

# Collier's

January 23, 1943

## Why the Japs Hate the Nazis

**By Robert Bellaire**

FORMER UNITED PRESS  
CORRESPONDENT IN TOKYO



The bald-headed little man is Yosuke Matsuoka, once Japan's foreign minister. He has just laid a wreath on a German war memorial

**The Sons of Heaven think there's room on earth for but one race of supermen—and they don't mean the Germans**

**O**NE drizzling morning last spring in Kyoto, Japan, a stoutish little German in the uniform of a Nazi general bowed solemnly as he approached a Shinto shrine to worship Japan's war dead.

The stoutish little man, followed by other uniformed Nazis and a dozen Japanese plain-clothes policemen, was the German ambassador to Japan, General Eugen Ott. Except for the raindrops, his well-cut uniform was immaculate. His dozen military medals glittered and jangled as he walked.

As Ott knelt to worship at the damp, moss-covered shrine, he was humiliating himself as part of a nation-wide "good will tour" ordered by Berlin in an effort to stem growing anti-Naziism in Japan.

For some months, Ott had been losing ground in his fight to get the Japs to follow his Fuehrer's orders. At no time had Tokyo ever placed its world-conquering program on Berlin war time. But now that Hitler was demanding that Japan

[OldMagazineArticles.com](http://OldMagazineArticles.com)



open a second front against Soviet Russia, the Japs had become more insolent and independent than ever.

Tokyo had given no publicity to her independence from the Axis or to her growing hatred of the Nazis. Open acknowledgment that the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis actually was made of glass would merely have comforted Japan's enemies as well as Germany's. But the harder Ott and his Nazi agents tried to rivet the yoke on Japan, as it had been riveted on Italy, the more the Japs hated the Nazis for trying to dictate to *them*. The Nazis might be supermen, but the Japanese were *gods*—the Sons of Heaven.

Ott's appearance in Kyoto was his twentieth such performance in two weeks. He had also made more than fifty speeches—urging the Japanese to trust Hitler and accept his leadership. But few Japanese had come to hear him. The government-controlled press had virtually ignored him. Not one of his speeches appeared in print. Several newspapers, however, entertained their readers by printing photographs of the superman Nazi kneeling in worship of the "despicable."

When Ott finally struggled to his feet in front of the Kyoto shrine, he decided to give up his good will tour and return to the capital. Word had reached him earlier that morning that a dozen Nazi agents and more than one hundred of their Japanese stooges had been arrested in Tokyo during the previous night. The charge against them was "attempting to interfere with the administration of Japan."

As Ott returned to his chancellery in Tokyo that evening, still trailed by a dozen Jap detectives who said they wanted to "protect" him, he probably wondered whether those arrests of the previous night had not been timed as a personal warning to him to terminate his Chautauqua activities. At least, he could tell himself, this obviously was not the season for a Nazi good will tour of Japan anyway.

The Japs have many reasons for hating the Nazis. Some of these reasons are Hitler's own fault. Others are the natural outgrowth of Japan's nationalism and religion—her fanatical belief that it is the mission of the Japanese race to dominate the entire world, including Germany.

Competent Japanese spokesmen have described that mission thus:

"The ultimate end of politics is the conquest of the world by one imperial power, and Japan is prepared to fill this glorious role—her destiny dictated by the gods. Those who resist must be subjugated."

No exception is made for Nazis, and the Nazis know it.

## Japs Hate Nazis



German and Japanese officials drink a toast to the Axis pact. At the extreme right is Herman Stahmer, mysterious German agent supposed to have induced the Japs to sign

“If Japan goes to war with America and Britain,” a ranking member of the German embassy staff in Tokyo told me a few weeks before Pearl Harbor, “our days will be numbered here too. Japan will wage a race war in which we Germans will be regarded as enemies along with the rest of the white race. It is only a matter of time. They intend to conquer all of us, but they are smart enough not to tackle all of us at once.”

He then quoted a remark made by a member of the Japanese cabinet several days earlier:

“Because you Germans are our allies,” the Japanese leader had told him, “we give you the honor of being the last white men we will drive out of the Orient.”

Since a Japanese is expected to be pro-Japanese, and pro-nothing-else, the Japanese government has tried to suppress everything which might make popular sentiment friendly toward Germany.

Not only has the government been suppressing Nazi-subsidized secret societies, but any popular celebration of Japan's membership in the Axis has been outlawed in effect.

On each anniversary of Japan's nominal adherence to the Axis, Nazi propaganda agents in Japan have attempted to organize mass meetings throughout the country. They have distributed thousands of huge Nazi flags which were to be hung along all city streets. They have tried to arrange short-wave propaganda broadcasts from Berlin for rebroadcast over Japanese long-wave stations. But everywhere the Tokyo government has thwarted them.

