons to Ethiopia. The chargé d'affaires told him that the stories were false. The disappointed minister nonetheless expressed gratitude for the sympathy the Japanese people had shown Ethiopia.<sup>11</sup>

By August, Japan's press began reporting that Rome regarded July's misunderstanding with Tokyo over Ethiopia as having ended. Italy's press had published Japanese denials of the alleged shipments of military materials and plans to send a military and commercial mission to Ethiopia. Satisfied with the denials, Italy's newspapers declared that those nations showing sympathy for Italy during the coming conflict would receive Italy's friendship.<sup>12</sup> Italo-Japanese reconciliation had begun – and along the realistic lines Japan's ambassador to Italy had all along been seeking.

### *Daba Birrou sets out for Japan & Japanese ambivalence*

Daba Birrou, Secretary of Ethiopia's Foreign Ministry and Director of the Holeta Military Academy, the national military school, left Addis Ababa at the beginning of the second week of August. He was young, modernized, well-known, close to Hayle Sellase, and highly regarded by foreign diplomats in Addis Ababa. Even though officials had tried to keep Daba Birrou's departure as secret as possible, many pro-Japanese officials and journalists saw the party leave the railway station in Addis Ababa.<sup>13</sup>

On August 11, Ethiopia officially reiterated that Daba would not be setting up a consulate in Tokyo but would be a first secretary to Ethiopia's honorary consul. Many were skeptical because Shoji was with him and because Japanese nationalists had organized the Ethiopian Rescue Society in early August to welcome him. Vinci reported from Addis Ababa that Daba was seeking accords, especially for supplying military materials in exchange for land concessions for growing cotton and for the rights to build a factory in Addis Ababa. Daba set sail from Djibouti on the thirteenth on board the French liner, *Atos II*.<sup>14</sup>

As Daba departed, Sugimura continued his line favoring Italy – to *Il Messaggero's* praise. On August 14, he reassured Suvich of Tokyo's support. Under-scoring his statement, the ambassador thanked the Italians for the reception given to a Japanese aeronautical mission then visiting Rome. Nevertheless, rumors about Japanese weapons exports to Ethiopia continued to dog Tokyo.<sup>15</sup>

Connecting colonial questions in Africa and political conditions in Europe, at mid-month Japan's press noted that the dispute between Italy and Ethiopia was becoming worse and had become enmeshed with problems elsewhere. Italy had promised France to mobilize one million men to strengthen its defenses along the Austrian frontier to foil Nazi plots, and the press observed that the 200,000 men Italy had sent to Ethiopia weakened that defense. Simultaneously, British attitudes and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of June 1935 were causing

anxiety in France and Italy, and the alienation of Italy and Britain even threatened peace.<sup>16</sup>

Japan's role in Ethiopia continued to confound Europeans, despite Shoji's clear-eyed reports, which downplayed Japanese influence there. Since Heruy's visit to Japan in 1931, Shoji wrote in mid-August, eighteen merchants and eleven other Japanese had visited Ethiopia. Some had opened shops in the capital, but none remained, and Shoji blamed their lack of foreign trade experience for their failure. Worse, some had caused resentment among the local merchants, and others had breached contracts to lose much of the good reputation the Japanese had previously enjoyed. Some claiming special connections with their home government, had had roused suspicions among local officials. Nonetheless, Japanese goods continued to find their way to Ethiopia, in 1934 making up 65 per cent of Ethiopia's total imports. There was room for expansion in shirting, twill weaves, khaki, glass, enameled goods, canned provisions, matches, cement, and more. But, a letter of credit was necessary for business with Japan, unlike transactions with Great Britain, and fees and other costs entailed transactions, problems that only a new Japanese legation could mitigate. Shoji advised that the Japanese had to help increase native purchasing power by promoting Ethiopia's exports. Finally, he suggested that any Japanese merchant without a sound business at home would fail in Ethiopia, especially given the proximity of Aden, the greatest market in that part of the world.<sup>17</sup>

Before and during Daba Birrou's long sea voyage, stories flooded Rome about presumed Japanese war materials and individuals heading to East Africa. From Shanghai at the end of July, Italian officials noted that a Japanese steamer bound for London would stop at Aden to disembark five Japanese officials, one of whom was a colonel of the Topographical Section of the General Staff. Then Vinci reported on military advisers, including two Japanese, at Djibouti. Italy's Royal Ministry of Colonies reported that a Japanese from Osaka, hoping to supply war materials to Ethiopia, had asked Ethiopia's foreign ministry to introduce him to Daba. Italy's representative from Alexandria reported that on September 3, Fukinami Katsumi, a correspondent for the *Osaka Asahi*, was leaving from Port Said, bound for Djibouti and then Addis Ababa.<sup>18</sup>

Japanese civilians continued to intrude into diplomatic matters. On August 20, the Great Japanese Turan Youth League of Tokyo published a protest which they had mailed to Mussolini. The document noted that the white and colored races had divided the world and that Italo-Ethiopian rivalry would start a racial war, which might lead to another world war. Supposed white superiority faced two exceptions – Japan had beaten Russia and Ethiopia had beaten Italy. The protest concluded: 'Dear colored brothers throughout the world! Stand up and save our poor brother Ethiopia who is going to fall in the clutches of that rapacious White Wolf! Slay that white-skinned bear who now threatens the life of the innocent Black Lamb! Do away with the White Peril.'<sup>19</sup> Among the association's directors were Yamauchi Masao and Shoji Yunosuke. George Padmore, who had long since left his days as a Comintern agent when he had warned blacks about the Japanese, now echoed this rhetoric.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, Italy's support for China continued to dog its relations with Japan. Flying from Rome in a Savoia-Marchetti plane, which he presented to



Chiang Kai-shek, General Silvio Scaroni succeeded Roberto Lordi as head of Italy's Air Mission to China. On September 7, a Chinese mission left for Italy, suggesting the possibility of a secret Italo-Chinese air agreement. The Nationalists used Italian aircraft – Breda, Fiat, Caproni, and Savoia-Marchetti – for field training, and some air cadets went every year to Italy for advanced training – and rumored service in East Africa in case of war there. The largest Italian manufacturers of aircraft parts, with offices in Milan and Shanghai, founded an Italian Aeronautical Consortium for China in September 1934, and work on the Sino-Italian National Aircraft Works began in 1935 in Nanchang. Fearing Japanese objection, however, construction languished, with limited production beginning only in April 1937.<sup>21</sup>

Taking heart in Italy's efforts and ever willing to provoke animosity toward Japan – and without evidence – in late August the Soviet press asserted that Japan had partially armed Ethiopia's army with modern military equipment and that military deliveries had increased. The Japanese were supposedly paying particular attention to Ethiopia's aviation and were helping in its organization. In the likely event of an Italo-Ethiopian war, Japan would supply Ethiopia with arms and ammunition. The press was still publishing canards about Japan's economic inroads and million-acre concessions. Further, and more crucially, Tokyo wanted to use its support for Ethiopia to gain from the Great Powers political leverage in China. Italy's embassy in Moscow noted that *Pravda* had violently denounced the 'White Wolf' manifesto of the Great Japanese Turan Youth League as mimicking Nazism in its racism. *Pravda*'s was a clear plea for Italy's co-operation in facing the twin threats to each, Germany and Japan.<sup>22</sup>

In this atmosphere, would Daba Birrou's coming visit accomplish anything positive? While some feared it might, Italo-Japanese rapprochement was also in the wind, and official Rome was beginning to pay more attention to Japanese government spokesmen and diplomats than to wild rumors. According to the Japanese press, *Il Giornale d'Italia* on August 27 had made a 'striking plea' for Italo-Japanese understanding in an editorial.<sup>23</sup> Responding, on August 29 the *Japan Times* editorialized that racial politics had its limits. 'With all due respect to the common consciousness of the colored races of the world, we believe that it is still too weak a force to make itself politically felt. Race feeling will continue, in the future as in the past, to intrigue those who balance world forces and read into the course of civilization their various interpretations.'<sup>24</sup>

What drew alarm in Moscow Sugimura praised as objective reporting. Italy and Japan were not in conflict but had to co-operate, because the two shared the same fate and policy. While wanting to secure its interests in Ethiopia, Italy was not seeking to monopolize profits there by closing doors or by using the racial issue.<sup>25</sup>

Tokyo did not want to move too quickly toward Rome. A foreign ministry spokesman on August 29 forcefully denied rumors that, to enlist Rome's support for its demands for naval parity at the forthcoming Second London Naval Conference, Tokyo had become more sympathetic toward Italy's Ethiopian adventure.<sup>26</sup> Later, Sugimura rejected rumors that Italy was removing pilot instructors from China to East Africa to appease the Japanese.<sup>27</sup>

Repeated denials in late August by Tokyo and Addis Ababa could not quash

rumors that Japan was sending arms, munitions, volunteers, and advisers to Ethiopia. Spokesmen insisted that Japan had not and would not send arms or ammunition to Ethiopia. Because munitions exports from Japan were under government control, it was impossible for private firms to conduct sales without official knowledge, and only one Japanese, a journalist, was then in Ethiopia. Japan had never negotiated with Italy on Ethiopia, nor had Tokyo bargained with Italy about Japan's naval demands. Japan would continue its policy of watchful waiting. The Ethiopians believed that Italy wished to use unease toward Japanese aims, real and imagined, to justify its aggressive policy toward Ethiopia. These Japanese concluded that the British, French, and others had propagated this rumormongering to help Italy protect a white stronghold.<sup>28</sup>

The reality was less dramatic. In early August, one Japanese citizen left the country by train for Djibouti. Thereafter, Ethiopians fondly told anyone who worried about Japanese economic and military penetration of their country that one third of the Japanese living in Ethiopia had left the country.<sup>29</sup>

Unconvinced, *Le Temps* on August 30 continued to relay rumors and fears rather than reality. The newspaper declared that permanent Japanese agricultural colonies in East Africa were a political and economic problem deserving Europe's attention. No one could take seriously Tokyo's statement that it had no political interests in Ethiopia. After 'lengthy negotiations' with Ethiopia, Kitagawa had won a concession of 'vast tracts' of uncultivated land on the high plateaus, where the Japanese could grow cotton of excellent quality. His 'methodically organized' exploitation 'soon brought happy results'. After only four years, cultivated lands had covered 'several hundred thousand hectares', and young, unmarried Japanese hoping to marry Ethiopian women had arrived. These rumors also deceived America's representative in Paris. Noting 'the insistence' with which *Le Temps* had had excoriated Japanese activities and concessions in Ethiopia, he suggested 'the possibility' that Japan was 'seeking indirect means for financing Ethiopia'. Japan wished to prolong Ethiopian resistance against Italy and was hoping for European complications, which 'could alone save Ethiopia in a campaign against Italy'.<sup>30</sup>

Further events confirmed Tokyo's cautious, benevolent neutrality, which indirectly helped Fascist aggression. Japan's representatives in Switzerland and Italy favored Rome. Then, on September 3, some of Japan's most esteemed ambassadors, including Matsudaira Tsuneo from London, Mushanokoji from Berlin, and Saito Hiroshi from Washington, met in Ottawa, Canada. Supporting the analogy between the Manchurian and Ethiopian crises, Mushanokoji publicly stated that the Japanese were behaving toward the Ethiopian affair as 'they expect the rest of the world should behave toward Japan's operations in Manchuria'. The dispute was 'a matter of vital importance only to the two nations concerned'.<sup>31</sup> The Italians saw the benefit in this comparison.<sup>32</sup>

Amid the confusion about Daba's trip, the Ethiopians spoke bravely. In mid-August Heruy told Yamauchi that Ethiopia would defend itself against invasion. His country would take no offensive operations and would not refuse favorable terms proposed by outside powers.<sup>33</sup> In early September, Emperor Haile Sellase cabled the Nihon Dempo News Agency, asking that it outline the threats confronting his empire. He promised that Ethiopia would try to solve its dispute

with Italy peacefully, and he added, 'I firmly expect right and justice to prevail and in any case we will defend our freedom and our territory against any aggression. I appreciate the numerous evidences of sympathy on the part of Oriental peoples.'<sup>34</sup> A week later, Princess Tsai, fourth daughter of Emperor and patron of the Ethiopian Patriotic Women's Society, appealed to Japan's sister organization for its support in Ethiopia's cause.<sup>35</sup>

Yet, Rome could not have worried too much for the consequences of Daba's sojourn. Pompeo Aloisi asked Japan's minister to Poland to assume the role of adviser to the League's committee on the Ethiopian controversy.<sup>36</sup>

### *Daba Birrou's arrival to enthusiasm & reticence*

In contrast to the official reticence, Daba Birrou's visit sparked as much public excitement in Japan as had Heruy's four years earlier. On September 9, nationalists sponsored three open lectures at the Osaka Asahi Hall, during which a journalist, a General Staff Officer, and Oyama Ujio spoke. The *Osaka Mainichi* & *Tokyo Nichi Nichi* on September 19 released to theaters Paramount Pictures' newsreels on military preparations by Ethiopia and Italy. Ethiopian cultural exhibitions at department stores, including one sponsored by the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi*, attracted many visitors. The Nagoya branch of *Osaka Mainichi* also sponsored other exhibits on Ethiopia. As a further promotion, the *Osaka Mainichi* & *Tokyo Nichi Nichi* published Shoji's four-part story describing Ethiopia's history, culture, and socio-political-economic system. The Ethiopian crisis also provided topics for popular dramas, short stories, and magazine cartoons. One small businessman opened 'Bar Ethiopia' and refused Italian customers, and the Japanese Council of Labor Unions stirred up public opinion for Ethiopia.<sup>37</sup>

Money, letters of encouragement, and applications from Japanese volunteers wanting to fight for Ethiopia poured in daily to Ethiopia's honorary consulate in Osaka. Honorary Consul Yukawa in early August went to Tokyo to try to secure passports for four volunteers wishing to enlist in Ethiopia's flying corps. They were willing to become Ethiopian subjects, if necessary. The commander of a 'certain Japanese flying corps' offered two planes for the young men to use. Similarly, Heruy told a Japanese correspondent in Addis Ababa that applications – some written in blood – from Japanese wanting to join Ethiopia's army had flooded his office. Yasujiro Kita was one of those wanting to volunteer. The twenty-eight-year-old Japanese resident in Berlin declared, 'I am proud of the Japanese spirit of chivalry. I cannot remain idle in face of the news of the Italo-Abyssinian conflict as long as Japanese blood runs in my veins.'<sup>38</sup> Kita was among fifteen or more, mostly Germans, who had approached the local Ethiopian Consul to volunteer for military service. Japan's press eagerly speculated that thousands of German nationals, including former Imperial Army field officers, had applied to fight in Ethiopia. The American and Italian embassies in Tokyo attributed popular Japanese enthusiasm to the *Osaka Mainichi's* and the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi's* propaganda, their ability to organize demonstrations, and to their money that paid for Daba's trip. Ethiopia's honorary consul, however, was refusing all applications; nor did Tokyo allow any Japanese to go. More symbol-

ically, patriots also sent 1,200 swords, relics of the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars. Akamatsu Shomo donated his family's ancient and honorable sword to pass on the patriotic samurai spirit Ethiopia needed to repel the invaders. A patriotic society presented an old Japanese sword to Emperor Hayle Sellase.<sup>39</sup>

While the Italians remained unclear about the meaning of his trip,<sup>40</sup> Daba, with Shoji at his side, arrived in Shanghai on September 10. He optimistically told those gathered that the League would prevent war in Ethiopia; but, in case of war, he promised, Britain would check the Italians. Resembling the Japanese in temperament, Ethiopians deeply respected them, and he expected that relations and trade between them would become increase. Shoji organized a meeting of about fifty members of Japan's Political, Commercial, and Cultural Institute in Shanghai. After speaking, Shoji introduced Daba, who, speaking in English, thanked them for their sympathy. Daba's group left Shanghai on September 12 on board the *Nagasaki Maru*.<sup>41</sup>

Knowing little more about Daba's visit than did the Italians, official Tokyo's attitude remained one of watchful waiting and protection of Japan's commercial interests – interests not terribly large anyway. Or, as Amau put it on September 13, Japan's attitude was 'that of a spectator watching a fight from a high window'.<sup>42</sup>

Daba and Shoji arrived in Nagasaki on September 13. The delegation greeting them included staff from the *Osaka Mainichi*, Yukawa Chuzaburo, Toyama Mitsuru, and about forty others. Drawing on the example of the Russo-Japanese War, Daba assured them that if war did break out, Ethiopia would humiliate Italy just as Japan had humbled Russia. Daba and Shoji visited the Suwa Shrine, and later in the afternoon, the *Osaka Mainichi* hosted them at the Geiyotei Restaurant. Daba, denying that he had come to negotiate in Japan for war materials or a loan to buy them, added that he might remain in Japan for more than a year. At 5 p.m., he and Shoji left for Kobe on the *Nagasaki Maru*.<sup>43</sup>

They arrived in Kobe the following afternoon to a rousing welcome on the pier. Among those greeting him were several representatives of the *Osaka Mainichi & Tokyo Nichi Nichi*, and from Yukawa and Tatsuji Takaya. There were also five representatives from the Ethiopian Rescue Society of Tokyo, members of the Patriotic Youth Association, and a corps of buglers from the Kobe Young People's Federation. Armed with paper flags, the Japanese cheered the visitors as the ship drew alongside the pier. On the ship's making fast, the principal Japanese boarded and welcomed Daba and Shoji, and they presented each man with a floral tribute. Newspapermen then surrounded Daba for an interview. For the crowd, Daba again drew comparisons between Ethiopia's conflict with Italy and Japan's with Russia. With Yukawa, Daba then left by automobile to call at Ethiopia's consulate and the *Osaka Mainichi*.<sup>44</sup>

At the *Mainichi's* offices, Daba once more asserted that Ethiopia did not want war, but if it did break out, he promised stout resistance. 'Spirit,' he said, would triumph 'over modern weapons.' He added that he would stay in Japan one or two years, depending on his government's orders, but he had received no instructions on setting up a Japanese legation in Addis Ababa. The *Mainichi's* editor-in-chief praised Ethiopian patriotism and devotion to their Emperor. Daba then

went to the paper's auditorium, festooned with the Japanese and Ethiopian flags, where he thanked the newspaper's chief officers and staff members for the kindness shown him by this paper's representatives at Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Nagasaki.<sup>45</sup>

Amid rumors of Japanese ships, volunteers, and munitions heading for Berbera or Djibouti and then to Ethiopia,<sup>46</sup> on September 15, Daba paid courtesy visits to Prince Higashi Kuna, Commander of the Fourth Division at Osaka, and to Inabata Katsutaro, President of the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Afterward, he paid homage at the Momoyama Imperial Mausoleum at Fushimi-Momoyama between Osaka and Kyoto. He next attended a welcoming tea given by the Ethiopian Rescue Society at the Miyako Hotel in Kyoto. Accompanied the whole time by Shoji and Yukawa, Daba's party returned to the Osaka Hotel. Daba reported to Heruy on the enthusiastic welcome he had received.<sup>47</sup>

Official Japan, however, remained reserved. Ambassador Giacinto Auriti called on Vice Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru at 5 p.m. on September 16. In their hour-long conversation, Shigemitsu reiterated Japan's strictly neutral position on Ethiopia because of tenuous Japanese interests there. Since its withdrawal from the League, Japan was preserving a rigorous policy of non-interference in Europe's political issues unless they affected East Asia. Japan, closely following events, worried about negative consequences to its foreign trade. The vice minister warned that Italy might find its freedom of action restricted if it remained in the League of Nations. Auriti confided to his superiors in Rome that the vice minister was kind, but busy, and he suggested that Italy's military attachés might provide a better vehicle for frank exchanges.<sup>48</sup>

Despite this official reticence, 'Ethiopians remained the rage in Tokyo', as one publication put it, with the 'yellow Emperor's subjects' lavishing 'hospitality on the chocolate Emperor's envoy'.<sup>49</sup> On Monday, the sixteenth, an audience of 6,000 packed Central Public Hall in Osaka to hear a lecture on Ethiopia sponsored by the *Osaka Mainichi*. Yukawa introduced Daba, who, speaking briefly in English, told the audience that he was to promote friendship and trade with Japan. He added that two great problems confronted East Africa: class struggle and racial conflict. He then drew a parallel with the foreign threat faced by Japan in the preceding century. 'Abyssinia,' he said, 'is now menaced by foreign foes as Japan was some 60 years ago when she was about to open her doors to the outside world. Because the country is small, because the country is non-Caucasian, because it is weak, it must meet the foreign challenge. These things we non-white people are forced to endure.'<sup>50</sup> After Daba, Shoji stepped on the platform to 'thunderous applause'. In his two-hour speech, he dwelled on Ethiopia's relations with Japan and Italy. He assured his listeners that as the only independent nation of the black race, Ethiopians were proud and confident of their ultimate victory. A film describing Ethiopia capped the long evening. The next night, despite inclement weather, a mammoth crowd packed the auditorium of the Kobe First Middle School for a similar performance, again sponsored by the *Osaka Mainichi*. After the latter meeting, Daba was a guest at a sukiyaki dinner.<sup>51</sup>

Back in Ethiopia, Hayle Sellase hoped to encourage Japanese enthusiasm for his country. In a private interview after a banquet given to foreign correspon-

dents and photographers at his palace on September 19, he told an *Osaka Asahi* correspondent, Fukinami Katsumi, that he regarded Japan as a sister country. While Ethiopia would use Japan as its model for modernization, the Emperor was veering away from the racial aspect of the coming war.<sup>52</sup>

As Daba Birrou was introducing himself to Japan, Araya Abeba remained in the news. In mid-September, Shoji reported that Araya, with his government's support, still wanted to marry a Japanese woman of good birth. At Araya's request, Shoji was carrying gifts to Sumioka and his wife, who had worked so hard on his betrothal with Kuroda. Rejecting the idea that this had been a publicity stunt, he promised that once the threat of war lifted, Araya would make another proposal.<sup>53</sup> Araya had also suggested that Ethiopia grant Japan concessions for industrial development. In speaking of the marriage, Shoji added that Japan's advance into East Africa would be part of the long-desired racial movement, the first step toward forming Greater Asia. Araya said that Ethiopia would gladly grant concessions for industrial development to Japan. The Emperor was ready to approve such grants and Araya had offered his services as an intermediary.<sup>54</sup>

Hailed by 2,000 members of the Black Dragons, the Patriotic Youth Association, the Nationalist Volunteer People's Party, the Ethiopian Defense Society, and kindred organizations, Daba, Yukawa, and Shoji arrived at the Tokyo train station at 8:30 a.m. on September 19. The Japanese carried banners that screamed 'Down With Italy!' and 'Rescue Ethiopia!' Boy Scouts addressed the gathering. Daba told the crowd that he intended to develop trade between the two countries. The visitors next shook hands with editors from the *Osaka Mainichi*. Led by Ethiopia's tricolor flag, they moved to the plaza in front of the Chiyoda Palace, where they bowed low. They then paid homage at the Meiji and Yasukuni shrines. Daba next visited the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi* headquarters and thanked officials for their courtesies. The *Osaka Mainichi* hosted Daba at a luncheon at the Tokyo Kaikan across from the Imperial Palace. That evening, he, Yukawa, and Shoji addressed a gathering at the Nihon Young Men's Hall. Disparaging Daba's frenetic activity, Auriti explained that he had come too late to generate anything of value.<sup>55</sup>

### *Failed official visits & popular enthusiasm*

The Italian ambassador was correct. Although Daba's movements in Japan enjoyed all the publicity the *Osaka Mainichi* and the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi* could command, despite the popular hullabaloo, influential Japanese were not involved. This had become painfully clear earlier the afternoon of September 19, when he called on Yoshida Tanichiro at the foreign ministry. Daba presented his government's letter of appointment and a letter from Heruy to Foreign Minister Hirota Koki, which officially revealed the purpose of his visit – his appointment as consular secretary. Yoshida soon divined, however, that Daba was also seeking aid, especially arms, ammunition, and advisers. As for the best way to ship munitions to Ethiopia, Daba quickly acknowledged that arms transfers through French and Italian territories would be impossible. He therefore suggested that Berbera in British Somaliland was the only port through which to send such

goods, with the journey from there to Ethiopia taking two days. Turning the conversation to his traveling companion, Daba confessed that Shoji had discovered his secret arms-seeking mission and that he had imposed himself on the venture with some support in Ethiopia. Daba expressed displeasure at being involved in the stunts Japanese newspapers had cooked up.<sup>56</sup>

Prompted by ultra-nationalist groups, Daba visited the general staff office in Miyakezaka and met with several officers, although he did not visit the Ministry of War itself.<sup>57</sup> This was a bad sign.

