

MARIMUN 2024



Russo - Japanese War

(1904-1905)

JCC

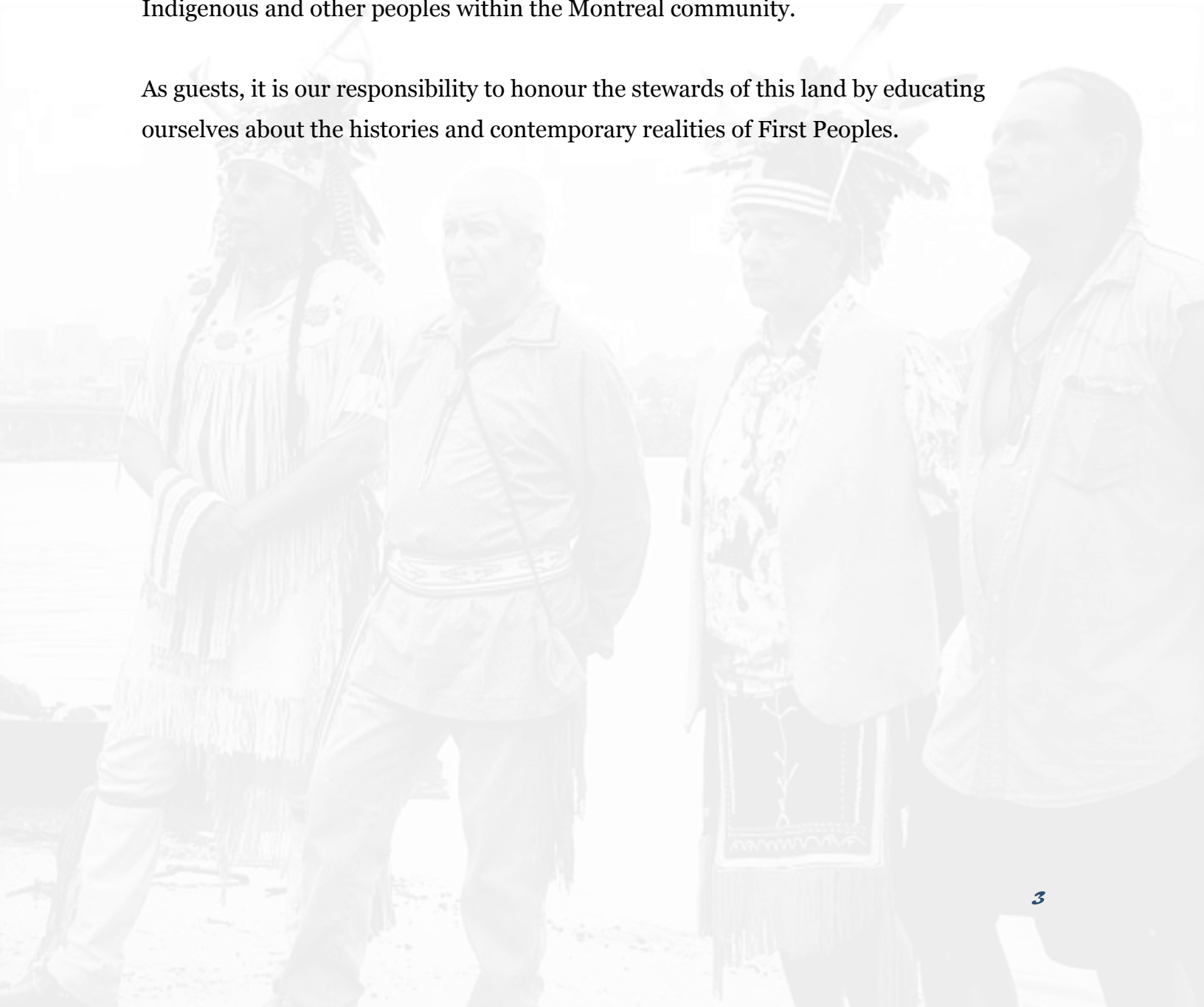
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	3
LETTER FROM THE USG & DEPUTY USG CRISIS.....	4
LETTER FROM THE DIAS & CRISIS TEAM.....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	7
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: RUSSIA.....	8
OVERVIEW.....	8
POLITICAL AND MILITARY LANDSCAPE.....	8
TIMELINE: RUSSIA LEADING UP TO THE WAR.....	13
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: JAPAN.....	14
OVERVIEW.....	14
POLITICAL AND MILITARY LANDSCAPE.....	14
SOCIO-ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE.....	16
TIMELINE: JAPAN LEADING UP TO THE WAR.....	18
TIMELINE OF TENSIONS.....	19
RESOURCES & MECHANICS.....	20
MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND HIERARCHY.....	20
WEAPONS AND MILITARY TECHNOLOGY.....	21
COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION.....	22
WAR CULTURE.....	23
FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT.....	25
UNITED STATES.....	25
BRITAIN.....	26
FRANCE.....	27
GERMANY.....	28
EAST ASIAN POWERS.....	29
GUIDING QUESTIONS.....	30
CHARACTER GUIDE.....	31
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	38

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Marianopolis College is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. Tiohtià:ke/Montréal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community.

As guests, it is our responsibility to honour the stewards of this land by educating ourselves about the histories and contemporary realities of First Peoples.



LETTER FROM THE USG & DEPUTY USG CRISIS

DEAR DELEGATES,

Welcome to the 37th iteration of Marianopolis College's Model UN conference! Our names are Isabella (she/her) and Chelsea (she/her) and it is our privilege to serve as your Under Secretary-General of Crisis and your Deputy Under Secretary-General of Crisis this year. We were both introduced to the world of Model UN here at the college and ever since, we have fallen in love with the late-night research for committees, the early Sunday morning FunMUNs and everything in between. Model UN, particularly crisis committees, has bestowed upon us incredible and enlightening experiences, developing essential skills like diplomacy, critical thinking, and public speaking.

Since September, we – alongside the entire MariMUN team – have been hard at work bringing this conference to life and for us specifically, the crisis committees. We have spent numerous hours brainstorming and choosing the two best committees that would both be enjoyable and rewarding experiences for everyone and we hope that you love them as much as we do. The Russo-Japanese War holds a pivotal place in history, earning itself the formidable moniker of “World War Zero” and our committee promises to be a riveting and eye-opening experience, filled with twists, turns and amazing crisis updates!

Alongside our Crisis Director, our Assistant Crisis Directors (whom you will meet below) and our staffers Issa Abdourahamane, Aashish Kalachand Bissoon, Massimo Briganti, Catherine Dong, Gabriella Duran, Noor El-Bially, Julien Fournier, Maya Garzhani, Antonin Joyce, Joshua Lynch, Eva Moore, Daniel Tang, Gopika Wright, and Ruijia Zhang, we are thrilled to present to you our background guide for the Joint-Crisis Committee: The Russo-Japanese War!

BEST REGARDS,

Isabella Quattieri

USG CRISIS

Chelsea Zhang

DEPUTY USG CRISIS

LETTER FROM THE DIAS & CRISIS TEAM

DEAR DELEGATES,

Welcome to the JCC: Rising Sun & Waning Moon! We are thrilled to be your dias for this year's joint crisis committee at MariMUN 2024. As Marianopolis students and alumni and past or present members of the MariMUN Secretariat, we cannot wait to experience this conference together. We are convinced that through your participation this weekend will offer much to learn, practice in resolution-writing and, above all, unforgettable memories.

Now, chairing the Japan committee is Ousmane Diagne (he/him). Ousmane is a newly-minted lawyer and recent graduate from the Faculty of Law of the University of Montreal. Marianopolis and MariMUN 2016-2018 alumnus, he has had a chance to take part of many conferences as both delegate and dias, including but not limited MariMUN, JACMUN, MUNC, WorldMun in all manner of committee. Model UN has provided a community of peers across the city (and the world) and he hopes it will do the same for you all. As his first conference and alma mater, MariMUN will always hold a special place in his journey and hopes to pass on his passion for Model UN and experience to future generations. Likewise, Camille Zhou (she/they), Japan's vice chair, is a second-year law student at Université de Montréal, Camille notes that Model UN not only taught her valuable skills but allowed her to forge special bonds with delegates from all around Montreal and beyond. As such, Camille is excited to welcome you, and wishes you the best of luck in preparing for the conference.