Since all mass meetings in Japan require police licenses, the government has found little trouble in suppressing Nazi plans for such demonstrations. Police officials issue just one permit for the entire country, and that is issued to the government itself. Speakers are carefully selected. Their speeches must not create sympathy or friendship for Germany or Italy. The meeting is held indoors, so that attendance will be limited to a few hundred. Newspapers are instructed to give the celebration little publicity.

Two years ago, the Germans managed to have the streets of Tokyo decked with Nazi flags the morning of the anniversary, but by noon, most of the Nazi flags had disappeared. I called the editor of one of Japan's largest newspapers to ask him why the German flags had been removed from his building.

“Police orders,” he said. “We were told we could not fly the flag even of our friendly enemies.”

The Nazis were even less successful in their attempts to bring Berlin propaganda broadcasts to the Japanese people.

## Japs Hate Nazis



The signing of the anti-Comintern pact is celebrated by the German ambassador with a speech in which the Japs are urged to trust Hitler and accept his leadership. Jap officials listen in amused silence

The Japanese government took the position that Berlin short-wave stations were so powerful that long-wave re-broadcasts in Japan would be unnecessary. Technically this was true. But possession of a short-wave radio receiver in Japan is punishable by imprisonment or death. Very few Japanese ever heard Berlin's Axis anniversary programs.

I once asked the Japanese Foreign Office for an explanation of the government's obvious attempts to suppress pro-Nazi propaganda in Japan. The reply said: "The government does not find it necessary to suppress pro-German propaganda, because there is very little popular pro-German sympathy in Japan."

The popular Japanese nickname for the Germans is "The Vultures." For several years, Japanese cartoonists have been using the vulture to impersonate Germany.

"Every time our embassy protests against these cartoons to the Japanese Foreign Office," an exasperated German news-agency correspondent told me, "the Japanese claim these vultures are really eagles."

The Nazis won the nickname of "Vultures" by making the Japanese feel that Hitler was attempting to reconstruct Germany's pre-World War I empire in the Orient at the cost of Japanese blood.

### The Vultures' Demands

The Nazis invited this feeling by the demands they made upon Japan on the grounds of "Axis partnership." The Germans have demanded:

1. The use of former German islands in the South Pacific as "bases from which to attack the United States."

2. A major share of the booty in the fabulously rich Netherlands East Indies, to which the Nazis claim to be the rightful heirs because of the Nazi occupation of Holland.

3. Major economic concessions in Japanese-occupied areas of China.

Japan's reply to all these demands has been a polite but firm, "Very sorry. . . . No!"

"We are partners," the Japanese concede for convenience. "You keep Holland, and we will keep the Indies. You fight the United States in the Atlantic. We will do the fighting in the Pacific. As for China, that must be a special Japanese area. We won that for ourselves before we became partners with you."

Ken Tsurumi, scheming Japanese army agent who operated in the Japanese diplomatic service, was quite frank in his off-the-record discussions of the Nazi problem when the Nazis were mak-

## **Japs Hate Nazis**

ing their biggest bid for concessions in occupied China early in 1940.

Tsurumi, a former consul general in Seattle, Washington, and in charge of Japanese espionage activities in Singapore immediately prior to December 7, 1941, spoke with authority. His remarks reflected the opinion of the Japanese army—the only opinion which has mattered in Japan during the past ten years.

“Japan really has no allies,” he told me two years ago in Shanghai. “She can have none. In the first World War we ousted Germany from the Pacific. It would not only be folly for us to permit her to rebuild her empire out here, but it would be to forget our holy mission in the world. Under our pressure, America and Britain have been backing out of the Orient without a real struggle. It is Germany that will worry us most. We feel they are not only more determined to hold what they have, but they plan to overrun the world.”

A year later, the Nazi menace suddenly loomed larger for Japan. France had collapsed. Japan was waiting for Germany to deliver to Britain the death blow which would topple Britain's Far Eastern possessions into Japan's lap, like ripe apples. But Hitler turned away from Britain to invade Soviet Russia.

As the Nazi legions swept eastward toward Moscow, the Japanese realized that this ambitious partner they hated and feared might soon be their neighbor in Siberia—within bombing distance of Tokyo.

American-educated Yosuke Matsuoka, Japan's jingoistic foreign minister of the time, with remarkable hindsight told his friends, “Here is our enemy. We can handle the Americans and British. They are predictable. Hitler is the greatest threat to our holy mission.”

Matsuoka had reason to be bitter at the Nazis. He had just returned from a “triumphant” visit to Berlin where “Hitler promised me that Britain would be conquered in three months.” At Hitler's suggestion, Matsuoka had negotiated a nonaggression pact with Josef Stalin while en route back to Tokyo.

