



**TURUN  
YLIOPISTO**  
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OF TURKU

# **IN SEARCH OF NEW FACTS**

Interwar Japanese Military Intelligence Activities in  
the Baltic States and Finland: 1918–1940

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is the world's first ever academic work clarifying the interwar Japanese military intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea region. These activities can be divided into three periods: 1) Planning and Research (1919–1931), 2) Nurturing Friendships (1932–1937), and 3) Joint Intelligence Operations (1937–1940).

In the first period, the Japanese Army estimated the effects of the intelligence activities in the region, mainly against the Soviet Union. There were several Japanese Army officers such as Captain Komatsubara and Major Obata stationed in Tallinn to observe the Soviet political situation. And, as tensions between Japan and the Soviet Union rose in the early 1930s, the Japanese Army formulated a special guideline to initiate the regional intelligence operation in 1932. In this 'Plan of 1932', Estonia and Finland were named as potential hubs for Japanese intelligence activities. According to the plan, the Japanese sent student officers to the both countries, and also to Latvia, to nurture friendships with the Japanese Army.

In the late 1930s, the situation surrounding the Plan of 1932 saw a drastic change in terms of Japanese diplomatic relations with China and the Soviet Union. The plan became a more aggressive 'espionage offensive' against the Soviet Union while promoting Japanese righteousness in the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–45). In 1938, a new guideline for the Japanese Army's foreign intelligence operations was formulated. In this Plan of 1938, the Japanese attempted to gain a decisive victory against the Soviet Union through various stratagems. However, their intelligence operations, jointly organised by the Estonian and German intelligence services probably failed, and in consequence they did not affect the international political situation of the late 1930s.

**KEYWORDS:** Baltic-Japanese relations, Finnish-Japanese relations, Modern Japanese history, History of Military Intelligence

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## TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä opinnäyte on maailman ensimmäinen akateeminen työ, joka selkeyttää Japanin sotienvälisiä sotilastiedustelutoimintaa Itämeren alueella, erityisesti Baltian maissa ja Suomessa. Tuona aikana japanilaisten alueella toiminta voidaan jakaa kolmeen jaksoon: 1) suunnittelu ja tutkimus (1919–1931), 2) ystävyyden vaaliminen (1932–1937) ja 3) yhteiset tiedustelutoimet (1937–1940).

Ensimmäisellä ajanjaksolla Japanin armeija arvioi alueen tiedustelutoiminnan vaikutuksia pääasiassa Neuvostoliittoa vastaan. Tallinnaan oli sijoitettu useita Japanin armeijan upseereita, kuten kapteeni Komatsubara ja majuri Obata tarkkailemaan Neuvostoliiton poliittista tilannetta. Ja koska Japanin ja Neuvostoliiton väliset jännitteet olivat kasvaneet 1930-luvun alkupuolella, Japanin armeija laati erityisen ohjeen alueellisen tiedustelutoiminnan aloittamiseksi vuonna 1932. Vuoden 1932 suunnitelmassa Viro ja Suomi nimettiin potentiaalisiksi keskuksiksi Japanin tiedustelutoimintaan. Suunnitelman mukaan japanilaiset lähettivät opiskelijaupseereja molempiin maihin ja myös Latviaan edistämään ystävyyttä Japanin armeijan kanssa.

1930-luvun lopulla vuoden 1932 suunnitelmaan liittyvä tilanne muuttui dramaattisesti Japanin diplomaattisissa suhteissa Kiinan ja Neuvostoliiton kanssa. Suunnitelmasta tuli aggressiivisempi painotuksenaan ”vakoiluyökkäys” Neuvostoliittoa vastaan edistäen samalla japanilaisten vanhurskautta toisessa Kiinan ja Japanin sodassa (1937–45).

Vuonna 1938 laadittiin uusi ohje Japanin armeijan ulkomaan tiedusteluoperaatioille. Japanilaiset yrittivät tässä vuoden 1938 suunnitelmassa saavuttaa ratkaisevan voiton Neuvostoliittoa vastaan eri juonien avulla. Heidän Viron ja Saksan tiedustelupalvelun yhdessä järjestämät tiedusteluoperaatiot kuitenkin ilmeisesti epäonnistuivat, joka seurauksena suunnitelma ei lopulta vaikuttanut 1930-luvun lopun kansainväliseen poliittiseen tilanteeseen.

ASIASANAT: Baltian ja Japanin suhteet, Suomen ja Japanin suhteet, Japanin oman aikamme historia, Sotilaallisen tiedustelun historia

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Ever since the launch of this thesis project in autumn 2016, I was quite at a loss for what to pursue. However, within four years of the project, I was totally blessed with people surrounding me.

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31 April 2021

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*Shingo Masunaga*

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# 1 Introduction

The interwar Japanese military intelligence activities in general have rarely caught scholarly attention, even though the first attempts to clarify the facts were made already during the Tokyo War Tribunal between 1946 and 1948. During the trials, a number of the former Japanese Army officers involved in secret intelligence operations such as Hiroshi Oshima, the former Ambassador and military attaché to Germany, were questioned. The Soviet Union, a country targeted by the Japanese Army in terms of its stratagems during the interwar period, submitted copies of the secret documents of the Japanese Army to the court as evidence of the Japanese espionage offensives targeted at the Soviet Union. The Soviet collection included the Plan of 1932, a guideline for the Japanese Army to organise intelligence operations against the Soviet Union. Torashiro Kawabe, the former military attaché to the Soviet Union in the early 1930s, recollected in the post-WW2 period that the evidentiary documents presented by the Soviet prosecutors including the Plan of 1932 at the Tokyo War Tribunal were authentic.<sup>1</sup> Despite the intense Soviet investigation, the whole picture of interwar Japanese intelligence activities was not uncovered by the court.

One of the reasons why the Allies including the Soviet Union failed to confirm the facts about the interwar Japanese intelligence activities was the destruction of the documents by the Japanese Army. In August 1945, shortly before the Allied occupation of Japan commenced, the majority of the official documents about the Japanese Army's intelligence activities were purposely destroyed. For instance, only two telegrams (a confidential telegram sent on 20 June 1936 and Telegram No.141 sent on 13 December 1937) by the interwar Japanese military attachés to Latvia survived this dishonourable act. The same order was implemented in Germany shortly before its defeat by the Allies in 1945. The same happened in the Baltic States before or during the Soviet occupation in 1940. Finland, a country that was able to maintain its sovereignty after the Second World War, was unfortunately not an

<sup>1</sup> **Kawabe, T.** From Ichigaya-Dai to Ichigaya-Dai: Memoir of the Last Vice Chief of Staff. (Ichigaya-Dai kara Ichigaya-Dai he: Saigo no Sanbo Jicho no Kaisoroku) Second Edition. Jiji Tsushinsha, Tokyo, 1971, p.210.

exception. In 1944, upon the Armistice with the Soviet Union, the Second Department of the Finnish General Staff (Intelligence) decided to dispose of the materials of their intelligence activities which would benefit their former enemy. To sum up, the destruction of the official documents, as evidence of intelligence cooperation with the Japanese Army, happened in all the countries involved: Estonia, Finland, Germany, Japan, and Latvia.

Meanwhile, materials (documents) in the Russian archives have been subject to arguments among scholars for decades ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> In the early 1990s, many Western historians headed to the newly born Russian Federation to find out if declassified Soviet-era documents succeeded in filling the gaps between official Soviet history and the historical facts hidden by the Soviet Communist Party. Even during this period, a majority of documents preserved in the archives of the former KGB (Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti, Committee for State Security), the Soviet-era Secret Police who were in charge of arrests and executions during the Stalin's Great Purge and both Soviet intelligence and counter-intelligence operations under the former name NKVD (Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del, People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs) in the 1930s, were not declassified and the information concerning locations of some of the archives were also not released to public.<sup>3</sup>

In 1991, soon after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Vasili Mitrokhin, a former KGB archivist, visited the American Embassy in Riga, Latvia with copies of the documents from the KGB Archive. The Americans doubted the credibility of the copies and, instead, Great Britain allowed him to defect to Britain and the British intelligence service retrieved 25,000 pages of files regarding secret operations of KGB and NKVD as far back as the 1930s. Some of Mitrokhin's copies of KGB/NKVD documents have been available to the public at the Churchill Archives Centre at Churchill College in Britain ever since 2014. However, the original handwritten notes by Mitrokhin, the copies of KGB/NKVD documents made by himself, are still classified.<sup>4</sup> In the Russian Federation, in March 2019, two courts in Moscow backed the decision of the Federal Security Service (Federal'naya sluzhba bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii), the successor organisation of the KGB, refusing to grant 'Gulag' (Soviet-era concentration camp) historian Sergei Prudovsky access to files containing the names of the NKVD Troika judges who had issued

<sup>2</sup> "Introduction" <http://russianarchives.com/archives/hoover/hist.html> (Access Date and Time: 5<sup>th</sup> October 2019, 19:46PM)

<sup>3</sup> "ArcheoBiblioBase: Archives in Russia: C-6" <http://www.iisg.nl/abb/rep/C-6.tab2.php> (Access Date and Time: 5<sup>th</sup> October 2019, 19:53PM)

<sup>4</sup> "KGB papers, kept in secret since 1992, released by British archive". [https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2014/07/06/kgb\\_papers\\_kept\\_in\\_secret\\_since\\_1992\\_released\\_by\\_british\\_archive.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2014/07/06/kgb_papers_kept_in_secret_since_1992_released_by_british_archive.html) (Access Date and Time: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019 08:14AM)

orders for people to be persecuted in Gulags between 1937 and 1938.<sup>5</sup> Also, on 8 June 2018, Meduza, a Riga-based online newspaper, reported that, on 10 May, the Russian government secretly ordered the destruction of all registration cards issued to convicts in the Soviet prison system, literally by the NKVD.<sup>6</sup> In September 2019, the author also inquired about documents related to the activities of the Gavrillov group, but the FSB archives denied the existence of the documents (see **Evidence No.17**). Hence, access to NKVD documents preserved in the Russian Federation is not possible at the moment and this situation will not change in the near future.