The Russian committee is proudly chaired by Amanda Morrone (she/her), a third-year medical student at McGill and a MariMUN 2018-2020 alumnus. Her first conference being this one as well as a JCC—a challenge as interesting as it was daunting—Amanda looks forward to a weekend of creative arcs, personal growth and fun! Likewise, Juliana Maciocia, Russia's vice-chair, welcomes you with great enthusiasm. Now in her first year of law school at the University of Ottawa, Juliana participated in Marimun previously, she is thrilled to witness the continuation of this conference and all the fruitful debate, new memories and, of course, new friends it will bring.

This year, the committee’s considerations are three-pronged: the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905’s political (i.e., power, nationalism, foreign involvement, etc.), socioeconomic (i.e., unity, propaganda, worker’s rights, etc.), and military dimensions (i.e., naval and artillery technology, resources, etc.). With such a broad subject matter, delegates are invited to explore the topic from all three angles, though your characters’ respective countries and backgrounds should provide focus on particular goals.

To this end, your backroom team offers some advice: Alexander (he/they), your Crisis Director, and Leo (he/him) and Alexandra (she/her), your Assistant Crisis Directors for Japan and Russia, respectively:

To help guide your research and give you an overview of the subject, the Secretariat has prepared the following background guide. Each section is divided into several subsections that explore the diverse considerations that delegates are expected to engage with in committee. This context, contextualized by the guiding questions, are to only serve as a strong starting point, as delegates are still encouraged to conduct further research on their characters’ stances and potential solutions.

If you have any questions or concerns about the conference—including the position paper, research, or Model UN in general—please do not hesitate to reach out via the following email: committees@marimun.ca. Thank you for your involvement, and we look forward to meeting you all!

BEST REGARDS,

Ousmane Diagne

CHAIR

Japan

Camille Zhou

VICE-CHAIR

Japan

Amanda Morrone

CHAIR

Russia

Juliana Maciocia

VICE-CHAIR

Russia

Alexander Laurin

CRISIS DIRECTOR

General

Leo Dansereau

ASST. CRISIS DIRECTOR

Japan

Alexandra Muravetchi

ASST. CRISIS DIRECTOR

Russia

INTRODUCTION

On February 8th, 1904, a year-and-a-half-long war broke out between Russia, a traditionally influential European country, and Japan, a formidable rising power in the East. That day, Japan launched a surprise attack on Russian-held Port Arthur on the coast of Manchuria, thus beginning its campaign to emerge as an internationally-reputable Eastern power.¹ Over the course of this war's numerous battles, both sides utilized technology and strategies borne by the Industrial Revolution, carrying advancements on both fronts and many casualties in their wake. This short but brutal war "redefined international relations," being the first of a series of conflicts, namely World War I and World War II.² In fact, the Russo-Japanese War is often dubbed "World War 0" on account of its incredible significance on the international stage. Foreign allies and foes supplied funding, artillery, intelligence, and troops in crucial battles, indeed believing the outcome of the conflict was of importance. This war "marked the beginning of a new century now commonly accepted as the era of total global conflict" yet tangentially inspired international collaboration between states around the world.³

¹ RESEARCH GUIDES. "RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR: TOPICS IN CHRONICLING AMERICA." *LIBRARY OF CONGRESS*. [HTTPS://GUIDES.LOC.GOV/CHRONICLING-AMERICA-RUSSO-JAPANESE-WAR](https://guides.loc.gov/chronicling-america-russo-japanese-war).

² STEINBERG, JOHN W. "THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR AND WORLD HISTORY." *EDUCATION ABOUT ASIA*. [HTTPS://WWW.ASIANSTUDIES.ORG/PUBLICATIONS/EAA/ARCHIVES/THE-RUSSO-JAPANESE-WAR-AND-WORLD-HISTORY/](https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/eaa/archives/the-russo-japanese-war-and-world-history/).

³ *IBID.*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: RUSSIA

Overview

Throughout the 19th century, Russia fell behind its Western counterparts in nearly all domains. While Britain concentrated on technological progress with its critical invention of the steam train, for example, and France advanced frameworks of civil rights popularized with its famous motto “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité,” Russia denied its long-standing setbacks, thus overlooking its potential for development. Come wartime, the Russian state, already in poor condition, was further challenged by worker uprisings brought by its weak economy, military, and foreign policy.



Political and Military Landscape

At the turn of the 20th century, Russia was one of the only remaining autocracies in place in Europe, with the nation being ruled by the noble class known as the “boyars,” with the tsar as the highest ruler.⁴ The tsars all succeeded from the Romanov dynasty, having been the reigning imperial house since 1613. Staunch believers in their divine right to rule, the Romanovs did not take kindly to opposition. The Tsar had several councils, three of which being the Holy Synod, which was the council of the Russian Orthodox Church, the advisory committee, the Imperial Council, and a Cabinet to discuss matters with, though members of these bodies were essentially forbidden to oppose the Tsar and his beliefs.⁵ The government thus lacked a constitution, national

⁴ ALPHA HISTORY. “TSARIST GOVERNMENT.”

[HTTPS://ALPHAHISTORY.COM/RUSSIANREVOLUTION/Tsarist-Government/](https://alphahistory.com/russianrevolution/tsarist-government/)

⁵ BLACKS ACADEMY. “THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF TSARIST RUSSIA.”

[HTTPS://WWW.BLACKSACADEMY.NET/PAGES/HY-036-HYQSED-SOCIAL-ECONOMIC-RUSSIA.PHP.](https://www.blacksacademy.net/pages/hy-036-hyqsed-social-economic-russia.php)

democratic procedures, high courts, and an elected representative assembly—unlike most of its Western European counterparts.

From 1855 to 1881, Tsar Alexander II ruled the Russian Empire and was known as “The Great Reformer,” as he had promised radical transformations. One notable change the tsar advanced was the emancipation of serfs. Serfs were no longer bound to land and left unpaid for their labour and, in theory, could leave their lands in search for a better life. In practice, however, this was virtually impossible, as Alexander II conditioned their emancipation on local lords needing to be repaid for all the free labour they lost—essentially leaving penniless citizens in debt for the rest of their lives. Another notable reform in 1874 was of a military nature, where the years of service for citizens was shortened from 25 to 15. Moreover, service was now required for all men as of 20 years old, allowing for more men to be put on reserve. The Tsar aimed to improve “the efficiency and fairness” of the Russian military and to reframe it from being a form of punishment to a proper working army.⁶

These two changes, among others, were not taken lightly by the population and in 1881, after many attempts on his life, Tsar Alexander II was murdered in his carriage on his way back to the Winter Palace. This, however, just made things worse. Tsar Alexander III followed and was known as “The Repressor.” While his father attempted to foster progress, Alexander III was regressive, backtracking on the premise of the previous reign being too liberal.⁷ He took away powers from local governments, fostered anti-Semitism, and persecuted non-Orthodox and non-Russian populations, among other policies. However, he critically helped stimulate the economy with projects like the Trans-Siberian Railway and was politically conscious; Alexander III sensed a revolution brewing and tried to quell this threat via instating reforms on working conditions, factory inspections, and wage distribution, for example.

⁶ IBID.

⁷ STUDY SMARTER. “ALEXANDER III.”

[HTTPS://WWW.STUDYSMARTER.CO.UK/EXPLANATIONS/HISTORY/TSARIST-AND-COMMUNIST-RUSSIA/ALEXANDER-III/](https://www.studysmarter.co.uk/explanations/history/tsarist-and-communist-russia/alexander-iii/).

With all this brewing in the background, Nicholas II becomes tsar of Russia in 1894 after Alexander III and of three tsars, he is the least politically savvy and least strong-willed leader. With his rule, the tsars' power and authority is weakening. The population is not taking kindly to the failed policies promised by Nicholas and they are beginning to become more susceptible to the echoes of communist ideals circulating in the country.⁸

In the aftermath of the setbacks suffered in the Crimean and Franco-Prussian wars, the once-praised reputation of the Russian army experienced a considerable decline.⁹ Hindered by the persistent use of outdated military techniques, military strategies failed to improve. As Russia fell behind in the industrial world, their artillery lacked essential modernization and placed them at a distinct disadvantage. The geographical placement of the nation's ports poses a logistic challenge as they are inaccessible for extended periods due to the freezing Arctic waters. Various segments of the Imperial Russian army, including the navy, were perceived as vulnerable.¹⁰ Although policies towards their improvement were put in place, the bureaucratic procedures surrounding their implementation stunted progress, leading to unnecessary delays.



Socio-economic Landscape

In the lead-up to the war, Russian society was marked by chaos and instability. The majority of the population, roughly 80%, were peasants residing in rural areas who lived in extreme poverty and were subject to the power of the landowning aristocracy.¹¹ Despite the abolition of serfdom in 1861, land distribution remained highly unequal.