The army that Daba wished to court had already decided to keep neutral, watchful, waiting – or even lean toward Italy. In fact, some of the younger Japanese military attachés so believed in Japan's idealistic desire to rescue the oppressed population of China that they sympathetically compared it with Italy's announced ambition to civilize Ethiopia. As early as September 7, Admiral Takeshita Isamu told newspapermen and delegates at a convention of Veterans of Foreign Wars in New Orleans that he Two days later, Lieutenant Colonel Numata Takazo, the military attaché in Rome, urged his superiors that Japan 'push Italy' to war and not compromise with the League.<sup>58</sup> Enshrining these attitudes, on September 19, Japan's military intelligence produced a document predicting that competition in Africa might lead to war in Europe and deplete European power. Because Japan was neutral, the report worried little about Japan's relations with the two belligerents but conceded that Japan's public was focusing on economic problems and racial issues.<sup>59</sup>

On September 21, Daba again visited Yoshida Tonichiro and detailed the aid he wanted: a couple of surgeons; a major, captain, and lieutenant as military instructors; a couple of fortifications engineers; four telecommunications engineers; two artillery instructors; one airplane sound locator instructor; and general educators to train young Ethiopians. He also requested modern artillery, anti-aircraft guns, sub-machine-guns, automatic rifles, light tanks, and munitions. Daba additionally sought medical supplies for 10,000 people as well as tents and surgeons for a field hospital. Finally, Daba wanted military telephones, small tents for soldiers, trench telescopes and other tools, and soldier's rations. In return, Daba offered cash for the weapons and ammunition as well as Ethiopian products such as coffee, hides, beeswax, and honey for medicines and other items. For a facility to produce ammunition, he wished to arrange credits. The two foreign ministries were to negotiate the salaries for the instructors. He also hoped to send Ethiopian students to Japan.<sup>60</sup>

Later that day, Oyama Ujiro of the Ethiopian Problems Society held a welcoming party for Daba and 251 patriotic guests at the Seiyoken Restaurant at Ueno, Tokyo. Among the evening's sponsors were four lieutenant generals, two major generals, and two vice admirals, all retired, plus seven representatives, two peers, and various reactionary leaders, such as Toyama Mitsuru. Shoji described Ethiopia, and Daba relayed his Emperor's appreciation for Japanese sympathy. Daba also delivered two personal letters to Toyama. In the first, Emperor Hayle Sellase had written, 'It is sad that Ethiopia, a country with a long history, might be destroyed by the imperialists.' He added that as 'a Christian country and a proud people, we do not wish to fight a war, but we are determined to defend our country at any cost'.<sup>61</sup> In the second letter, Heruy thanked the

Japanese people for their friendship. Daba also gave Toyama a photograph of Hayle Sellase. Toyama then took the lead in cheering for Ethiopia's ruler and Daba led cheers for Japan's Emperor. The roundtable guests unanimously passed a resolution asking Daba to tell Hayle Sellase that, though the group could say nothing about the government's attitude, the Japanese people wished to help his country. The meeting broke up at 9:30 p.m. Western newspapers snidely pointed out that Daba, 'young', 'coal-black', and English-speaking, appeared dazed by the amount of handshaking by elderly patriots, and he did not realize that no Japanese of importance was present.<sup>62</sup>

Inspired by Daba's visit, Ethiopians became so popular in Japan that some began impersonating them in affairs of the heart. One posed as a millionaire and Cambridge University graduate searching for a Japanese bride. When police in September summoned him for questioning, the impostor admitted that he was a native of the African Gold Coast and that his only connection with Ethiopia was that he had once lived six months in Addis Ababa. He had fled the United States to escape arrest for fraud; his passport was not in order; and he had never graduated from Cambridge University. Another impostor was a Japanese college student with 'Al Jolson makeup' who had gone to a department store's dining room to court one of the waitresses: 'You are more beautiful,' he cooed, 'than Miss Masako Kuroda, the bride-elect of our Prince.' A detective picked up the would-be Lothario as he loitered about. Asked his identity, the young man replied in a poor imitation of broken Japanese, 'I am an Abyssinian'. Facing skepticism, however, the student confessed. The black stuff on his face, he explained, was soot he had rubbed in with cold cream, and naturally curly hair and lipstick around his mouth dramatized the effect. He had left the young lady unimpressed, but at least the police released him with only a reprimand.<sup>63</sup>

The outbreak of war did not cool popular passions. On October 8, newspapers announced that Japan had suffered its first 'casualty' in the hostilities. After having argued about the war with her husband, and despondent at news of Ethiopian reverses, his twenty-year-old wife drank rat poison. She was hospitalized in Kamakura.<sup>64</sup>

The war also caused problems for Japanese living in Italy. Fujiwara Yoshie, the famous tenor, was to have made a concert tour of Italy in March, but his Italian manager notified him that he should cancel because of the threatening situation. Other Japanese musicians in Italy, including the soprano Miura Tanaki, were seeking to leave Italy earlier than scheduled.<sup>65</sup>

At the end of September, Shoji wrote about how strongly many Ethiopians favored Japan. Among them, Shoji listed a poet and scholar in Adwa, the father of Kidane Miriam Abera, now the Vice Minister of Education and Shoji's friend. The Empress, another ardent supporter of Japan, had offered one of her imperial estates, where she was building a beautiful structure to house the prospective Japanese legation.<sup>66</sup>

Even though foreign ministry officials on September 22 had again declared that they did not want to commit Japan, Daba followed instructions from Addis Ababa, and on September 28, he visited Yoshida Tanichiro for a third time. Again, he heard that Tokyo would not let the Italo-Abyssinian dispute disrupt its own affairs.<sup>67</sup>



Oblivious to this reality, E.W. Martin, 'a negro politician', and two others in early October visited the Japanese embassy in Washington. Knowing they could not get American passports, they asked Japan to help American black volunteers get to Ethiopia or at least provide passage for them to the Red Sea. Nothing came of the approach, and the State Department thought Martin might have been a bit of a fraud.<sup>68</sup>

Hearing the news of Italy's attack on Ethiopia on October 3, Daba hurried back to Tokyo, and various right-wing organizations solicited him to attend their lectures and meetings. With great bravado, Daba told the *Osaka Mainichi*, 'We will crush them out! That's all that awaits the Italian invaders.'<sup>69</sup> Although Daba was to remain in Japan until the spring, this was the last of the intense coverage of Ethiopia's envoy in Japan's press. Even the *Osaka Mainichi*, which had played such a crucial role in promoting Daba's visit, no longer followed his activities.

This did not mean that the newspaper neglected the war. Further dramatizing its lack of coverage of Daba, the *Osaka Mainichi* engaged more journalists. Yamauchi was already sending dispatches from Addis Ababa, and Iwabuchi was traveling as a war correspondent with Ethiopia's army marching toward Harrar. He had already sent his first dispatch by telephone to Yamauchi in Addis Ababa, who relayed it to the Osaka office of *Mainichi*: 'In the event of war with Italy, every Abyssinian, even women and children, will fight to the finish and will meet as brave a death as the Japanese "Three Human Bombs".'<sup>70</sup> Shoji, whom the paper claimed was in Japan at Heruy's request, was to return to Ethiopia.

The *Osaka Mainichi* also engaged other journalists. Webb Miller, the European news manager of the United Press, was with the Italian army on the Mareb Front. Edward Beattie left from Germany bound for Addis Ababa, and Herbert Ekins had started for the front from Djibouti. Leonard Packard and Alfred Street were two United Press correspondents. For special features, the paper engaged Ladislav Farago and Sir Percival Phillips, the Addis Ababa correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*. The newspaper also lined up the United Press and Rengo news agencies. Its special correspondents in Europe included Nanjo Shinichi in London, Kiido Mataichi in Paris, Otsuka Torao in Berlin, and Kobayashi Hideo in Moscow. This was a staggering amount of talent and showed a remarkable commitment to describing and analyzing the war, and in the succeeding months the paper published a great deal on the war's fighting and diplomacy. The newspaper even sent its New York correspondent to Ethiopia, apparently to negotiate for the right of Japanese interests to set up broadcast facilities in Ethiopia.<sup>71</sup>

Similarly interested, on October 5, Japanese military authorities dispatched Naval Lieutenant Commander Yamamoto Yoshio, stationed in England, to Port Said to comment on military activities. Later, in November, they sent Captain Hattori Takushiro, a military attaché in France, to observe the battlefield.<sup>72</sup>

## Conclusion

The American embassy in Tokyo disparaged rumors that Daba Birrou would be able to buy munitions or secure a loan. The Americans thought the visit was

largely a newspaper stunt by the *Osaka Mainichi* and that Daba was trying to find out how far Japan would go to champion the colored races against whites. The embassy did not believe that Tokyo would alter its policy of non-interference in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict.<sup>73</sup>

Fate decreed that Daba Birrou's mission was Ethiopia's last concerted effort to attract Japan's political and military support. Because of similarities between Italy's aggressive activities in Ethiopia and Japanese action in China, Tokyo was aware that Japanese support for Ethiopia and condemnation of Italy might lead to international criticism of Japanese aggression. Thus, Japan did not give any substantial support to Ethiopia during the crisis. As Italy approached victory in the spring of 1936, Tokyo tacitly approved its aggression.<sup>74</sup>

Meanwhile, Britain showed greater fear of race war and more interest in its colonial holdings than in preserving the Stresa structure that was keeping Germany in check and preserving peace in Europe. Paris, albeit reluctantly, followed London's lead, and following the Anglo-German Naval Agreement, the three-power collaboration born at Stresa 'passed away like a dream'.<sup>75</sup> Then came the double failure of Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden's summer visit to Rome and the tripartite Anglo-French-Italian talks in August to moderate Italy's designs on Ethiopia. Japan perspicaciously saw that the Italo-Ethiopian War would pave the way for Italo-Japanese and Italo-German reconciliation borne on the back of common antipathy to London, Paris, and the League of Nations.<sup>76</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *OM&TNN*, August 4, 1935; *Le Courrier d'Ethiopia*, September 13, 1935; Yamada, *Masukaru no Hanayome*, p. 200; Bradshaw, 'Japan', p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> Auriti, August 2, 5, 1935; Aloisi, August 6, 1935: MAE Etiopia—FG b101 f4.

<sup>3</sup> For the months leading to Italy's attack on Ethiopia in October, as a small sample of Italian paranoia regarding military supplies going to Ethiopia from sources as diverse as Germany, Great Britain, France, the United States, Denmark, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Poland, Greece, the Netherlands, and Czechoslovakia, see *DDI*, 8th, 1, nos. 61, 82, 98, 124, 128, 170, 174, 177, 195, 205, 217, 220, 223, 277, 280, 304, 363, 436, 461, 476, 477, 528, 552, 601, 607, 625, 628, 641, 701, 713, and 715; *NYT*, July 31, Aug. 5, 1935; *MDN*, July 28, 1935; and *Corriere della Sera*, July 28, 1935. For more on rumors of Japanese supplies, see Pasqualucci, August 23, 1935; Dubbiosi, Aug. 26, 1935; Suvich, Aug. 27, 1935; Minister of War, Aug. 31, 1935; Sept. 4, 1935: Circular, Aug. 31, 1935; Sept. 4, 1935; Sept. 10, 1935: MAE Etiopia—FG b72 f3; Pasqualucci, Aug. 24, 1935; Auriti, Aug. 26, 1935; Circular, Sept. 7, 1935: MAE Etiopia—FG b13 f10; Circular, Sept. 5, 1935: MAE Etiopia—FG b62 f3; Agbi, 'Japanese', 133; and Agbi, *Japanese Relations*, 52–3.

<sup>4</sup> 'Ethiopia as News', *Japan Chronicle* (Aug. 1, 1935):142–3; *JA*, Aug. 8, 10, 1935; Stefani, August 6, 1935; Ricci, Aug. 7, 1935; Ottaviani, Aug. 13, 1935: MAE Etiopia—FG b62 f3; Oriente, Aug. 8, 1935; Guarnaschelli, Aug. 13, 1935; Circular, Aug. 12, 16, 1935; Ministero delle Colonie, Aug. 20, 1935: MAE Etiopia—FG b72 f3.

<sup>5</sup> *JT&M*, August 8, 1935; *NYT*, August 10, 1935; Eisuke, July 30, 1935; Sakuma, August 23, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–2–1.

<sup>6</sup> Sugimura, August 3–4, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–7–1; Tom C. Killion, 'Railroad Workers and the Ethiopian Imperial State: The Politics of Workers' Organization on the Franco-Ethiopian Railroad, 1919–1959', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 25 (1992):597; Ferretti, *Giappone*, p. 44; Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> Kirk, August 7, 1935: NARA 765.84/755; Sugimura, August 16, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–2; Auriti, August 5, 1935: MAE Etiopia—FG b101 f4; *JA*, August 6, 1935; *NYT*, August 7, 1935.

<sup>8</sup> Leone, August 7, 1935; Vinci, August 9, 1935; Rome, n.d.: MAE Etiopia—FG b72 f3; Auriti, August 8, 1935: MAE Etiopia—FG b117 f7; Kirk, August 8, 1935: NARA 765.84/897; *JT&M*, August 8, 9,

- 10, 11, 1935; *The Times*, August 7, 9, 10, 1935; *NYT*, August 9, 13, 1935; *JA*, August 8, 10, 11, 1935.
- <sup>9</sup> Ferretti, *Giappone*, p. 45.
- <sup>10</sup> Auriti, August 10, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3. In NARA see Neville, September 18, 1935: NARA 894.00/93; Kirk, August 8, 1935: 765.84/897; Kirk, August 7, 1935: 765.84/755; and Southard, November 21, 1935: 702.8494/2. Also see *MDN*, August 11, 1935; *OM&TNN*, August 10, 1935; and Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 20.
- <sup>11</sup> Fujii, August 8–9, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–7–1.
- <sup>12</sup> *JT&M*, August 9, 1935.
- <sup>13</sup> *OM&TNN*, August 13, 1935; September 15, 1935; *JA*, September 14, 1935; *NYT*, September 19, 20, 1935; *The Times*, September 20, 1935; J. Calvitt Clarke III, 'Dashed Hopes for Support: Daba Birrou's and Shoji Yunosuke's Trip to Japan, 1935', in *Proceedings of the XVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Siegbert Uhlig (ed.) (Hamburg: Aethiopistische Forschungen, 2006), pp. 224–32; Bradshaw, 'Japan', pp. 347–58.
- <sup>14</sup> Auriti, August 15, 1935; Vinci, August 11, 1935; August 13, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b101 f4; Sbrana, August 13, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3; *OM&TNN*, August 13, 1935; *JT&M*, August 13, 1935; Unno, 'Dainiji Italia-Ethiopia Senso', pp. 206–7.
- <sup>15</sup> Colloquy with Sugimura, August 14, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3; Kirk, August 11, 1935: NARA 765.84/797.
- <sup>16</sup> *JT&M*, August 16, 1935; also see *Il Giornale d'Italia*, June 15, 18, 1935.
- <sup>17</sup> *OM&TNN*, August 17, 20, 1935.
- <sup>18</sup> Suvich, July 27, 1935; To Minister of War, August 27, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b72 f3; Vinci, August 30, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b101 f4; Ghigi, September 3, 1935; Lojacono, July 30, 1935; Vinci, July 31, 1935: Etiopia–FG b62 f3; Sugimura, August 16, 19, 1935; Okamoto, August 26, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–2; Ferretti, *Giappone*, p. 46.
- <sup>19</sup> 'Arise, All Colored Brothers!' August 20, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3. Also see William Henry Chamberlin, 'Japan and the Abyssinian Crisis', *The Spectator* (November 1, 1935):711–12.
- <sup>20</sup> *OM&TNN*, August 22, 1935; *The Times*, September 17, 1935; *JT&M*, August 21, 26; October 10, 1935; Sakuma, August 23, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–2–1; Greenwood, 'A Betrayer of the Negro Liberation Struggle', *International Press Correspondence* 14 (June 29, 1934): 968. For comments on a possible racial war, see: *NYT*, August 2, 13, 1935; *JT&M*, August 14, 1935; November 23, 1935; *OM&TNN*, August 13, 14, 24, 1935; and *JA*, August 14, 1935. For more on Padmore, see James R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary: George Padmore's Path from Comintern to Pan Africanism* (New York: Praeger, 1967). See also Ken Ishida, 'Racisms Compared: Fascist Italy and Ultra-Nationalist Japan', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 7 (October 2002):380–91. This protest was widely circulated in the colonial world and continued to bother Europeans well into 1936. Corti, February 14, 1936: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>21</sup> Tamagna, *Italy's Interests*, pp. 17–20; *JT&M*, July 31, 1935; September 10, 1935; *JA*, September 13, 1935; Attolico, February 16, 1935: MAE URSS b15 f2; *FRUS*, 1935, 3:801–2.
- <sup>22</sup> *MDN*, August 26, 1935; Kitada, August 21, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–2; Sugimura, August 21–September 12, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–7–1; Arone, October 16, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b117 f7.
- <sup>23</sup> *OM&TNN*, August 28, 1935; *Il Giornale d'Italia*, August 27, 1935; Kirk, August 26, 1935: NARA 765.84/942.
- <sup>24</sup> *JT&M*, August 29, 1935; *NYT*, August 10, 1935.
- <sup>25</sup> Sugimura, August 31, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–2; *MDN*, August 27, 1935; Buti, August 27, 1935: MAE URSS b. 17 f. 2.
- <sup>26</sup> *JT&M*, August 30, 1935; *OM&TNN*, August 28, 1935; Auriti, August 30, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3.
- <sup>27</sup> Sugimura, October 2, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–7–2.
- <sup>28</sup> General Staff, September 1935: GSK A461 ET/II I–1; Sakuma, August 23, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–2–1; *DDI*, 8th, 2: no. 2; *NYT*, August 30, 1935; *JT&M*, August 30, 1935. In NARA, see Engert, August 24, 1935: 884.20/44; August 24, 1935: 884.24/73; and August 24, 1935: 784.94/23.
- <sup>29</sup> *JA*, October 2, 1935; *JT&M*, October 4, 1935.
- <sup>30</sup> *Le Temps*, August 30, 1935; *NYT*, August 15, 29, 30, 1935; *JA*, September 5, 1935; Dawson, September 3, 1935: NARA 784.94/22; Halden, 'Diplomacy', pp. 176–7.
- <sup>31</sup> Ottawa, July 17, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3; Auriti, October 28, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b117 f7; Ferretti, *Giappone*, p. 48; Léon Archimbaud, 'Le Conflit italo-abyssin vu d'Extrême-Orient', *La Revue du Pacifique* (July–August 1935):449–53.
- <sup>32</sup> Aloisi, September 22, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b13 f10; Aloisi, September 12, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b101 f4.
- <sup>33</sup> *OM&TNN*, August 24, 1935.
- <sup>34</sup> *JA*, September 7, 1935.

- <sup>35</sup> *OM&TNN*, September 15, 1935.
- <sup>36</sup> *JA*, September 8, 1935.
- <sup>37</sup> *NYT*, October 5, 1935; *OM&TNN*, August 16, 1935; October 23, 1935; September 13, 1935. See Shoji's illuminating four-part series in *OM&TNN*, August 14, 15, 16, and 17, 1935; for more of Shoji's articles, see July 12, 17, 28, 31, 1935; August 4, 18, 20, 1935; and September 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, 29, 1935. See also Aoki Sumio, 'Sanmai no Echiopia chizu: Italia-Echiopia sensō to Nihon', *Gekkan Afurika* 36 (June 1996):19–24; Hayashi Nikuta, 'Hoerō! Echiopia', *Nihon hyōron* 10 (Nov. 1935):386–99; and *Journal de Geneve*, October 29, 1935: GSK A461 ET/11–2–2.
- <sup>38</sup> *OM&TNN*, August 10, 1935; September 1, 1935.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, September 14, 20; August 10, 1935; *JT&M*, August 20, 1935; *JA*, August 7, 1935; September 22, 1935; 'Letters Written in Blood', *Japan Chronicle* (September 26, 1935):407; 'To the Last Man. Ethiopian Emperor Asks for Sympathy of Japan', *Japan Chronicle* (September 26, 1935):407; *NYT*, September 22, 1935; Auriti, September 11, 1935; October 2, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b101 f4; Sbrana, September 9, 1935: Etiopia–FG b42 f1; Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', pp. 5–6, 11–12.
- <sup>40</sup> Minister of War, August 27, 1935; MAE Etiopia–FG b72 f3; Vinci, August 30, 1935: MAE Etiopia – Guerra b101 f4; *NYT*, August 30, 1935.
- <sup>41</sup> *JT&M*, September 12, 14, 1935; *JA*, September 11, 1935; 'Ethiopian Envoy to Japan', *Japan Chronicle* (September 19, 1935):372; Neyrone, September 19, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b101 f4; China, September 19, 1935: MAE Etiopia b24 f3; Auriti, September 12, 1935: MAE Etiopia – Fondo di Guerra b62 f3.
- <sup>42</sup> *NYT*, September 14, 1935; Auriti, September 12, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3.
- <sup>43</sup> Neville, October 3, 1935: NARA 765.84/2012; Neville, October 18, 1935: NARA 894.00/94; *OM&TNN*, September 14, 15, 1935; *JA*, September 12, 14, 1935; 'Italy Like Tsarist Russia', *Japan Chronicle* (September 26, 1935):407.
- <sup>44</sup> *OM&TNN*, September 15, 1935.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, September 15, 1935.
- <sup>46</sup> Scalise, September 14, 1935; Circular, September 21, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3; Circular, September 18, 25, 1935; Soddu, September 16, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b72 f3; Gabba, September 23, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b13 f10.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, September 17, 1935; *NYT*, September 19, 20, 1935; *JT&M*, August 10, 11, 1935.
- <sup>48</sup> *DDI*, 8th, 2: 115, 130; Auriti, September 14, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3; Auriti, September 17, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b101 f4; *OM&TNN*, September 18, 1935; *JA*, September 18, 1935.
- <sup>49</sup> 'Black Rage', *Time* (October 7, 1935):21.
- <sup>50</sup> Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', p. 5.
- <sup>51</sup> *OM&TNN*, September 17, 18, 1935. For Shoji's entire speech, see September 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 1935.
- <sup>52</sup> *JA*, September 22, 1935; Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', pp. 5–6; 'Ethiopian Envoy Arrives', *Japan Chronicle* (September 19, 1935):372.
- <sup>53</sup> *JA*, September 17, 1935.
- <sup>54</sup> *OM&TNN*, September 29, 1935; *NYT*, September 2, 1935.
- <sup>55</sup> *OM&TNN*, September 20, 1935; *NYT*, September 19, 20, 1935; *The Times*, September 20, 1935; *MDN*, September 20, 1935; 'God-Sent Troops', *Time* (September 30, 1935): 21; Auriti, September 20, 1935; Suvich, September 29, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b101 f4; Neville, October 3, 1935: NARA 765.84/2012. For more on trade promotion in Africa, see *JT&M*, October 31, 1935.
- <sup>56</sup> Unno, 'Dainiji Italia-Echiopia Senso', p. 207.
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 210; *FRUS*, 1935, 3:393–4; *JA*, September 9, 1935; *JT&M*, September 10, 1935.
- <sup>59</sup> Ferretti, *Giappone*, p. 48; Yamada, *Masukaru no Hanayome*, pp. 216–17; Auriti, September 23, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b101 f4.
- <sup>60</sup> Unno, 'Dainiji Italia-Echiopia Senso', p. 208. Agbi claims that the Japanese were tempted. As one Foreign Ministry official asserted, 'all we need is British verbal declaration allowing transit'. Agbi goes on to say that there is no evidence suggesting that the foreign ministry ever consulted Britain on the issue. He believes that the *Genoa Maru*, which had set sail for East Africa in late August 1935, carried military equipment and volunteers. This seems doubtful. Agbi, 'Japanese', p. 133; Agbi, *Japanese Relations*, pp. 52–3. For Italian fears of arms shipments – along with Japanese denials – see Scalise, June 26, 1935: Etiopia–FG b62 f3; Circular, July 3, 4, 1935: Etiopia–FG b72 f3; Auriti, July 10, 1935: Etiopia–FG b101 f4.
- <sup>61</sup> Oguri, September 23, 1935: GSK A461 ET/11–2–1.
- <sup>62</sup> *NYT*, September 22, 1935; *OM&TNN*, September 24, 1935; *The Times*, 23, 1935; 'Japan', *Time* (September 30, 1935):21.

