

The Arrival of Jewish Refugees to Wartime Japan
as reported in the local newspaper *Fukui Shinbun* (Part II: 1941)

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This work is based on an exhaustive search of articles in the newspaper *Fukui Shinbun* concerning the Jewish refugees' landing at Tsuruga, Fukui Prefecture, Japan. Following the first part, which covered the period May-December 1940, this second and final part treats the period January-July 1941.

After three months and a half of silence on the subject, on 15th February 1941 *Fukui Shinbun* hardly hides its astonishment at the news that there are over 350 Jewish refugees on board a single Europe-Asia liner *Amakusa Maru* arriving from Vladivostok. The same steamship will have ferried approximately two thousand refugees to Tsuruga over its six navigations across the Sea of Japan before mid-April 1941.

This second wave of arrivals in the early spring of 1941, after the initial wave in the autumn of 1940, would be attributed to a policy of naturalisation imposed by the Comintern on the newly-sovietised Lithuania in December 1940: all refugees having poured into Lithuania found themselves obliged to choose, by 25th January 1941, whether to become Soviet citizens or to be considered as stateless. This seemed to constitute a strong 'push factor' for many of potential candidates for exile to the Far East. In this sense, the Jewish refugees who braved the freezing Siberian temperatures and the turbulent Sea of Japan in the first months of 1941 should henceforth be described, not only as escapees from the Nazi persecution, but also from being integrated into the Communist regime.

Curiously enough, among the names of the refugees staying in Kobe as they were registered by Hyogo Prefecture on 31st August 1941, there is a number missing from the Sugihara visa list made in Kaunas in summer 1940. This discrepancy leads us to a new investigation on the travel certificates and transit visas issued by two Japanese diplomats: Yoshitsugu Tatekawa (1880-1945), Ambassador in Moscow, and Saburo Nei (1902-1990), acting Consul-General in Vladivostok. By uncovering these obscure characters and facts, we will finally be able to fully seize the story of 'Visas for Life'.