Instead of the NKVD documents preserved in Russian archives, the author decided to use NKVD documents left in Estonia. In the Estonian National Archive (ERA), there are two types of materials (documents) available: 1) Official documents of Estonian government organisations and 2) Official documents of the Soviet secret police (NKVD). The Latvian National Archive (LVVA) holds official documents of Latvian government organisations and the NKVD documents as well. However, access to most of the NKVD documents is still restricted. Similarly, the Finnish National Archive (KA) offers the government's official documents including those of the Finnish secret police known as VALPO. Meanwhile, archives in Japan are separated by their content. For instance, if a researcher wishes to check the official documents of the Japanese Army, the collection is preserved at the National Institute for Defence Studies (NIDS) at the Japanese Defence Ministry. Documents related to foreign policy such as reports of the Japanese Legation in Riga are available at the so-called MoFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) archives. However, only two or three reports (telegrams) from the Japanese military attachés in Helsinki and Riga has been preserved at Japanese archives. Thus, this thesis was written largely relying on materials available in the archives of the Baltic Sea region countries such as Estonia and Finland.

Regarding the materials in Estonia, when the Republic of Estonia declared the restoration of independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, the local KGB unit left the country after burning classified documents for days before the seizure of the buildings and its Archives by the Estonian authorities. However, a number of the documents issued in the interwar period were untouched, possibly because the KGB officials in Estonia prioritised the destruction of documents on current activities rather than the decades-old documents, so these fell into the hands of the Estonians.

<sup>5</sup> “Russian Authorities Seal Stalin-Era NKVD Archives”. <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/03/14/authorities-seal-stalin-era-nkvd-archives-reports-a64804> (Access Date and Time: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019 10:12AM)

<sup>6</sup> “Historians say the Russian authorities have started shredding archival Gulag records. Here’s what we know.” <https://meduza.io/en/cards/historians-say-the-russian-authorities-have-started-shredding-gulag-archival-records-here-s-what-we-know> (Access Date and Time: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019 10:18AM)

The Estonian National Archives (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv) compiled those documents as dossier series 'ERAF.138sm' and, since the mid-2000s, they have been available to scholars. In comparison with Estonia, Latvia has implemented far more severe restrictions on the perusal of the NKVD/KGB documents. In December 2018, by a decision of Saeima (the Latvian National Parliament), a portion of registration cards for KGB informants during the post-WW2 period were finally released to the public. However, it is yet unclear whether other types of the documents such as the NKVD reports on the informants in Riga are preserved in Latvia, and the Latvian State Historical Archives (LVVA) did not respond to my inquiry.

Regarding observation of the Japanese military intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea region by intelligence services of third countries, circa 2005, the American and British National Archives declassified a vast number of documents related to the topic. The most famous documents are the so-called 'SSU Interrogation Records', issued by the Strategic Services Unit (SSU). This American counter-intelligence agency conducted interrogations of Japanese war criminals at Sugamo Prison in Tokyo during the post-WW2 period. Among the documents, there were several interrogation records of former Japanese military attachés to the Baltic States and Finland such as Makoto Onodera and Hiroshi Onouchi. Yet, many parts of their confessions could not be confirmed by other sources, so the use of the records in this thesis was very limited. Despite the uncertainty of the facts, in the last decade many authors have cited the SSU interrogation records as trustworthy primary sources since they were classified for so long (between 1946 and 2005) and the interrogations were conducted by the SSU, the official American intelligence service. In terms of written history, it is never enough just to 'unveil' the facts by referring to one type of document but also by relating them to other documents. The author could not fully trust the confessions of Onodera and Onouchi during the American interrogations from this perspective and, until December 1941, American surveillance of the Japanese-Soviet intelligence war was very limited. It was obvious from the facts that the Americans and British decided to intercept and decipher correspondence between Japanese military attachés and the General Staff in Tokyo only after the outbreak of the war. The evidence shown at the post-WW2 Tokyo War Tribunal are also good examples. The majority of the interwar Japanese intelligence operations against the Soviet Union were unveiled by the Soviets themselves through a number of secretly retrieved Japanese official documents.

In this thesis, records related to the post-WW2 Nuremberg and Tokyo War Tribunals were treated as 'secondary sources' since there is a possibility that changes were made to the original documents by third parties through checking and translation procedures, mainly by American and Soviet prosecutors. Thus, the tribunal records were attached to this thesis as appendices. Memoirs and other sources such as published articles on newspapers from the countries are also used in

this thesis. In terms of the selection and use of memoirs, the author decided to apply the concept of Heidemarie Salevsky. According to her, “For memories of times of war and social upheaval, the relationship between victors and vanquished is crucial”.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, almost all the memoirs of the former Japanese Army officers who were involved in the interwar intelligence activities were written in the post-WW2 period and after the Tokyo War Tribunal held by the victors. To see what was common to the memoirs, the authors had to try and cross-reference and compare them with other sources to check authenticity. The method is explained in detail in **Chapter 2** of this thesis.

## 1.1 Aims of Research

This thesis is the first-ever attempt to unveil a perspective on interwar Japanese military intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea region through historiographical reconstruction. The topic has been rarely taken up by scholars, probably due to lack of primary sources. However, intelligence history in general has been seen as ‘Regalia’ by the intelligence services of each country. For instance, research on interwar Japanese intelligence activities has caught the attention of the defence ministries of different nations such as Estonia and Japan. Hence, in April 2019, the author was invited to give a lecture at the National Institute for Defence Studies (NIDS) of Japan. According to Hockett, “It is wise for a writer to volunteer information about his relations with his subject to disarm suspicion of bias”.<sup>8</sup> In my case, there is no correlation with certain groups of political thoughts that this thesis deals with.

Various countries were involved in the Japanese activities and it was challenging to collect the primary sources varied in several languages (Estonian, English, Finnish, French, German, Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian, Swedish and Japanese). The archival fieldworks at the National Archives of each country required an enormous budget, time and great patience to obtain access to many of the restricted materials. Furthermore, there were some suspicious materials in which authenticity needed to be carefully examined. In the given time, the author had to admit that he did not have enough time to check all the related materials and, for that reason, reconstruction of the historical context in this thesis may have some shortcomings. Still, this thesis aims to open up a new route for other historians or potential candidates to discover new facts and ultimately, as a result of their work, clarification of the historical facts.

<sup>7</sup> **Salevsky, H.** The Memoirs of Interpreters as a Historical Source: Reports of Russian and German Interpreters concerning 22 June 1941. *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 2014, 27, 2, p.255.

<sup>8</sup> **Hockett, H., G.** *The Critical Method in Historical Research and Writing*. New York, United States: The Macmillan Company, London, 1964, p.57.

## 2 Basic Concepts of Understanding History and Introduction to Critical Method of History

Writing history always requires translations of documents. In historical research, there are basically two types of materials: 1) those intended as evidence and 2) those that unintentionally serve as historical evidence. In the case of using the former, historians must read the evidence “against the intentions of those who produced it”.<sup>9</sup> Source criticism for historians starts from the premise that no source is innocent.<sup>10</sup>

The primary sources can be divided into three classes: 1) ‘Purposeful Materials’ in which the purpose was to transmit certain information to people in the future, 2) ‘Non-Purposeful Materials’, which were written not to transmit information, and 3) ‘Memorials’, which combine the characteristics of both purposeful and non-purposeful materials.<sup>11</sup> The ideal of ‘Deconstructive Reading’ or the analyses of the primary sources is “an ascetic practice of criticism in which rigour entails resistance to meaning – particularly unearned meaning – and its seemingly all-consuming ideological lures”.<sup>12</sup> To provide precise translations, historians must have bits of knowledge on languages and cultures that they are willing to translate.<sup>13</sup> However, as McCullagh admitted “it is almost impossible to guess how people in the past read the texts before them. Even when they are fluent in the language of the text and familiar with its context, it is common for people to find things in texts which were not there, or to distort what was said in some way”. Also, according to him, historians tend to make mistranslations of documents since they read texts hoping to find evidence or against a certain hypothesis about the past.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> **Fellman, S. & Rahikainen, M. (Eds.).** *Historical Knowledge: In quest of Theory, Method and Evidence.* Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2012, p.23.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.26.

<sup>11</sup> Vincent, 1974, p.14.

<sup>12</sup> Fay, Pomper & Vann, 1998, p.101.

<sup>13</sup> McCullagh, 2004, p.19.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p.20.

The main task for historians is to recreate or reproduce a body of facts. Vincent noted the basic concept of writing history: “Comment upon history is not history. The world needs first the truth about the past”.<sup>15</sup> Fulbrook noted a basic attitude required for historians as a combination of ‘Source Fetishism’ and ‘Archive Positivism’. The former is “properly and objectively tell the (historical) truth by using appropriate sources and methodology” whereas the latter is “appropriate time spent sweating in the archives (to find appropriate materials)”.<sup>16</sup> The manifestation of a body of facts can be interpreted as a ‘creation of historical narratives’. McCullagh identified two types of historical narratives: 1) Metanarratives and 2) Commonsense Narratives. The former is a product of armchair analysis of historical facts in which accuracy is doubtful and the latter is an analysis of historical facts from everyday concepts. Metanarratives have been criticised as being ‘top-down’ history whose purpose has been the justification of oppression, torture and executions.<sup>17</sup> In contrast, commonsense narratives are rather a ‘bottom-up’ history in which credibility is higher than metanarratives.

The primary meaning of a narrative is a reconstruction of a set of events (real or imagined) originally encoded in one tropological mode and the progressive restructuration of the set in another tropological mode. Thus, the formation of a narrative is a process of decodation and recordation in which an original perception is clarified by being cast in a figurative mode different from that in which it has come encoded by convention, authority or custom.<sup>18</sup> To form a competitive narrative, it is important to note that ‘top-down’ history or ‘metanarratives’ are themselves incompetent at the first point since the narratives should be created purposefully, mainly to meet the demands of either certain persons or organisations. Fay, Pomper & Vann took up the cases of philosophical understandings (decoding and recoding) of the French Revolution which had been subject to the different perspectives of many scholars.<sup>19</sup> Some recorded in the mode of irony, some did so in the mode of synecdoche, etc. What is most important, defined by the three authors, was ‘modalities of the relationships of different events’, not the data itself. After all, historical narratives come in two types: 1) one encoded as ‘actual’ or ‘real’ and 2) the other revealed to have been illusory.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> **Vincent, J., M.** Historical Research: An Outline of Theory and Practice. Lenox Hill Pub. (Burt Franklin), 1974, p.10.