- <sup>63</sup> *JA*, September 24, 1935; *JTM*, Sept 27, 1935.
- <sup>64</sup> *JA*, October 8, 1935; Bradshaw, 'Japan', p. 342.
- <sup>65</sup> *JTM*, October 4, 1935.
- <sup>66</sup> *OM&TNN*, September 28, 1935.
- <sup>67</sup> Neville, October 18, 1935: NARA 894.00/94; Unno, 'Dainiji Italia-Echiopia Senso', p. 208.
- <sup>68</sup> State Department, October 7, 1935: NARA 884.2221/35.
- <sup>69</sup> *OM&TNN*, October 5, 1935.
- <sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, September 27, 1935. The 'Three Human Bombs' were three soldiers who blew themselves up to destroy wire in front of a Chinese position guarding Shanghai. Their sacrificial suicides made possible a desperate Japanese assault, and the three were immortalized in popular Japanese culture. Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998): pp. 71, 77, 78, 157.
- <sup>71</sup> *OM&TNN*, October 3, 5, 1935; November 10, 1935; *JA*, September 9, 1935; Bradshaw, 'Japan', pp. 343–4.
- <sup>72</sup> Unno, 'Dainiji Italia-Echiopia', 220; Corti, February 14, 1936: MAE Etiopia b24 f3; Auriti, October 29, 1935; Corti, February 27, 1936: MAE Etiopia–FG b117 f7; Scalise, Sept. 14, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3. For exaggerated reports of Japanese going to Ethiopia, see Ouno, Oct. 4–5, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–7–2.
- <sup>73</sup> Sbrana, October 23, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b117 f7; Neville, October 18, 1935: NARA 894.00/94; Auriti, September 11, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b101 f4.
- <sup>74</sup> Furukawa, 'Japan's Political Relations', p. 12.
- <sup>75</sup> *OM&TNN*, August 20, 1935.
- <sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, July 12, 1935; August 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24, 30, 1935; *JTM*, August 16, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 29, 1935; September 8, 17, 20, 1935; October 4, 7, 8, 12, 1935; January 5, 1936; February 4, 1936; *MDN*, April 21, 1936; May, 10, 1936; *NYT*, June 19, 1935; August 11, 15, 16, 1935; September 17, 22, 1935; 'The Ethiopian Dispute Reaches a Crisis', *Geneva* 8 (September 1935):101–4.

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# 10

## *The End of Stresa, the Italo-Ethiopian War, & Japan*

### *Collapse of the Stresa Front*

Like the Japanese, the Soviets were offering little tangible support to Ethiopia beyond verbal forays. George Padmore starkly denounced the effort: 'The Soviet Union failed to send a ruble, a bandage roll, or a ton of wheat to Ethiopia.'<sup>1</sup>

The last thing that Foreign Commissar Litvinov wanted was a confrontation between Britain and Italy, as this would paralyze all efforts to form a united front against Germany and Japan. During the summer of 1935, he had worked hard to delay discussions at Geneva on Ethiopia, and he told Anthony Eden how earnestly he hoped to avoid in Ethiopia the example of Manchuria, where the League had proved impotent. Blending a Marxist outlook on colonial problems with the dictates of Soviet expediency necessitating peace, Litvinov repeated this theme many times over the next year in the League's public forum, where he showed remarkable ambivalence toward Italy's aggression in Ethiopia. Ethiopia's fate merely threatened the League's ability to deal with aggression elsewhere, and for that reason alone was the Italo-Ethiopian conflict worth the energies of the League's representatives. If collective security in or out of the League – it is hard to imagine that Stalin truly cared where – caved in to a weak aggressor, what would happen when the aggressor was strong?<sup>2</sup>

It was London that sucked Paris and Moscow into the vortex of anti-Italian League action. Just when the USSR, Britain, Italy, and France seemed to be moving toward one another in the spring of 1935, Britain undercut common ground by signing the Anglo-German Naval Agreement. Then, after July, Britain stood firmly against Italy's move on Ethiopia and an Anglo-Italian naval war in the Mediterranean seemed possible. As London dragged the USSR and France away from Italy, Rome responded on December 28 by denouncing the Rome Accords and its Stresa commitments. Italy was well along the road to its future alliance with Germany.<sup>3</sup>

### *Japan's initial reaction to war*

While effusive expressions of Japanese public opinion fed suspicions among the

Great Powers, government policy proved more hardheaded. Japan, after all, also had to consider its relations with those powers and had few resources anyway to divert to East Africa.<sup>4</sup>

After Italy attacked Ethiopia on October 3, two broad opinions emerged in Japan. Ambassador Sugimura, who leaned strongly toward Italy, urged caution, neutrality, and realism. He pushed for circumspection toward League-imposed economic sanctions against Italy, fearing they could lead to war between Italy and other Western powers. Non-League members, including Japan, could not escape the repercussions. Further, when Japan had left the League, Tokyo had rejected the collective system embodied in Article 16 of the League Covenant. Now, Japan should not support the League because it was treating Italian aggression in Ethiopia as it had Japan's incursion into Manchuria. Suzuki Kuma, later a secretary in the Japanese legation in Addis Ababa, seconded Sugimura, insisting that Japan express its sympathy toward Ethiopia only 'in a non-political sphere where difficulty can hardly arise'.<sup>5</sup>

Taking a similar stance, Japanese officials in Geneva grumbled that the government faced the dilemma of taking action that would arouse accusations of supporting the League or of inaction that would inflict charges of backing Italy. These officials openly endeavored to prevent any hint of co-operating with the sanctions the League was then imposing.<sup>6</sup>

On October 4, Amau declared that Japan would not commit itself on what it might do if Geneva applied sanctions on Italy. Not excluding the possibility of co-operating, Tokyo wanted the situation clarified first, and international law and treaties would guide Japan. Amau denounced press reports that a Japanese military mission had gone to Addis Ababa; Tokyo had neither issued a single passport for Ethiopia nor granted any license to export arms or munitions to Ethiopia. Even so, Yet, Rome still worried.<sup>7</sup>

Ambassador Auriti appreciated those in Japan's government seeking to work with Italy, and he pleaded for calm in Rome. Interestingly, he noted Shoji's many articles pointing out problems in furthering Japanese commerce with Ethiopia. Calling him a commercial agent as well as a correspondent, Auriti sensibly concluded that his 'assertions, apparently objective and easily checked ... would completely deny the rampant rumors of vast Japanese economic affairs in Ethiopia'.<sup>8</sup> Auriti also counseled the Japanese. Only days after Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, for example, he urged them not to believe doctored reports that the Italians had bombed an Ethiopian Red Cross hospital. 'Can you believe that Italy,' he asked, 'with a glorious history of thousands of years, would resort to such tactics?'<sup>9</sup>

Many in Japan's army appreciated Auriti's approaches. On October 10, behind closed doors, Major Seizo Arisue of the Adjutant General's Department handed Yoshida Tanichiro a policy paper. It described the government's policy as hoping for an early and peaceful solution to the Italo-Ethiopian conflict and preserving friendly relations with both Italy and Ethiopia. The military, on the other hand, hoped to prolong the conflict. Arisue's report suggested that the government should 'restrain public opinion and popular demonstrations' and added, 'If England and others solicit Japan to support sanctions against Italy, Japan should reject the advance and show our favorable attitude toward Italy.'<sup>10</sup>

At the same time, Japan should send a minister who would secretly support Ethiopia. Hoping to learn from parallels between Italy's struggle in Ethiopia and Japan's own fighting in China, Japan should also send officers to observe the conflict but supply neither side with weapons. The military staff wanted Japan to promote conflict among the European Powers, thus freeing the Far East for Japanese exploitation. Fearing criticism of Italy's military action as indirectly criticizing Japan's own behavior in Manchuria, the ministry of war hoped to smother the pro-Ethiopian movement in Japan.<sup>11</sup>

Rejecting Amau's earlier reticence, Sugimura made Japan's position clear to his fellow ambassadors in Rome. Tokyo would abstain from co-operating with the League of Nations, would not support the League's harsh sanctions policy, and would not even answer the League's communications. Japan would continue its open market for each belligerent, but Sugimura expected little business as Ethiopia was broke. That Japanese steamers had cancelled Italian ports-of-call was not partisanship, but simply showed that there was little merchandise they could carry to and from Italy.<sup>12</sup>

These official opinions and statements did not deter the second broad opinion in Japan. When word of Italy's invasion reached Japan, Toyama called a meeting on October 3 to support Japan's fellow colored friends in Ethiopia. Held at the Seiyoken Hotel in Ueno Park in Tokyo, Toyama displayed his autographed portrait of Hayle Sellase. Then, about thirty members of the Ethiopian Problems Society met at the Aeronautical Hall on the night of October 5 to express their unabated support for Ethiopia. They sent Heruy a pretentious cablegram signed by Toyama: 'The Japanese nation indignantly condemns Italian aggression. God bless righteous Ethiopia. In a war, air raids are not the deciding factor. Never lose courage. Transmit this message to your commanders.'<sup>13</sup>

As Japan's reactionary societies continued to fulminate against Italy, newspaper editorials generally sympathized with Ethiopia and attacked the League for its ineptitude. Even while advocating strict neutrality in the dispute, they also attacked Italy for racial discrimination and claimed that war would exacerbate racial problems. Most papers bitterly rejected comparisons between Italy's actions in Ethiopia and Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931.<sup>14</sup>

Some in government leaned toward this second approach to the Italo-Ethiopian conflict. On the evening of October 12, Tsuchida Yutaka spoke at Honjo Public Hall under the auspices of several pro-Ethiopian groups. Oyama Ujio and Ito Kiyoshi, a professor at Nihon University, also spoke. These groups held three more meetings in Tokyo and more in Osaka, Kyoto, and Kobe, and the organizers solicited contributions, which they sent to Addis Ababa.<sup>15</sup>

Trying to influence the argument, Mussolini told an *Osaka Asahi* correspondent in mid-October that he admired the Japanese because they were courageous, strong, and capable of great things. He also praised their high birthrate and respect for tradition while keeping 'abreast with the time'. He added that Italy and Japan shared many characteristics, especially their geographical positions. He, therefore, especially regretted the misunderstandings by public opinion on both sides in July, which had happened because a British journalist had misquoted Sugimura on Japan's position toward Ethiopia by omitting the word 'political'. 'I am glad,' Mussolini added, 'that the trouble has been cleared



up'. Il Duce denied that Italy had raised the racial question. 'There are 3,000,000 people in Abyssinia,' he said, 'who belong to the Semitic race, not the black race. These three millions have subjugated 7,000,000 people of other races.' He went on to note that the Japanese were 'supposed to belong to the yellow race'. He then asked the correspondent a rhetorical question: 'Why do the Japanese aviation officers who visited this country and you, too, do not have yellow skins?' Mussolini encouraged the correspondent to cable quickly the contents of the interview to Japan.<sup>16</sup> In extolling similarities uniting Italy and Japan, Mussolini might have added that, in invading Ethiopia, he was mimicking Japanese actions in North China, perhaps even to the extent of setting up a 'pretended independent State' in the territory surrounding Adwa.<sup>17</sup>

The Italo-Ethiopian War and possible Anglo-Italian conflict provided mixed commercial opportunities for the Japanese. Despite some fears that war might force a decline in Japan's East African trade, many thought that a long war and successfully imposed League sanctions would benefit Japan. Its businessmen could increase exports of cotton yarn, cotton cloth, woolen goods, raw silk, silk waste, silk goods, rayon yarn, and rayon and rayon-mixed fabrics. Heavy industries would boom and Japanese steel exports would surge. Imports, including salt, soda ash, phosphates, raw cotton, and gum, would continue. In every field, except wheat and chemicals, Japan would gain, thought many. Some hoped that the decline in Italian shipping in the Orient would be good for Japan and that tension in the Mediterranean would bring a rush of charters to Japanese shipping. Exporters, however, began demanding wartime insurance rates for ships passing through that sea, and fuel-suppliers in Naples canceled their contracts to refuel Japanese ships. Japanese companies began diverting their ships through Cape Town instead of Suez, increasing freight rates between Yokohama and London. Even while the Japanese were making it clear that they would protect their commercial rights, some exporters denied themselves possible profits. Leading Japanese shoemakers began declining inquiries from Italian traders in Naples because they might see military use. One firm refused to deliver 100,000 pairs of boots to Italian Somaliland, and the Mitsui Bussan Company refused large orders for beer and underwear from the Italian government. Not all were so altruistic. Japan seemed willing to supply Italy with the essential foodstuffs in case the League applied economic sanctions, and in early February 1936, the Japanese shipped 60,000 grams of silkworm eggs on an Italian freighter out of Yokohama. In truth, however, Japan had little trade and only a small consular representation in Italy.<sup>18</sup>

On the morning of October 15, Auriti called at the foreign ministry to ask about Japan's attitude if the League of Nations applied sanctions against Italy. Vice Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru told Auriti that Japan had already severed relations with the League and had no obligation to stand by Geneva's decisions or even to declare its attitude. His government did not intend to support or criticize either Italy or Ethiopia. While some in the world's press saw ambivalence, in truth, Japan was not going to join in sanctions.<sup>19</sup>

Extensive red-penciling in the documents in Japan's archives evidence Tokyo's great interest in sanctions issues. For example, one official underscored parts of a press account describing the sanctions attitudes of many countries and

listing banned exports. He commented, 'To stop all Italian exports is more than an economic measure: it amounts to an act of hostility amply justifying Italian countermeasures.'<sup>20</sup> Sanctions and the war also affected Tokyo's relations with third parties. Japan's chargé d'affaires in Vienna, for example, reported that Austria, with its important trade relations with Italy, was reluctant to support economic sanctions. Austrian newspapers were trying to turn the public's interest from the Italo-Ethiopian conflict toward the East Asian issues and were raising alarm at Japanese expansion in Northern China, which threatened European peace.<sup>21</sup>

Sugimura and the foreign ministry notwithstanding, the army dictated attitude and policy once war had broken out. Both the ministry and the army agreed that public passions would not affect policy, and Tokyo announced that it would observe strict neutrality, calmly watch the East African situation, and ignore League policy. The Japanese told the Italians – but not Daba – that they would not send loans, arms, munitions, volunteers, or a military mission to an Ethiopia that was unable to pay in any case. Japan also had to consider international complications and had few resources to offer East Africa. Perhaps the government resented the fact that various right-wing organizations were dragging Daba around the country. The army did, however, favor selling other Japanese goods and medicines to Ethiopia, and with army support, the foreign ministry decided, despite the war, to open its legation to safeguard Japanese rights and interests in Ethiopia. Tokyo replied to Daba's requests only through its instructions of December 4 preparing for the appointment of Secretary Suzuki Kuma in France as minister *ad interim* to Ethiopia. He would open Japan's new legation in January 1936.<sup>22</sup>

Tokyo did not have total control of its citizens, and the Japanese did send some small amount of medical and other aid to Ethiopia. The first shipment of medical supplies arrived in early September 1935. At the end of October, Heruy sent a message to Prince Tokugawa Iyesato, President of the Japanese Red Cross, announcing that Ethiopia had just formed its own Red Cross Society, with himself as president. He begged for Japanese support for the new organization, a plea that Yamauchi seconded.<sup>23</sup> In November, Japan consigned some medical supplies including tents to Ethiopia. In mid-February 1936, the Japanese Red Cross shipped twenty stretchers, five double tents for twenty people, five carpets for tents, and 138 cases of medical supplies. Most of the drugs, which came without instructions, were preventatives or well-known drugs as quinine. Japan's Patriotic Women's Association offered medical equipment to Ethiopia. The Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry planned to provide straw sandals to Ethiopians to protect their feet against poison gas. The Ethiopians thanked Japan.<sup>24</sup>

Despite this help given to Ethiopia, Japan's overall attitude impressed Ambassador Auriti. On November 7, he explained to Rome that neutral, watchful waiting had marked Tokyo's policy since the Sugimura Affair, despite Japan's economic interests in Ethiopia and nationalist talk of war between white and colored peoples. In fact, the Japanese admired Mussolini, and many in the foreign ministry and military were supporting Italy. With Great Britain and the League at odds with Italy, Japan saw the war as an opportunity to expand its

influence over China. Expecting a European war, Japan was arming, and Auriti predicted that if war did break out, Japan would side against Britain. He saw an opportunity for rapprochement with Japan, but Italy had to assure the Japanese that its activities in China were economic and not designed to strengthen Chinese resistance to Japan.<sup>25</sup>

Auriti asked his government to tell Stefani, the Italian news agency, not to speak of the Yellow Peril. Nor should the agency mention Japan's exploitation of workers and women, its dumping, or its designs to monopolize Ethiopia's market, or anything on China, except a little on Italy's trade interests there. Above all, Italy's press should be prudent in its comments on Manchukuo and recognize Japan's need for expansion. Despite inadequate economic resources and a growing population, Japan had rapidly progressed because of its patriotism, industriousness, and discipline. Japan, he added, was useful in guarding the Far East against Communism. If Italy's press fell into line, Auriti believed that Japan's press agency, Rengo, would immediately respond with articles favorable to Italy.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time, the Japanese readily assured Rome that they wanted to increase mutual trade and that they were ready to obstruct efforts to apply sanctions against Italy. Sugimura even volunteered the Mitsui Bussan Company as a source for vital petroleum products, and Mussolini happily accepted. Driving home this tilt toward Italy, in December, Sugimura told Aloisi that Daba wanted to get nurses and doctors, military advisers, and arms and munitions but Tokyo had refused his supplications from the beginning. Mussolini asked his ambassador in Tokyo to confirm Sugimura's statements.<sup>27</sup>

Sugimura sent a strong signal to Italians on December 3 when he and his wife attended services at the Church of Jesus commemorating St Francis Saverio, first preacher of the gospel in Japan. Japanese students of the Papal College for the Propaganda of the Faith sang hymns, and the ambassador viewed a relic of the saint, his right arm.<sup>28</sup>

In early December, as the Japanese worked to clarify their policy, London and Paris tried to reassert some influence over the Ethiopian crisis and have Italy rejoin the Stresa Front. British Foreign Secretary Samuel Hoare and French Premier Pierre Laval proposed to end the war by partitioning Ethiopia, with Italy receiving the best parts of Ogaden and Tegray and obtaining economic influence over the southern part of the country. While wishing to work with the Soviet Union, the British also hoped to use the revitalized Stresa Front against Japan in China. Facing unexpected military resistance in Ethiopia, Mussolini agreed, but a delay in its public announcement gave time for a French newspaper to leak the plans on the December 13. Amid public upset, both Hoare and Laval resigned, and their plan died.<sup>29</sup>

Japan's foreign ministry denounced the Hoare-Laval Plan for violating Ethiopia's territorial integrity and Britain's attitude for contradicting its position assumed in the Sino-Japanese dispute following the 1931 Manchurian incident. Japan's press denounced Britain and France for insulting the Ethiopians, a colored race.<sup>30</sup>

While the Hoare-Laval Plan collapsed and the Italo-Ethiopian War ground on, on December 7, the Second London Naval Conference convened to continue

regulating warship construction begun with the Washington Naval Conference of 1922. With militarists firmly in control in Tokyo, the Japanese rejected the status quo and sought to expand their tonnage allotments to a level equal to that of Great Britain and the United States. Rebuffed, they walked out of the conference in January 1936. Until the middle of January, Italy's press had paid little attention to the conference, but now articles appeared comparing Japanese expansion in Far East to the European crisis over the Italo-Ethiopian dispute. The Italians supported the Japanese action as a way to stretch Britain's Royal Navy away from the Mediterranean. Rome and Tokyo were forging ever-stronger bonds on the Ethiopian anvil.<sup>31</sup>

Just like the Japanese, the Italians also remained conflicted. Many saw similarities between Japan's actions in Manchuria and Italy's in Ethiopia and, in the abstract, many Italians saw no just reason why Asia should not be for Asians. One Italian exchange professor assured his Japanese audience at the Pan-Pacific Club in Tokyo as much. On the other hand, others instinctively feared the decline of white race and the rise of the yellow. They deplored the circumstances forcing Latin Italy into a moral alliance and more with a Teutonic nation on the one hand and an Asian nation on the other.<sup>32</sup>

### *Ethiopia's collapse*

#### JAPAN ESTABLISHES A LEGATION

The positive attitudes of Ethiopia's leaders toward Japan touched every Japanese diplomat who met them. 'There's no other country that welcomes Japan with this degree of honesty and sincerity. Shouldn't we return their trust and respect?' asked one.<sup>33</sup> This clearly distinguished their attitudes from those of civilian manufacturers such as Irye Kanae, who strictly judged Ethiopia's prospects by practical, economic rationalism.