⁸ "RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR," AUGUST 9, 2022.

[HTTPS://WWW.HISTORY.COM/TOPICS/ASIAN-HISTORY/RUSSO-JAPANESE-WAR.](https://www.history.com/topics/asian-history/russo-japanese-war)

⁹ JESSICA BRAIN, "THE OUTCOME OF THE CRIMEAN WAR."

[HTTPS://WWW.HISTORIC-UK.COM/HISTORYUK/HISTORYOFBRITAIN/OUTCOME-CRIMEAN-WAR/.](https://www.historic-uk.com/historyuk/historyofbritain/outcome-crimean-war/)

¹⁰ THE INFOGRAPHIC SHOW, "WORLD WAR ZERO - THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR EXPLAINED", YOUTUBE, APRIL 10, 2023. [HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/Zp9ENHskbHc?si=K7gVbwPwUHGUoxO8.](https://youtu.be/Zp9ENHskbHc?si=K7gVbwPwUHGUoxO8)

¹¹ "RUSSIAN SOCIETY." *ALPHA HISTORY*, 2018.

[HTTPS://ALPHAHISTORY.COM/RUSSIANREVOLUTION/RUSSIAN-SOCIETY/.](https://alphahistory.com/russianrevolution/russian-society/)

The peasant's farmland was distributed elsewhere due to the hierarchical system put in place and they were not given the rights to their owed land, ultimately leaving many countrymen without their own property.¹²

The social dynamics were further worsened by the Tsar's authoritarian rule, where the freed serfs kept in an agrarian lifestyle that limited their voices. The Tsars aimed to keep the population uneducated, preventing the formation of groups and ideas that could lead to revolts. Numerous reforms were implemented to suppress the plethora of minority groups within the Russian territory as they were not seen as beneficial and were thought to be in need of conformity to Russian customs. The Okhrana, a secret police force, was created to put an end to the opposition to the Tsar's rule and suppress those who did not fit the Russian culture.¹³

The government's focus was primarily on economic aspects such as exporting large quantities of wheat for profit rather than feeding their starving population, ultimately causing the Russian famine of 1891-1892.¹⁴ Combining this with the building of the trans-Siberian railway, aimed at economic development and heightened transportation of goods, social unrest arose among the working class.¹⁵ The industrial working class, concentrated in rapidly industrializing cities like St. Petersburg and Moscow faced harsh working conditions, low wages and poor job security.¹⁶ Very little protective legislation was put in place within factories and no legal trade unions existed, meaning that factory owners treated the working class as their serfs. One of these few legislations included the factory law of 1885 which forbade the employment

¹² INFORMATION ARCHITECTS OF THE ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA. "EMANCIPATION MANIFESTO." *BRITANNICA*. (FEB 24, 2023). [HTTPS://WWW.BRITANNICA.COM/EVENT/EMANCIPATION-MANIFESTO](https://www.britannica.com/event/EMANCIPATION-MANIFESTO).

¹³ OVERSIMPLIFIED. "THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION." *YOUTUBE*. (AUGUST 17, 2022). [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=CQBLEASIMMO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQBLEASIMMO).

¹⁴ LILLY, DAVID P. "THE RUSSIAN FAMINE OF 1891-92." LOYOLA UNIVERSITY, NEW ORLEANS. (1994). [HTTP://CAS.LOYNO.EDU/SITES/CAS.LOYNO.EDU/FILES/THERUSSIANFAMINEOF1891-1892.PDF](http://cas.loyno.edu/sites/cas.loyno.edu/files/TheRussianFamineOf1891-1892.pdf)

¹⁵ SANAT PAI RAIKAR, "TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILROAD" *BRITANNICA* [HTTPS://WWW.BRITANNICA.COM/TOPIC/TRANS-SIBERIAN-RAILROAD](https://www.britannica.com/topic/TRANS-SIBERIAN-RAILROAD)

¹⁶ ELIAS BECK, "WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION" (NOVEMBER 26, 2016) [HTTPS://WWW.HISTORYCRUNCH.COM/WORKING-CONDITIONS-IN-THE-INDUSTRIAL-REVOLUTION.HTML#/GOOGLE_VIGNETTE](https://www.historycrunch.com/working-conditions-in-the-industrial-revolution.html#/GOOGLE_VIGNETTE)

of both women and children for night shifts.¹⁷ However, small workrooms who employed a majority of the working class were not included within this legislation. Without tangible enforcement measures to hold factories accountable to the legal standards, many workers, including children, were forced to endure excessive hours of painstaking labor. The building of factories was aimed at modernization, but resulted in strikes and protests within the population, making these workers the “most strike-prone in Europe during the 1900s” and putting all blame on the Tsar.¹⁸

Though politically powerful, Russia was still an agrarian-based country in the midst of a period of industrialization. It relied on foreign investment and loans in order to keep up with its rapid reform. Their main source of funding came from a consortium of French banks which loaned 400 million francs. Despite this, the war caused internal financial issues and balancing it along with the cost of industrialization was focal. After launching the conquest, the tsar saw little success and saw much of his credibility evaporate.¹⁹

Whether in the countryside or the industrialized cities, the underprivileged faced oppressive conditions, setting the stage for social and economic tensions that would contribute to the disruption within Russian society.

¹⁷ ORLANDO FIGES, “ORIGINS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION,” [HTTP://WWW.ORLANDOFIGES.INFO/SECTION1_ORIGINSOFTHERUSSIANREVOLUTION/THECONDITIONSOFTHEWORKINGCLASS.PHP](http://www.orlandofiges.info/section1_originsoftherussianrevolution/theconditionsoftheworkingclass.php).

¹⁸ ORLANDO FIGES, “ORIGINS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION” (2024).

¹⁹ JENNIFER SIEGEL, “THE RISE OF FRANCO-RUSSIAN FINANCIAL ALLIANCE” (NOVEMBER 2014) [HTTPS://ACADEMIC.OUP.COM/BOOK/25612/CHAPTER-ABSTRACT/192972438](https://academic.oup.com/book/25612/chapter-abstract/192972438).

TIMELINE: *Russia Leading Up to the War*

Crimean War (October 5, 1853 - March 30, 1856)

France loses this war, ultimately leading it to ally itself with Russia in the hopes of counterbalancing the threat of the German (Prussian) Empire.

Construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway (1891 - 1904)

Russia signs a deal with China for a 25-year lease of Port Arthur to establish a naval base. It wants to establish an accessible port all year round in warm waters and to have closer proximity to friends and foes in Manchuria.

German influence

With rising socio-political unrest in Russia, authorities seek to promote nationalism and create a scapegoat.

This war involves the Ottoman Empire, Britain, France, and Sardinia, against Russia, essentially over territorial disputes. This war proves that Russia's military is severely outdated and weak.

Franco-Prussian War (July 19, 1870 - May 10, 1871)

Its construction strives to connect all of Russia together in order to facilitate the transport of military and goods and to serve as a symbol of their power.

Lease of Port Arthur (March 27, 1898)

Feigning goodwill, Germany guides Russia towards conquest hoping to replace France as its main ally.

Russian propagandic Narratives

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: JAPAN

Overview

Decades before the Russo-Japanese War, Japan underwent major political, economic, and social transformations, marked as the Meiji Restoration²⁰ of 1868: the end of the fifteenth and final shōgun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, by an edict from Emperor Meiji's supporters²¹. With roughly 50 million citizens at the turn of the century, Japan urbanized and industrialized; civilians moved from rural farmlands to urban centers in search of superior employment opportunities in the growing cotton and sericulture industries, among other major exports.²² Japan was brimming with hope to grow in material, military and political stature, enough so to assert its will against an otherwise European hegemony.



Political and Military Landscape

The Meiji Restoration officially put an end to the feudal system, in which Tokugawa Yoshinobu,²³ Japan's military ruler, stepped down as the fifteenth and final shōgun. In his stead, Emperor Meiji gained power as the symbolic and political leader of the nation. The samurai, insofar as they were once the dominant warrior-noble class in Japan, dissolved. Samurai shifted to administrative roles, sociopolitically mingling with the commoners, like silk farmers and merchants, who rose to constitute an urban middle class. Under the slogan of "National Wealth and Military Strength" and

²⁰ "THE MEIJI RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION" *ASIA FOR EDUCATORS* (2024).

²¹ "AFTER THE SHOGUNATE: THE LAST SHŌGUN AND A NEW DIRECTION FOR THE TOKUGAWA CLAN," *NIPPON*, (SEPTEMBER 15, 2023).