<sup>16</sup> **Fulbrook, M.** Historical Theory. Routledge, London, 2002, p.3.

<sup>17</sup> **McCullagh, C., B.** The Logic of History. Routledge, London, 2004, p.116-121.

<sup>18</sup> **Fay, B., Pomper, P., & Vann, R., T. (Eds.)**. History and Theory: Contemporary Readings. Blackwell Publisher, Massachusetts, 1998, p.29.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.29.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.30-31.

There are many different concepts, defined by different scholars, in terms of the formation of historical narratives. The author of this thesis applied the definition of Hayden White. In his theory, a “historical narrative is not a transparent representation or copy of a sequence of past events.”<sup>21</sup> According to him, “Historians does not find or discover her narrative; she reconstructs it”.<sup>22</sup> Historical narratives, in the theory of White, belongs to either one of four possible literacy forms: tragedy, comedy, romance or satire.<sup>23</sup> This way of formation of historical narratives is best suited to this thesis for two reasons: 1) The topic had never been researched and 2) Reconstruction of historical narratives (or a creation of a completely new narrative) is indeed required to form a narrative from sets of disparate materials. Meanwhile, historical narratives themselves are broadly diversified. The phenomena are the results of different backgrounds of researchers: “...even among historians with serious respect for the evidence, the self-same historical facts can be employed in many different kinds of narrative”.<sup>24</sup>

In the concept of White, “even if the references to past events in the historical account are assessible in terms of truth or falsity, that added ‘something’ – the narrative configuration or pattern is not.”<sup>25</sup> White’s theory put emphasis on constructions of historical narratives to enable historical events to exist in larger historical contexts. Fay, Pomper & Vann took up the case of the Battle of Stalingrad during WW2. Following the theory of White, the battle itself, qua event, does not have meaning, but it can gain the meaning in other stories. For example the battle can be regarded as the destruction of important buildings in architectural history.<sup>26</sup> According to some scholars such as Louis Mink, historical narratives are merely products of imaginative construction.<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile, scholars like Alasdair MacIntyre defended the academic use of historical narratives. He claimed that human history is a series of enacted narratives.<sup>28</sup> Fay, Pomper & Vann concluded this never-ending argument regarding academic use of historical narratives by noting that historical narratives consist of assertions about the past and they attempt to tell what had actually occurred. According to them, historians select their facts and the stories they tell are incomplete. That does not mean that historical narratives are sets of fiction, but just academically immature subjects. It goes without saying that, to defy the

<sup>21</sup> Fay, Pomper & Vann, 1998, p.35.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.35.

<sup>23</sup> Fulbrook, 2002, p.54.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.8.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p.37.; **White, H.** The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory. *History and Theory*, 23(1), 1984, pp.3-4.

<sup>26</sup> Fay, Pomper & Vann, 1998, p.38.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.153.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 1998, p.157.



complaints against historical narratives, facts indicated in the narratives should be examined.<sup>29</sup>

Other major problems challenging historians were defined, for example, as follows<sup>30</sup>:

1. Historians describe the same event differently, thus their descriptions cannot be credible (Bias – Perspective).
2. Historian's interests in a subject will inevitably distort their accounts of it so that no historical descriptions are credible (Bias – Interests).
3. Historians employ concepts and beliefs drawn from their own culture in describing the past, thus their descriptions of the past cannot be worthy of belief. (Anachronisms).
4. Historians are unable to capture past events in all their unique detail; they inevitably misrepresent them (Ignorance).
5. The meanings of words and sentences depend upon those of other words and sentences to which they are related in the minds of those who read them, and these associations are more or less limitless so that it becomes impossible to define the meaning of sentences at all precisely (Incomprehension).

Vincent stressed that the choice of the materials should be based on the relation of the subject to the larger development of the nation or society.<sup>31</sup> He also referred to the definition of 'Universal History' by German historian Leopold von Ranke as follows: "Universal History (Weitgeschichte) embraces the events of all nations, and times in their connection, in so far as these affect each other, appear one after the other, and all together form a living totality".<sup>32</sup> Indeed, this perspective is recommended for the analysis of foreign policy. James Rosenau emphasised the interdependence of foreign policies of each countries since the "sources and consequences of foreign policy have become inextricably woven into the patterns of interdependence."<sup>33</sup> Rosenau, Cordell and Wolff applied this concept toward the age of Globalisation after the end of the Cold War, but the interwar Japanese military intelligence activities in the Baltic States and Finland were also intertwined with, if not affected by, changes in international politics, especially the Anti-Comintern Pact

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp.164-166.

<sup>30</sup> **McCullagh, C., B.** The Logic of History: Putting Postmodernism in Perspective. Routledge, London, 2004, pp.14-15.

<sup>31</sup> Vincent, 1974, p.11.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.12.

<sup>33</sup> **Cordell, K. & Wolff, S.** Germany's Foreign Policy towards Poland and the Czech Republic: Ostpolitik Revisited. Routledge, Oxon, 2005, p.6.

of Germany and Italy, and the activities themselves involved a number of foreign countries including China (the Republic of China) and the Soviet Union, so Rosenau's idea is applicable to this thesis.

For philosophical understanding, historical studies are no exception to post-modernism. Post-modernists challenged the traditional empiricism of historians to find out 'what had really happened' by suggesting the existence of 'Situated Truth' based on the Foucaultian linking of power and knowledge, which meant that truths manifested by historians are affected by powers and actually not consistent with what really happened.<sup>34</sup> Yet, unfortunately, there is no clear definition of post-modernism or post-structuralism, but just a general outline.<sup>35</sup> Also, the traditional empiricists and post-modernists take stands against each other in terms of the definition of 'historical resources'. The empiricists think that resources can be direct links between the present and the past, whereas the post-modernists claim it is not possible to use the resources as direct links. Rather, the post-modernists support a constructivist idea that "historical knowledge is a creation of the present and all connections to the past are nothing more than a construction".<sup>36</sup> Although there is no conclusion to the debate between the empiricists and the post-modernists<sup>37</sup>, in the view of Keith Jenkins, "Today we live within the general condition of postmodernity. We do not have a choice about this."<sup>38</sup> Fulbrook recommended scholars to focus on questions raised by post-modernism in correlation with historical studies rather than its characteristics. The two questions are 1) the possibility of unmediated access to a real past, and 2) process regarding surviving traces of that past in the present.<sup>39</sup> Hayden White was in the supportive position of Keith Jenkins in his postmodernist incarnation and he (White) claimed that, as far as individual statements shall be true or false, the way historians take up the statements in their presentations is a product of the present, which shows an infinite variety of possible ways on the traces of the past.<sup>40</sup> Fulbrook agreed on the point and admitted that many historians do not always follow post-modernism or the philosophical scepticism of traditional empiricism.<sup>41</sup> The stance of the author of this thesis is to fully support traditional empiricism since there is less space for post-modernism to

<sup>34</sup> Fulbrook, 2002, p.26.

<sup>35</sup> Fay, Pomper & Vann, 1998, p.179. The three authors referred to the Ulrecht Conference of 1984.

<sup>36</sup> **Rosenlund, D.** Source Criticism in the Classroom: An Empiricist Straitjacket on Pupils' Historical Thinking? *Historical Encounters: A Journal of Historical Consciousness, Historical Cultures, and History Education*, 2015, 2, 1, p.49.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Fulbrook, 2002, p.19.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p.19.

<sup>40</sup> Fulbrook, 2002, p.21.; **White, H.** *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation.* The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1987, p.27.

<sup>41</sup> Fulbrook, 2002, p.27.

be applied in this thesis due to a lack of a clear definition. In terms of empiricism, Hayden White's theory meets the requirements.

Yet, applying normal methods of history is quite difficult in terms of the research on the interwar Japanese military intelligence activities, since most Estonian, Finnish, Japanese and Latvian primary sources are lost, and collation with the Soviet-era materials is extremely difficult as the documents are still mostly classified in the Russian archives. However, one must clarify facts as much as possible in the realm of existing theories and methods of historical research. The author decided to apply the critical method since it appears to be most suitable for examining the existing materials, of course from a critical perspective.

The critical method of history is divided into two parts: External Criticism and Internal Criticism (also known as 'Higher Criticism'). The former examines 'who' and 'when' wrote the materials whereas the latter analyses the statements or the meaning of the sentences on the materials. The goal is to find out whether the materials are genuine and legitimate.<sup>42</sup> The need to confirm the author arose from two points: 1) there is a suspicion that the document is wholly or partially false or 2) it is needed for internal criticism.<sup>43</sup> In both procedures, the existence of certain materials to support one's historical narrative is essential. Borrowing the words of Fay, Pomper & Vann, "Evidence is that which can be metaphorically read as a manifestation, or 'realisation' of something (event, process, thought) whose meaning cannot be grasped without reference to a beginning, however elusive must be guaranteed through its relations (reference, logical inference) to things outside the text."<sup>44</sup> This stance is shared with fiction as well. An author of fiction tends to develop their fictional ideas from evidence. What is the difference between fiction and history? In modern historical research, researchers take distance from the verbal symbols chosen by the author and direct it to the words of others (or artifacts or natural objects).<sup>45</sup>

The first step of External Criticism is the determination of authorship and the written date of evidence. This process is required because of suspicions of materials having been forged. External Criticism can be done through one or all of the following methods: 1) Content Analysis, 2) Comparison with the content of other evidence, and 3) tests of the physical properties of evidence.<sup>46</sup> The author of this thesis decided to apply the second method since it was the first attempt to sum up the interwar Japanese intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea region. With limited

<sup>42</sup> Vincent, 1974, p.19.

<sup>43</sup> Shafer, 1974, p.119.

<sup>44</sup> Fay, Pomper & Vann, 1998, p.76.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p.77.

<sup>46</sup> Shafer, 1974, pp.119-120.

amounts of materials available on the topic, it was only possible to apply Content Analysis to form a general context of the Japanese activities. As mentioned earlier, the aim of the author was to clarify the Japanese activities.