### **The Bitter Lesson**

“Hitler made a fool of me,” Matsuoka confessed privately. “He was using me as a shield for his plans to attack Russia. But we will not let the Nazis use us again. We will not forget this lesson.”

The army soon forgot Matsuoka, who went into retirement “to give my overworked brain a rest.” But the lesson his blunders had taught was not forgotten.

When the Nazis bogged down for their first terrible winter in Russia, Tokyo suddenly awakened as if from a terrible nightmare.

Japanese newspapers carried huge headlines announcing, in great jubilation, the Nazi defeat. Japanese diplomats in Berlin were ordered to aid Japanese newspaper correspondents in evading Nazi censorship, so that all possible details of the German disaster could be enjoyed by the Japanese public. Here were the two most powerful nations of Europe obligingly blowing each other to pieces. The longer they fought, the easier would be Japan's path to world conquest.

The Japanese do not have the same hatred for the Italians they have for the Nazis. In Japan, the Italians have become the same standing joke they have become elsewhere in the world because they have permitted Hitler to dominate them.

## Japs Hate Nazis



Italian diplomats in Japan two years ago protested to the Japanese Foreign Office against "undignified" jokes which Japanese stage comedians were telling about Italy.

In one of these jokes, Mussolini, in great excitement, calls Hitler on the telephone.

"Adolf, this is going too far," Mussolini explodes. "The Gestapo has just arrested a hundred Italian policemen here in Rome."

"Don't get excited," Hitler reassures him. "I'm sending two hundred Berlin policemen to take their places. That's more than fair, isn't it?"

But the Italians are more than standing jokes to the Japs. Italy is the pitiful object lesson which all Japanese regard as an eternal warning against too close relations with Hitler.

The Japanese know, of course, that Hitler sent his agents pouring into Japan just as he sent them into Italy. But the Japs are determined that these Nazi agents shall wield no real influence.

More than 2,000 Tokyo police are assigned to shadow the staff of the German embassy, which alone numbers over three hundred persons. Many of these German diplomats call themselves "advisers" to the Japanese government, but they are nothing more than teachers. Their influence on the government of Japan has been greatly exaggerated.

"You Americans taught us to eat ice cream," Japan's foreign minister, Masayuki Tani, once told me. "We thank you for that. But you cannot tell us when or where to eat it. In the same way, the Germans taught us the art of blitz warfare. They have given us the blueprints for the Messerschmitt planes. But where and when we use them, is something Japan will decide for herself. We will tolerate no interference with the administration of our government which has the wisdom of the gods to guide it. I fear Mr. Hitler has yet to understand this."

The classic case which brought about the eventual arrest of the dozen Nazi agents in Japan last spring was the Nazi attempt in 1941 to assassinate elderly Baron Hiranuma, then Japanese Home Minister. Hiranuma, as head of all the country's police, had been conducting a cleanup of German-subsidized secret societies in Japan. He had not ordered the arrest of Nazi agents, but he had thrown into jail several hundred Japanese who had been accepting money from the Nazis.

Investigation of the attack on Hiranuma revealed that twenty-four hours before he was shot, the Tokyo correspondent for Stefani, the official Italian propaganda agency, had telephoned the Home Office to inquire about the baron's "condition." Home Office officials did not realize the significance of the call at the time, but they did twenty-four hours later, when Hiranuma was hovering between life and death with several Nazi bullets in his head and his tongue half shot away.

## 7 Japs Hate Nazis



Thirty members of the Hitler Jugend are welcomed to Tokyo by representatives of the government and youth organizations. Later they established a "youth's kingdom" by joint encampment with Jap youths

The Stefani correspondent, when questioned by the enraged police, could only say that a German diplomat had told him the previous day that Hiranuma had been shot. The German apparently had his dates wrong. The would-be assassin later confessed to being a member of one of the Nazi-subsidized secret societies which Hiranuma was attempting to liquidate.

### Curbs on the Nazis

Japanese short-wave broadcasts are not mentioning the dozen Nazi prisoners who were taken in Tokyo while Ott was worshiping the Kyoto war dead. Perhaps their fate will remain unknown until after the war. But other Germans with whom I was able to establish occasional fairly direct contact after Pearl Harbor were complaining bitterly against new curbs on their freedom in Japan.

Germans frequently were confined to their homes for hours during air raids or regular army maneuvers. Germans no longer were being permitted inside Japanese factories where they formerly had acted as advisers. German homes frequently were raided by Japanese police who no longer even apologized. Germans were not permitted to travel between Japanese cities without specific permits for each trip. Few such permits were being issued. Germans were finding that many Jap shopkeepers refused to sell food to them—or anyone else of the white race.

In addition, Japan recently announced her official policy toward all non-Japanese business interests, including German, in all newly occupied areas of the Pacific.

As one German commented, "This policy places us in exactly the same position as business interests of countries with which Japan is openly at war."