²² SUSAN B. HANLEY, "POPULATION TRENDS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN TOKUGAWA JAPAN: THE CASE OF BIZEN PROVINCE IN OKAYAMA," *JSTOR* (2024).

²³ "SHOGUN | DEFINITION, MEANING, HISTORY, & FACTS | BRITANNICA," *ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA*, (2024).

“Flourishing Industries and Start Up Businesses,”²⁴ Japan’s focus was emphasized on its modernization, industrialization, and infrastructure, in the face of its weak military, lack of technology, and agriculture-based economic system. Moreover, the government sent individuals abroad for education in Western countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, and Russia.²⁵ Thus, these individuals were then enlisted foreign experts to accelerate Japan’s integration of modern military strategy and technology.

In 1853, Commodore Matthew Perry of the US Navy sailed into Tokyo harbor and sought to force Japan to abandon its policy of isolation.²⁶ Thus, Japan signed treaties with Western nations, opening up its ports to international trade and fostering economic ties with the global community.²⁷ However, these international agreements also entailed that Japan was forced to transform not just national legal and institutional frameworks but also specific social practices to persuade the treaty partners that Japan was a “civilized” nation deserving of equal treatment.²⁸ Although the newly reformed country went through various changes when developing international relations, it sought a delicate balance, aspiring to preserve its unique identity amid the influx of Western influence. To gain recognition among the Western powers and to incite change in the unfair treaties signed in the 1850s, Japan reformed its legal system, inspired by Germany and France. In 1894, the Western nations finally revised the treaties and recognized Japan as equal in principle, although not in international power.



²⁴“MEIJI RESTORATION - NEW WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA,” *NEW WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA*, (2024).

²⁵ “EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN MODERNIZATION IN JAPAN” N.D.

²⁶ “EDO PERIOD - NEW WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA” *NEW WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA*, (2024).

²⁷ “JAPAN, 1800–1900 A.D.” *HEILBRUNN TIMELINE OF ART HISTORY*. (OCTOBER 2004)

²⁸ SQUIRES, GRAHAM. “MEIJI PERIOD” *WORLD HISTORY ENCYCLOPEDIA*, (OCTOBER 20, 2022)

Socio-economic Landscape

Boundaries between social classes were broken down, yielding a more horizontal and egalitarian society buoyed by modernization.²⁹ The Meiji era brought demographic changes to the island primarily through population expansion, crucially thanks to advancements in medicine and modernization³⁰—the discovery of the plague and dysentery *bacillus* in 1894 and 1897, respectively, along with the crystalline isolation of epinephrine, most impressively—that improved both public health and general well-being.³¹ Socially, the former samurai lost their exclusive privileges, cutting their top knots in Western hairstyle and starting jobs in business and professions³². The government implemented compulsory education, changes in traditional social roles, and a new middle class of white-collar workers.³³ Found in government agencies, private corporations, and specialized institutions, this class thrived in Tokyo, a hub of bureaucratic and intellectual activity in modern Japan.

Social stratification persisted via harsh working conditions akin to those in industrializing Western Europe as well as discriminatory policies against the burakumin—citizens descended from the pre-Meiji castes associated with *kegare*, such as executioners, undertakers, butchers, and slaughterhouse workers. However, promising to discard the "evil customs of the past" in favor of the "just laws of nature," progressive officials undertook significant changes to social and sumptuary customs in the pursuit of "civilization and enlightenment." This period witnessed substantial investments in critical infrastructure like railroads and communication networks, with the completion of the first railway in 1872 and an expansive network by 1890.

²⁹ SHUNSUKE SUMIKAWA, "THE MEIJI RESTORATION: ROOTS OF MODERN JAPAN," (1999).

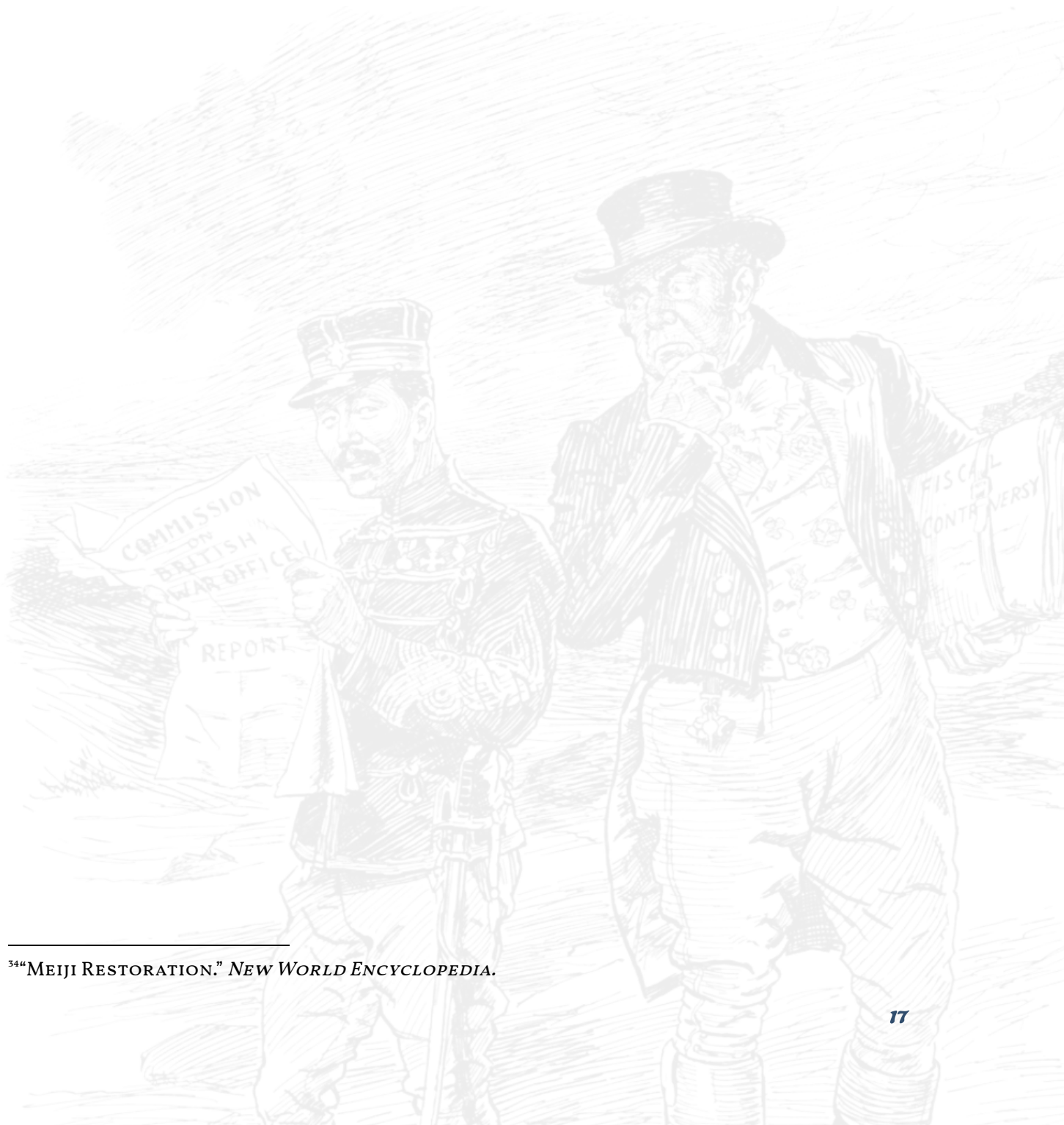
³⁰ "HISTORY OF MEDICINE - JAPAN, TRADITIONAL, MODERN | BRITANNICA," *ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA*, (2024).

³¹ "HISTORY OF MEDICINE: JAPAN." *ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA*

³² "THE MEIJI RESTORATION AND MODERNIZATION | COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY," *ASIA FOR EDUCATORS*, (2024).

³³ GRUNOW, TRISTAN. "JAPAN'S MEIJI RESTORATION" *ORIGINS* (JANUARY 27, 2023).

Financial challenges emerged in the mid-1880s due to extensive industrial expenditures, leading to currency and banking reforms. The government supported private enterprises, particularly influential family-owned businesses, called zaibatsu. The educational system, while influenced by Western theories, stressed samurai loyalty and social harmony. Art and literature transitioned from outright Western imitation to a synthesis of Japanese and Western influences, reflecting a dynamic cultural evolution during this transformative period.³⁴



³⁴“MEIJI RESTORATION.” *NEW WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA*.

TIMELINE: *Japan Leading Up to the War*

Heavy Taxation within the Population

Abandoning its isolationist policies, Japan imposes high domestic taxes. The citizens disapprove of this development. Japan thus pursues the conquest of Korea to provide promised economic gains.