The second phase of source criticism is called 'Internal Criticism', which weighs the relation of testimonies to the truth.<sup>47</sup> Methodologically, Internal Criticism can be divided into two phases: a) Positive Criticism and b) Negative Criticism. The former is to confirm meanings of statements (materials) and the latter is a process to confirm the credibility of the statements.<sup>48</sup> According to Shafer, witnesses can make false statements for various reasons: "The evidence available to a historian usually is not 'fact', but testimony on the facts. The testimony inevitably is affected by the powers of observation, the mental state, and the veracity of the testifier."<sup>49</sup> This emphasises the need to implement certain source criticism during historical research. A cautionary point of Internal Criticism, in general, is the interpretation of texts within the 'Rule of Context'. Researchers must not isolate particular phrases and sentences from the rest of the document.<sup>50</sup> Thus, in this thesis, materials used as evidences were fully translated into English and as many as possible were inserted.

Competence is based on the extent to which the maker of a statement had to know the facts.<sup>51</sup> In case of diplomacy or espionage, comprehension of the nature of the offices in which documents were customarily prepared is needed.<sup>52</sup> As most official sources are lost forever, the interwar Japanese military intelligence activities are full of myths, rumours and legends. Hockett said, "they (myths) grow with repetition and in time lose all determinable resemblance to the facts from which they sprung".<sup>53</sup> For example, the legend(s) of the so-called 'Akashi Works' (Akashi Kousaku 明石工作) during the First Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) can be considered such a case. In fact, the Nakano School, the Japanese Army's school for training special espionage agents that opened in March 1938, was established based on the believed success of the Akashi Works, which had allowed Japan to gain a final victory over Russia in 1905.<sup>54</sup> The memoirs of Colonel Motojiro Akashi, the then Japanese military attaché to Sweden who organised intelligence operations against the Russian Empire during the war, was published for the first time by the 1<sup>st</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Vincent, 1974, p.20.

<sup>48</sup> Macmillan, 1964, pp.42-45.

<sup>49</sup> **Shafer, R., J.** A Guide to Historical Method. Second Edition. The Dorsey Press, Illionois, 1974, p.4.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.143.

<sup>51</sup> Macmillan, 1964, p.44.

<sup>52</sup> Vincent, 1974, p.56.

<sup>53</sup> Hockett, 1955, p.51.

<sup>54</sup> **Kato, M.** The Nakano School: Reality of Secret Soldiers (Rikugun Nakano Gakkou: Himitsu Senshi no Jittai). Ushio Shobou Koujinsha, Tokyo, 2014, p.242.

Section of Research Department (Gaimusho Chousabu Dai-Ichi Bu 外務省調査部 第一部) of the Japanese Foreign Ministry in May 1938, but it was classified as top secret (Gokuhi 極秘).<sup>55</sup> This meant that only a handful of people who had been granted access to the memoirs knew about the activities of Akashi in the 1930s.<sup>56</sup> In the 1970s, Professor Emeritus Olavi K. Fält confirmed the facts mentioned in Akashi's memoir. He mainly focused on Akashi's connection with Konrad (Konni) Zilliacus, a Finnish independence activist in Stockholm. For instance, Zilliacus wrote that 10,000 Polish soldiers of the Russian Army surrendered to the Japanese and that it was a result of wartime propaganda organised jointly with Akashi. However, Fält doubted the recollection of Zilliacus since such scale of desertion had never occurred in military history.<sup>57</sup> In general, he appreciated the value of the Akashi Works to some extent, but denied that it did not contribute to either an immediate revolution in the Russian Empire or the final victory of the Japanese in the war.<sup>58</sup> Professor Chiharu Inaba takes the same stance as Fält, that the Akashi Works, in general, did not have the impact as believed.<sup>59</sup>

Among historical materials, there are indeed voluminous forgeries or fake documents created for certain purposes. The biggest motives for forgeries are literary notoriety or desire for gain.<sup>60</sup> In the case of research into interwar Japanese military intelligence, the Tanaka Memorial (Tanaka Jyousou-Bun 田中上奏文) must be considered an example. It was an alleged document on Japanese strategic policy to conquer East Asia and ultimately the world, which Japanese Prime Minister Giichi Tanaka allegedly proposed to Emperor Hirohito on 25 July 1927.<sup>61</sup> Stephan cited, "It served as a potent means to mobilize international sentiment against Japan in the 1930s much as the 'Twenty-one Demands' had done two decades earlier".<sup>62</sup> There were several critical mistakes found on the document such as the total amount of Japan's investment in Manchuria and personal records of Japanese persons involved in the manifestation of a strategic plan to conquer China. The biggest mistake was the description of secret meeting between Emperor Yoshihito and statesman Aritomo

<sup>55</sup> JACAR, B12080958600.

<sup>56</sup> Motojiro Akashi died on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1919, thus the memoir had been unpublished until May 1938.

<sup>57</sup> **Fält, O., K.** Collaboration between Japanese Intelligence and the Finnish Underground during the Russo-Japanese War. University of Oulu, 1977, pp.215-216.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p.236.

<sup>59</sup> For more details of the Russian surveillance on Akashi, see: Inaba, C. *The Akashi Works: The Russo-Japanese War from the Perspective of Stratagem* (Akashi Kousaku: Bouryaku no Nichi-Ro Sensou). Tokyo, Maruzen, 1995.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p.29.

<sup>61</sup> **Stephan, J., J.** The Tanaka Memorial (1927): Authentic or Spurious? *Modern Asian Studies*, 1973, 7, 4, p.733.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p.733.

Yamagata in 1922 regarding the means to nullify the Nine-Power Treaty<sup>63</sup>, ratified by Japan on 6 February 1922. The Emperor had retired from official duties in November 1921 and Yamagata, hero of the Meiji Restoration of 1868 and a founder of the Japanese Army, had died five days before the ratification.<sup>64</sup> The publisher of the Tanaka Memorial could not be identified and, even today, it is a bone of contention. Still, the document was distributed in pamphlet form throughout China in 1929 and few years later, in 1931, it was reproduced in pamphlets, magazines and newspapers in America, Canada and Europe.<sup>65</sup> The Tanaka Memorial quickly gained popularities in those countries and, whoever the publisher, forged document achieved its purpose: broadcasting Japanese threats to the world.

The first step of Positive Criticism is to understand what is written on the materials. Borrowing the words of Macmillan, “Plainly the historian must have a wide knowledge of the language, laws, customs, and institutions of the countries and periods in which his work lies, or he cannot interpret the documents with which he must work.”<sup>66</sup> Macmillan took up a case of misunderstanding by a young historian who thought there were Czechs among the early immigrants to Virginia as there was an Indian village in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, which was rendered by settlers in Virginia as ‘Kiskyack’ (‘Cheesecake’).<sup>67</sup> Vincent also agreed on the point, “Lack of experience in the testing of documents and neglect of the laws of evidence, because the writer was not aware of the origin and nature of his materials, are fruitful sources of error”.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, research on interwar Japanese military intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea region requires knowledge of various languages like Estonian, Finnish, and Russian. The second phase of Positive Criticism is to understand the real meaning of statements. However, Hockett did not indicate clear examples of the method so the phase will be combined with so-called Negative Criticism.

In contrast, Negative Criticism focuses on finding out every possible reason for doubting statements.<sup>69</sup> In the context of Negative Criticism, Hockett mainly discussed the cognitive capabilities of the makers of statements. For example, old people’s recollections are more fallible than those of young people. This is indeed because of the aging of the former people.<sup>70</sup> There are basically many aspects we

<sup>63</sup> The Nine-Power Treaty was concluded among America, Britain, Netherlands, Italy, France, Belgium, Portugal, China (Republic of China) and Japan. The purpose was to deter Japanese territorial expansionism in China and through extension of economic and diplomatic rights of China e.g., tariff autonomy.

<sup>64</sup> Stephan, 1973, p.741.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p.738.

<sup>66</sup> Macmillan, 1964, pp.42–43.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.42.

<sup>68</sup> Vincent, 1974, p.22.

<sup>69</sup> Hockett, 1955, p.44.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p.49.

must consider for the application of Internal Criticism. Hockett indicated the cognitive capabilities of the makers as well as the influences of gossip, myths and cultural traditions.<sup>71</sup> Here is a basic checklist for Internal Criticism created by Shafer<sup>72</sup>:

1. Is the real meaning of the statement different from its literal meaning? Are words used in senses not employed today? Is the statement meant to be ironic?
2. How well could the author observe the thing he reports? Were his senses equal to the observation? Was his physical location suitable to sight, hearing, touch? Did he have the proper social ability to observe: did he understand the language, have other expertise required such as law and military? Was he not being intimidated by his wife or the secret police?
3. How did the author report? What was his ability to do so?
  - a. Regarding his ability to report, was he biased? Did he have enough time for reporting?
  - b. When did he report in relation to his observation? Soon? Much later?
  - c. What was the author's intention in reporting? For whom did he report? Would that audience be likely to require or suggest distortion to the author?
  - d. Are there additional clues to intended veracity? Was he indifferent to the subject reported, thus probably not intending distortion? Did he make statements damaging to himself, thus probably not seeking to distort? Did he give incidental or casual information, almost certainly not intended to mislead?
4. Do his statements seem inherently improbable: e.g. contrary to human nature or in conflict with what we knew?
5. Remember that some types of information are easier to observe and report on than others.
6. Are there inner contradictions in the document?
7. Are one's own biases or preconceptions distorting one's view of the document or the exact statement in it?

<sup>71</sup> Hockett, 1955, pp.50–51.

<sup>72</sup> Shafer, 1974, pp.157-158.

8. Consult reference works as required to resolve doubts.
9. Does the statement leave you sufficiently confident of your knowledge of that detail so that no corroboration is required?

In Internal Criticism, in general, a background check on the person who wrote the statement, i.e. his/her own personal interests on the subject taken up in the statement, is also required. In many cases, a competent person who has a certain capability to report the facts precisely would not act in a rational way to report it, since he chooses to falsify deliberately. This tendency is more similar when the “slant (of the statement) is unfavourable to the personal or group interest of the author”. For example, Hiroshi Oshima, former Japanese military attaché and Ambassador to Germany between the 1930s and 1940s, created several versions of his statements on the involvements with the interwar secret intelligence activities of the Japanese Army. During the Tokyo War Tribunal in the aftermath of WW2, Oshima attempted to minimise his involvement with the secret activities of the Usui Organ ran by his subordinate Lieutenant Colonel Shigeki Usui such as an assassination attempt against the Soviet leader Josef Stalin (see Appendix No.15). The perjury was possible for Oshima since Usui died in December 1941 and did not change his stance throughout the post-WW2 period. The Japanese newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun interviewed Oshima in the 1970s about his role in negotiating with Germany to form a military alliance.