In October 1935, the foreign ministry chose Nakayama Shoichi, Counselor to Japan's embassy at Rome, as its representative to Ethiopia. He was to leave immediately for Addis Ababa. Kuroki Takitaro, Consul at Alexandria, was also to go, and Oto Naguharu, Chancellor at Japan's Consulate-General at Foochow, was on his way to Alexandria to join them. They were to establish and staff the legation, which was to open on January 1. Tokyo, however, had not yet decided whether to appoint Nakayama as a minister or as *chargé d'affaires*.<sup>34</sup>

Nakayama, however, fell ill. Tokyo quickly turned to Suzuki Kuma, the Second Secretary at the Paris Embassy and named him as First Secretary. The foreign ministry decided to send him to Ethiopia with Oto and Yabuuchi Ichiro from Lyon. At Marseilles, on the afternoon of December 13, the three boarded the steamer *Marshal Joffre*, bound for Port Said and then to Djibouti, where he and his two secretaries disembarked and pressed on to Addis Ababa that evening. They arrived at the capital on the night of the twenty-fourth.<sup>35</sup>

To Heruy's delight, Suzuki ceremonially opened the legation at 11 a.m. on New Year's Day. Expecting completion of the new legation building to take a month or more, the Japanese chose as their temporary site the Imperial Hotel,

which one correspondent disparaged as 'the wretchedest hole that ever was offered for the sojourn of mankind'.<sup>36</sup> Auriti feared Suzuki was preparing to negotiate a treaty of commerce and friendship.<sup>37</sup>

Meanwhile, Rome revived its move to establish a consulate-general in Manchukuo and decided to meet Manchukuo's demands to set up its office in Hsinking, the capital, instead of at Mukden as originally planned. When, however, Italy sought Nanking's understanding before opening the consulate-general, Manchukuo took offense. Taken aback, Italy decided to deal only with Manchukuo. Without surplus funds to invest in Manchukuo, politics lay behind Italy's wish to establish consular contacts.<sup>38</sup>

Even as Tokyo opened its legation in Addis Ababa over the objections of those who saw the war chiefly in racial terms,<sup>39</sup> the Japanese had to prepare for a likely Italian conquest of Ethiopia. A foreign ministry communiqué declared its willingness to close its new legation and replace it with a consulate. It added, 'The Italian government has agreed to respect the commercial and other interests of Japan in Abyssinia and give especially favorable consideration to those interests.' Tokyo vouched that the new Italian consulate-general in Mukden had no connection with Japan's closing its legation in Addis Ababa. Rather, it logically followed Japan's recent agreement with Germany.<sup>40</sup>

Heruy went to the new legation on January 23, to order small quantities of light arms from Japan.<sup>41</sup> He, however, had no more success than Daba Birrou was having in Japan or Afewerq had had in Rome.

The Japanese tried to learn from the fighting in Ethiopia. In early February, an international military mission, including a Japanese, Captain Sika, visited the Eritrean Front. A member of the General Staff, he had prominently participated in the Manchurian Campaign. The captain told correspondents that, given Ethiopia's rough terrain and poor roads and communication, plus the distance between the war zone and the mother country, Italy's logistical successes were greater than those the Japanese had achieved in Manchuria. He added that the Italians had cleverly used the 'biblical systems' of transportation existing in the country with modern, mechanized transport. Toward the end of February, the military experts moved on to the Somali Front.<sup>42</sup>

Noting Italy's surging military advance on Addis Ababa, in mid-March Sugimura implored Rome to ask Italian military authorities to respect Japan's Imperial Legation at Addis Ababa. Located at the former residence of the Emperor's second son, it was on the road to Entotto, to the south, next to the Swedish School and northwest of the French legation.<sup>43</sup>

In late March, as their war was going badly, Ethiopians expressed their gratitude to the Japanese for holding 'a fair position', despite their disappointed expectations for significant aid from Japan. Ethiopia protested to Japan as a contracting party to Hague Convention of October 18, 1907, and the Geneva Protocol of June 17, 1925, over Italy's use of poison gas and its bombing of Red Cross units.<sup>44</sup>

Notwithstanding the prospect of Ethiopia's imminent collapse, Suzuki suggested that Japan had 'to help and guide the independence and development of Ethiopia without selfish motives to win more of Ethiopia's trust'. Japan also needed to protect its concessions in Ethiopia. 'In the future,' he wrote, 'it is

necessary, to expand our economic concessions that will benefit ten million Ethiopians and develop our commercial rights to the Red Sea through this country or the Djibouti area'.<sup>45</sup> Suzuki also noted that peoples in Africa, Arabia, and India were paying attention to the Italo-Ethiopian conflict as the struggle of the suffering colored races against white imperialism. Meanwhile, he warned, Soviet Russia was trying to spread its influence in Ethiopia to establish a foothold for expansion into Africa and Arabia. Ethiopia's development, however, was too primitive for Communism to spread. The Russians had fomented a vigorous anti-Japanese campaign in Ethiopia, saying that Japanese designs there mimicked those in China and that the Soviet Union was preparing for a war in five years' time against Japanese imperialism.<sup>46</sup> Further, the Soviets were continuing to highlight Japanese concerns that Italy was planning to turn Ethiopia into an Italian protectorate and would injure Japan's trade there.<sup>47</sup>

Toward the war's end, criticism in Japanese newspapers generally focused on the unreliability of the League of Nations and weak British diplomacy rather than on Italian aggression. The 'solidarity' movement among Japanese nationalists rapidly died out as they turned their attention toward China and militaristic domestic reforms.

#### DABA BIRROU BIDS FAREWELL

Through Daba at the end of March 1936, Emperor Haile Sellase awarded Sumioka the Commander Class of the Order of Menilek II. In turn, Sumioka sent two letters to Ethiopia. In one, he urged Heruy to set up a legation in Tokyo soon. In the second, he thanked the Emperor for the decoration and the gifts of a gold bracelet and ring for his wife. He predicted that Ethiopia's brave soldiers under the 'direct command of its courageous "King of Kings" would defeat his enemies. Sumioka's letter went on to commend Daba:

During his six months' sojourn in Japan ... Daba has at all times conducted himself with credit, and at no time has the prestige of Abyssinia suffered at his hands. ... Hirota ... has received him twice in private conference and has seen him to the door in person when ... [he] took leave.

Despite the difficulties ... Daba has been able to push negotiations with the Japanese authorities to a point where agreement on principles has been reached, although on particulars there still seems room for further discussion.

The goodwill of the Japanese people toward Abyssinia has been evinced in the warm welcome which ... Daba received ... and in the intense activities of ... organizations and individuals in sending medical supplies, money and other articles for the aid of the Abyssinian people.<sup>48</sup>

Sumioka's statement certainly – even if inadvertently – highlighted the quasi-official nature of Daba's visit. And Sumioka's list of accomplishments – Daba had seen Hirota twice and the foreign minister had escorted him to the door; he had negotiated agreement in principle, even if without particulars; many Japanese had enthusiastically welcomed him; some few groups had sent some few medical supplies; and Daba had not embarrassed himself – merely highlight how little his visit had achieved or ever could have achieved.

As Daba was winding up his stay in Japan, the *Osaka Mainichi* interviewed him at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. Turning to the proposed marriage, he suggested Araya should come to Japan and 'decide the affair himself'. He then tried to put on his best face at what had been a disappointing trip. 'When I think of conditions in my country,' he said, 'I am unable to do much, but I think I have done all that I am supposed to do in this country, so I am leaving. When I return to Abyssinia, I am going to the front to do my duty.'<sup>49</sup> With Yukawa Chuzaburo, Daba called on the *Osaka Mainichi* to bid farewell. He expressed his gratitude for the kindness extended to him. 'I shall certainly tell my countrymen of the help and sympathy of the Japanese toward my country.'<sup>50</sup> Daba left Tokyo on March 30.

Italy's ambassador to Tokyo had always downplayed the significance of Daba's efforts and had only casually followed his sojourn. In his report to Rome describing Daba's departure from Tokyo, he mentioned that a couple of hundred members of 'reactionary nationalistic associations', had seen him off at the station. Toyama Mitsuru gave him a sword and some cash; patriotic associations gave him bandages; the Japanese Red Cross gave him medical materials for 10,000 wounded; the firm of Hoshi-Siyaku gave medicines and other gifts. The Japanese assured Italy's military attaché that the supplies given Daba had been but a few samples of poor quality and did not include 'even one of the rifles that he had been insistently requesting'.<sup>51</sup>

Daba Birrou, *soi-disant* diplomat, had been in Japan for almost seven months. He now set out for home, arriving in Osaka on March 31. On April 2, he sailed from Kobe on the *Hakozaki Maru*. Twenty-six days later, he arrived at Aden with fifty bulky cases of medical materials. He was continuing to Djibouti.<sup>52</sup>

#### THE FALL OF ADDIS ABABA & PROTECTING JAPANESE INTERESTS IN ETHIOPIA

Undeterred by Daba's departure from Japan or Italy's advance on Addis Ababa, in the third week of April Japanese nationalists formed yet another pro-Ethiopian group, another Japanese-Ethiopian Society. The group proudly forwarded its founding documents to the Italian embassy.<sup>53</sup> The government, less quixotically, worried that Italian action might damage its commerce with Ethiopia, and the foreign ministry promised that if Italy subjugated Ethiopia, Japan would watch events and protect its rights and interests in that region.<sup>54</sup>

As the Italians inexorably approached Addis Ababa in late April, the Empress of Ethiopia appealed to the world over two Russian wireless stations to stop the war. Undeterred, the Italians by April 27 were dropping leaflets from planes over the city demanding an end to resistance. On the morning of the twenty-ninth, a lone Italian plane flew over the city, and the next day Suvich promised Sugimura that Italy would protect the lives and property of any Japanese residing in Ethiopia. Despite Hayle Sellase's impressive 'sangfroid' and 'gracious unhurried suavity',<sup>55</sup> the Italian advance continued.

Yet, Yukawa, Ethiopia's Honorary Consul, optimistically declared that even if the Italians took Addis Ababa, they would have to retreat just as Napoleon Bonaparte had fled Moscow. He added that Ethiopia was geographically difficult

to occupy and the Italians would face difficulties in supplying their troops.<sup>56</sup>

With the Italians about fifty miles from the capital, the diplomatic corps met on the morning of May 1. To protect their respective nationals, the group decided that each representative, individually and informally, should try to dissuade the Ethiopians from taking steps that might lead to fighting around the capital. By May 2, anarchy reigned, the center of town was burning, and foreign nationals were seeking protection in various legations. Rioters attacked the Japanese legation several times but without serious damage, and the six Japanese residing in Ethiopia remained safe. With the collapse of normal communications, Suzuki sent his reports to Paris by the wireless at the French legation. From there the reports went to Tokyo. Ethiopians began fleeing the city, and soon those in flight included government officials and the royal family. The government radio stopped broadcasting. Chaos continued on the May 3 and 4 as the Italians – who met only sporadic gunfire – drew nearer. On the fifth, Italians began entering the quiet city.<sup>57</sup>

Seeking safety in exile, on May 8 Haile Sellase arrived in Haifa on a British ship to modest ceremony. At the Jerusalem Station, the Emperor, his family, and a suite of about fifty people arrived at 4 p.m. to a similar lack of pomp and circumstance. Only a few British officials, the staff of the Ethiopian consulate, and representatives of several Ethiopian convents and monasteries met him. Despite labor discord, the Arab Strike Committee allowed taxis to meet the train and to transport the royal exiles to their respective hotels. The Emperor went to the King David Hotel. The cool reception, dictated from London, upset the Emperor for its ‘shabbiness’.<sup>58</sup>

The next day from his balcony at the Piazza Venezia, a strutting Mussolini, his chin jutting forward, triumphantly proclaimed victory and King Victor Emmanuel II as ‘Emperor of Ethiopia’. Japan’s ambassador attended the proclamation.<sup>59</sup>

Earlier, on May 6, the Italian High Commissioner in Ethiopia had notified Suzuki that all foreign legations were to conduct their business with Italy’s representatives now governing Ethiopia. The foreign ministry then authorized Suzuki to call informally on the Italian High Commissioner in Addis Ababa to seek protection for the few Japanese residents in Ethiopia. Tokyo, however, stressed that Suzuki’s call did not signify recognition of Italy’s annexation of Ethiopia. Sugimura in Rome also gently approached the Italians.<sup>60</sup>

The foreign ministry appointed Asada Shunsuke as chargé d’affaires at Addis Ababa to replace Suzuki, who had fallen ill. Asada and his wife left Tokyo for his post on the evening of May 11. He stressed to the *Osaka Mainichi* the unsettled nature of the Ethiopian situation. Commenting that Ethiopia’s Emperor had not abdicated, he refused to criticize Italy’s action, but he also insisted on the validity of the Ethio-Japanese friendship. His chief job was to look after trade with Ethiopia. Asada sailed from Kobe aboard the *Haruna Maru* on May 14.<sup>61</sup>

On May 12, Italy’s ambassador in Tokyo called on Japan’s Vice Foreign Minister Shigemitsu to announce Italy’s annexation of Ethiopia and to promise that Italy would respect Japanese interests in Ethiopia. He added that he assumed that Japan would recognize Italy’s sovereignty over Ethiopia. The vice minister



replied that they would take the matter under advisement, examine the positions of the other powers, and decide independently.<sup>62</sup> In his reports the ambassador also described the reaction of Japan's newspapers: 'While for us there appears no show of sympathy, feeling for Ethiopia is bland and without concern for the Negus.'<sup>63</sup>

Despite Asada's optimism, Sugimura better represented the arch of Japan's African diplomacy, which was collapsing as Tokyo sided with Fascist Italy in its African expansion.<sup>64</sup> He continued his efforts toward Italo-Japanese rapprochement by publishing, in 1936, a book in Italian which pressed a favorable picture of the Japan on the Italians.<sup>65</sup>

Ever cynical, Italy quickly betrayed its promises to protect Japanese interests in Ethiopia. In early May, Italians destroyed Japanese property in Ethiopia, including pillaging Captain Hattori Takushiro's residence and demolishing Yamauchi's property. The Italians began pressuring foreign merchants with a chartering system for exports and imports, exchange controls, and more, making it difficult for them to continue. Noda Minosuke in Addis Ababa complained that Italian goods now dominated markets that Japanese goods had previously monopolized. Italian authorities forced the Addis Ababa branch of the firm of Mishima Shoten, the only Japanese merchant in Ethiopia, to close. Noda did not hide his anger that Italy was violating Japan's commercial rights.<sup>66</sup>

Responding in mid-June the Japanese recalled their chargé d'affaires from Addis Ababa, a move toward diplomatic withdrawal because the Italians were not granting visas to diplomatic replacements.<sup>67</sup>

On June 27, Foreign Minister Arita Hachiro cabled Sugimura, admitting that 'unilateral recognition of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia would be in bad taste .... [T]he actual situation in Ethiopia should be recognized as presenting a "fait-accompli" to all governments.'<sup>68</sup> The Japanese, however, continued to delay even while probing the Italians in an effort to protect their interests in Ethiopia.<sup>69</sup>

Japan's unchastised Pan-Asian nationalists did not let Ethiopia go easily from their imaginations. The Ethiopian Problems Society, Sumioka, and Toyama doggedly continued to support Ethiopia, and some diplomatic representatives abroad preserved contacts with Ethiopia's former functionaries, now in exile. The Roundtable Conference on Ethiopian Issues held a meeting on August 14, 1936 at the Rainbow Grill in the Osaka Building in Tokyo. About one hundred attended, including many familiar faces such as Oyama Ujio, Tanabe Yasunosuke, Shoji Yunosuke, and Sumioka Tomoyoshi. The guest of honor was Yamauchi Masao, who had been close to death in Addis Ababa. He spoke on Ethiopia's situation, the merciless war pursued by the Italians, his last days in Addis Ababa, and his flight to Djibouti. Yamauchi stressed the difficulty of dislodging the Italians, but Japan, the champion of the colored races, had to support Ethiopia in its fight for independence. An Ethiopian, Ambaye Wolde Mariam, had accompanied Yamauchi from Ethiopia and was staying with Sumioka while in Japan. He also spoke about the war. Before the group's president closed the meeting, he relayed news from Asada in Ethiopia about the distribution of the money sent him for Ethiopia's cause. As was typical, a dinner followed.<sup>70</sup>

In the meantime, Daba Birrou disembarked at Port Said on September 16.

The Ethiopian consulate in Djibouti provided his diplomatic passport. By the twenty-eighth, he had found hotel lodging in Ismailia. While there, Daba visited several notable Copts, and on October 9, he, his secretary, and Abuna Mikhail called on the British General Commander. Daba then went to Cairo, where a small group of Ethiopian refugees lived, and he stayed with the former Ethiopian consul to Port Said. He had gone to Egypt to get to London, but he changed his mind after three months. In December, he decided to subjugate himself to the Italians so he could reenter Ethiopia. He sought from the Italians free passage from Suez to Djibouti on a ticket suitable to his class – everything else, he left to Italy's discretion.<sup>71</sup>

On December 12, at Italy's legation in Cairo, Daba Birrou subjected himself to Italian rule in the presence of Italy's local officials, and the Italians provided him with a passport. He planned to go to Djibouti and then to Addis Ababa.<sup>72</sup> As Daba requested, the Italians delayed public announcement so he could recover his baggage from the Ethiopian consulate at Djibouti. The boxes, which he gave to the Italians, contained the medicines and surgical tools Japan had donated to Ethiopia.<sup>73</sup>

#### EXCHANGE OF RECOGNITIONS – MANCHUKUO FOR ETHIOPIA

The end of the Italo-Ethiopian War significantly rearranged international friendships. To win Mussolini's approval of its own aggression into the demilitarized Rhineland, on July 25, Germany announced it would abolish its legation in Ethiopia and set up a consulate-general, thereby recognizing Italy's annexation. Further, Japan and Italy began to negotiate for approval of their respective activities in Ethiopia and China. With the onset of the Spanish Civil War and Italo-German co-operation there, the alliance that would launch World War II was beginning to firm up.<sup>74</sup>

In mid-October 1936, Ciano, now Italy's foreign minister, told Sugimura that Italy would be willing to establish a legation in Manchukuo if Japan kept its legation in Ethiopia. Tokyo asked for assurances that Italy would not discriminate against Japanese exports to Ethiopia. Ciano agreed to grant Japan 'most favored nation' status, but he preferred not at that time to exchange formal legal notes on this arrangement.<sup>75</sup>

On October 29, Mussolini and Ciano strongly spoke with Sugimura against the Soviet Union and in favor of co-operating with Germany. The ambassador hoped that relations between Italy and Japan would improve against their common enemy as German-Japanese relations already had. Italy was ready to recognize Manchukuo's independence, despite the League's position and Chinese hostility. Although Italy had been friendly with the Soviet Union and Ciano himself had sympathized with China, Italy had also worked to build friendly relations with Japan. On the other hand, the ambassador opined, Italy was also seeking rapprochement with Great Britain. And, although opposed to the Popular Front government, Italy also felt close to the French people and especially the French military.<sup>76</sup>

Meanwhile, Japan's foreign ministry was trying, vainly, to protect Japan's economic interests in Ethiopia. It presented a report exploring those interests.

Because Ethiopia had disappeared, the report read, Japan had to recognize Italy's annexation, at least as *de facto*. Tokyo should abolish its legation and set up a consulate in its stead. The report estimated that Ethiopia's imports of Japanese goods in 1935 had reached 32.2 per cent of all Ethiopian imports and insisted that Japan secure the concessions Ethiopia had promised. While noting that Italy's main products – cotton cloth, silk cloth, and silk – competed with Japan's, the report wanted Ethiopia to remain as an export market for Japanese goods. Japan should negotiate with Italy for 'most favored nation' status.<sup>77</sup>

On October 31, Sugimura sent two telegrams, one asking his government to set up a consulate in Addis Ababa and the other asking Rome for permission to do so. When Italy's Foreign Ministry suggested that Japan should ask for an *exequatur* guaranteeing the consul's rights and privileges, the ambassador replied he could not. Rome then suggested that a member of the Japanese embassy staff could go to Addis Ababa without having to ask for an *exequatur*, but the Japanese did not pursue the idea.<sup>78</sup>

On November 14, Foreign Minister Arita ordered Sugimura to notify Rome that Tokyo wished to improve relations. The ambassador was to secure Japanese commercial interests by saying Japan was ready to demote its legation in Ethiopia to a consulate.<sup>79</sup>

When they met, Sugimura followed instructions and told Ciano that Japan wanted to transform its legation in Addis Ababa into a consulate-general. He also asked that Italy protect Japan's interests in Ethiopia. In his notes of the meeting, Ciano bragged that he failed to give any such assurance. Undeterred, Sugimura added that Japan wanted to improve its economic, political, and cultural relations with Italy. In turn, the Italian foreign minister agreed this was Italy's wish as well. He confessed that Italy had earlier erred by distinguishing between the Comintern and the Soviet Union; Italy now saw things more clearly. Since becoming foreign minister, he had pursued a 'stern policy' toward the Soviet Union – a posture Hitler supported. Saying that he had heard that Tokyo and Berlin had reached an agreement toward the Soviet Union, Ciano now wanted a similar one with Japan. Sugimura replied that Japan was seeking co-operation with many countries to counter the Soviet Union's communist activities. But, even if Japan were to enter an agreement with Germany, it would not hold a military character and would therefore differ from the special understanding that existed between Germany and Italy on the Spanish Civil War. Japan preferred, Sugimura said, to restrict discussions to the problems involved in setting up a Japanese consulate in Ethiopia and an Italian consulate in Manchukuo. Afterward, he would discuss the possibility of an Italo-Japanese, anti-Comintern pact. The ambassador did, however, express satisfaction at Italy's struggle in Spain against the Bolshevik danger.<sup>80</sup>

The Italians continued their approaches. Ambassador Auriti on November 20 asked Manchukuo if Rome could establish a consulate-general in Mukden. Rome officially announced a reciprocal agreement for Italy's *de facto* recognition of Manchukuo and Japan's recognition of Italy's Ethiopian Empire.<sup>81</sup>

Soon after, on November 25, the Germans and Japanese signed the Anti-Comintern Pact. Japan's puppet government of Manchukuo on December 1 announced that Italy had permission to establish a consulate-general at Mukden.

Simultaneously, the Italians agreed to consider respectfully Japan's commercial and other interests in Ethiopia. The next day, Sugimura officially told Ciano of Tokyo's decision to transform its legation in Addis Ababa into a consulate-general, and he addressed the request 'to the government of His Majesty the King of Italy and Emperor of Ethiopia'.<sup>82</sup> This gave de facto recognition to Italy's acquisition. The next day, the Japanese closed their legation at Addis Ababa, and Italy's press rejoiced at this step in mending Italo-Japanese relations.<sup>83</sup>

Tokyo and Rome were also assiduously cultivating cordial relations through their co-operation in cultural and other fields, and Japan expected to open quickly conversations with Italy to adjust trade relations between Japan and Ethiopia. Trade agreements with Italy, however, could produce little commercial profit for Japan in Ethiopia. That could change only if Italy were to develop Ethiopia's cotton production, which could become a new source of this raw material for Japan. Similarly, trade between Italy and Manchukuo was slight. Ambassador Grew, therefore, came to believe that the political importance of the exchange of recognitions transcended the economic. Japan had joined the fascist bloc.<sup>84</sup>

On December 30, 1937, the Italians and Japanese negotiated a compensation system for Ethio-Japanese trade as a supplemental agreement to the Italo-Japanese Commercial Treaty. The treaty determined the amount of Japanese exports based on Japanese imports of salt from Italian East Africa, which occupied most of Ethiopia's exports to Japan. Japanese salt imports were small in 1935 and 1936, and Japanese exports to Ethiopia significantly decreased between 1937 and 1939.<sup>85</sup> Italy had betrayed Japan's trust.

## *Conclusion*

Despite ardent adulation from patriotic Japanese, fervid expectations of the world's colored peoples, and tepid aid to Ethiopia's Red Cross,<sup>86</sup> in the end, the Ethiopians got none of the tangible and significant help they had hoped to get from Japan. Ethiopia's troops were neither sufficiently armed, trained, nor led to resist Italy's invasion for long.