The Qing dynasty and the Empire of Japan fought over Korean territory. With China defeated, Japan proved its military might and foreshadowed its seat as the next greatest Asian power.

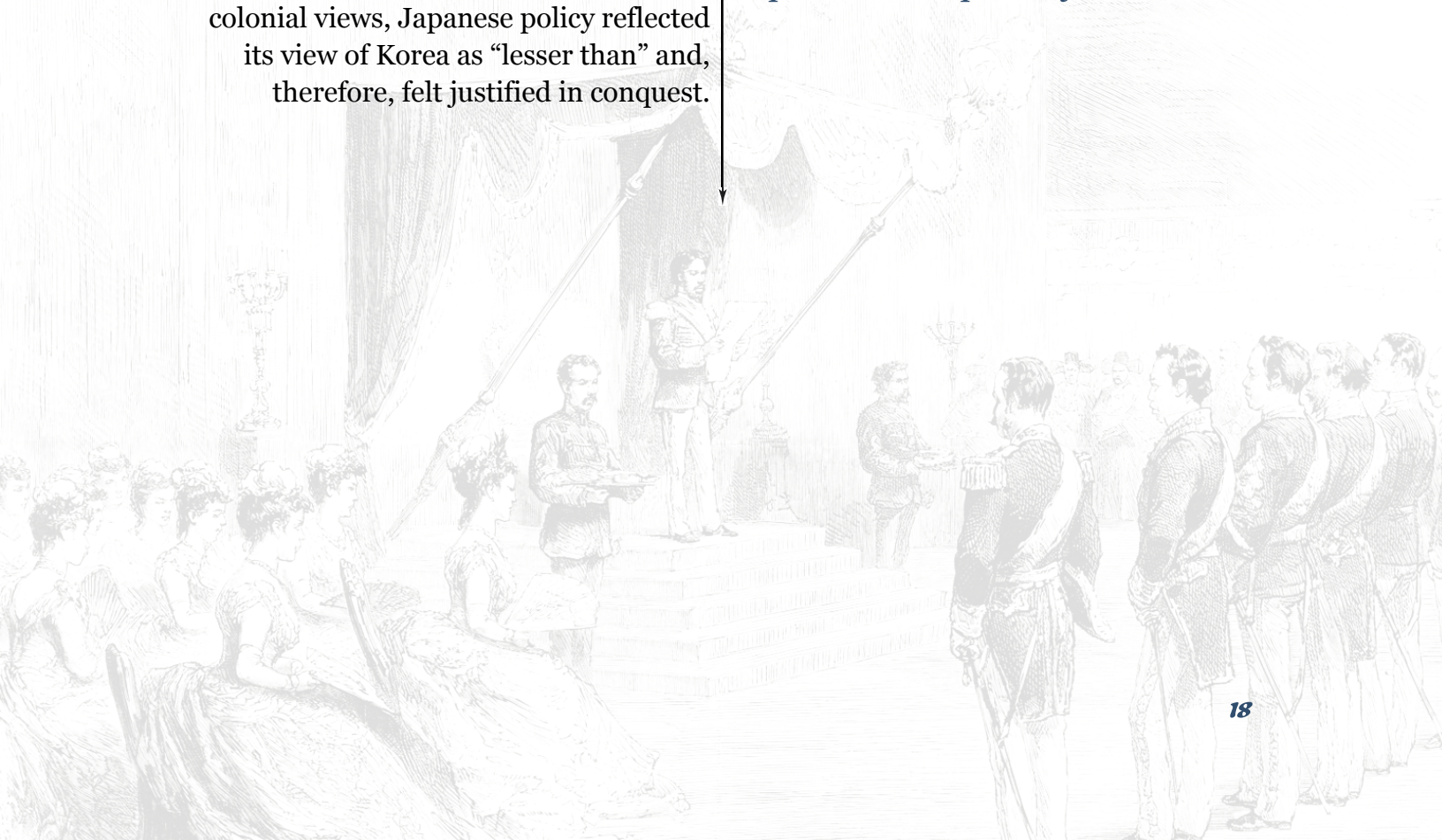
Sino-Japanese War (July 25, 1894-April 17, 1895)

Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902-1922)

Britain being a strong colonial power conferred Japan international prestige. Both nations shared concern over Russia's threat.

Similarly to contemporary European colonial views, Japanese policy reflected its view of Korea as "lesser than" and, therefore, felt justified in conquest.

Japanese Perception of Korea



TIMELINE OF TENSIONS

Tsushima incident (May 21st, 1861)

Russia attempts to settle ships on the coast of the island of Tsushima, a Japanese territory located between Kyushu and Korea.

Korea becomes a strategic interest for both Russia and Japan. Russia establishes a significant presence in Korea.

Korean Peninsula Tensions (1875-1895)

Treaty of Shimonoseki (April 17, 1895)

First Sino-Japanese War results in the Treaty of Shimonoseki, where Japan gains control over Taiwan and parts of Manchuria. Russia, Germany and France (“Triple Intervention”) pressure Japan to withdraw from the Liaodong Peninsula.

Russia signs a deal with China for a 25-year lease of Port Arthur to establish a naval base. Japan deems this implied alliance a threat.

Lease of Port Arthur (March 27, 1898)

Boxer Rebellion (1899)

Russia, along with other Western powers, sends troops to suppress the Boxer Rebellion in China.

Japan signs the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, aimed at countering the growing influence of Russia via Great Britain’s aid.

Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902)

Negotiations Fail (1903)

Diplomatic negotiations between Russia and Japan fail, leaving the status of Manchuria and Korea undetermined.

RESOURCES & MECHANICS

Military Establishment and Hierarchy

With 1.6 million men, the Soviet army, led by Tsar Nicholas II, was amongst the largest and most imposing armies in the world. Opposing it, Emperor Meiji's army possessed roughly a million men or two thirds of what the Soviets had. Both militaries followed a pyramidal hierarchy featuring generals at the top, followed by officers (staff, upper, and lower), and finally privates. Decisions ultimately came from top generals, but they were nevertheless heavily influenced by state officials and by oligarchs. For instance, both armies were led by emperors, and thus the head of state also held absolute power over the military.

The Russian military heavily relied on the Siberia-Manchuria railway to transport materials and troops. This railway went from Vladivostok Fort to Port Arthur, two strategic landmarks. In most scenarios, they could mobilize troops in 7 days. However, they often experienced delays such as mechanical failures or logistical inefficiencies which doubled or tripled mobilization time. On their end, the Japanese utilized roads which were in the process of being expanded. They also required 7 days to mobilize troops though they had a much more reliable system and did not experience unforeseen delays. They were known to use pack animals to transport baggage which was efficient but required constant maintenance and resources. This meant carrying food and water for both troops and animals.³⁵

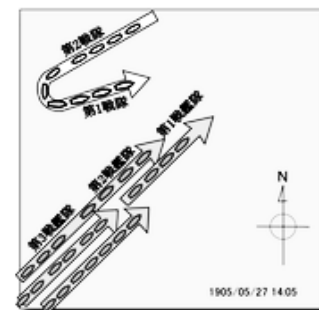
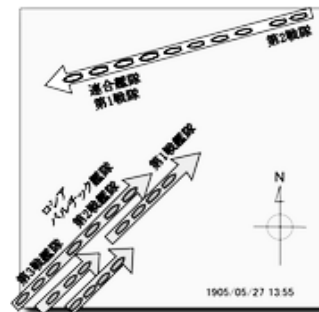


³⁵ TOEPFER. "TECHNICS IN THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR." *PROFESSIONAL MEMOIRS, CORPS OF ENGINEERS, UNITED STATES ARMY, AND ENGINEER DEPARTMENT AT LARGE* 2, NO. 6 (1910): 174–201. [HTTP://WWW.JSTOR.ORG/STABLE/44709410](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44709410).