Apart from forgery, there is a problem of ‘Interpolation’ which is the insertion of additional texts or the replacement of the existing texts after publication. It is a problem since the “Interpolator will at times run risks in order to give a sentence a different meaning and evidences of distortion are frequently encountered”. The solution is to compare all available versions of texts and find the changes.

To sum up, the Critical Method of History implies the minimisation of biases, or to be precise, that minimisation itself is the main purpose of the method. In terms of research of interwar Japanese intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea region, it is difficult to comprehend the background of each document and cross-reference with other sources since such materials do not exist in many cases. However, in this thesis, the author tried to follow the checklist as much as possible to examine the authenticity of the materials.



### 3 Literature Reviews

First of all, the interwar Japanese intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea region had not been a primary subject of academic research. Some scholars of different fields such as Baltic, Finnish and Russian studies partially took up and mentioned a few facts about the Japanese activities. Otherwise, the author of this thesis had to conduct archival research to find out the primary sources and construct his own historical narrative.

In the Baltic Sea region, the Japanese Army mainly focused on Estonia and Finland for its interwar intelligence activities. Latvia and Lithuania played less important roles in terms of Japanese activities for political and military reasons. Regarding interwar Estonian-Japanese intelligence cooperation, no details were covered by previous research. Yet, as a prominent researcher, Research Fellow Ivo Juurvee of the ICDS in Estonia found that Captain Michitaro Komatsubara of the Japanese Army had been stationed in Tallinn during the Estonian War of Independence (1918-1920). Ever since his first visit to Estonia in June 1919, Komatsubara had worked as a military observer and was in cooperation with the Hearing Department (*Maakulamise osakond*) of the Estonian General Staff.<sup>73</sup> Komatsubara was also in contact with the Northwestern Army led by General Nikolai Yudenich, which was based in Estonia for the late periods of the Estonian independence war. However, there were only a few documents regarding the connections between Komatsubara and the Estonian General Staff (or the Yudenich's Northwestern Army) preserved in the Estonian National Archives (ERA) and the Hoover Institution, which holds a variety of documents about the Northwestern Army. For example, the ERA files 495.10.51, 975.11.30, and 2315.1.93 contained documents on requesting entry permission for Komatsubara and permission for him to visit the eastern front. The Hoover Institution only had a report of a captain who greeted Komatsubara on the first day of his visit to Tallinn in June

<sup>73</sup> **Juurvee, I.** *100 Years of Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence in Estonia (100 aastat luuret ja vastuluuret Eestis)*. AS Printon, Tallinn, 2018, p.27. The Estonian hearing department was a predecessor in charge of the interrogations of the Red Army Prisoners of War (PoWs) and the exchange of the information with foreign military officials stationed in Estonia.

1919. (Yudenich Collection Box 4, File 16) This meant that there was a lack of broad sources about the intelligence activities of Komatsubara in Estonia. On the other hand, the Archives of the Japanese Foreign Ministry (Gaimusho Gaikou Shiryokan 外務省外交史料館) in Tokyo contained collections of the Army's ciphered telegrams sent by Lieutenant Colonel Kiyoshi Furuya, military attaché to Russia in Stockholm and his subordinate Komatsubara in Estonia. The telegrams were shared with the Japanese Foreign Ministry for the purpose of analysing the political situation of the Baltic Sea region and they were compiled into the files entitled the "Political Situations of European Russia" (Ou-Ro Seijyou 欧露政情). Since the original telegrams received by the Army were destroyed by fire in August 1945, the MoFA files are the sole primary sources of the Japanese Army's intelligence activities in Estonia and Finland during the Estonian independence war. The problem with the Army-MoFA information-sharing programme was that, as a first-hand receiver of the telegrams, the Army purposely selected the information given to the diplomatic counterpart. For example, only 48 telegrams (called the Ro-Ko-Den 「露古電」) were shared with the MoFA in 1919 when the Estonian independence war had been raging. Apparently, there were more than 10 telegrams, which it was decided by the Army would not to be shared with the MoFA according to the telegram numbers. The negative effect of the Army-MoFA sectionalism continued even after the Estonian independence war but, ever since 1920 when Estonia concluded a peace treaty with the Soviet Union, the role of Komatsubara had changed from military observer to political observer of the Soviet Union and the telegrams were renamed for this reason (called the Hokusei-Ro-Den 「北西露電」). The political observatory mission was succeeded by Komatsubara's two successors, Major Toshiro Obata and Captain Ando who resided in Tallinn until Spring 1922. The Hokusei-Ro-Den, which stood for 'Northwestern' (Hokusei 北西), 'Russia' (Rossija ロシア) and 'Telegram' (Denpou 電報) covered the information related to the Soviet economic, political and military conditions. The problems of the Hokusei-Ro-Den were the enormous number of telegrams and the variety of topics covered. It requires in-depth knowledge of Soviet economics and politics to conduct a full-scale analysis of the telegrams.

The closure of the Japanese Army's office in Tallinn in Spring 1922 ended the mutual cooperation with the Estonian military and some other Estonian collaborators. The relationship between the Japanese Army and the Estonian military was restored in the mid-1930s, although the exact year of the event could not be identified. The first move toward restoration by the Japanese Army was the detachment of young officers to the Estonian Army and Air Force in 1933 and 1934. This was according to the Japanese Army's 'Plan of (Year) 1932' to promote bilateral cooperation with the Baltic Sea countries in order to use them as bridgeheads for the Army's espionage against the Soviet Union. Only a photo of one Japanese Army officer who studied at

the Estonian Air Force (Captain Tadamasa Shimanuki) was found at the Estonian National Archive and a book compiled by his remnants containing the letters from Shimanuki in Estonia.

For Finnish-Japanese intelligence cooperation, Lehtonen, Liene & Manninen found that the Finnish-Japanese intelligence cooperation did not materialise until the bilateral agreement concluded on 20 December 1939 due to political issues in Finland.<sup>74</sup> Their finding was true, however, that, during the interwar period, Finland and Japan had a number of opportunities to create such cooperation. In the late 1920s, the Finnish General Staff was interested in the Japanese-Polish cooperation in military intelligence sector.<sup>75</sup> It was not only the Finnish General Staff, but also the former Finnish secret police E.K. (Etsivä keskuspoliisi) and its successor organisation VALPO (Valtiollinen poliisi) were the main counterparts of the Japanese Army in negotiating intelligence cooperation. Their clandestine relationship dated back to 1934 when the first Japanese military attaché to Finland (Major Seiichi Terada) was sent to Helsinki. The connection between Terada and the E.K. was partially mentioned in the documents concerning the relationship between the E.K. and Terada's successor, Yoshihide Kato, hence the exact period of the beginning of the E.K.-Terada cooperation could not be identified. However, upon his arrival in Helsinki, Kato visited the E.K headquarters in Helsinki on 10 December 1936 in order to confirm the identity of his new émigré Russian secretary Tatjana Arhipoff.<sup>76</sup>

In the late 1930s, diplomatic and political situations surrounding Japan had rapidly changed thus the Japanese intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea region. The changes were confirmed through the documents of Kurt Martti Wallenius, Finnish war correspondent invited by the Japanese Army to report the Second Sino-Japanese War. In January 1937, the VALPO refused the cooperation with the Japanese Army and the Army's plan to mobilize Finland for the intelligence activities against the Soviet Union had failed. It was unclear how Finland had been treated in the Instead, the Japanese Army turned to Estonia ever since the failure in Finland. The official intelligence cooperation between the Japanese Army and Estonian counterpart took place in 1938 in the form of the detachment of agents to the Soviet Union. Throughout the late 1930s, due to the war with China and the tension with the Soviet

<sup>74</sup> **Lehtonen, L., Liene, T. & Manninen, O.** Messengers and Codebreakers: Finnish Radiointelligence War. (Sanomansieppaajia ja koodinmurtajia: Suomen radiotiedustelu sodassa) Docendo Oy, Helsinki, 2018, pp.261–262.

<sup>75</sup> **Ruotsalainen, H.** Producers of Encrypted Information: Development of Finnish military attaché system (Salatun tiedon tuottajat: Suomen sotilasiamiesjärjestelmän kehitys 1918–1939) Maanpuolustus korkeakoulu, 2020, pp.137–138.

<sup>76</sup> Report of the Finnish E.K. officer J.S. on his meeting with Japanese military attaché Yoshihide Kato, 11<sup>th</sup> December 1936. (No.3223) **Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto)**. M36.3134.

Union, the Japanese Army was forced to choose radical options for the intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea region rather than collection and evaluation of the Soviet information. Their inclination to stratagems in order to weaken the Soviet Union became obvious by the Plan of Year 1938, revised version of that of Year 1932. (see **Evidence No.12**)

The most significant material to discuss the Japanese activities in the Baltic Sea region in the late 1930s had been Yuriko Onodera's memoir 'On the shore of the Baltic Sea' (Baruto-Kai no Hotiri-nite 「バルト海のほとりにて」) written in the 1980s. Her book contained the details of previously unknown secret activities of the Japanese Army such as the detachment of agents to the Soviet Union in cooperation with the Estonian General Staff. However, her recollections had not been proved by any of primary sources. Thus, the author decided to take up the secret operation mentioned by Yuriko Onodera especially and clarifies the facts with the NKVD materials preserved in Estonia which had not been declassified until the late 2010s. In the previous research, over-reliance on secondary sources had been one of the biggest problems in terms of research on the interwar Japanese military intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea region. In general, the Japanese intelligence activities in Europe in the late 1930s had not been mentioned in detail. And, in that sense, the author had to construct his own perspective on the issue through primary sources.

There were two questions arose from the literature reviews: 1) Lack of details of each operation of the Japanese intelligence activities and 2) Its correlations with diplomatic and political situations especially those of the 1930s.

## 4 Japanese Military Intelligence Activities of the interwar Period: 1919–1940

In the Baltic Sea region, Japanese military intelligence activities were mostly based on diplomatic missions and military attaché offices. During the interwar period between 1919 and 1940, Japan had two legations in Helsinki and Riga, the former established in 1921<sup>77</sup> originally as a diplomat office where one or two Japanese diplomats were temporarily stationed, and the latter in 1929 as the first-ever official Japanese diplomatic mission in the Baltic States, as well as a diplomat office in Tallinn that operated for a short period between 1939 and 1940.