Japan had chosen an opportunistic policy toward the Italo-Ethiopian War, sometimes favoring Italy, sometimes Ethiopia. Japan could have been, as Afewerq had said, Ethiopia's last resort and the only country on which Ethiopia could count against Italy and immobility in the League of Nations.<sup>87</sup> If Japan had been close to Ethiopia in words, in deeds it leaned toward Italy, whose attitude toward Ethiopia was exactly as Japan's was toward Asia. Having common interests, Italy and Japan drew closer together.

At the crucial moment during the Italo-Ethiopian War, in February 1936 young Imperial Way Faction army officers launched a coup by occupying the Diet Building and the ministry of war and by assassinating high officials. The coup's failure strengthened the Control Faction, which clamped down on those ultra-nationalist groups that had also tended most vociferously to support Ethiopia. One outcome of the pragmatists' victory was that Tokyo accommodated itself to Italy's conquest of the Ethiopian Empire. The exchange of recog-

nitions on December 2, 1936 – Japan’s conquest of Manchukuo for Italy’s conquest of Ethiopia – paved the way for reconciliation between Tokyo and Rome.<sup>88</sup>

Surely, Rome and Tokyo could not have completed this *volte face* so quickly if the Italians had not come to believe Japanese protestations of innocence on the arms transfers and training that Ethiopia had so desperately needed. Perhaps they never had. But, whether they had or not, they had effectively used the rumors of significant Japanese inroads into Ethiopia to disarm potential international opposition to Italy’s coming adventure, especially in London, Paris, and Moscow.

As Italian troops were entering Addis Ababa, Sugimura explained to Tokyo that Italy might have to advance its troops to the Brenner Pass against Germany. Finding neither the League nor Britain reliable, the Soviet Union wanted Italy in its collective security front opposing Germany, and France was looking favorably on any rapprochement between Moscow and Rome. This budding alliance, however, never flowered.<sup>89</sup>

Would the Italo-German Axis have formed had London made its peace with Rome? Might a Soviet collective security system encompassing Italy have thwarted Hitler’s ambitions and precluded World War II? The questions themselves suggest the missed possibilities, missed largely because of London’s curious preference to deal with Nazi Germany and its shortsighted priority of preserving its imperial integrity rather than European security. Britain was determined not to get stuck in the Balkan and East European quagmire – even though this is where World War I had begun two decades before and where World War II would begin half a decade later.<sup>90</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon, Afurika kōryūshi*, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Clarke, *Russia*, pp. 192–3; *DDI*, 8th, 2: No. 499; Arone, October 31, 1935: MAE AP URSS b17 f2.

<sup>3</sup> Clarke, *Russia*, pp. 192–3; Arone, October 31, 1935: MAE AP URSS b16 f2.

<sup>4</sup> Umino, ‘Dainiji Italia-Echiopia Senso’, p. 209.

<sup>5</sup> Agbi, ‘Japanese’, 136; Long, October 8, 1935: NARA 765.84/1669. Auriti, October 9, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b42 f1; Circular, October 10, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b117 f7. Also see ‘I-E kaisen to renmei no taido’, *Ekonomisuto* 13 (October 11, 1935):6–7.

<sup>6</sup> Gilbert, October 14, 1935: NARA 765.84/1794; Wilson, October 10, 1935: NARA 765.84/1723.

<sup>7</sup> *NYT*, October 5, 6, 13, 16, 1935; *JT&M*, October 5, 1935; *OM&TNN*, October 6, 1935; *JA*, October 2, 1935; *The Times*, October 5, 7, 1935; Scalise, October 1, 1935; Tiberi, October 3, 1934; Pasqualucci, October 4, 1935; Circular, October 12, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b72 f3; Cerruti, October 2, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b101 f4; Circular, November 5, 1935; Bianconi, Dec. 20, 1935; Guarnaschelli, January 23, 1936: MAE Etiopia-FG b117 f7. In NARA see Neville, November 11, 1935: 894.00/95; Neville, November 11, 1935: 894.00/90; Neville, October 5, 1935: 765.84/2011; Neville, October 11, 1935: 765.84/1758. In *Ekonomisuto*, see ‘Seisai hatsudō to Nihon’, 13 (October 21, 1935): 6; Nagato Masaharu, ‘Tai-i seisai katsudō o megurite’, 13 (October 21, 1935):25–7; and ‘Tai-i seisai to heikō suru wakyō kasaku’, 13 (November 1, 1935):28–30.

<sup>8</sup> Rome, October 7, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b117 f4.

<sup>9</sup> *JA*, October 8, 1935; October 5, 8, 1935; January 10, 1936.

<sup>10</sup> Unno, ‘Dainiji Italia-Echiopia’, pp. 209–10, quote 210; see also Auriti, October 15, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b101 f4.

<sup>11</sup> Agbi, ‘Japanese’, pp. 136–7.

<sup>12</sup> Long, October 29, 1935: NARA 765.84/2192; Lockhard, October 22, 1935: NARA 765.84/2043;

- Sawada, October 21–22, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–7–3.
- <sup>13</sup> Circular, December 4, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b117 f4; Unno, ‘Dainiji Italia–Echiopia’, p. 208; *J.A.*, October 6, 1935; Bradshaw, ‘Japan’, p. 355; Byas, *Government*, 198–201; *NYT*, October 6, 1935. For more on the racial connections of the conflict, see Oguri, October 11, 14, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–2–2.
- <sup>14</sup> *JT&M*, October 10, 11, 13, 1935; Neville, November 11, 1935: NARA 894.00/95; Neville, November 11, 1935: NARA 894.00/90; ‘Japanese Attitude on Sanctions’, *Japan Chronicle* (October 10, 1935):461; ‘Japan and Blockade’, *Japan Chronicle* (October 10, 1935):461; ‘Abyssinia Not Like Manchuria’, *Japan Chronicle* (October 24, 1935):515.
- <sup>15</sup> *J.A.*, October 12, 1935.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> *NYT*, Oct 14, 1935; ‘Duce Appeals to Japan’, *Japan Chronicle* (October 24, 1935):515.
- <sup>18</sup> *NYT*, September 22, 1935; *J.A.*, September 20, 25, 26, 27, 29, 1935; October 2, 4, 9, 1935; Jan. 21, 1936; *OM&TNN*, September 27, 1935; October 5, 6, 16, 1935; *JT&M*, September 30, 1935; October 2, 6, 8, 9, 11, 1935; November 18, 1935; February 4, 1936; *NYT*, October 13, 1935; *New York Sun*, September 18, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–2–1; Mohandally, November 26, 1935: GSK E120 X1–12; Long, October 14, 1935: NARA 765.84/1812; ‘Elenco delle Merci ...’, n.d.: MAE Etiopia–FG b117 f7; Circular, September 5, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b62 f3; ‘Japan and the War’, *Japan Chronicle* (October 10, 1935): 461; ‘Big Bright Bogey’, *Time* (September 30, 1935): 21; Iida Seizō, ‘I-E sensō wa Nihon ni dō hibiku: Nihon sangyō ni oyobosu eikyō’, *Nihon hyoron* 10 (November 1935):354–64; ‘Ethiopia and European War’, *Military Engineer* (September–October 1935):355–6.
- <sup>19</sup> Auriti, October 16, 30, 1935; Bova Scopa October 21, 1935; Sutiyyo, October 26, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b117 f7; Rocco, October 13, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b101 f4; Neville, November 11, 1935: NARA 894.00/95; Neville, November 11, 1935: NARA 894.00/90; *J.A.*, October 16, 20, 1935; *OM&TNN*, October 16, 1935; *NYT*, October 16, 24, 1935. On the application of sanctions, see ‘The League Applies Sanction’, *Geneva*, 8 (November 1935):121–6 and ‘Sanctions at a Standstill’, *Geneva*, 8 (December 1935):133–6; and Richard Pankhurst, ‘The Italo–Ethiopian War and League of Nations Sanctions, 1935–1936’, *Genève-Afrique*, *Geneva-Africa* 13 (1974): 5–29.
- <sup>20</sup> *Sidney Morning Herald*, October 18, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–5; Neville, December 11, 1935: NARA 894.00/96. The League kept Tokyo informed about sanctions. See, for example, Vasconcellos, October 21, 1935; November 5, 9, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–7–4; Vasconcellos, February 13, 1936: GSK A461 ET/II–7–6; and Vasconcellos, July 9, 1936: GSK A461 ET/II–7–7.
- <sup>21</sup> Suwa, November 18, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–5.
- <sup>22</sup> Scalise, October 14, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b72 f3; Circular, October 9, 1935; Auriti, October 29, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b117 f4; Armour, October 19, 1935: NARA 765.84/2058; *J.A.*, October 5, 1935; Unno, ‘Dainiji Italia–Echiopia’, pp. 209–10; Taura, ‘Nichi-i kankei’, pp. 302–28; Agbi, *Japanese Relations*, p. 57; Faërber–Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 23.
- <sup>23</sup> *J.A.*, November 2, 1935; *OM&TNN*, August 8, 1935; *NYT*, August 7, 1935.
- <sup>24</sup> See the documents in GSK ET/II–6: ‘Activate de la Croix–Rouge en Ethiopie’, February 10, 1936; Heruy, October 2, 1936; ‘Liste Des Dons Reçus De L’étranger pals Croix Rouge Ethiopienne’, n.d.; and Suzuki, March 27–28, 1936. For private offers of medical assistance, in this case by the Black Dragons, see Oguri, July 20, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–2–1. See also Auriti, March 6, 1936: MAE Etiopia–FG b117 f7; *OM&TNN*, November 3, 1935; *NYT*, September 8, 1935; John William Scott Macfie, *An Ethiopian Diary: A Record of the British Ambulance Service in Ethiopia* (London: University Press of Liverpool, 1936), p. 51.
- <sup>25</sup> *DDI*, 8<sup>th</sup>, 2: no. 580; *NYT*, Oct 31, 1935; ‘Bigger Than Benito’s’, *Time* (December 9, 1935):21–2.
- <sup>26</sup> Auriti, November 22, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b117 f7.
- <sup>27</sup> Suvich, November 22, 1935; Aloisi, November 21, 1935; Mussolini, November 22, 1935; Rome, December 16, 1935: MAE Etiopia–FG b117 f7; *DDI*, 7<sup>th</sup>, 2: no. 766.
- <sup>28</sup> *J.A.*, December 5, 1935.
- <sup>29</sup> Henderson B. Braddock, ‘The Hoare–Laval Plan: A Study in International Politics’, *Review of Politics* 24 (July 1962):342–64; Rosaria Quartararo, ‘Le origini del piano Hoare–Laval’, *Storia contemporanea* 8 (December 1977):749–90; Sobocinski, ‘Dividing the Dictators’, pp. 129–38; Cataluccio (ed.), *Il conflitto*, Vol. 2: *Dal 3 Ottobre 1935 al 15 Luglio 1936*, Part 2: *Dal 28 Novembre 1935 al 1° Febbraio 1936*, nos. 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14; Ota, December 11–12, 1935; Sugimura, December 16–17, 1935: GSK A461 ET/II–7–5.
- <sup>30</sup> Grew, January 18, 1936: NARA 894.00/97; Grew, January 18, 1936: NARA 765.84/3831; Jordan, *Popular Front*, pp. 34–6; *J.A.*, December 9, 1935; *JT&M*, January 1, 1936. Moscow was no happier with this powerful blow against collective security and drew comparisons between Japan’s aggression in China and Italy’s in Ethiopia. See *MDN*, December 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 20, 1935 and in NARA

- 765.84 see Henderson, December 19, 1935: /3347; December 30, 1935: /3289; December 30, 1935: /3286; and January 2, 1936: /3479.
- <sup>31</sup> For the story of the Second London Naval Conference, see Stephen E. Pelz, *Race to Pearl Harbor: The Failure of the Second London Naval Conference and the Onset of World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974); *La Tribuna*, January 16, 1936; *La Gazzetta del Popolo*, January 16, 1936; *JFA*, January 18, 1936; Long, January 22, 1936: NARA 500.A15A5/651. See also Ishimaru, *Japan Must Fight*.
- <sup>32</sup> *JFA*, February 8, 1936; *Il Giornale d'Italia*, January 14, 1936; Long, January 22, 1936: NARA 500.A15A5/651.
- <sup>33</sup> Taura, 'Nihon-Echiopia', p. 164.
- <sup>34</sup> *JT&M*, October 12, 1935; *OM&TNN*, October 12, 1935; November 24, 1935; *The Times*, October 12, 1935; *NYT*, Oct 12, 1935; Auriti, November 30, 1933: MAE Etiopia b14 f9; Auriti, November 1, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b117 f7.
- <sup>35</sup> Taura, 'Nihon-Echiopia', 159; Liberati, December 13, 1935; Sbrana, December 24, 1935: MAE Etiopia-FG b117 f7.
- <sup>36</sup> *JFA*, January 26, 1936.
- <sup>37</sup> *The Times*, January 8, 1936; *JFA*, January 6, 1936; *JT&M*, January 5, 1936; *OM&TNN*, January 5, 1936; *Le Temps*, December 27, 1935; Grew, February 21, 1936: NARA 894.00/98; Sugimura, January 18/February 17, 1936: GSK A461 ET/II-6; Gardiner, n.d.: GSK A461 ET/II-8; Auriti, January 10, 21, 1936; Circular, January 22, 1936: MAE Etiopia-FG b117 f7; Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, pp. 20, 22; Taura, 'Nihon-Echiopia', pp. 159, 163.
- <sup>38</sup> *JFA*, January 5, 7, 13, 1936; March 2, 1936.
- <sup>39</sup> Sato, January 9, 1936: GSK A461 ET/II-2-2.
- <sup>40</sup> Grew, January 18, 1936: NARA 894.00/97.
- <sup>41</sup> Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 20.
- <sup>42</sup> 'Foreign Military Experts', March 12, 1936: NARA 765.84/3976.
- <sup>43</sup> Sugimura, March 14, 1936: MAE Etiopia b24 f3; Rome, March 23, 1936: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>44</sup> Aide Memoire, March 20, 1936: GSK A461 ET/II-6. See GSK A461 ET/II-6, for extensive press communiqués – most documents are from Addis Ababa, Red Cross, General Headquarters. They concentrate on the military situation; some from the foreign ministry criticize Italian attacks on the Red Cross and the use of poison gas. Several documents refer to aid by Japan's Red Cross. See GSK A461 ET/II-7-6 on the League of Nations and the Italo-Ethiopian War, especially accusations of atrocities.
- <sup>45</sup> Suzuki, March 27-28, 1936: GSK A461 ET/II-6; Taura, 'Nihon-Echiopia', p. 159.
- <sup>46</sup> Suzuki, March 29, 1936: GSK A461 ET/II-6.
- <sup>47</sup> *MDN*, April 17, 1936.
- <sup>48</sup> *JFA*, March 28, 1936; Grew, April 16, 1936: NARA 894.00/100; Auriti, March 31, 1936: MAE Etiopia-FG b117 f7.
- <sup>49</sup> *OM&TNN*, March 31, 1936.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>51</sup> Auriti, March 31, 1936, March 6, 1936: MAE Etiopia-FG b117 f7.
- <sup>52</sup> Grew, May 13, 1936: NARA 894.00/unclear; Fabiani, April 30, 1936; Rome, June 13, 1936: MAE Etiopia-FG b117 f7.
- <sup>53</sup> Naval Attaché, April 21, 1936: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>54</sup> Auriti, April 13, 1936, April 21, 1936; Minister of Colonies, April 14, 1936; Suvich, April 18, 1936: MAE Etiopia b24 f3; Auriti, Mar. 31, 1936: MAE Etiopia-FG b117 f7; Auriti, April 17, 21, 1936: MAE Etiopia-FG b101 f4; Grew, May 13, 1936: NARA 894.00/1829; Grew, May 13, 1936: NARA 894.00/unclear.
- <sup>55</sup> Engert, May 1, 1936: NARA 765.84/4237. For more on Engert's description of the Italians approach, in NARA 765.84 see April 27, 1936: /4194; April 29, 1936: /4197; April 29, 1936: /4198; May 1, 1936: /4216; and May 1, 1936: /4217. Also see April 24, 1936: NARA 884.0011/88 and Grew, June 10, 1936: NARA 894.00/unclear. See also Auriti, May 1, 1936; Suvich, May 7, 1936: MAE Etiopia-FG b101 f4.
- <sup>56</sup> *OM&TNN*, May 3, 1936.
- <sup>57</sup> For Engert's reports in NARA 765.84, see May 1, 1936: /4218; May 2, 1936: /4232; May 2, 1936: /4233; May 2, 1936: /4236; May 2, 1936: /4238; May 3, 1936: /4234; and May 3, 1936: /4235. See also Kirk, May 3, 1936: NARA 765.84/4230; Cramp, May 5, 1936: NARA 765.84/4284; Clarke, 'Feodor Kononov ... (Part II)', pp. 27-9; *OM&TNN*, May 3, 6, 7, 1936; and *MDN*, May 6, 1936. GSK A461 ET/II-4 and A461 ET/II-8 contain many documents of meetings of foreign representatives in Addis Ababa as they tried first to deal with Ethiopia's collapse and Italy's conquest of Addis

- Ababa, and then as they sought to come to terms with the new Italian administration of the country.
- <sup>58</sup> Morris, May 15, 1936: NARA 884.001 Selassie I/324; *OM&TNN*, May 5, 1936; *MDN*, May 10, 1936.
- <sup>59</sup> *Il Popolo d'Italia*, May 10, 1936; Mussolini, *Opera*, 27: 268–69; *MDN*, May 8, 11, 1936; Cataluccio (ed.), *Il conflitto*, Vol. 2, Part 4: *Dal 4 Aprile al 9 Maggio 1936*, no. 19.
- <sup>60</sup> *OM&TNN*, May 3, 14, 1936; Sugimura, May 7–8, 1936; ‘The Visit of the Italian Ambassador in Tokyo on the Ethiopian Issue’, n.d., A461 ET/II–7–7.
- <sup>61</sup> *OM&TNN*, May 13, 1936; *The Times*, June 16, 1936. Suvich, May, 17, 1936: MAE Etiopia-FG b112 f8.
- <sup>62</sup> *FRUS*, 1936, 3: 232; Dooman, May 14, 1936: NARA 765.84/4459; Arita, May 12–13, 1936: GSK A461 ET/II–7–7; *OM&TNN*, May 14, 1936.
- <sup>63</sup> Circular, May 16, 1936: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>64</sup> Jun Morikawa, *Japan and Africa: Big Business and Diplomacy* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 1997), p. 47; Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika*, pp. 45–6.
- <sup>65</sup> Sugimura Yotaro, *L'evoluzione del Giappone* (Rome: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1936). Auriti, July 3, 1936: MAE Etiopia b24 f3; Vinci, July, 11, 1936: MAE Etiopia-FG b101 f4.
- <sup>66</sup> Taura, ‘Nihon-Echiopia’, p. 160; Agbi, ‘Japanese’, p. 138.
- <sup>67</sup> Engert, June 24, 1936: NARA 701.5584/5; Engert, June 25, 1936: NARA 701.0084/24.
- <sup>68</sup> Bradshaw, ‘Japan’, pp. 359–60.
- <sup>69</sup> Bastianini, July 4, 1936: MAE Etiopia-FG b112 f8; Graziani, August 23, 1936: MAE Etiopia b24 f3.
- <sup>70</sup> Auriti, August 18, 1936: MAE Etiopia-FG b117 f7.
- <sup>71</sup> Cairo, October 3, 1936; October 23, 1936; Corti, August 18, 1936; Fabiani, September 8, 1936; Minister of War, September 29, 1936; Ghigi, December 5, 1936: MAE Etiopia-FG (1935–40) b117 f7.
- <sup>72</sup> Cairo, December 18, 1936: MAE Etiopia-FG (1935–40) b117 f7.
- <sup>73</sup> In the last half of the 1960s Daba was an administrator at the Aviation Technical School in Addis Ababa. One of his former students described him as a heavy-set man of perhaps 350 pounds and out of place at the school. Student rumors held that he was a disgraced high official and that his rebellious nature had led to his demotion to the school. Email from Assefa Chabo, Saturday, July 25, 2009.
- <sup>74</sup> Sugimura, September 13, 14, 23, 1936: GSK A461 ET/II–8; Sugimura, May 25–26, 1936: GSK A461 ET/II–7–7.
- <sup>75</sup> Bradshaw, ‘Japan’, p. 360; Ciano, October 9, 1936; Auriti, October 13, 14, 22, 29, November 6, 14, 1936: MAE Etiopia-FG b112 f8.
- <sup>76</sup> Sugimura, October 29, 1936: GSK A461 ET/II–8; Kirk, June 15, 1936: NARA 793.94/8026.
- <sup>77</sup> Taura, ‘Nichii Kankei’, p. 319.
- <sup>78</sup> Phillips, November 16, 1936: NARA 762.94/79.
- <sup>79</sup> Taura, ‘Nichii Kankei’, pp. 319–20.
- <sup>80</sup> James William Morely, *Deterrent Diplomacy: Japan, Germany, and the USSR, 1935–1940*. Selected translations from *Taiheiyō sensō no michi: kaisen gaiko shi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 43; Phillips, November 16, 1936: NARA 762.94/79; Ciano, November 18, 1936; Auriti, November 15, 1936: MAE Etiopia b24 f3; Auriti, November 21, 22, 1936: MAE Etiopia-FG b101 f3; Agbi, ‘Japanese’, 138–39.
- <sup>81</sup> Phillips, May 13, 1937: NARA 765.00/90; Grew, Jan. 18, 1936: NARA 894.00/97; Ciano, November 18, 1936; Auriti, November 20, 1936: MAE Etiopia b24 f3; *The Times*, November 18, 19, 1936.
- <sup>82</sup> *The Times*, December 3, 1936; November 28, 30, 1936.
- <sup>83</sup> In NARA see Engert, November 27, 1936: 701.9484/12; Engert, December 8, 1936: 701.9484/15; Grew, November 30, 1936: 865d.01/210; Grew, November 30, 1936: 765.94/107; Grew, December 1, 1936: 765.94; Grew, December 4, 1936: 894.00/108; Grew (?), unclear: 762.94/154½; Grew, January 21, 1937: 894.00/109; Phillips, December 2, 1936: 865d.01/213; Phillips, May 13, 1937: 765.00/90; Johnson, November 30, 1936: 762.94/105; Johnson, December 2, 1936: 762.94/111; and Peiping, December 12, 1936: 701.9484/16. In GSK M130 1–1–2, see *Il Giornale d'Italia*, December 3, 1936; *Il Piccolo*, December 3, 1936; *La Tribuna*, December 3, 1936; and *Il Popolo d'Italia*, December 3, 1936. See also Kawagoe, November 28, 1936: GSK A461 ET/II–8; *The Times*, December 1, 3, 1936; Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, pp. 23–4; Taura, ‘Nichii Kankei’, p. 321; Taura, ‘Nihon-Echiopia’, pp. 159–60; and Bradshaw, ‘Japan’, pp. 358–61.
- <sup>84</sup> Phillips, May 13, 1937: NARA 765.00/90; Phillips, May 21, 1937: NARA 765.00/95; Phillips, January 21, 1937: NARA 765.94/43; Lockhart, February 27, 1937: NARA 765.94/44; Grew, December 5, 1936: NARA 765.94/39; Grew, March 17, 1937: NARA 894.00/111; Mishima and Co., n.d.: GSK A461 ET/II–3.
- <sup>85</sup> Taura, ‘Nihon-Echiopia’, p. 160; Phillips, December 30, 1937: NARA 765.942/2.
- <sup>86</sup> Jordan, November 18, 1936: GSK A461 ET/II–8.