Weapons and Military Technology

A large emphasis was put on the development of new technologies, with weaponry as a focal point. Most notably, the engineering behind rapid-fire weapons was solidified and its use popularized. The Japanese widely deployed the French Hotchkiss guns, which were great at destroying nimble vehicles or ground troops. In contrast, the Russians employed the field gun, firing substantially heavier bullets and with longer reload times between rounds. This was useful for destroying larger targets such as camps and other semi-permanent military structures³⁶. These modern armaments drastically increased killing power on both ends meaning that in the case of a confrontation, casualties would be more numerous than ever.³⁷

Amphibious strategies were preferred by both militaries meaning that ground and naval battles were on the table. On land, trench wars predominated. They consisted of digging long trenches that troops would live in. Anything that popped out of a trench was instantly shot. In order to gain territory, one side would lay cover using heavy artillery such as machine guns and the infantry would push forwards, running through difficult terrain filled to reach and invade enemy trenches. Hand



³⁶ "THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR BROUGHT RAPID-FIRE WEAPONS TO THE WORLD." *MEDIUM*, APRIL 17, 2016. [HTTPS://MEDIUM.COM/WAR-IS-BORING/THE-RUSSO-JAPANESE-WAR-BROUGHT-RAPID-FIRE-WEAPONS-TO-THE-WORLD-31102C507924](https://medium.com/war-is-boring/the-russo-japanese-war-brought-rapid-fire-weapons-to-the-world-31102c507924).

³⁷ STEINBERG, JOHN W. "WAS THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR WORLD WAR ZERO?" *THE RUSSIAN REVIEW* 67, NO. 1 (2008): 1–7. [HTTP://WWW.JSTOR.ORG/STABLE/20620667](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20620667).

explosives such as grenades or simple gunpowder were popular in trench battles due to the high density of people within.³⁸

Russia possessed 45 major vessels such as battleships and 67 smaller specialized ships such as destroyers. Japan had 40 vessels to its name, only 4 of those being large battleships.³⁹ However, In 1900, Japan began talks with Britain, the world's largest navy to secure naval backing. This meant that Britain would support Japan by sending ships, officers, and personnel, thus allowing them to rival Russia on the seas. During these times, the Japanese navy was experimenting with new naval strategies such as the togo turn. This consisted of a U-turn in front of the enemy ship to then cut it off and get better firing angles. Naval battles were typically used to dispute key strategic land points or to cut off carriers and siege a region.

Communication and Transportation

Both the Russians and the Japanese made great use of the telegraph to communicate. Telegraph communications worked by transmitting morse code vibrations via a wire that spanned hundreds of kilometers. This wire was often held up by poles (similarly to electrical wire) and connected telegraph stations where anyone would receive or send a telegraph. This system relied on having interpreters on both ends to send and receive messages. It also required the wire to be fully intact as a single rupture would mean a total loss of the message. Port Arthur was a key telegraph hub for Russia as it connected it to the battlefields. Similarly, Saseho was crucial to Japan as it allowed

³⁸ "HAND-GRENADERS IN THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR." *PROFESSIONAL MEMOIRS, CORPS OF ENGINEERS, UNITED STATES ARMY, AND ENGINEER DEPARTMENT AT LARGE* 7, NO. 34 (1915): 507–11.
[HTTP://WWW.JSTOR.ORG/STABLE/44697635](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44697635).

³⁹ McLAUGHLIN, WILLIAM. "1904-5 THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR: JAPAN SHATTERS RUSSIA'S NAVY AND GLOBAL PERCEPTIONS." *WAR HISTORY ONLINE*, (2016).
[HTTPS://WWW.WARHISTORYONLINE.COM/HISTORY/1904-5-RUSSO-JAPANESE-WAR-JAPAN-SHATTERS-RUSSIAS-NAVY-GLOBAL-PERCEPTIONS.HTML](https://www.warhistoryonline.com/history/1904-5-russo-japanese-war-japan-shatters-russias-navy-global-perceptions.html).

communication with both the battle fields and the western world. The Japanese were known for their flawless and efficient communication network. Russia, on the other hand, often struggled with consistency and delay issues in their communications. They attempted to make up for their shortcomings by pioneering portable telegraph stations and even attempting experiments with wireless communication technologies.

To close the distance between the base and the battlefield, the train was the transportation of predilection for both sides. The Japanese efficiently utilized their network of tracks to mobilize troops. Notably, the expansion of the network to Lake Baikal ended up being crucial to its effectiveness. Russia also heavily relied on their Siberia-Manchuria track system to transport troops, supplies, and equipment to the front lines. Russia's network, though expansive, struggled with efficiency due to its single-track construction and the lack of maintenance checkpoints. However, both sides sought to exploit the steam engine's battlefield potential.

In order to displace large camps, both Russia and Japan had elite engineer sapper battalions charged with, amongst other things, constructing light bridges. This allowed the passage of heavy machinery such as tanks onto difficult terrain. Efficient and innovative bridge construction on both sides, allowed to momentarily tip the scales by allowing rapid transportation.⁴⁰



War Culture

Russia's army was known as a fierce and barbaric one. Indeed, the Russian army was known to go to any length, no matter the number of casualties on their own side, to win battles. During both Chechen wars and the Neapolitan war, Russia used a strategy known as the scorched earth policy which consists of retreating into their own

⁴⁰ TECHNICS IN THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR - JSTOR. ACCESSED NOVEMBER 13, 2023.
[HTTPS://WWW.JSTOR.ORG/STABLE/PDF/44709410.PDF.](https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/44709410.pdf)

territory and burning all villages and resources. This way, when enemies advance, they must face the harsh soviet weather without any pre-existing infrastructure.

Though seemingly less powerful, Japan proves to be a worthy adversary with its British-backed nav. Also, Japanese soldiers were characterized by a warrior culture called *Bushido*—a way of the Warrior—which can be traced back to the samurai era. Bushido consists of pure dedication to warfare and valorizes bravery and honor in both combat and death, typically in service of one’s superiors or state.⁴¹ A well known element of this ideology is *seppuku*, a ritual suicide involving disembowelment meant to honorably face defeat. Although well-known, seppuku was abandoned as a standard practice in the late 1800’s, though the severe discipline that motivated its performance arguably persisted in different forms.



⁴¹ ALPHAHISTORY. “THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR.” RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, JANUARY 12, 2019. [HTTPS://ALPHAHISTORY.COM/RUSSIANREVOLUTION/RUSSO-JAPANESE-WAR/](https://alphahistory.com/russianrevolution/rucco-japanese-war/).

FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT

United States

The United States' involvement in the Russo-Japanese War was modulated by its evolving perceptions of Japan. The small island nation, "though emerging from its centuries-old cocoon of feudal isolation, largely escaped Washington's attention," highlighting the initial oversight of Japan.⁴² Despite lacking sufficient strength in East Asia, the U.S. recognized a parallel weakness in its European rivals, whose armed forces were dispersed defending "far-flung empires throughout the world."⁴³ Indeed, the American "Open Door" policy of 1899 and 1900 as well as the U.S.'s participation in the international suppression of China's nationalistic "Boxer Rebellion" in 1900, "reflected American determination to prevent the European political and commercial domination of China."⁴⁴

President Theodore Roosevelt, a longstanding admirer of Japan, celebrated the early Japanese successes as aligned with the "Open Door" policy's objectives. Impressed, he dispatched journalists and military personnel to observe Japanese operations, solidifying the perception of the U.S. as a potential mediator between Japan and Russia.⁴⁵ However, Japan's military triumphs against Russia ironically bred apprehensions in Washington, where observers' accounts of patriotic and even fanatic Japanese forces fueled concerns about a potential Japanese threat, despite elation over Japan's elimination of Russian influence in Manchuria.⁴⁶

⁴² AULT, JONATHAN BENNETT. "CLOSING THE OPEN DOOR POLICY: AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY REACTIONS TO THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR OF 1904-1905." 1994. "DISSERTATIONS, THESES, AND MASTERS PROJECTS." WILLIAM & MARY. PAPER 1539625920, 2.

⁴³ BENNETT, "CLOSING THE OPEN DOOR POLICY," 3.

⁴⁴ *IBID.*

⁴⁵ BENNETT, "CLOSING THE OPEN DOOR POLICY," 4.

⁴⁶ BENNETT, "CLOSING THE OPEN DOOR POLICY," 4.

The Russo-Japanese War became a defining moment for Roosevelt, who, in response to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, declared unequivocal support for Japan: "It is clear, nonetheless, that Roosevelt appeared to be frankly and sincerely committed to the justice of Japan's cause and to its ultimate triumph in the test of battle."⁴⁷ The dynamics of this relationship reflected the delicate balance of power and perception that shaped other countries' involvement in the Russo-Japanese War.



Britain

The Russo-Japanese War bore witness to a dance of alliances with Britain as a key performer shaping the conflict's trajectory. In fact, "Japan's success was made possible in part by Britain," as the alliance signed in 1902 stipulated British support in a war against Japan's enemy if one or more countries joined Russia's cause.⁴⁸ British military authorities, wary of a minor episode in Asia escalating into a global conflict through the Franco-Russian entente, strategically influenced the outcome. Although Britain initially expressed a desire for a "strict neutral line,"⁴⁹ its diplomatic manoeuvres suggested otherwise. Beyond diplomacy, Britain's long-term support for Japan extended to naval expertise and ship construction, shaping the Japanese fleet in British shipyards.⁵⁰ The final naval victory at Tsushima, hailed by some as the most impressive in history, showcased the influence of British naval tactics on Japan's success via the Admiral's early training in Britain⁵¹.