Captain Taketo (Osato) Kawamata, the first Japanese military attaché to Latvia and also the Baltic Sea region, arrived to Riga on 21 July 1931<sup>78</sup> while Major Seiichi Terada, the first Japanese military attaché to Finland arrived in Helsinki on 25 May 1934.<sup>79</sup> During the interwar period, only the Japanese Army had stationed its military attachés in Baltic Sea region. The Japanese Navy started to jointly administer Finland by means of its naval attaché stationed in Moscow from the mid-1930s. However, no independent naval attachés were stationed in the region, and Finland alone was jointly administered by the naval attaché to the Soviet Union who resided in

<sup>77</sup> **Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.** List of Diplomatic Corps (Liste du Corps Diplomatique). December 1921, p.7. The first Japanese diplomat stationed in Helsinki was Secretary Hyoji Nihei.

<sup>78</sup> 1. General and miscellaneous matters (including the matter for more than two missions) (1. Ippan oyobi zatsu: nikan ijyou ni watarumono wo fukumu 1.一般及び雑 二館以上に亘るものを含む) JACAR, B14090832100.

<sup>79</sup> 3. Finland (3. Finlandkoku 3. 芬蘭国) JACAR, B14090834900.; Report of the arrival of Major Seiichi Terada to Helsinki, written by the Japanese Legation in Helsinki, 20 June 1934. **Finnish Foreign Ministry Archive. (Ulkoministeriön arkisto)** 6.O15.

Moscow. Thus, in this thesis, ‘military attachés’ are of the Japanese Army unless indicated as the Naval attaché.<sup>80</sup>

Between 1919 and 1940, the two military attachés in Helsinki and Riga were in charge of the military intelligence operations of the Japanese Army in the Baltic Sea region. The military attaché in Latvia began to jointly administer Estonia and Lithuania from March 1937<sup>81</sup>, and from January 1938, the military attaché in Finland to administer Sweden as well.<sup>82</sup> For a short period between February and October 1938, the assistant military attaché to Latvia who was accredited by the Estonian government as the Japanese military attaché to Estonia existed.

Both military attachés in Riga and Helsinki had their offices in the official residences, completely independent of the Legation and its staffs. In Riga, the Japanese Legation was completely unaware of the doings of the military attachés, at least in 1939. In one of telegrams of Envoy Shojiro Ohtaka to the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo sent on 13 December 1939, he reported that the military attaché (Lieutenant-Colonel Hiroshi Onouchi) was a frequent traveller to Estonia, visiting the country once or twice a month, but Ohtaka himself had no idea of the business of Onouchi in Estonia.<sup>83</sup> The situation would have been similar in Finland since Yoshihide Kato, former military attaché to Finland and Sweden, recollected that he had looked down on the Legation staff as they had not tried to learn Finnish. In contrast, Kato gained some Finnish language skill within 2 years of his stationing in Finland.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>80</sup> The Japanese Navy’s intentions in the Baltic States and Finland during the Interwar period are unclear and not yet clarified by any scholars, and their activities are not taken up in this thesis either. However, it should be mentioned that the Japanese Navy stationed independent naval attachés in Latvia for two short periods. Lieutenant-Colonel Keinchi Ikenaka resided in Riga between 1924 and 1925, and Lieutenant Colonel Mitsunobu Suzuki between 1939 and 1940. Soon after the establishment of the Japanese Embassy in the Soviet Union in 1925, Ikenaka was transferred to Moscow from Riga. This was because the Navy intended to extend its intelligence activities in Moscow rather than the existing hub in Riga. In comparison with the case of Ikenaka, Suzuki was an exceptional case. As of September 1939, Suzuki was an assistant naval attaché in Germany temporarily visiting Latvia but he was unable to return to Germany upon closure of Latvian border due to the outbreak of the German-Polish War in the same month and he had no other option than to be accredited to Latvia.

<sup>81</sup> Regarding joint administration by the Japanese military attachés (Bukan kenkin ni kansuru ken 武官兼勤に関する件) JACAR, C01007505900.

<sup>82</sup> Regarding joint administration of other fields of works by military attachés overseas (Zaigai bukan wo shite ta no shokumu wo kenmu seshimuru ken 在外武官をして他の職務を兼務せしむる件) JACAR, C01004467000.

<sup>83</sup> 2. Europe/ 13 Japanese Legation in Latvia and Japanese diplomat office in Tallinn (2. Ou/13 Zai Latvia koushikan, Zai Tallinn gaikoukan jimusho 2. 欧/13 在ラトヴィア公使館、在ターリン外交官事務所) JACAR, B14091194800.

<sup>84</sup> **Kato, Y.** Generals Talks: Major General Yoshihide Kato - Recollection of Memories of Baltic Sea Countries and National Defence. (Shougun wa Kataru: Kato Yoshihide Shouhou - Hokuou Chuzai, Kokudo Bouei no Kaisou) Kaiko, 1985, p.41.

## 4.1 Mission of Japanese Military Officers Abroad (Zaigai Bukan) by Professor Masakuma Uchiyama

As of Summer 2019, only a few academic publications had addressed the characteristics of ‘Japanese military officers abroad’ (Zaigai Bukan 在外武官 in Japanese) during the interwar period as their research subject. The Japanese officers abroad, hereinafter ‘Zaigai Bukan’, was a broad term which literally meant all the Japanese officer stationed abroad.

In his work published in 1988, Professor Uchiyama defined ‘Zaigai Bukan’ as follows:

“Japanese military officers on active duty who had worked overseas, not limited to military and assistant military attachés.” Uchiyama did not limit the definition to the official military attachés, but also “active Japanese military officers who broadly worked overseas”.<sup>85</sup>

According to Uchiyama, there were basically five types of Zaigai Bukan<sup>86</sup>:

1. Military officers sent overseas to fulfil certain duties specially meant for the Zaigai Bukan.
2. Military officers sent to study or master certain subjects in foreign countries.
3. Military officers whose specialities were technical issues and were stationed in foreign countries as armory or naval supervisors.
4. Military officers who were given special directives and sent overseas for the long term.
5. Military officers who were sent to manage occupied areas.

During the interwar period, a number of Army and Navy officers were sent overseas for different purposes. Here, the definition of ‘stationing in overseas’ (Chuzai 駐在) can be divided into two characteristics: 1) Military officers stationed overseas for the purpose of collecting military information (Chouhou Shoukou 諜報将校), and 2) the so-called ‘Language officers’ (Gogaku Shoukou 語学将校) whose mission is to master foreign languages and pursue academic degrees at the local educational institutes. The former had to sometimes get involved in illegal activities

<sup>85</sup> Uchiyama, M. Historical Research concerning Japanese Military Officials stationed Overseas. *Journal of Law, Politics and Sociology*, 54(3), 1981, pp.20-21.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p.21.

also faced some risks in their work, whereas the latter's activities such as espionage had to remain within the realm of local and international laws.<sup>87</sup>

## 4.2 General Picture of the Japanese Army's Intelligence Activities in the Baltic Sea Region during the Interwar Period

Intelligence activities of the Japanese Army overseas were directed by the Second Department of the General Staff (Rikugun Sanbou Honbu Dai-Ni Bu 陸軍参謀本部第二部). Intelligence, in general, was underestimated in the Japanese Army. According to Sugita, the main role expected of intelligence officers in the Japanese Army was as a 'messenger boy' who gathers information, summarises it and reports it to other officers.<sup>88</sup> In the same context, the Chief of the Japanese Second Department was considered a sinecure position.<sup>89</sup> Fujii agreed with the opinion that chiefs of the Second Department were in inferior positions compared to their counterparts in the operations department (the First Department of the General Staff). He implemented personnel changes during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945) as examples of the misunderstanding. Shortly after the outbreak of the war on 7 July 1937, Masaharu Homma became Chief of the Second Department on 21 July. Homma graduated from the British Army College and was known as an expert on Anglo-American affairs. Despite the outbreak of the war with China, the Japanese Army thought lightly of the intelligence against China. In July 1938, Kiichiro Higuchi was chosen as Homma's successor. Higuchi was an expert on intelligence operations against the Soviet Union. Even after Higuchi, none of the American or Chinese experts were named as chiefs of the Second Department during the war.<sup>90</sup>

As of early 1934, the Japanese Second Department was divided into two divisions: the Fourth and the Fifth. The former was also called the America and Europe Section (Oubei-Ka 欧米課) and handled analyses of the Western nations including the United States, Europe and the Soviet Union, whereas the latter was known as the China Section (Shina-Ka 支那課) and concentrated on the analysis of Chinese affairs.<sup>91</sup> Additionally, in August 1936, the Russian Section (Roshiya-Ka ロシア課) was established.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p.20.

<sup>88</sup> Sugita, 1988, p.23.

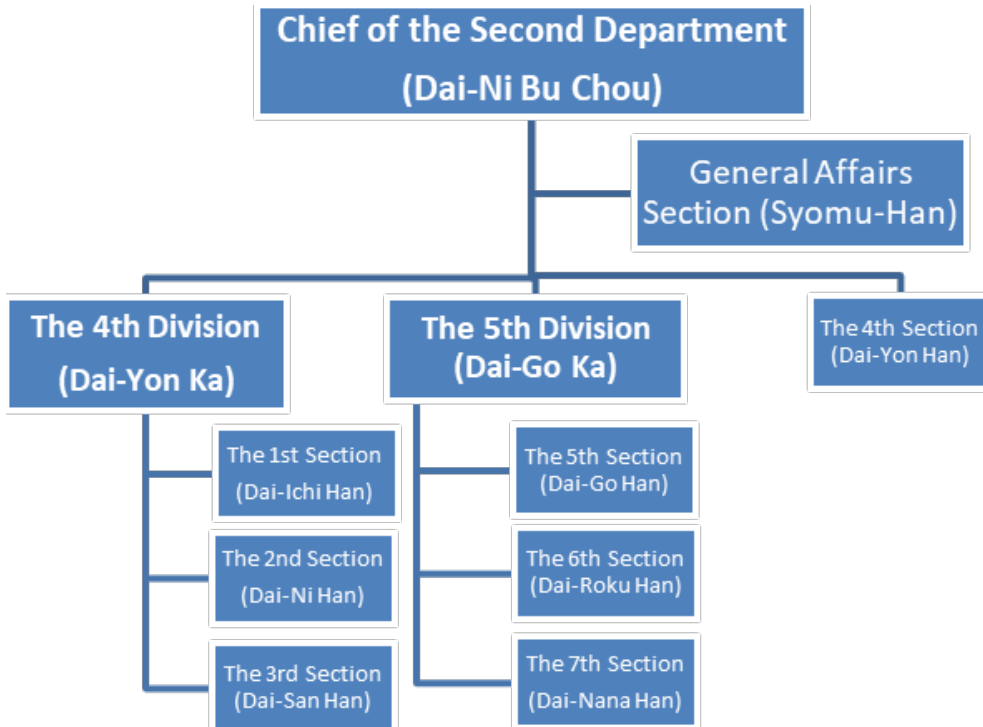
<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p.85.