<sup>87</sup> Faëber-Ishihara, *Premiers*, p. 24.

<sup>88</sup> Bradshaw, 'Japan', pp. 321–2, 355–7; Sugimura, October 29, 1936: GSK A461 ET/I1–8; Mushanokoji, May 15–16, 1936: GSK A461 ET/I1–7–7; *MDN*, May 10, 1936.

<sup>89</sup> Sugimura, May 3–4, May 15–16, 1936: GSK A461 ET/I1–7–7.

<sup>90</sup> Clarke, *Russia*, pp. 194–5; Suvich, October 14, 1935: MAE Ethiopia–FG b101 f4; *DDI*, 8th, 2: no. 346.

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## Conclusion

### *The Road to World War II*

Italy's war against Ethiopia held enormous consequences for international diplomacy. It became the pivot around which potential alliances turned. Within a year after Italy's declaration of empire, the sides that took to the military field between 1939 and 1941 had become clear.

Japan's unpunished aggression in the Far East had inspired Italian Fascism and helped clear the diplomatic way for the Ethiopian adventure. The war then breached the united front the three great Western powers had reached at Stresa. This provoked conflict between Italy and Britain, sharpened Anglo-French antagonisms, and killed Soviet hopes for collective security against Germany and Japan. The war also provided room for Germany to violate international agreements by moving troops into the Rhineland in 1936. Meanwhile, the successful resolution of the Sugimura Affair attracted Italy to Japan.<sup>1</sup>

Today, Italy's slide down the slippery path into a suffocating German alliance as Hitler's doxy may seem to have been inevitable. During the mid and late 1930s, however, the matter was not so clear, and Moscow consistently tried to wean Italy from its German ties. In May 1936, for example, the Kremlin offered Rome an Italo-Franco-Soviet accord in exchange for removing its sanctions. During July, rumors abounded that Mussolini had seriously studied the idea. In the end, however, he rejected Soviet advances.<sup>2</sup>

The onset of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936 dashed Soviet efforts at reconciliation with Italy. For the next three years, relations between the two states degenerated into little more than vicious exchanges of public assaults, with Italy conducting covert submarine and air attacks on Soviet merchantmen plying the Mediterranean. Nonetheless, once the Spanish Republic's fate was sealed in the spring of 1939, Moscow again worked to find points of common interest against Germany. That policy seemed vindicated with Italy's declaration of '*nonbelligeranza*' at the onset of World War II. Even after Italy's declaration of war against France in June 1940, the Kremlin still did its utmost to exploit any friction between Italy and Germany. Rationally, the policy followed so assiduously since

1933 should not have come to naught. Mussolini had represented Italy's interests quite well in the first half of the 1930s and had appeared willing to entertain the Kremlin's entreaties to work toward their common interests. Seduced, however, by his vainglory, he ultimately rejected that policy in the months before Germany's attack on Soviet Russia on June 22, 1941.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile after the Italo-Ethiopian War, Japan's right-wing, patriotic, pro-Ethiopian groups enthusiastically came to support the Axis alliance. In 1937, Germany, Italy, and Japan signed their Tripartite Defense Treaty, and Japan began the Pacific War before the end of 1941. Meanwhile, eleven months after Italy had joined Germany in its war against Great Britain and France, Anglo-Ethiopian forces liberated Ethiopia. In accord with the Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement and Military Convention of January 1942, Ethiopia declared war on Japan on December 14 of that year.

### *Failure of the Japanizer movement*

Beyond its international consequences, the Italo-Ethiopian War also held implications for Ethiopia's developmental strategies. Just before the war with Italy, the Emperor's private secretary told Ladislav Farago that:

At last we have reached the point when we have officials who have the ability to govern the country in the European method, instead of oligarchies. I am convinced that we shall now develop more rapidly, but, we must be left alone, for all our efforts would be wasted if we fell back on the old ways, even if it were in defence of our very life and independence. On that day our evolution would stop, and a bloody revolution would take place. And the men who take it upon themselves to make a European country out of this backward African Empire, will be the first martyrs in the revolution, for the Conservatives rule the country, and conservative here means backward and pitiless. We of the younger generation are the friends of progress and humanism, while they are its enemies! And we do not want to work in vain!<sup>4</sup>

Farago inferred that this statement about the Japanizers helped explain Ethiopia's determination to resist Italy – to protect the work begun less than ten years earlier through its own strength and initiative.<sup>5</sup> The Marxist Addis Hiwet has suggested that it also showed that the ideas advanced by the Japanizers had been too radical for the other educated elements in Ethiopia.<sup>6</sup>

After World War II, the playwright, biographer, and historian, Kabbada Mikael, confidently and enthusiastically continued to prescribe the Japanese model. He wrote that Japan had charted its own course and had preserved its independence through education. As the Japanizers had done decades before, he hoped Ethiopia would learn this lesson. He, like many others before him, noted similarities between Ethiopia and Japan. The Portuguese had visited both countries about the same time and both had driven them out to preserve their religions. Both countries subsequently had faced isolation from the world for about 250 years. More significantly, Kabbada also pointed out the differences between the two countries. Whereas Japan had adopted European ways with remarkable speed, Ethiopia moved more slowly. He added, 'The only country that has

succeeded in safeguarding her independence and in charting her own path of educational progress is Japan. If we examine her history and follow her example, we can achieve a lot in a short period of time.' But what Ethiopia's intellectuals had most feared – the loss of independence if Ethiopia failed to modernize – had already occurred over the five years of Italian occupation.<sup>7</sup>

Kabbada Mikael's yearnings dramatize the point made by Bahru Zewde that, in the end, the Japanizer movement in Ethiopia failed. He argues that comparing the Adwa victory of 1896 with Japan's victory over Russia in 1905 is not especially useful. More enlightening is to compare Japan's victory with Ethiopia's defeat in 1936. The former was the logical outcome of three decades of fundamental transformation of Japanese society, whereas the latter 'was the penalty for the failure to modernize'.<sup>8</sup> Even before the Meiji Restoration, Japan had reached a higher state of social development than had Ethiopia after World War I. Japan's agriculture before the Meiji period had already begun to undergo the process of commercialization with its emerging sugar, cotton, tea, and tobacco plantations. The cash nexus went further in Japan than in Ethiopia, thereby entailing a higher degree of differentiation among the peasantry. Urbanization and the attendant emergence of a strong mercantile class in Japan also advanced much further than in Ethiopia. Literacy in pre-reform Japan greatly exceeded that in Ethiopia. While the foreign threat symbolized by the visit of Commodore Matthew Perry to Japan in 1853 and 1854 had acted as a 'midwife in the delivery of capitalism from the womb of feudalism'. Ethiopia, 'did not muster the same energetic reaction to the threat of foreign intervention. In fact, the victory of 1896 instilled in Ethiopians a false sense of self-sufficiency and ill-prepared them for the greater danger of the 1930s'. Given the fewer resources at its command, the impassioned pleas of the Japanizers remained a 'subjective urge unsupported by the objective reality'.<sup>9</sup>

Ethiopia's inadequate economic development and the harsh reality of international politics – including failed appeals to racial solidarity – had smashed the gossamer hopes of Ethiopia's Japanizers and Japan's Pan-Asianists alike.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *MDN*, March 12, 1935. Also see July 3, 21, 1935; March 1, 1936; May 5, 1936; June 29, 1936; Tamagna, *Italy's Interests*, p. 25. Also see A. Nikonova and I. Lemina (eds), *Vooruzheniia kapitalisticheskik stran v 1935 g.* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe voennoe isdatel'stvo narkomata oborony soiuza SSSR, 1936), pp. 94–145.

<sup>2</sup> Cerruti, May 22, 1936: MAE AP URSS b19 f1; Vitetti, July 18, 1936: MAE AP URSS b21 f5; Clarke, *Russia*, pp. 194–5.

<sup>3</sup> Mario Toscano, *Designs in Diplomacy: Pages from European Diplomatic History in the Twentieth Century*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), pp. 48–252; Clarke, *Russia and Italy*, p. 195.

<sup>4</sup> Farago, *Abyssinia*, pp. 70–1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>6</sup> Hiwet, *Ethiopia*, p. 82.

<sup>7</sup> Bahru Zewde, 'Concept', p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11. See *JA*, September 13, 1935 for an example of such overconfidence.

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*Appendix*  
The Ethiopian & Meiji Constitutions<sup>1</sup>

Japan	<i>Similarities</i>	Ethiopia
Chapter I, Article 3. The Emperor is sacred and inviolable.		Chapter I, Article 5. By virtue of His Imperial Blood as well as by the anointing which He has received, the person of the Emperor is sacred, His dignity is inviolable and His power indisputable. Consequently, He is entitled to all the honors due to Him in accordance with tradition and the present Constitution. The Law decrees that anyone so bold as to injure the Majesty of the Emperor will be punished.
Chapter I, Article 4. The Emperor is the head of the Empire, combining in Himself the rights of sovereignty, and exercises them according to the provisions of the present Constitutions.		Chapter II, Article 6. In the Ethiopian Empire supreme power rests in the hands of the Emperor. He ensures the exercise thereof in conformity with the established law.
Chapter I, Article 7. The Emperor convokes the Imperial Diet, opens, closes and prorogues it, and dissolves the House of Representatives.		Chapter II, Article 8. It is the Emperor's right to convene the deliberative Chambers and to declare the opening and the close [sic.] of their sessions. He may also order their convocation before or after the usual time. He may dissolve the Chamber of Deputies.
Chapter I, Article 12. The Emperor determines the organization and peace standing of the Army and Navy.		Chapter II, Article 13. It is the Emperor's right to determine the armed forces necessary to the Empire, both in time of peace and in time of war.
Chapter II, Article 25. Except in the cases provided for in the law, the house of no Japanese subject shall be entered or searched without his consent.		Chapter III, Article 25. Except in the cases provided by law, no domiciliary searches may be made.
Chapter II, Article 26. Except in the cases mentioned in the law, the secrecy of the letters of every Japanese subject shall remain inviolate.		Chapter III, Article 26. Except in the cases provided by law, no one shall have the right to violate the secrecy of the correspondence of Ethiopian subjects.
Chapter II, Article 27. The right of property of every Japanese subject shall remain inviolate. Measures necessary to be taken for the public benefit shall be provided for by law.		Chapter III, Article 27. Except in cases of public utility determined by law, no one shall be entitled to deprive an Ethiopian subject of the movable or landed property which he holds.
Chapter III, Article 40. Both Houses [of the Imperial Diet] can make representations to the Government, as to laws or upon any other subject. When, however, such representations are not accepted, they cannot be made a second time during the same session.		Chapter IV, Article 36. Each of the two Chambers shall have the right to express separately to His Majesty the Emperor its opinion on a legislative question or any other matter whatsoever. If the Emperor does not accept its opinion, it may not, however, revert to the question during the same parliamentary session.
Article 57. The Judicature shall be exercised by the Courts of Law, according to law, in the name of the Emperor. The organization of the Courts of Law shall be determined by law.		Chapter VI, Article 50. Judges, sitting regularly, shall administer justice in conformity with the laws, in the name of His Majesty the Emperor. The organization of the Courts shall be regulated by law.

Japan	<i>Differences</i>	Ethiopia
Chapter I, Article 5. The Emperor exercises the legislative power with the consent of the Imperial Diet.	No such provision.	
Chapter II, Article 28. Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious belief.	No such provision.	
Chapter II, Article 29. Japanese subjects shall, within the limits of law, enjoy the liberty of speech, writing, publication, public meetings and associations.	No such provision.	
Chapter III, Article 35. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members elected by the people, according to the provisions of the Law of Election.	Chapter IV, Article 32. Temporarily, and until the people are in a position to elect them themselves, the members of the Chamber of Deputies shall be chosen by the Nobility and the local chiefs.	
Chapter III, Article 37. Every law requires the consent of the Imperial Diet.	Chapter IV, Article 34. No law may be put into force without having been discussed by [the] Chambers and having obtained the confirmation of the Emperor.	
Chapter III, Article 38. Both Houses shall vote upon projects of law submitted to it by the Government, and may respectively initiate projects of law.	Chapter IV, Article 35. The members of the Chamber of Deputies shall be legally bound to receive and deliberate on the proposals transmitted to them by the Ministers of the respective Departments. However, when the Deputies have an idea which could be useful to the Empire or to the nation, the law reserves to them the right to communicate it to the Emperor through their President, and the Chamber shall deliberate on the subject if the Emperor consents thereto.	
Chapter III, Article 51. Both Houses may enact, besides what is provided for in the present Constitution and in the Law of the Houses, rules necessary for the management of their internal affairs.	Chapter IV, Article 44. The Emperor shall draw up, in the form of a law, the standing orders of the Senate and of the Chamber of Deputies.	
Chapter III, Article 54. The Ministers of State and the Delegates of the Government may, at any time, take seats and speak in either House.	Chapter IV, Article 47. The Chambers may not summon Ministers to their meetings even if they feel the need therefore, without having first obtained the consent of the Emperor. Ministers, on their part, may not attend meetings of the Chambers and take part in their deliberations without having obtained the consent of His Majesty.	

## Note

<sup>1</sup> Beckman, *Meiji Constitution*, pp. 151–6; Bahru Zewde, ‘Concept’, pp. 15–17; Paul and Clapham, *Ethiopian Constitutional Development*, 1:326–38; Haile Sellassie, ‘The Constitution of 1931’, pp. 363–5; Okakura, *Eciopia no Rekishi*, p. 167.





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## *Index*

- Adal Province, 101  
Addis Ababa (capital), 85, 86, 105, 106, 133, 150  
    Japanese in, 53, 57, 82, 84, 117, 137, 159  
        Shoji, Yunosuke, 23, 25, 104, 121, 123  
        Kuroki, Tokitaro, 31, 32, 34, 35, 154  
        Mushanokoji, Kintomo, 32  
        Kitagawa, Takashi, 48  
        Toda, Masaji, 55  
        Nanjo, Shinichi, 56  
        Yamauchi, Masao, 56, 121, 123, 143  
        Haniyu, Chotaro, 79  
        Tsuchida, Yutaka, 92  
        Fukinami, Katsumi, 134  
        Suzuki, Juma, 149  
        Nakayama, Shoichi, 154  
        Oto, Naguharu, 154  
coronation, 35  
efforts to establish Japanese  
    representation in  
        early efforts, 32-3, 34-5, 36, 45  
        after 1931, 46, 55, 78, 80, 92-3, 94, 96,  
        after 1933, 103, 109, 111, 115, 132, 133, 138,  
        142  
Japanese legation and consulate in, 149, 154,  
    155, 159, 161, 162  
Russians in, 62, 63  
foreign colony in, 18, 82, 93, 133, 142, 143  
United States legation in, 36, 54, 84, 91, 102  
Italian legation in, 55, 90, 102, 120, 133  
British legation in, 90  
war and fall of, 154, 155, 157, 158, 159, 161,  
    163  
Aden, 32, 94, 124, 134, 157  
Adwa, 9, 142, 151  
Adwa, Battle of, 1896, xiii, 2, 5, 7, 27, 28, 170  
Afewerq Gebre Iyesus, 89-90, 95, 96-7, 102, 121,  
    132, 155, 162  
Afghanistan, 12  
Africa (Africans), xii, 71, 88, 142, 169  
    North Africa, 1, 24, 107, 123  
    Northeast Africa, xiii, 1, 62, 72, 107, 117  
    East Africa, xiv, 92, 94, 117, 120, 135, 136, 139,  
    140, 149  
    British East Africa, 33  
    Portuguese East Africa, 33  
    Italian aggression in, xiii, 37, 105, 110, 123  
    Japan's trade with, 33, 34, 36, 47, 78, 85,  
    109, 134, 151, 162  
    Italian and European fears of Japan in, 106,  
    114, 116, 119  
    Soviet support for Italy in, 107  
    Japan's political aims in, 111, 123, 132, 152  
South Africa, 29  
    Japan's early contacts, xii, xvi, 1-2, 22  
    Japanese expansion in, xiv, 34, 47, 51, 85, 108,  
    114, 120  
    Ethiopian attitudes toward, 12, 13, 44-5  
    Japanese attitudes toward, 22, 23, 24, 29, 32,  
    68, 94, 116, 123, 133, 141, 156, 159  
    Russian and communist interest in, 62, 66, 72,  
    156  
    colonial struggle over, xii, 51, 86, 117  
    Italian fears of Japanese advances in, 45, 51-2,  
    70, 89, 96, 105, 110, 115, 117, 120  
    Europe's fears of Japanese expansion in, 85, 95,  
    102, 116, 117, 120, 123  
    Italian expansion in, 81  
Aichi Prefecture, 43  
Akamatsu, Shomo, 138  
Alexandria, Egypt, 11, 134, 154  
Aloisi, Pompeo, 131, 137, 153  
Ambaye Wolde Mariam, 159  
Aminaka, Yasuhiro, 23  
Amau, Eiji, 69, 71, 110-11, 112  
    denials of Japanese support for Ethiopia, 108,  
    132, 138, 149, 150  
Amhara (Amharic people, language), 8, 15, 26, 27,  
    32, 42, 63, 131  
Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement and Military  
    Convention, January, 1942, 169  
Anglo-German Naval Agreement, June 1935,  
    133-4, 144, 148  
*Anschluss*, xi, 71  
Anti-Comintern Pact, 1936, 101, 161  
Ara Province, 101  
Arab Strike Committee, 158

- Arabia (Arabian), 24, 54, 156  
 Araya Abeba, 131, 140  
     marriage plans, 23-4, 26, 55, 83-91, 93, 97, 108, 157  
     Heruy's visit to Japan, 1931, 41, 44, 83  
     potential deals with Japanese, 47, 55, 82, 85  
     after Ethiopia's defeat, 91  
 Armenia (Armenians), 16, 18, 25, 32, 93  
 Arita, Hachiro, 159, 161  
 Arusi Province, 101  
 Asada, Shunsuke, 158, 159  
*Asama*, 82  
 Asfaw Wossen Taffari, 51, 85, 93  
 Asia (Asians, Asiatic, Orient, Far East), 5, 13, 18, 67, 132, 137, 139, 152, 162  
     *see also* China  
     *see also* First Convention of Oriental Students  
     *see also* Pan-Asian  
     *see also* Yellow Peril  
     *see also* Soviet Russia  
     anti-colonial movement, xii  
     early contacts with Africa, 1  
     race, 22, 23, 28, 44, 90, 95  
     Japan as leader of, 24, 29, 114, 118  
     'Asia for Asians', 4, 28, 118, 154  
     Japan challenges Italy's interests in, 70, 96, 102  
     Japan's policies in Asia and Ethiopia, 96, 105, 117, 120, 132, 140, 154, 168  
 Attolico, Bernardo, 106-7  
 Auriti, Giacinto, 120-1, 140  
     complaints about Japan's press, 82, 104  
     reports on marriage, 87, 88, 89  
     Japan's military aid to Ethiopia, 94, 106  
     Sugimura Affair, 111, 112, 113, 116, 122  
     Italo-Ethiopian War, 139, 149, 151, 152, 153  
     exchange of recognitions, 155, 161  
 Australia, 90, 117  
 Austria (Vienna), xi, xiv, 9, 15, 18, 35, 67, 71-2, 82, 106-7, 119, 133, 152  
 Axis, xiv, 163, 169  
*Ayame*, 103  
*L'Azione Coloniale*, 50, 51, 73  
 Azumi Insect Powder Factory, 43  
 Azumi, Isaburo, 34, 46-7, 113  
  
 Bahru Zewde, xvi, 83, 170  
 Balkans (Southeast Europe), xi, 47, 66, 70, 72, 73, 107, 163  
 Balkan War, 1912, xiv  
 Bath, England, 12, 91  
 Beattie, Edward, 143  
 beer, 124, 151  
 Belgium (Belgian), xiii, 15, 19, 25, 34, 35, 37, 39 n27, 53, 95, 102, 105  
 Berbera, 47, 125, 139, 140  
*Berhanena Salam*, xv, 13-14, 16, 17, 63  
 Berlin, *see under* Germany  
 Black Dragon Society, 28, 30 n34, 46, 105-6, 108, 122, 140, 164 n24  
 Bolshevik, *see under* communism  
 Bombay, 32, 79, 104  
*La Bourse Egyptienne*, 51  
 Boxer Rebellion, 1900, 3  
 Breda, 135  
 Brenner Pass, 107, 119, 163  
  
 Buddha, 3  
 Bureau of Racial Research, 28  
 Burma, 5  
  
 Cairo, Egypt, 51, 160  
 Cambridge University, 11, 142  
 capitalism (capitalists), 8, 66, 68, 170  
 Caproni, 135  
 Castel Fusano, 115  
 Catholicism, Roman (missions), 15, 16, 72, 95  
 Celtic disease, 89, 99 n65  
 Central Asia-Far Eastern Society, 103  
 chambers of commerce and industry  
     Japan, 35  
     Kobe, 44  
     Nagasaki, 49, 51, 52, 59 n41  
     Nagoya, 43  
     Osaka, 28, 35, 43, 44, 113, 139, 152  
 Chiang Hsueh-liang, 64  
 Chiang Kai-shek, 64, 65, 135  
*Chicago Defender*, 107-8  
 China (Chinese), xi, 1, 3, 34, 96  
     comparisons, Ethiopia and, 16, 106, 112, 122-3, 141, 144, 150, 151, 156  
     Manchukuo, xi, 70, 102, 103, 122, 153, 155, 160-2, 163  
     Manchuria, 62, 64, 67, 78, 114, 122, 155  
         comparisons with Ethiopia, 71, 104, 108, 110, 123, 136, 148, 149, 150, 154  
     Manchurian Incident, 1931, 24, 45, 64, 66, 68, 108, 150, 153  
     Shanghai Incident, 1932, 23, 64  
     Japanese attacks on, 2, 23, 24, 66-7, 69, 115, 117, 118, 152  
     unity of Japan and, 4, 102, 141  
     Italo-Soviet anti-Japanese interests in, xiv, 58, 64-5, 69, 70, 72, 73, 90, 112, 114, 120, 122, 135  
     Italo-Japanese rapprochement and, 78, 102, 103, 111, 151, 153, 160-2  
     Italian aeronautics in, 65, 71, 112, 134-5  
 Chirol, Ignatius Valentine, 22  
 Christianity (Christian), 3, 4, 86  
     in Ethiopia 14, 16, 27, 63, 84, 89, 141  
 Chukio Trading Company, 55  
 Chujo, Tsuneshichi, 35-6  
 Church of Jesus, 153  
 Ciano, Count Galeazzo, 64, 160, 161, 162  
 collective security, xi, xiv-xv, 66, 71-2, 73, 107, 119, 148, 163, 168  
 Colombo, Ceylon, 50  
 colonialism (imperialism), xiii, xiv, xv, 7, 44, 82, 109, 113, 133, 144, 163  
     *see also* Russo-Japanese War  
     *see also* Tripartite Anglo-French-Italian Agreement, 1906  
     *see also* Padmore, George  
     Communist Russia, xi, xv, 62, 67, 70, 72, 90, 106-7, 148  
     Ethiopia, xii, 2, 8, 19, 27, 141  
     Africa and, 1, 2, 34, 47  
     race, xii, xiii, 2, 13, 28, 118, 121, 131, 156  
     Japan's threat to colonialists in Ethiopia, 46, 49, 66, 73, 84, 93, 114-15  
     Italy's conflicts with other European imperialists, 82  
     Japan's imperialism, 66, 117, 118