⁴⁷ DUA, R. P. "UNITED STATES & THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR (1904-5)." *PROCEEDINGS OF THE INDIAN HISTORY CONGRESS* 34 (1973): 274. [HTTP://WWW.JSTOR.ORG/STABLE/44138733](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44138733).

⁴⁸ "BRITISH ASSISTANCE TO THE JAPANESE NAVY DURING THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR OF 1904-5." *THE GREAT CIRCLE* 2, NO. 1 (1980): 1. [HTTP://WWW.JSTOR.ORG/STABLE/41562319](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41562319).

⁴⁹ "BRITISH ASSISTANCE TO THE JAPANESE," 1.

⁵⁰ *IBID.*

⁵¹ "BRITISH ASSISTANCE TO THE JAPANESE," 1.

An education which was exchanged in return as observers studied the Russo-Japanese War for insights on conflict.⁵² Moreover, Britain involved herself in the conflict implicitly when it “intimidated the Russian Baltic Fleet by sending warships with their guns cleared for action to watch over it until Britain had decided whether to allow it to proceed.”⁵³ Yet fulfilling its promise of neutrality, Britain conversely intervened by protest when “a superior Japanese force threatened to sink the Russian warships Varyag and Koreetz in the neutral port of Chemulpo in Korea,” and the British “Captain Bayly [...] took many of the Russian seamen on board.”⁵⁴

Soviet and Japanese scholars moreover acknowledge Britain's financial role, with loans enabling Japan to continue fighting. This relationship exemplifies how commercial ties translated to political alliances in wartime. Notably, Japanese “loans were raised from commercial banking houses and [...] [not necessarily] because of the activities of the British government itself.”⁵⁵ Likewise, the British inadvertently determined the timing of the war when the British armament manufacturer Armstrong-Whitworth delivered two cruisers commissioned by Japan. Meanwhile, British authors sought parallels between Japan's situation with Russia and Britain's with Continental Europe, emphasizing the utility of studying the Russo-Japanese War for British observers.



France

The Russo-Japanese War cast a revealing light on France's alliance with Russia, characterized primarily by a financial bond that had rapidly developed since 1890. Indeed, “the cement that held the alliance together was the French-Russian

⁵² NORDLUND, ALEXANDER M. “A WAR OF OTHERS: BRITISH WAR CORRESPONDENTS, ORIENTALIST DISCOURSE, AND THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, 1904–1905.” *WAR IN HISTORY* 22, NO. 1 (2015): 28–46, 1. [HTTP://WWW.JSTOR.ORG/STABLE/26098222](http://www.jstor.org/stable/26098222).

⁵³ “BRITISH ASSISTANCE TO THE JAPANESE,” 2.

⁵⁴ *IBID.*

⁵⁵ “BRITISH ASSISTANCE TO THE JAPANESE,” 1.

creditor-debtor financial relationship," a connection that became their "common interest" by 1904.⁵⁶ While the "French at first willingly loaned to Russia although they looked with disfavor upon the war," France, notably its Finance Minister Maurice Rouvier, grew "disillusioned with their incompetent ally and the unsatisfactory trade relations with Russia," with more "French business and industry [leaders] demand[ing] better trade relations with Russia."⁵⁷

Amid the conflict, France maintained neutrality, a stance attributed to Foreign Minister Theophile Delcasse's efforts to enhance relations with Great Britain and the alliance's lack of an explicit provision for French military support unless Britain joined the war.⁵⁸ In the absence of British intervention in the Russo-Japanese War, France's involvement in Russian affairs was left to wane in its financial contribution. Still, France's alliance with Russia cannot be reduced to this economic dimension, as this alignment contributed to the war via the pressure it imposed on Germany.



Germany

Germany's ostensibly neutral stance in the Russo-Japanese War conceals a nuanced and strategic involvement driven by geopolitical considerations. While officially pledging "strict neutrality," Germany had been subtly working to "turn Russia against Japan" since the successful 1895 Triple Intervention, leading to Japan's return of the Liaotung Peninsula to China.⁵⁹ The acquisition of Kiaochow/Tsingtao in 1898 prompted Russia's lease of Liaotung with Port Arthur, strategically connected via railway to Siberia. Germany's interest in a Russo-Japanese conflict stemmed from its

⁵⁶ LONG, JAMES. "FRANCO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS DURING THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR." *THE SLAVONIC AND EAST EUROPEAN REVIEW* 52, NO. 127 (1974): 214.
[HTTP://WWW.JSTOR.ORG/STABLE/4206868](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4206868).

⁵⁷ LONG, "FRANCO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS DURING THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR," 215.

⁵⁸ LONG, "FRANCO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS DURING THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR," 215.

⁵⁹ KREBS, GERHARD. "GERMAN POLICY AND THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR." IN *RETHINKING THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, 1904-5*, 88-103. DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1163/EJ.9781905246199.1-348.53](https://doi.org/10.1163/EJ.9781905246199.1-348.53).

apprehension of a "two-front war" due to the Russo-French alliance, failed attempts to align with Britain, and the "anti-German bias" in the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.⁶⁰ The fleeting interest in joining this alliance was thwarted by German naval rearmament.

The geopolitical implications were clear—a Russian engagement in the Far East would divert the tsar's attention from the Balkans and Turkish Straits, where Germany sought influence through the construction of the Baghdad railway. Kaiser Wilhelm, through diplomatic efforts, pressed Russia to guard Europe against the 'yellow peril,' emphasizing the preservation of the "Christian faith" and the "white race against Asian barbarism."⁶¹ This calculated involvement is exemplified in Wilhelm's assurance to Tsar Nicholas II during the planning of the Triple Intervention, pledging to "keep Europe quiet" and safeguard Russia's move toward the Far East. This multi-pronged strategy reveals Germany's subtle diplomatic quest to secure its interests in Europe and, therefore, Asia.



East Asian Powers

Japan was perceived by China and Korea as an ambitious and assertive regional power. China saw Japan as a potential threat to its influence in the region, especially regarding Manchuria. The latter's expansionist ambitions influenced China and Korea's responses to the war, as they sought to safeguard their own interests amid Japan's growing influence.

Russia's aggressive policies in East Asia, particularly its moves in Manchuria and the Liaodong Peninsula, raised concerns among both China and Japan. Attempts to establish a warm-water port in the Pacific and extend the Trans-Siberian Railway to the region were seen as threats to the existing balance of power. China, while weakened internally, sought to resist further encroachments by Russia.

⁶⁰ KREBS, GERHARD. "GERMAN POLICY AND THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR."

⁶¹ IBID.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Political

- * How will neighbouring states be affected by and seek to capitalize on the conflict? How will these interests affect their ongoing relationships with Russia, Japan and other powers (i.e., East Asian, Western European, American, etc.)?
- * What will be the respective populations' responses to their state entering into war? Will it cultivate a stronger sense of nationalism or alienation?

Socioeconomic

- * How is the Russo-Japanese War an extension of Japan's ambitions from the Meiji Restoration? How would this shape public perception?
- * What impact will this conflict have on the welfare of both states? How will they address the expenses associated with engaging in warfare and its effects on their populations?
- * How will different social strata in Russia and Japan be affected by and attempt to capitalize on the conflict? Are these interests competing?

Military

- * What approaches or tactics to war should be taken? How can novel technologies be capitalized on in the conflict's specific geographic, temporal and climatic context? How would each actor want to see the war play out?
- * What resources will need to be mobilized? How will troops be moved, fed, supplied and motivated?

CHARACTER GUIDE

Russia

Dmitry Alekseyevich (NONFICTIONAL)

Serving under the Ministry of War, Alekseyevich introduced multiple military reforms within the Russian empire. This minister of war put forth significant enhancements in military education across various branches of the army. Notably, in 1874, he introduced the concept of conscription for the first time, making all eligible Russian males over the age of twenty serve the nation.

Alexandra Feodorovna (NONFICTIONAL)

Born Princess Alix of Hesse and the German wife of Tsar Nicholas II, Alix's marriage in 1894 marked a significant alliance, and she, upon converting to Orthodoxy, faced the challenge of adapting to Russian court life. Known for her reserved nature, Alix played a pivotal role in supporting Nicholas and their family, sharing a deep connection with the Tsar and thus wielding influence on her husband's mandate.