<sup>90</sup> **Fujii, H.** Personnel Affairs of the Japanese Army during the Showa Era. (Showa no Rikugun Jinji) Ushio Shobou Koujin Sha, Tokyo, 2015, pp.289-290.

<sup>91</sup> Sugita, 1988, p.7

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p.8.





**The General Affairs Section (Syomu-Han 庶務班):**  
Adjutant duties

**The Fourth Division (Dai-Yon Ka 第四課, American and Europe Division)**

- The 1st Section:  
North and South America including the U.S. colonies
- The 2nd Section:  
Soviet Union, Poland, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Romania, Bulgaria, Finland, Baltic States, Manchuria and Mongolia
- The 3rd Section:  
Other European countries including the British, French, and Italian colonies, Thailand, and the British Dominions

**The Fifth Division (Dai-Go Ka 第五課, China Division excludes Manchuria)**

- The 5th Section:  
Cryptanalysis and development of codes
- The 6th Section:  
China excluding Manchuria
- The 7th Section:  
Economic and Political research

**The Fourth Section (Dai-Yon Han 第四班, under direct command of Chief of the Second Department):**

Estimate of general situations, stratagem and propaganda, budgets etc.

**Figure1.** Organisation of the Japanese Second Department in early 1934. Reference: Sugita, I. War Command without Information. (Jyoho-naki Sensou Shidou) Hara Shobou, Tokyo, 1988, p.7.

The Second Department of the Japanese General Staff had reformed its organisational structure between the 1920s and 1930s. The biggest change was the establishment of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division, also known as the Stratagem Division (Bouryaku-Ka 謀略課) in November 1937.<sup>93</sup> The 8<sup>th</sup> Division was a product of restructuring of the 4<sup>th</sup> Section. This division was literally in charge of planning and running schemes inside and outside Japan. Ichiji Sugita, former section chief of the Imperial Headquarters (Dai-Hon-Ei 大本營)<sup>94</sup>, criticised the Stratagem Section for its inclination towards planning and implementing ‘Plots and Stratagems’ instead of organising operations to collect and analyse information.<sup>95</sup>

The overseas intelligence activities of the Japanese Army were implemented by the military attachés stationed in foreign countries. Between the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and the end of the Second World War in 1945, the Japanese Army detached the military attachés to the following European countries (year of the first detachment in parentheses)<sup>96</sup>:

Germany	(March 1875)
France	(March 1880)
Austria	(April 1881)
Britain	(March 1894)
Italy	(April 1896)
Turkey	(February 1907) <sup>97</sup>
Netherlands	(August 1914)
Switzerland	(August 1915)
Sweden	(February 1918) <sup>98</sup>
Greece	(June 1920)
Poland	(May 1921)
Hungary	(February 1923)

<sup>93</sup> Sugita, 1988, p.101.

<sup>94</sup> The Imperial Headquarters (Dai-Hon-Ei 大本營) was the highest military command organ during wartime. In peacetime, the role of the Imperial Headquarters was divided into the General Staff (Sanbo Honbu 参謀本部) of the Japanese Army and the Naval General Staff (Gunreibu 軍令部) of the Japanese Navy.

<sup>95</sup> Sugita, 1988, p.101.

<sup>96</sup> **Tachikawa, K.** System of the Interwar Japanese Military Attachés. (Wagakuni no Senzen no Chuzai-Bukan Seido) National Institute for Defence Studies (NIDS), Ministry of Defence of Japan. pp.127-128. [http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/publication/kiyo/pdf/bulletin\\_j17\\_1\\_6.pdf](http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/publication/kiyo/pdf/bulletin_j17_1_6.pdf) (Access Date and Time: 11<sup>th</sup> August 2019, 18:20PM)

<sup>97</sup> Officially accredited in September 1927.

<sup>98</sup> Jointly administered by the military attachés to Finland and to the Soviet Union for several years during the Interwar period.

Soviet Union	(1925) <sup>99</sup>
Latvia	(August 1928)
Romania	(April 1932)
Finland	(April 1934)
Spain	(January 1938)
Bulgaria	(December 1939)
Yugoslavia	(April 1940) <sup>100</sup>
Portugal	(March 1942)

According to Toshikatsu Matsumura, assistant military attaché to Poland between 1935 and 1936, the military attachés in Europe were under the direct command of Chief of Staff (Sanbou Souchou 参謀総長) in Tokyo until 1934.<sup>101</sup> Then, from April 1934, as far as being in Europe, they were to be directed by Major General Masataka Yamawaki, military attaché to Poland.<sup>102</sup> In the 1930s, the Japanese military attaché office in Warsaw was the local headquarters for the Japanese Army's intelligence activities in Europe until its closure in September 1939 due to the German-Polish War.

### 4.3 General Pictures of the Interwar Estonian, Finnish, German and Latvian Military Intelligence Activities

In Estonia, military intelligence activities during the interwar period were under the jurisdiction of the Second Department of the General Staff. ('Sõjavägede Staabi II osakond' in Estonian) Its official purposes were indicated in a letter to foreign military attachés accredited to Estonia as follows: 1) to exchange information with foreign military officials, and 2) to organise interviews between foreign and Estonian military officials.<sup>103</sup>

During the interwar period, Estonia had military attachés in France, Germany, Poland, Latvia, Finland and the Soviet Union. The Estonian military attachés

<sup>99</sup> The position of the military attache to the Soviet Union was succeeded by the former military attache to Russia (stationed outside Russia e.g., Stockholm and Paris) until the establishment of the Japanese Embassy in the Soviet Union in 1925.

<sup>100</sup> Jointly administered by the military attaché to Hungary.

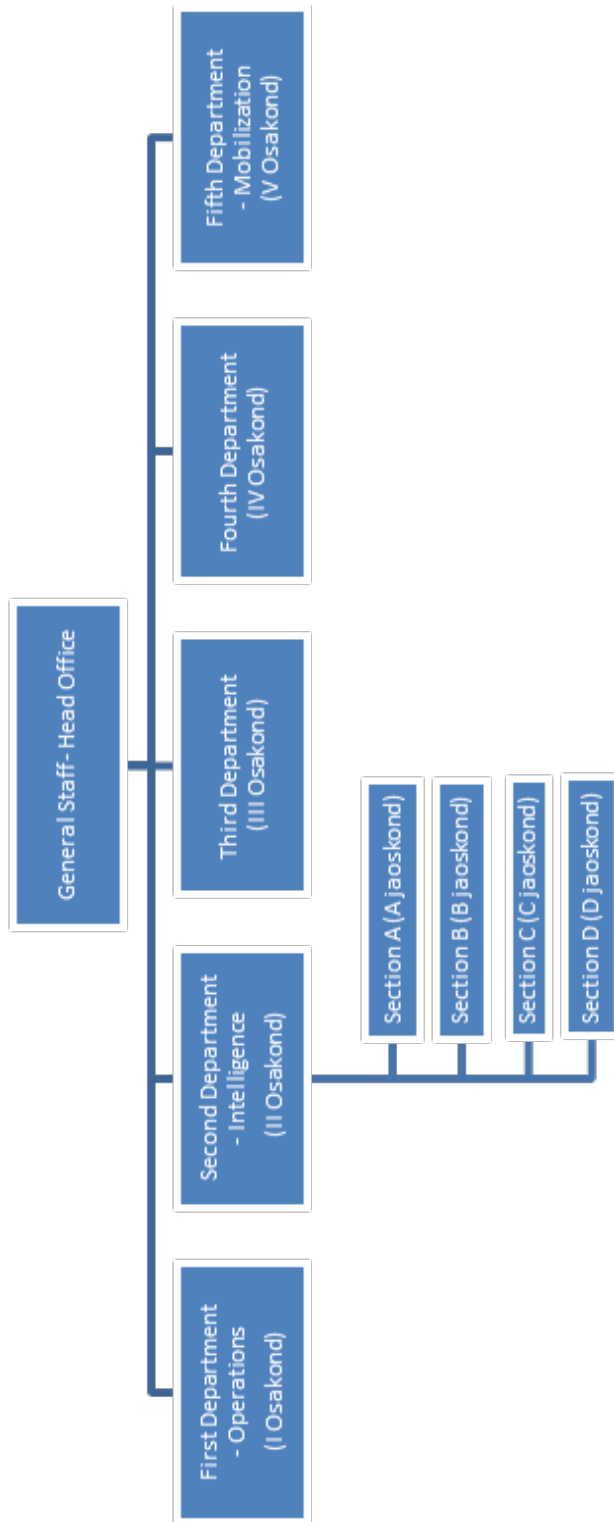
<sup>101</sup> **Matsumura, T.** Diary of Vice Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army. (Kantou-Gun Sanbou-fukuchou no Shuki) Fuyou Shobou, Tokyo, 1977, p.14.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> From the Estonian General Staff to Foreign Military Attachés accredited to Estonia, written date unknown. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA.495.12.119, p.34.

accredited to Finland were stationed in Tallinn.<sup>104</sup> Reports of the military attachés were submitted to and analysed by the Second Department. The Estonian Second Department was divided into four sections: Sections A to D. Section A (A jaoskond) was placed above the three other sections and also called the ‘Administration’ section. Section B (B jaoskond) was a counter-intelligence section. Section C (C jaoskond) was officially a topographical section of the Second Department. However, from the aforementioned dossier series No.138, the section was found to be the headquarters of secret intelligence operations and in charge of the exchange of the Soviet information with foreign diplomats and military attachés. Section D (D jaoskond) was the Signal Intelligence section established in 1936, the purpose of which was to intercept and decode Soviet military radio messages in cooperation with the Abwehr, the German intelligence service.