- communism (communist, bolshevik, Third Communist International, Comintern), 65, 66, 70, 73, 90, 91, 153, 156, 161  
 Marxism-Leninism, xi, 148, 169  
 on Ethiopia, xi, xiv, xv, 10, 16, 62, 63  
 Third Communist International (Comintern), 63, 66, 134, 161  
 Anti-Comintern Pact, 1936, 101, 161  
 concessions in Ethiopia (plantation, monopolies, immigration, emigration, imports, exports, imports—alcohol, aluminum products, beeswax, canned meat, caps and hats, celluloid goods, coffee and Mocha coffee, cotton, enamel ware, fruit trees, glass manufactures, gold, gum, honey, iron works, ivory, khaki, knitted goods, lumber and forest, matches, medicinal plants, mining, mosquito sticks and insect powder, opium, paper products, peas, phosphates, platinum, rare woods, reed mats, rice, rubber boots, salt, skins and hides, soap, soda ash, steel, tea, tobacco, towels, uniforms, vegetables, woolen blankets), 31, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 55, 68, 81, 82, 94, 97, 110, 135  
*see also* Nikkei-sha  
*see also* textiles  
*see also* Haniyu, Chotaro  
*see also* Jacob Adol Mar  
*see also* opium and poppies  
*see also* marriage  
*see also* Southard, Addison E.  
*see also* Shoji, Yunosuke  
 denials of Japanese concessions, 46, 57, 92, 94, 104, 108  
 use to pay for military aid, 124–5, 133, 136  
 after Italy's conquest of Ethiopia, 155–6, 161  
 Japanese emigration/immigration, 49, 53, 54, 55, 56, 101–2, 106, 121  
 European concessions, 27, 37, 53, 72, 78, 81  
 'On Japan's Commercial Policy', 47–8  
 'commercial issues equal political issues', 48  
 Japanese investigation party to East Africa, 1934, 47  
 constitution, Ethiopian, 1931, 10, 20 n15, 24, 26, 27, 37–8, 171–3  
 Meiji Constitution, 1889, 10, 37–38, 171–3  
 Consular Commission of Inquiry, Shanghai, 64  
 Control Faction, 109, 162  
 Council of Labor Unions, 137  
 cotton, *see under* textiles  
 Covenant of the League of Nations, *see under* League of Nations  
 Crosland, Thomas William Hodgson, 3  
 Czechoslovakia (Czech), xi, 57, 71, 72  
 Daba Birrou, 41, 166 n73  
 trip to Japan, 1935, 25, 125, 144  
 departure, 131–7  
 arrival, 137–40  
 official visits, 140–3  
 failure, 152, 153, 155  
 leaves Japan, 156–7  
 reconciliation with Italy, 159, 160  
*Daily Herald*, 49–50, 52, 54  
*Daily Telegraph*, 143  
 Deresse Amente, 143  
 Djibouti, 94, 143  
 Japanese trade through, 31, 32, 36, 47, 57, 95, 112, 156  
 Japanese travel through, 31, 33, 82, 92, 104, 136, 154, 159  
 Ethiopian travel through, 41, 44, 133, 157, 160  
 arms trade through, 125, 134, 139  
 Djibouti–Addis Ababa Railroad, 9, 93, 105, 125, 132  
 DuBois, W. E. B., 22  
 dumping, Japanese, 67, 69, 72, 90, 120, 153  
 Dutch, 22  
 East Europe, 57, 70, 71, 163  
 L'Écho de Paris, 118  
 Economic Survey Party to East Africa, 1927–8, 33, 36  
 Eden, Anthony, 144, 148  
 education (university, student, teacher, adviser), 15, 16, 27, 68, 86, 113, 142  
 as path to national strength, 9, 13, 14  
 missionary schools, 7  
 education abroad, 11, 15, 17, 27  
 Japan as a model, xv, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, 19, 69–70, 105  
 local education, 17, 18  
 Italo-Japanese exchanges, 102, 103, 141  
 foreign advisers, 17, 25, 37, 62, 94, 105, 131, 134, 136, 140, 153  
 Egypt (Egyptian), 2, 15, 24, 31, 32, 36, 47, 54, 72, 101, 160  
*Egyptian Mail*, 95  
 Ekins, Herbert, 143  
 Enomoto, Seisaku, 25, 46, 53, 87  
 Entotto, 10, 155  
 Entotto Raguel Church, 10  
 Eritrea (Eritrean), 8, 9, 15, 82, 96, 155  
 Ethio-Japanese commercial treaty, 1927, 32, 33, 34  
 Ethiopian Crisis Committee, 106  
 Ethiopian Defense Society, 28, 140  
 Ethiopian-Japan Association, 123  
 Ethiopian Patriotic Women's Society, 137  
 Ethiopian Problems Society, 110, 141, 150, 159  
 Ethiopian Rescue Society, 28, 133, 138, 139  
 Europe (Europeans), 26, 31, 82, 91, 140, 141, 143  
*see also* Balkans  
*see also* colonialism  
*see also* East Europe  
*see also* Rome Accords, 1935  
*see also* Russo-Japanese War, 1904–5  
*see also* textiles  
*see also* Yellow Peril  
 conflict within Europe, xiv, 117, 141, 144, 150, 152, 153, 154, 163  
 German threat 119, 133  
 Ethiopian animosity toward, 18–9, 52  
 racial fears of, 18, 19, 83, 109, 118, 121, 123–4  
 Japanese threat in, xi, xiii, 65, 68, 95, 96, 117, 139  
 Japanese threat to Europe in Ethiopia, 11, 86, 91, 96, 103, 113  
 economic threat, 26, 35, 37, 51, 54, 56, 57, 80, 81, 102, 105  
 military threat, 83, 117  
 diplomatic threat, 11, 12  
 as Japan's teacher, xv, 1, 2, 9, 11, 12, 169

- influence in Ethiopia, 12, 14, 15, 25, 40 n37, 96, 169  
 European education, 7, 8, 9, 11, 16  
 European trade with Ethiopia, 35, 81  
 China and, 65, 69  
 Soviet Russia and, 62, 67, 68, 71, 120  
 comparisons of policies in Ethiopia and Asia, 150, 152, 154  
 contempt for Ethiopia, 15–6  
 arms control in Ethiopia, 34, 73, 96, 105
- Falkenegg, Baron von, 3, 4  
 Far East, *see under* Asia  
 Farago, Ladislav, 45, 57, 143, 169  
 Fascism (Fascist), xiv, 68, 114, 117  
 anti-Fascism, xi, xiv, 106, 111  
 race, xiii  
 Russia and Communism, xi, 64, 66, 69, 72, 73  
 Africa, xiii, 51, 82  
 Japan, 116, 118, 121, 131, 136, 159, 162, 168  
 feudalism (feudal), 7, 8, 14, 17, 24, 26, 63, 64, 170  
 Fiat, 135  
 First Convention of Oriental Students, Rome, 68, 69  
 Floating Clouds, 123  
 Ford, automobile, 92, 99 n88  
 Ford, James W., 66  
 Formosa (Taiwan, Formosan), 1, 66  
 Four Power Pact, xiv  
 France (French, Franco, Paris), xii, xiv, 52, 56, 64, 81, 91, 133, 136, 143, 154  
*see also* collective security  
*see also* Hoare-Laval Plan, 1935  
*see also* Paris Arms Treat, 1930  
*see also* Rome Accords, 1935  
*see also* Stresa Agreement, 1935  
*see also* Tripartite Anglo-French-Italian Agreement, 1906  
 Ethiopia, 8, 15, 16, 25, 36, 106, 125, 132, 140, 155  
     Heruy Welde Sellase, 10, 11, 12  
     commerce with Ethiopia, 25, 53, 79, 85  
 French language, xvi, 15, 17, 26, 32, 36  
 Italy, 70, 82, 115, 116, 117, 122, 133–4, 160, 168, 169  
 Japan, 32, 78, 82, 85, 101–2, 123, 143, 152, 153, 158  
     Soviet Union, xi–xii, 65, 66, 67, 69, 168  
 Franco-Abyssinian Treaty, 1928, 34  
 Fujiwara, Yoshie, 142  
 Fukinami, Katsumi, 134, 140  
*Fukuoka Nichi Nichi*, 116  
 Furukawa Electric Company, 79  
*The Future of Africa*, 2
- Gabra Egziabher, 8, 9  
 Galli, *see under* Oromo  
 Gandhi, Mahatma, xv  
 Gayda, Virginio, 109, 117, 122  
 Gebre Heywet Baykedagn, 9–10  
 Geneva, *see under* League of Nations  
 Geneva Protocol, June 17, 1925, 155  
 Germany (Berlin, Nazi), 2, 3, 28, 52, 53, 66, 70, 106, 117, 131, 133, 136, 143  
     collective security against, xi, xiv, 65, 67, 71–2, 73, 107, 119, 135, 144, 148, 163  
     ties with Ethiopia, 9, 11, 13, 15, 25, 32, 35, 37, 105, 129 n128, 137  
     growing Italo-German-Japanese alliance, 85, 95, 155, 160, 161, 168–9  
*Il Giornale d'Italia*, 108, 109, 111, 115, 117–18, 121  
 Great Britain (Anglo, Anglo-Saxon, Britain, British, England, London), xii, 52, 56, 85, 95, 143, 151  
*see also* Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement and Military Convention, January, 1942  
*see also* Anglo-German Naval Agreement, 1935  
*see also* collective security  
*see also* Four Power Pact  
*see also* Hoare-Laval Plan, 1935  
*see also* Paris Arms Treaty  
*see also* League of Nations  
*see also* Second London Naval Conference  
*see also* Stresa Agreement, 1935  
*see also* *see also* Tripartite Anglo-French-Italian Agreement, 1906  
*see also* Yellow Peril  
 Afghanistan, 12  
 Asia, 110  
 colonial possessions and issues, 33, 47, 49, 62, 72, 80, 83, 86, 106, 115, 117, 123, 124, 125, 141  
 English language, xvi, 26, 42, 55, 56, 68, 79, 86, 89, 121, 138, 139, 142  
 Ethiopia, 9, 15, 32, 35, 37, 46, 72, 85, 90, 105, 131, 132, 133, 134, 136, 169  
     arms control in Ethiopia, 131, 146 n60  
     competition with Japan in, 24, 26, 50, 53, 79, 85, 93, 95, 101, 102, 106  
     Daba Birrou, 131, 138  
     Heruy Welde Sellase, 10, 11, 12, 46, 50  
     Hayle Sellase's flight, 91, 158, 160  
 Italy, 78, 95, 105, 117, 118, 121, 123, 144, 148, 151, 152, 160, 163  
 Japan, 33, 50, 66, 85, 106, 111, 131, 133, 136, 143, 149, 150, 152, 153, 156  
     Sugimura Affair, 111, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 121, 122, 123, 150  
     Soviet Russia, 62, 65, 66  
 Great Depression, 34, 65  
 Great Japanese Turan Youth League, 28, 134, 135  
 Greece (Greek, Athens), 16, 18, 25, 31, 32, 93  
 Grene, William C., 59 n41  
 Grew, Joseph, 87, 103, 104, 162
- Hague Convention, 1907, 155  
 Hangchow, 65  
 Haniyu, Chotaro, 78, 79, 80, 81, 89, 93  
 Hara, Fujiemon, 46  
 Hara, Toemon, 46  
 Harada, Chuichiro, 50, 51, 52  
 Harrar Province, 2, 34, 82, 143  
 Hattori Poultry Farm, 43  
 Hattori, Takushiro, 143, 159  
 Hayle Sellase, Emperor (Teferi Mekonnen, Negus), 10, 11, 44, 57, 64, 133, 137, 169  
*see also* Société Éthiopienne de Commerce et d'Industrie, 63  
 Constitution, 37, 38  
 coronations, 1928 and 1930, 16, 34, 35, 41, 42, 45, 63  
 defeat and flight, 12, 91, 157, 158  
 Italy, 37, 38, 106

- Japan, 41, 44, 48, 81, 82, 104, 110, 114, 116,  
132, 133, 138, 159  
as model, 10, 12-3, 16, 26, 38, 42, 52, 140  
government officials, 26, 27, 31-2, 35, 41, 53,  
92, 132  
journalists, 24, 25, 55, 56, 89, 104, 121, 136,  
139-40, 141  
legation, 120, 155  
non-government representatives, 35, 46, 117,  
141-2, 150, 156  
League of Nations, 31  
marriage proposal, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90  
modernization, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 26, 37, 48  
racial attitudes, 13, 17, 54, 140  
United States of America, 37  
visits Europe, 11, 31  
Heruy Welde Sellase, 15, 31, 36, 58, 64, 106, 109,  
110, 150, 152, 156  
trip to Japan, 1931, xvi, 12-13, 24, 26, 35, 41-6,  
53, 55, 83, 113, 134, 137  
Italy's reaction, 41, 45  
Japanizer, 10-11, 12  
foreign opinion of, 11-12  
and journalists, 12, 26, 56, 57, 131, 136, 137  
Ethiopia's constitution, 37, 40 n37  
economic contacts with Japanese, 48, 50, 51,  
52, 57, 81, 92, 104  
marriage proposal, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90  
Daba Birrou's trip to Japan, 1935, 139, 140,  
141-2, 143  
Japan's legation in Addis Ababa, 154, 155  
Higashi, Kuna, 139  
Hikida, Yasuichi, 22  
Hirohito, Emperor, 10, 12, 27, 42, 44, 45, 54, 90,  
108, 116, 132, 142  
Hirota, Koki, 47, 69, 70, 82, 104, 140, 156  
Sugimura Affair, 110, 111, 113, 114, 116, 119  
Hsinking, 155  
Hitachi Electric Company, 79  
Hitler, Adolf, 67, 161 163, 168  
Hiwet, Addis  
Hoare-Laval Plan, 1935, 153  
Hoare, Samuel, 153  
*Hochi*, 131  
Hoshi-Siyaku, 157  
Holeta, 47  
Holeta Military Academy, 133  
Holiness Church of Japan, 66  
Hong Kong, 139  
Hungary, 67, 71  
  
Imperial Diet, Japan, 47, 69, 93, 113, 115, 162  
Imperial Household Department, Japan, 42, 84,  
86, 87, 88, 90  
Imperial Way Faction, 109, 162  
imperialism, *see under* colonialism  
Inabata, Katsutaro, 28, 35, 139  
Inahara, Katsuji, 70-1  
India (Indians), xv, 5, 16, 22, 44, 65, 90, 106, 117,  
156  
merchant activity in Ethiopia, 32, 33, 36, 41,  
51, 79, 93, 96  
Indian Ocean, 66, 72  
Indo-China, 44, 90  
Inukai, Tsuyoshi, 44  
Irye, Kanae, 33, 36, 43, 154  
Islam (Muslim), 4, 23, 27  
  
Italian Navy League, 70  
Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of Friendship and  
Arbitration, 1928, xiii, 34, 36, 95, 104  
Italo-Ethiopian War, First, 1896, xiii, 134  
Italo-Ethiopian War, Second, 1935-6, xi, xii, xiv,  
xvi, 12, 13, 26, 57, 62-3, 88  
*see also* Daba Birrou  
*see also* Hoare-Laval Plan, 1935  
*see also* Suzuki Kuma  
rumors of Japanese aid to Ethiopia, 107-8, 135,  
149  
Japanese reconciliation with Italy, 144, 149,  
150-1, 152-3, 154, 156, 159, 162  
Japanese views of war, 108, 138, 142, 149-50,  
152, 157, 159  
Soviet view of war, 148  
League sanctions, 149, 150, 151-2  
exchange of recognitions, 160-3  
Japan establishes a legation in Ethiopia, 152,  
154-5  
Japan establishes a consulate in Ethiopia, 155  
Italy establishes consulate in Manchukuo,  
155  
Japan observes war, 150, 155  
Japan's rights in Ethiopia, 155-6, 157, 158-9,  
160-1, 162  
Hayle Sellase flees, 158  
Japan recognizes Italian conquest, 158-9  
comparisons of Italy in Ethiopia and Japan in  
Manchuria, 150, 154, 155, 162  
Japan's medical aid to Ethiopia, 152, 157, 160,  
162  
effect on Japan's commerce, 151  
Ethiopia's disappointment in Japan, 155  
fall of Addis Ababa, 157, 158  
international implications of war, 160, 161, 168  
Ethiopia's modernization, 169, 170  
Italy (Italians, Rome), 7, 133  
*see also* Adwa, Battle of  
*see also* Afewerq Gebre Iyesus  
*see also* Aloisi, Pompeo  
*see also* Asia  
*see also* Auriti, Giacinto  
*see also* China  
*see also* Ciano, Galeazzo  
*see also* collective security  
*see also* Fascism  
*see also* Gayda, Virginio  
*see also* *Il Giornale d'Italia*  
*see also* Great Britain  
*see also* Haniyu, Chotaro  
*see also* Hayle Sellase  
*see also* Italo-Ethiopian War, Second, 1935-6  
*see also* Kitagawa, Takashi  
*see also* League of Nations  
*see also* Lessona, Alessandro  
*see also* Litvinov, Maksim Maksimovich  
*see also* marriage  
*see also* Matsushima, Hajime  
*see also* *Il Mattino*  
*see also* military aid  
*see also* Mussolini, Benito  
*see also* Olympics  
*see also* *Il Popolo d'Italia*  
*see also* racial issues  
*see also* Rome Accords  
*see also* Shtein, Boris

- see also* Southard, Addison E.  
*see also* Soviet Russia  
*see also* Stresa Agreement, 1935  
*see also* Sugimura Affair  
*see also* Sugimura, Yotaro  
*see also* Suvich, Fulvio  
*see also* *Le Temps*  
*see also* *La Tribuna*  
*see also* Tripartite Anglo-French-Italo Agreement, 1906  
*see also* ultra-nationalists  
*see also* Vinci-Gigliucci, Luigi Orazio  
*see also* World War II  
*see also* Yellow Peril  
 opposition to outside influences in Ethiopia, xi, 37  
     to Japan in Ethiopia, xiv, xv, 33, 45, 48, 53, 56, 93-4, 118  
     to Japan's economic threat, 37, 46, 47, 54, 57-8, 95, 102, 105, 108  
     to Japan's military threat, 73, 81, 82, 83, 89, 95-6, 113, 124, 133  
     to Japan's constitutional influence, 37-8  
     to Heruy's visit to Japan, 1931, 45  
     Italian representatives downplay Japanese success, 45, 57, 131  
     Japan assures Italy, 101, 139  
     objections to Ethiopia's modernization, 10, 11  
     fears of Ethiopia military build-up, 104, 105  
     Shoji, Yunosuke, 24  
     doctors in Ethiopia, 25  
     embassy in Tokyo, 28, 95, 106  
     using Japan to attract support against Ethiopia, 38, 57, 58, 114, 116, 136  
     Italo-Japanese co-operation, 103, 124, 125, 133, 135, 139, 154  
     Japanese warning of difficulties facing Italy in Ethiopia, 116-7  
     Daba Birrou's visit, 1935, 133, 136-7, 138, 141, 143  
     military build-up against Ethiopia, 137  
     popular upset in Japan against, 137-8, 140, 142, 148-9  
     Japanese face difficulties in, 142  
 Ito Chu Company, 79  
 Ito, Kiyoshi, 150  
 Iwabuchi, Yosikazu, 131, 143  
 Iwate, 82  
 Iyasu Mikael, Emperor, 10  
*Izvestia*, 106  
  
*Japan Advertiser*, xvi, 119-20  
 Japan Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra, 103  
 Japan-Ethiopian Association, 28, 35  
 Japan Mail Steamship Company, 2  
 Japan Production Party, 28, 46, 116  
 Japan Rolling Stock Manufacturing Company, 43  
*Japan Times & Mail*, xvi, 106, 135  
 Japan-Turan Association, 28  
 Japanese Cotton Thread and Cloth Guild, 36, 93  
 Japanese-Ethiopian Society, 28, 35  
 Japanese-Ethiopian Trade Association, 46  
 Japanizers (Japanization, Progressive Intellectuals, Young Ethiopians, modernization, modern), 44, 48, 57, 83, 85  
*see also* Araya Abeba  
*see also* Berhanena Salam  
  
*see also* Hayle Sellase  
*see also* Heruy Welde Sellase  
*see also* Italo-Ethiopian War, Second, 1935-6  
*see also* Italy  
*see also* military aid  
*see also* Kabbada Mikael  
*see also* Procházka, Roman  
 beliefs, xv, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16  
 failure, 169, 170  
 Jews (Falasha, Jewish, Semite), xiii, 13, 15, 27, 28, 66, 67, 96, 102, 151  
 Jimma, 78  
*Juo Hyoron*, 85  
  
 Kabbada Mikael, 169, 170  
 Kanegafuchi Spinning Company, 43, 44, 79  
 Kasa Darge, 37  
 Katakuru Reeling Company, 42  
 Keizo Nambu, 82  
 Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928, 110, 112, 114, 115, 118, 120  
 Kenya, 33, 34, 56, 124, 132  
 Kidane Mariam Aberra, 18, 142  
 Kiido, Mataichi, 43  
 Kitagawa, Takashi  
     negotiation in Ethiopia, 48-9  
     international controversy, 49-52, 54, 57, 59 n40  
 and n41, 85, 89, 108, 136  
 Knackfuss, Hermann, 3  
 Kobe City, 41, 44, 45, 47, 102, 105, 138, 150, 157, 158  
 Kobayashi Hideo, 143  
*Kokusai Hyoron*, 25  
 Korea (Koreans), 1, 2, 66, 67, 91, 107, 117, 120  
 Kremlin, *see under* Soviet Union  
 Kuroda, Hiroyuk, 86, 87  
 Kuroda, Masako, 26, 86-7, 97, 142  
     chosen for marriage, 86, 88  
     scandals, 91  
     marriage idea dies, 88, 89, 90  
     international implications of marriage, 104, 108, 140  
 Kuroki, Tokitaro, 35, 36, 50  
     visits to Ethiopia, 31, 32, 34, 35, 93, 154  
     Heury's visit to Japan, 43, 44  
 Kyoto City, 139, 150  
  
 Laval, Pierre, 71, 107, 153  
*Il Lavoro Fascista*, 68  
 League of Nations (Geneva), xii, 137  
     Ethiopia, 10, 15, 31, 32, 52, 96, 105, 119, 138  
     Japan, 31, 92, 95, 110-11, 117, 131, 151, 156  
     Japanese concessions in Ethiopia, 51, 52  
     withdraws from League, 64, 69, 72, 139, 149  
     League ignores aggression of, 110, 123  
     ignores League, 115, 118, 141, 150, 152  
     Italy, xiii, 64, 71, 110, 131, 139, 144, 160  
     collective security, xiv, xv, 72, 107, 124, 148, 163  
     Lytton Commission of Inquiry, 63  
     Anti-Opium Bureau, 93  
     Opium Advisory Committee, 52  
     Covenant, Article 16, and sanctions, 104, 149, 151  
     Great Britain, 118  
     failure in East Asia, 110  
 Lebanon, 15