Aleksey Kuropatkin (NONFICTIONAL)

Rising to become a Russian military leader, Kuropatkin rose through the ranks, displaying strategic acumen and engineering expertise. Graduating from the Nicholas General Staff Academy, he particularly distinguished himself in military theory. Kuropatkin's pre-1904 successes foreshadowed a leadership role, and by the Russo-Japanese War, he was the Russian Armed Forces' Chief of the General Staff.

Dmitrii Ivanovich Kurskii (FICTIONAL)

As Head of the new Russian Imperial Military's Medical Department at the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War, Kurskii implemented innovative medical practices. The renowned physician introduced advancements in field hospital organization, medical personnel training, and healthcare logistics. Kurskii's dedication to efficiency and reform set him on the course of streamlining healthcare services for Russian forces.

Sergei Ivanovich Mosin (NONFICTIONAL)

A firearms innovator working in the Russian army as an officer and engineer, Mosin's collaboration with Belgian designer Léon Nagant led to the creation of the Mosin-Nagant rifle, a pivotal development in Russian military arms. While not directly managing manufacturing, his role ensured the rifle's adoption as a standard-issue firearm through the streamlining of its mass production.

Vyacheslav Plehve (NONFICTIONAL)

Once state prosecutor, then Russian Minister of the Interior during the early 1900s, Plehve wielded influence through conservative policies and propaganda efforts. Instrumental in Russification of his nation's provinces through narratives, the minister's leadership marked a tumultuous period of aggravating social tensions. Plehve supported the war with Japan, seeing opportunity in the bloodshed.

Grigori Rasputin (NONFICTIONAL)

A confidant of Tsar Nicholas II, Rasputin was renowned for his profound spiritual and mystical insights. Despite his absence from the Russian Orthodox Church, he was given the title of a monk following his 1897 pilgrimage to a monastery. Roaming through highly populated cities like Saint Petersburg, he spoke about his ideologies, amassing a considerable following of believers. Revered as a healer, he was sought out within the high-class societies and admired for his prophecies.

Roman Rosen (NONFICTIONAL)

Raised in a noble family, Rosen began his career as a legal scholar and public servant. Rising through diplomatic ranks, he held positions in London and Constantinople, where his fluency in several languages demonstrated his keen intellect and cultural acumen. Early appointments in consular and ministerial roles allowed him to wield administrative expertise in his diplomacy.

Vasily Vereshchagin (NONFICTIONAL)

This Russian artist was recognized for his realist paintings touching on themes of conflict, suffering and, later in his life, Asian culture. Known internationally for "The Apotheosis of War," Vereshchagin's art was informed by his own military experience, where he had witnessed violence outside the frame of his canvases. Indeed, returning to military service, Vasily would live in the Far East until the Russo-Japanese War.

Robert Viren (NONFICTIONAL)

This naval officer was entrusted with the command of the armored cruiser Bayan due to his extensive experience in the naval field. Having gotten multiple awards such as the Order of St. Stanislaus and the Order of St. Anna, this commander was seen as a courageous and daring leader. In the lead up to the war, Commander Viren was stationed in Port Arthur with the Russian Pacific Squadron.

Sergei Witte (NONFICTIONAL)

Attaining the position of the Russian Empire's first Prime Minister, Witte played an important role in the industrialization of the nation. Positioned as a politically neutral figure, he refrained from taking a conservative or a liberal stand. Whilst he stood alongside the Tsar, he was opposed to the concept of war and tried to implement policies that would lessen the chances of conflict.



Japan

Shibusawa Eiichi (NONFICTIONAL)

Eiichi was a preeminent Japanese industrialist, philanthropist and financier, often referred to as the "father of Japanese capitalism." Renowned for founding the first modern banks and numerous successful companies in Japan, he wielded substantial economic influence. Shibusawa's formidable wealth and influence over crucial industries gives him a significant degree of influence, despite holding no public office.

Tōgō Heihachirō (NONFICTIONAL)

Admiral Tōgō was a distinguished naval officer, who studied in England before rising through the ranks in the Japanese military. He fought in the Sino-French War, the Sino-Japanese War (where he commanded a warship), and the soon-to-be Russo-Japanese War, in which he was appointed commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet. Highly adept at strategizing, Admiral Tōgō played a crucial role in shaping Japan's naval strategy during this war.

Atsutane Hirata (NONFICTIONAL)

As a prominent Japanese scholar (*Kokugaku*) and Shinto reformer during the Edo period, Hirata sought to revive and systematize Shinto teachings, emphasizing the purity of indigenous beliefs. Hirata shaped early modern Shinto, or "Way of the Gods," as the Chief Priest of the Ise Grand Shrine, leading spiritual practices in celebration of the empire during the Meiji Restoration.

Yuzuru Hiraga (NONFICTIONAL)

Hiraga graduated from the Imperial Japanese Naval Academy to become a military engineer. Renowned for innovative designs in torpedo and destroyer ships, he significantly improved his nation's naval capabilities. Beginning his work at the

Yokosuka and later Kure Naval Arsenal, his contributions to warship technology makes him a key candidate for the Chief Engineer at the Naval Technical Department.

Jigoro Kano (NONFICTIONAL)

Inventor of Judo and ex-minister of war, Jigoro Kano was a popular figure in Japan. He viewed politics, war, and sports holistically. Jigoro was also the first Japanese athlete to enter in the Olympics. In his Judo institute, he pioneered a new pedagogical system using belts (white to black). He was a kind and especially wise man for whom people often went to great lengths.

Ozaki Kihachi (NONFICTIONAL)

Kihachi was a Japanese poet and translator known for his anti-war sentiments in the Shirakaba humanist philosophy during the Russo-Japanese War. His verses vividly depicted the human spirit with a pastoral palette, conversely illustrating the human toll resulting from conflict. Crucially, his work contributed to a broader movement of Japanese artists engaged in the propagation of official social goals.

Viscount Shin'ichiro Kurino (NONFICTIONAL)

A Harvard-educated Japanese diplomat, Kurino would travel far from the Fukuoka prefecture he was raised in to work in the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Viscount served as his island-nation's "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary" to the United States, then Russia. Amidst the rising tensions of the war, Kurino would be recalled to Japan, though his diplomatic persistence remains.

Claude Maxwell MacDonald (NONFICTIONAL)

A British military officer and diplomat, MacDonald was involved in negotiations surrounding the Boxer Rebellion in China and later served as the British Minister to China. Known for diplomatic finesse, he was appointed as Consul-General to Japan in 1900, working on the frontlines of the British-Japanese alliance from within the British Legation in Tokyo.

Nogi Maresuke (NONFICTIONAL)

Count Nogi Maresuke was a general in the imperial Japanese army and was known as a national war hero. During the Satsuma Rebellion, he lost a banner representing the emperor. To earn back the emperor's respect, he put on acts of suicidal bravery until forgiven. Having lost his mother to malaria, Count Nogi wishes to develop the Japanese healthcare system.

Natasha Nakamura (FICTIONAL)

Natasha Nakamura was a businesswoman who made her fortune by founding one of Japan's largest corporations which traded electrical supplies, metals, and chemicals. She also had stakes in the copper mining industry, the raw silk market, and rice trading. Natasha was born from a Russian mother and a Japanese father but has lived in Japan her whole life. She promises her heart lies with Japan and wishes to help in any way she can.

Josephine Nightingale (FICTIONAL)

Raised and inspired by the famous nurse and pioneering healthcare statistician Florence Nightingale, Josephine is a well-respected, trailblazing physician. Never at rest in any one place, Josephine has travelled across Europe in her late teens, later deciding to study novel medical insights in Japan. Unintimidated by the rising political tensions, Nightingale is prepared to treat the wounded, including foreign soldiers.

Okuhara Seiko (NONFICTIONAL)

Descendant of a samurai, Okuhara is no stranger to battles. She was known for her masculine appearance, which she used to gain recognition in the world of the arts. Her art was unique due to the blend of Chinese inspiration with Japanese culture. Indeed, in school, she studied Chinese poetry, art, and literature. As an artist, she is well known in the underground scene of Japan.

Umetaro Suzuki (NONFICTIONAL)

As one of Japan's leading biochemists, Umetaro Suzuki was developing a water-based rice acid (later known as vitamin B1 – the first-ever vitamin). He hopes to publish his findings in international journals. Umetaro has vast ties to the medical world and the international academic scene. He always seeks to analyze things rationally and is thus a big believer in the scientific method.

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