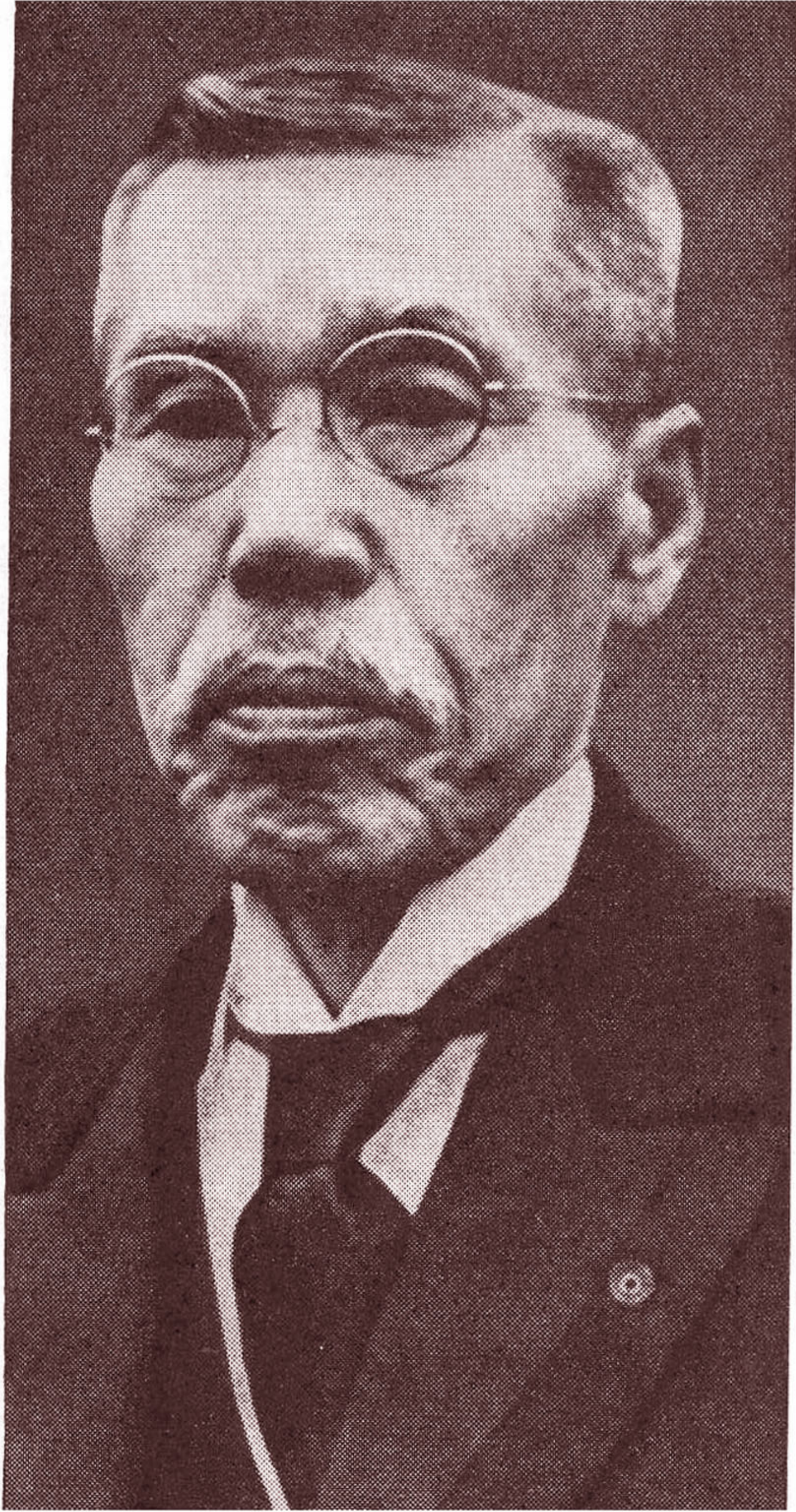
The Japanese announcement of policy said: "Business interests of non-Japanese ownership may operate freely in these areas, provided they accept complete Japanese direction as to policy and operations. Any non-Japanese interests which refuse to accept Japanese direction will be regarded as enemy property and confiscated. Persons responsible for such lack of co-operation will be regarded as enemies and punished accordingly."

Much of Japan's hatred for Germany obviously has come from Hitler's efforts to control Japan as he controls Italy, but most basic is Japan's consuming hatred and contempt for all the white

## Japs Hate Nazis

race and for all of what Japan considers the human race. For theirs is the wrath of the gods.

**THE END**



Baron Kiichiro Hiranuma, former Jap premier and the empire's No. 1 Fascist, as he appeared in 1940 just after his appointment as home secretary. Later an attempt was made to assassinate him



**Collier's for January 23, 1943**