- Leoncavallo, Ruggero, 103  
 Lessona, Alessandro, 50, 96  
 Libya, 7  
 Little Entente, 71  
 Litvinov, Maksim Maksimovich, xiv, 64, 67, 68,  
     69, 70, 107, 120, 124, 148  
 London, *see under* Great Britain  
 Lordi, Colonel. Roberto, 65, 135  
 Loyang City, 65  
  
 Majoni, Giovanni Cesare, 45  
 Manchukuo, *see under* China  
 Manchuria, *see under* China  
 Mar, Jacob Adol, 78, 80-1  
 Mareb Front, 143  
 Mariani, Luigi, 112  
 marriage, xii, 82, 83-8, 93, 97, 102, 103-4, 140  
     *see also* Araya Abeba  
     *see also* Hayle Sellase  
     *see also* Kuroda, Masako  
     *see also* Nanjo, Shinichi  
     *see also* Shoji, Yunosuke  
     *see also* Sumioka, Tomoyoshi,  
     and concessions in Ethiopia, 55, 85, 87, 89, 90,  
     92, 136, 140  
     Italian interference and failure, 85, 88-91, 95,  
     108, 112  
 Martin, E. W., 143  
 Marxism-Leninism, *see under* communism  
*Il Mattino*, 47, 51  
 Matsudaira, Tsuneo, 136  
 Matsushima, Hajime, 70, 95  
*Il Mattino*, 47, 51  
 Mediterranean Sea, 57, 65, 66, 68, 72, 120, 148,  
     151, 154, 168  
 Meiji Constitution, 1889, 10, 37, 38, 171-3  
 Meiji Restoration, 1868, 1, 7, 10, 29, 170  
 Meiji Shrine, 42, 140  
 Mekonnen Welde Mikael, 12  
 Menilek II, Emperor, 5, 9, 10, 47, 156  
*Il Messaggero*, 50, 114, 118, 132, 133  
 Middle East, 1, 81, 94  
 Mikhail, Abuna, 160  
 military aid (arms, armaments, munitions,  
     ammunition, military advisers)  
     modernizing Ethiopia's military, 37, 42, 95-6,  
     116  
     Italy and Ethiopia, 34, 132, 140  
     Japan and Ethiopia, 47, 56, 94, 96, 102, 108,  
     163  
     Italy's worries, 34, 55, 89, 97, 105, 106, 120,  
     125, 131, 134, 139, 149  
     Japan assures Italy, 111, 112, 132, 135-6, 163  
     Ethiopia assures Italy, 102  
     Heruy, 44, 45, 92, 155  
     Daba Birrou, 132, 140, 141, 152, 153  
     Afewerq Gebre Iyesus, 132, 155  
     Ethiopia's desire for, 37, 133  
     Paris Arms Treaty, 1930, 34  
     Italy and China, 65, 70, 112  
     Europe and Ethiopia, xiii, 34, 62, 105, 131, 140  
 Miller, Webb, 143  
 Mishima Shoten, 159  
 Mitsubishi Aircraft Manufacturing Plant, 43  
 Mitsui Bussan Company, 46, 151, 153  
 Miura, Tanaki, 142  
 modernization, *see under* Japanizers  
  
 Mohammed Ali, 47  
 Mombasa, Kenya, 33, 34, 124  
 Monroe Doctrine, Japan's (Amau Doctrine), 71  
*Morning Post*, 51, 52  
 Moscow, *see under* Soviet Union  
*Moscow Daily News*, 72, 90  
 Mukden, Manchuria, 155, 161  
 Munich Agreement, xi  
 Mushanokoji, Kintomo, 32, 33, 93, 108, 136  
 Mussolini, Benito (Duce), 89, 96, 97, 102, 105,  
     118, 120, 121, 158  
     *see also* collective security  
     *see also* First Convention of Oriental Students  
     *see also* Sugimura Affair  
     justifying an aggressive policy in Ethiopia, xiii,  
     82, 83, 97, 104, 105, 110  
     race, xv, 110, 119, 120 151  
     Japan's threat to Italy, 47, 68, 69, 108, 114, 123  
     China, 64, 65, 69  
     Japanese reaction to, 67, 69, 70, 71, 93, 95, 109,  
     116, 120, 123, 134, 152  
     Soviet Union, xiv, 107, 119, 124, 168-9  
     reconciliation with Japan, 150 153  
     reconciliation with Germany, 160  
     Hoare-Laval Plan, 153  
     union of policy in Asia & Africa, 81, 151  
  
 Nagasaki City and Prefecture, Japan, 49, 50, 138,  
     139  
 Nagasaki Association for Economic Investigation  
     of Ethiopia, *see under* Nikkei-sha  
 Nagoya City, 43, 55, 137  
 Naigai Rubber Factory, 44  
 Nakada, Juji, 66  
 Nakayama, Shoichi, 154  
 Nanchang, China, 65, 135  
 Nanjo, Hiroshi, 70  
 Nanjo, Shinichi, 23, 25, 26, 56, 86-7, 88, 89, 143  
 Nanking, China, 64, 65, 71, 173  
 Naples, 51, 82, 96, 151  
 National Cotton Cloth Exporters' Association, 43  
 National Council of Trade Unions, 90  
 Nationalist Volunteer People's Party, 140  
 Nazi, *see under* Germany  
 Near East, 47, 81  
 Negus, *see under* Hayle Sellase  
 Nehru, Jawaharlal, 5  
 Nicholas II, 3  
 Nihon Dempo News Agency, 136  
 Nikkei-sha, 48-52, 53, 54, 57, 66, 89, 92, 93, 108  
 Nimiya, Takeo, 27-8  
 neo-mercantilism, 47, 58, 65, 124  
 Nishikawa Shoji Company, 79  
 Nisshin Joint Stock Textile Company, 35, 41  
 Noda, Minosuke, 159  
 Numata, Takazo, 141  
  
 Ogaden, 153  
 Okada, Keisuke, 113  
 Olympics, xiii, 103, 112  
 Omya City, 42  
 Oohara, Takekei, 47  
 opium and poppies, 55, 82, 91, 121  
     *see also* concessions  
     *see also* Nikkei-sha  
 Oromo (Galli), 56, 57  
 Osaka, city and prefecture, 47, 113, 150, 159

- Heruy's visit, 43, 44, 45, 46  
 Daba Birrou's visit, 134, 137, 139, 143, 157  
*Osaka Asahi*, 49, 52, 104, 116, 123-4, 134, 140, 150  
 Osaka Exporting League to Africa, 34, 43, 47  
*Osaka Mainichi*, xvi, 25, 26, 43, 47, 56, 131  
 Daba Birrou's visit to Japan, 1931, 25 137, 138, 139, 140, 143, 144, 157, 158  
*Osaka Mainichi and Tokyo Nichi Nichi*, xvi, 56, 131, 137, 138  
 Osaka Mercantile Steamship Company (OSK), 33, 109  
 Osaka School of Foreign Languages, 117  
 Osumi, Mineo, 82  
 Otsuka, Torao, 143  
 Oto, Naguharu, 154  
 Ottawa, Canada, 136  
 Oyama, Ujirō, 23, 33, 36, 137, 141, 150, 159
- Pacific Ocean, 66, 69, 110, 115, 117, 169  
 Packard, Leonard, 143  
 Padmore, George, 66, 68, 107, 134, 148  
*Pagliacci*, 103  
 Palestine, 15  
 Pan-Asian (Pan-Asianism), 23, 24, 28, 46, 83, 92, 97, 102, 159, 170  
 Pan-Asianism Society, 28  
 Pan-Pacific Club, Tokyo, 103, 154  
 Papal College for the Propaganda of the Faith, 153  
 Paris Arms Treaty, 1930, 34  
 Patriotic Women's Association, Japanese, 152  
 Patriotic Youth Association, 28, 138, 140  
 People's Party, 115-6  
 Perry, Commodore Matthew Calbraith, 22, 170  
 Philippines, 5  
 Phillips, Sir Percival, 143  
*Il Piccolo*, 114, 118  
 Pinon, René, 3-4  
 Poland, xi, 137  
 Pontificio Collegio Etiopico, 15  
*Il Popolo d'Italia*, xiii, 65, 118  
 Popular Front, 160  
 Port Said, Egypt, 2, 31, 33, 50, 134, 143, 154, 159, 160  
 Portugal (Portuguese), 22, 169  
 Potemkin, Vladimir Petrovich, 65  
*Pravda*, 68, 135  
 Procházka, Roman, 18-9, 90, 121  
 Progressive Intellectuals, *see under* Japanizers
- Quarto*, 82
- racial issues (yellow, black, colored, race, white), xii, 1, 28, 38, 122, 144, 153  
*see also* Kidane Mariam Aberba  
*see also* Nanjo Hiroshi  
*see also* Padmore, George  
*see also* Pan-Asian  
*see also* Procházka, Roman,  
*see also* Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5  
*see also* Social Darwinism  
*see also* White Peril  
*see also* White Wolf Manifesto  
*see also* Yellow Peril  
 Italian views and use of, xv, 38, 65, 69, 72, 105, 131, 136, 151, 154  
 during Sugimura Affair, 114, 115, 117, 118, 119, 121, 124  
 Japanese views and use of 131, 135, 139, 150, 152, 155, 156, 162  
 early analysis, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28  
 during Sugimura Affair 109, 110, 111, 116, 123-4  
 racial solidarity xiii, xv, 2, 29, 86, 114, 134, 159  
 learns attitudes from the United States, 22  
 limits of racial politics, 135  
 Ethiopian views and use of, xv, 13, 16, 18, 19, 51, 83, 114, 139-40, 170  
 racial union of Japan and Ethiopia, xiv, xv, 29, 37, 89, 90, 97, 114, 120 140  
 Soviet and communist views, xi, xiv, xv, 62, 66, 106  
 Germany, 28, 95  
 United States, xiii, 18, 22, 108, 143
- Rapallo Agreements, 1922, 67  
 Rea, L. M., 103  
 Red Cross, 149, 152, 155, 157, 162  
 Red Sea, 83, 95, 108, 117, 118, 143, 156  
 Rengo News Agency, 104, 110, 114, 115, 143, 153  
 Rey, Charles, 23  
 Rhineland, xi, 160, 168  
 Rhodes, Cecil, 2  
 Romania, 32, 71  
 Rome Accords, 1935, 71, 72, 106, 148  
 Roundtable Conference on Ethiopian Issues, 23, 159  
 Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5, xiv, 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 12, 28, 134, 138, 170
- Saigon, 43  
 St Cyr, 15  
 Saito, Hiroshi, 136  
 Savoia-Marchetti, 134, 135  
 La Scala Grand Opera Company, 103  
 Scaroni, General Silvio, 135  
 Second London Naval Conference, 1935, 135, 153-4  
 Seizo, Arisue, 149  
 Semite, *see under* Jews  
 Shanghai, 23, 33, 44, 64, 65, 73, 134, 135, 138, 139, 147 n70  
 Shanghai Incident, 1932, *see under* China  
 Shidehara, Kijuro, 32, 34, 42, 45  
 Shigemitsu, Mamoru, 48, 94, 106, 112, 139, 151, 158  
 Shimada Glassware Manufacturing Plant, 43  
 Shoa Province, 101  
 Shoji, Yunosuke, 12, 104  
 Hayle Sellase, 121  
 background and ideas, 23-5  
 marriage issue, 85, 86, 88, 89-90, 140  
 trip to Japan, 1935, 138, 139, 140, 141, 143  
 promotes Ethiopia, 25, 26, 28, 104, 116-7, 137, 142, 159  
 objective analysis, 50, 134, 149  
 interference in diplomacy, 121, 123, 124, 131, 133, 134, 141
- Shtein, Boris, 71, 107, 124  
 Siberia, 62, 73, 114  
 Sidani Province, 101  
 Sika, Captain, 155  
 Singapore, 44, 53, 65, 106

- Sino-Italian National Aircraft Works, 135  
 Sino-Japanese conflict, 1930s, 64, 66, 153  
 Sino-Japanese War, 1894-5, 1, 138  
 Slavophilism, 62  
 Social Darwinism, 2, 22, 65, 70  
 Société Éthiopienne de Commerce et d'Industrie, 63  
 Société Nationale, 81  
 Somaliland (Somali), 57, 155  
     British, 47, 140  
     French, 93  
     Italian, 82, 96, 124, 151  
 Southard, Addison E. 35  
     compares Japan and Ethiopia, 12-13, 85, 88, 89  
     comments on race, 13  
     critiques Japanizers, 14, 16, 17, 18  
     critiques Italian fears of Japan in Ethiopia, 37, 53  
     evaluates Japanese advances in Ethiopia, 26, 36, 41, 52, 53-4, 57, 79 82-3, 92  
     on communist activity in Ethiopia, 63, 64  
     marriage proposal, 84-5, 87, 88  
     on Ethiopia's military, 95-6  
 Southeast Europe, *see under* Balkans  
 Soviet Russia (Kremlin, Moscow, Russo, Tsar, USSR), xvi, 3, 16, 56, 63, 64, 143, 157  
     *see also* collective security  
     *see also* communism  
     *see also* Litvinov, Maksim Maksimovich  
     *see also* Padmore, George  
     *see also* racial issues  
     *see also* Rapallo Agreements, 1922  
     *see also* Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5  
     *see also* Stalin, Joseph  
     *see also* Stein, Boris  
     *see also* White Russians  
     common interests with Italy, 71, 73, 117, 119, 120, 122, 124  
         in Asia 58, 62, 64, 65, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 107  
         in Ethiopia, 58, 64, 65, 67, 69, 72, 78, 90, 101, 104, 106, 107, 108, 109, 135  
         in Europe, 70  
     tsarist interests in Ethiopia, 10, 62, 64  
     Ethiopian fears of Bolshevism and communism, 62, 63  
     and China, 64  
     and Great Britain, 106, 153  
     worsening of relations with, 148, 156, 160, 161, 168, 169  
 Spain (Spanish), 15, 105, 129 n128, 161  
     Spanish Civil War, 1936-9, xi, xiii, 160, 161, 168  
     Spanish Republic, 168  
 Special Court, 11, 18, 31  
 Stalin, Joseph, 72, 148  
*La Stampa*, 47, 103, 114  
 Starace, General Achilles, 121  
 Stefani, 153  
 Stoddard, Lothrop, 4  
 Street, Alfred, 143  
 Stresa Agreement, 1935, 71, 72, 119, 144, 148, 153, 168  
 Sudan, 9, 32, 72, 132  
 Suez, 2, 151, 160  
 Sugimura Affair, xiv, 101, 109-25  
 Sugimura, Yotaro  
     *see also* Sugimura Affair  
     *see also* Olympics  
         antagonizes Pan-Asian nationalists, 102, 109, 110  
         discord with Japanese foreign ministry, 104, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 115, 116, 123  
         Italian reaction 111, 115, 117, 119  
         Japanese press reaction 113, 114, 116, 118, 119, 120  
         foreign evaluations 120, 122, 124  
     assurances to Italians, 89, 96, 97, 102, 103, 105, 109-25 *passim*  
     contacts with Ethiopians, 31, 95, 96, 131, 132  
     reaction to Italo-Ethiopian War 149, 150, 152, 153, 155  
     protecting Japanese interests in Ethiopia, 157, 158, 159  
     new legation & consulate in Addis Ababa, 103, 161, 162  
     new legation in Manchukuo, 160  
     favors Italy 133, 135, 159, 161  
 Sumioka, Tomoyoshi, 23, 24, 28, 117, 120, 140, 156, 159  
     marriage proposal, 23, 84, 85, 86, 88, 89, 140  
 Sumitomo Copper Works, 43  
 Suvich, Fulvio, 65, 89, 96, 107, 119, 133, 157  
 Suwa Shrine, 138  
 Suzuki Kuma, 149, 152, 154-6, 158  
 Suzuki Shintaro, 50, 54  
 Sweden (Swedes), xiii, 9, 12, 60 n70, 105, 155  
 Switzerland (Swiss), 15, 81, 129 n128, 136  
  
 Tabata, Chiiko, 86  
 Takeshita, Isamu, 141  
 Tanabe, Yasunosuke, 23, 159  
 Tanaka Giichi, 32  
 TASS, 67, 68  
 Tatsuji, Takaya, 138  
 Taytu Betul, Empress, 8, 9  
 Teferi Gebre Mariam, 41  
 Teferi Mekonnen, *see under* Hayle Sellase  
 Tegray, 9, 153  
 Tekle Hawaryat, 10, 20 n15, 37, 56-7, 102  
*Le Temps*, 50, 120, 136  
*Il Tevere*, 115  
 textiles, including clothing, cotton, rayon, silk, tents, towels, and wool, 43, 46, 95, 141, 151, 152  
     *see also* Army Clothing Depot  
     *see also* concessions  
     *see also* Cotton Thread and Cloth Guild  
     *see also* Kitagawa, Takashi  
     *see also* National Cotton Cloth Exporters' Association  
     cotton, 66, 58, 69, 83, 170  
         Japan's trade with Ethiopia, 1, 33, 35, 45, 46, 78  
         cotton products, 2, 32, 33, 36, 41, 43, 48, 53, 93, 151  
         Ethiopia's trade with India, 51, 79  
         Ethiopia's trade with Soviet Russia, 63  
         Ethiopia's trade with Italy, 161, 162  
     silk, 2, 32, 33, 53, 151  
 Three Human Bombs, 143, 146-7 n70  
 Third Communist International (Comintern), *see under* communism  
*The Times*, 22

- Toshiharu, Harima, 133  
 Toda, Masaji, 55  
 Tokugawa, Iyesato, 152  
 Tokugawa Shogunate, 1603-1868 (Shogun), 10-11, 23, 24, 26  
 Tokyo Imperial University, 2, 32, 83, 103  
*Tokyo Nichi Nichi*, xvi, 56, 57, 83, 111-12, 116  
     Daba Birrou's visit to Japan, 1935, 25, 137, 140  
 Tomizu, Hirono, 2  
 Tomono, Soichi, 46  
 Tomaselli, Francesco, 103  
 Toyama, Mitsuru, 110, 138, 141, 142, 150, 157, 159  
 Toyo Spinning Company, 43, 44  
 Treaty of Friendship and Commerce, Ethiopia and Japan, 1932, 31, 32, 36  
*La Tribuna*, 47, 102, 115  
 Tripartite Anglo-French-Italian Agreement, 1906 (tripartite powers), 36, 37, 51, 78, 110, 115, 118  
     cooperation against the Japanese, 11, 49, 50, 53, 95, 102, 118, 123, 136  
     rivalries with Britain and Italy in Ethiopia, 86, 93, 105, 144  
 Tripartite Anglo-French-Italian declarations of, 1934, 71  
 tripartite Anglo-French-Italian talks, 1935, 144  
 Tripartite Defense Treaty, Italy, Japan, and Germany, 1937, 169  
 Trotsky, Lev, xiv, xv  
 Tsai, Ethiopian princess, 137  
 Tsuchida, Yutaka, 26-7, 92-4, 97, 150  
 Tsushima Strait, Battle of, 12  
 Turkey (Turks, Ottoman, Istanbul), 7, 32, 35, 96  
     *see also* Young Turks  
 Uchida, Ryohei, 46, 116  
 Ueno, Tokyo, 42, 44, 91, 141, 150  
 Ugaki, Kazushige, 107-8, 112  
 ultra-nationalists (ultra-patriotic, super-patriotic), Japanese, xv, 28, 48, 97, 109, 116, 123, 141, 162  
 unequal treaties, 2  
 United Press News Agency, 132  
 United States of America (Washington), xii, xvi, 14, 18, 57, 67, 119, 136, 142  
     *see also* Addison E. Southard  
     *see also* Joseph Grew  
     Ethiopia, 2, 10, 11, 15, 25, 32, 81, 120  
         reports from America Legation, 7, 12, 16-7, 36, 37, 84, 91, 102, 104  
         Treaty of Conciliation and Arbitration, 1929, 37  
     Japan, 65, 66, 69, 90, 91, 95, 106, 122, 136, 154  
         reports from American Embassy, 36, 50, 54, 87, 122, 137, 143-4  
     race, xiii, 4, 16, 18, 22, 66, 143, 144  
     journalists, 115, 131  
     reports from Italy, 73, 122  
     Vaccari, Oreste and Enko, 45  
     Vascello, Marquis Giacomo Medici del, 69, 70  
     Victor Emmanuel II, King and Emperor, 158, 162  
     Vinci-Gigliucci, Luigi Orazio  
         concern at Japanese activities, 55-6, 82, 92, 102, 120, 133, 134  
         marriage, 55, 85, 87, 88-9  
     Versailles Peace Treaty, 1919, 67, 71, 123  
     Vienna, *see under* Austria  
     Vietnam, 5  
     Vincenzo, Rojacono, 73  
     Volunteers of Nationalistic Populace Party, 28  
     Wakamatsu, Torao, 36  
     Wallo Province, 101  
     Washington Naval Conference, 1922, 154  
     Washington, D.C., *see under* United States of America  
     WelWel Incident, 94, 96  
     White Peril, 4, 134  
     White Russians, 63  
     White Wolf Manifesto, 134, 135  
     Wilhelm II, Emperor (Kaiser), 3, 35  
     Wolde Giorgis, 18, 55  
     World War I (First World War), xiii, xiv, 20, 37, 62, 163, 170  
     World War II (Second World War), xiii, 160, 163, 168, 169  
     Yabuuchi, Ichiro, 154  
     Yamada, Kosaku, 103  
     Yamamoto, Yoshio, 143  
     Yamauchi, Masao, 23, 134, 159  
         activities in Ethiopia, 26, 56, 121, 123, 131, 136, 143, 152  
         letter to Hayle Sellase, 55  
         marriage proposal, 84, 86, 88, 89  
     Yamazoe, Shinkichi, 46  
     Yasujiro, Kita, 137  
     Yasukuni Shrine, 140  
     Yellow Peril, 2-4, 5, 131  
         Italy and, 65, 70, 96, 110, 114, 119, 120, 122, 153  
         Soviet Union and, 169  
     Yellow Hope, 4  
     Yokohama, 44, 82, 151  
     Yokoyama, Mr., 52  
     Yoshida, Isaburo, 33, 36, 41, 42, 93  
     Yoshida, Tanichiro, 140, 141, 142, 149  
     Young Egypt, xv, 7  
     Young Ethiopians, *see under* Japanizers  
     Young Turks, xv, 7  
     Yugoslavia, 71  
     Yukawa, Chuzaburo, 47, 113, 137, 138, 139, 140, 157  
     Zeila, 125  
     Zemene Mesafint, 1769-1855, 11  
     Zewditu Menilek, Empress, 10, 13, 34, 35  
     Zuihoji Temple, 42



With the Japanese posing as the leader of the world's 'colored' peoples before World War II, many Ethiopians turned to Japan for inspiration and support against the stark reality of a stronger Italy encroaching on their country. Europeans feared Japan's growing economic and political influence in the colonial world more than they opposed Italy's imperial ambitions. 'Yellow' Japanese and 'black' Ethiopian collaboration before the war illuminates the pernicious and flexible use of race in international diplomacy. Italians used race to justify their actions as defending 'white' civilization. The Japanese used race to explain their tilt toward Ethiopia. The Soviets used race to justify their support for Italy until late 1935. Ethiopia used race to attract help, and 'colored' peoples worldwide rallied to Ethiopia's call.

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Photograph: Special Envoy Heruy Welde Sellase and the Ethiopian delegation visit Major General Koiso Kuniaki, Director, General Affairs Department, Japanese Army Ministry, 11 December 1931  
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