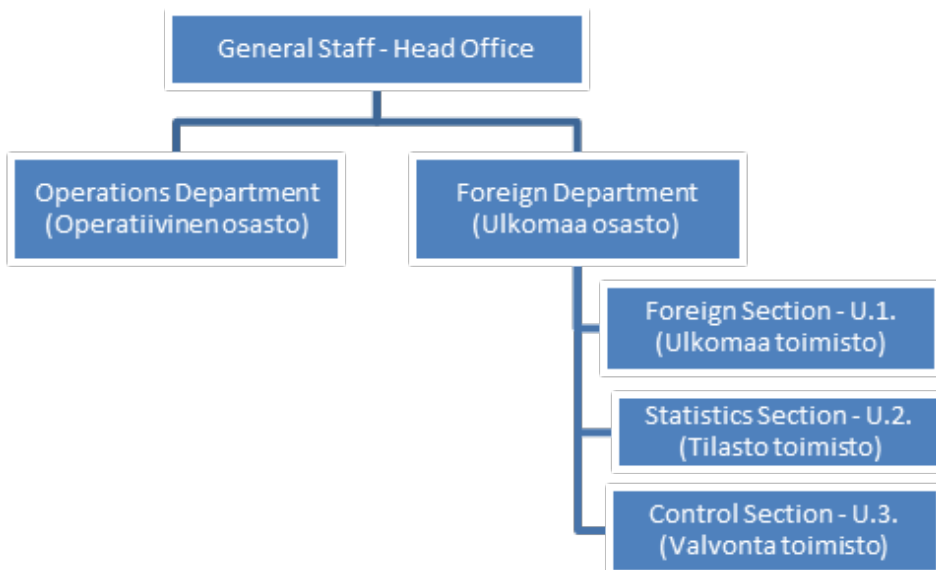
<sup>104</sup> According to Research Fellow Ivo Juurvee (Ph.D.) of the International Centre for Defence Studies (ICDS), this tradition is succeeded by the Estonian Defence Forces (EDF) re-established after restoration of independence of the Republic. As of Summer 2019, the Estonian Defence Attaché accredited to Finland is stationed in Tallinn.



**Figure 2.** Organizational Structure of the Estonian General Staff and the Second Department (II Osakond) as of 1939. Based on Juurvee, I. The Structure of Estonian and Latvian Military Intelligence in the 1930s: Comparison with the German Abwehr (Eesti ja Läti sõjaväeluure struktuur 1930-ndali: võrdlus Saksa Abwehriiga). The General Laidoner Museum Annual Publication, Tallinn. 2003, p.36.

There was an additional counter-intelligence agency in interwar Estonia called ‘Political Police’ (PolPol, Poliitline Poliisi) with branches spread all across Estonia, and it collaborated with the local police forces. As the information concerning the organisational structure of the Estonian General Staff was designated ‘Secret’ (Salajane), the Political Police were the more commonly known counter-intelligence unit among the citizens in interwar Estonia.

In Finland, between 1925 and 1937, military intelligence activities were organised by the Second Department (Toimisto II) of the General Staff (Yleisesikunta) like their Estonian and Japanese counterparts. The Finnish Second Department was also divided into several sections: from Office IV to Office VI. The Foreign Department (Ulkomaatoimisto, also known as Office IV) was in charge of the exchange of military information with foreign military attachés. Office V (Tilastotoimisto) was a topographical section and Office VI (Valvontatoimisto) was a supervisory (administration) section. A drastic change was made to the organisational structure in 1937 when the offices were integrated into two departments: Operations Department (Operatiivinen osasto) and Foreign Department (Ulkomaaosasto).



**Figure 3.** Organizational structure of the Finnish General Staff and the Foreign Department (Ulkomaaosasto) between 1937 and 1939. Based on Elfvengren, 2000, p.154.

Similar to the Estonian Political Police, there was also a counter-intelligence unit called the ‘State Police’ (Valtiollinen Poliisi, VALPO) in interwar Finland. The State Police conducted surveillance over various organisations and people such as

Comintern, the Soviet-led International organisation of Communists and émigré Russians residing in Finland.

In interwar Germany, military intelligence operations were mainly handled by the Abwehr (meaning ‘Defence’ in German) established in 1921. The former had been under the command of Admiral Wilhelm Canaris ever since January 1935.<sup>105</sup> In the middle of the 1930s, the Abwehr was divided into five departments as follows<sup>106</sup>:

Central Department (Zentralabteilung)

Department I (Abwehrabteilung I) - Intelligence (Zentralabteilung)

Department II (Abwehrabteilung II) - Special Service (Sonderdienst)

Department III (Abwehrabteilung III) - Counter-Intelligence (Abwehr)

Department of Foreign Affairs (Abteilung Ausland)

As for interwar Latvian intelligence services, the details are less well-known and the author has to admit that he was unable to check their historical backgrounds. However, communications between the Japanese Army and the Latvian intelligence services were very limited as Makoto Onodera, one of the interwar Japanese military attachés to Latvia and later the Baltic States (1936-1938), recollected about the work in Riga that the Latvian intelligence service (Information Department of the Latvian General Staff) was ‘almost no use’ compared to the Estonian Second Department, in terms of collecting Soviet information.<sup>107</sup> As in Estonia and Finland, there were two intelligence services in interwar Latvia: the Information Department (Informacja dala) of the Latvian General Staff and a counter-intelligence unit called the State Police of Latvia (Latvijas Valsts policija). As mentioned in the earlier section of this thesis, most of the documents concerning their secret intelligence activities, mainly targeted at the Soviet Union, were destroyed in the 1940s.

<sup>105</sup> **Paine, L.** *The Abwehr: German Military Intelligence in World War Two.* Robert Hale, London, 1984, p.5.

<sup>106</sup> **Juurvee, I.** *The Structure of Estonian and Latvian Military Intelligence in the 1930s: Comparison with the German Abwehr (Eesti ja Läti sõjaväeluure struktuur 1930-ndail: võrdlus Saksa Abwehriga).* The General Laidoner Museum Annual Publication, Tallinn, 2003, p.44.

<sup>107</sup> Onodera, 1985, p.52. This was of course Onodera’s personal impression although as a matter of fact, the Japanese Army appreciated Estonia more than Latvia for its intelligence operations against the Soviet Union in the late 1930s.

## 4.4 General Picture of the Soviet Intelligence Activities during the Interwar Period

The intelligence activities of the Soviet Union during the interwar period were organised by the NKVD (Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del, ‘The People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs’). It was originally established as Cheka, the Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage on 20 December 1917 under the initiative of the Bolsheviks.<sup>108</sup> The Cheka was abolished by a decree of 6 February 1922 and the GPU (State Political Administration) was established instead.<sup>109</sup> The GPU was renamed the OGPU (Joint State Political Directorate) in 1923.<sup>110</sup> In March 1933, the OGPU was officially authorised to order executions by a fresh interpretation of earlier regulations.<sup>111</sup>

December 1917	Cheka
February 1922	Incorporated in NKVD (as GPU)
July 1923	OGPU (Joint State Political Directorate)
July 1934	Reincorporated in NKVD (as GUGB)
February 1941	NKGB

**Figure 3.** The organisational transition of the NKVD. Based on Andrew, C. & Gordievsky, 1990, xi.

In July 1934, The OGPU was renamed as the GUGB (Glavnoe upravlenie gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti, the Main Directorate of State Security) and the organisation became subordinated to the NKVD.<sup>112</sup> Foreign intelligence and special affairs departments remained under the control of the GUGB. In November 1936, the GUGB departments inside the NKVD were divided into three: the 3<sup>rd</sup> Department (Counter-Intelligence), the 5<sup>th</sup> Department (Special Affairs), and the 7<sup>th</sup> Department (Foreign Intelligence). Then, in June 1938, the entire organisation of the GUGB was liquidated and reincorporated in the 1<sup>st</sup> Department of the NKVD. However, in September 1938, the GUGB was again established inside the NKVD under the new

<sup>108</sup> **Conquest, R.** *The Great Terror: Stalin’s Purge of the Thirties.* The Macmillan Company, New York, 1968, p.542.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p.545.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p.545.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p.547.

<sup>112</sup> “NKVD”, Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine.

<http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CN%5CK%5CNKVD.htm> (Access Date and Time: 29<sup>th</sup> April 2020, 23:34PM)



leader Lavrenty Beria, the 1<sup>st</sup> rank Commissar of State Security. This organisational structure was maintained until February 1941.<sup>113</sup>

Special tasks such as assassinations of foreign officials and stratagems on foreign soil started only in 1937 amidst Stalin's Great Purge.<sup>114</sup> Despite the fact the NKVD itself could not be exempted from the Great Purge between 1937 and 1938, a number of the high-ranking officials were purged including the Director Nikolai Yezhov. The special tasks unit of the NKVD had grown up as the largest section of Soviet foreign intelligence by 1938, claiming to have 212 agents operating in the United States, France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and China.<sup>115</sup> In fact, in Spring 1938, Pavel Sudoplatov, the NKVD agent who infiltrated the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), assassinated the leader Yevhen Konovalets.<sup>116</sup> Despite a few successes in special tasks, quite many NKVD residences in foreign countries ceased to function in 1937-1938 due to the liquidation of many of their officers and agents.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>113</sup> **Rosenthal, R. & Tamming, M.** War before War: Activities of the Soviet intelligence services in Estonia until 1940. (Sõda enne sõda: Nõukogude eriteenistuste tegevusest Eestis kuni 1940. aastani) Kirjastus SE&JS, Tallinn, 2013, p.68.

<sup>114</sup> **Andrew, C., & Mitrokhin, V.** The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West. Second Edition. Penguin Group, London, 2000, p.89.

<sup>115</sup> Andrew & Mitrokhin, 2000, p.100.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p.112.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p.102.

## 5 Japanese Military Intelligence Activities during the Estonian and Latvian Independence Wars (1918–1920)

The Russian Revolution in October 1917 created an enormous power vacuum across the Eurasian Continent, from Vladivostok to Tallinn or Riga. Although the Bolsheviks, who overthrew the Kerensky's provisional government and finally put an end to the Russian Empire, once admitted rights of self-determination to ethnic minorities across the old imperial territories, the concept of Lenin was different from that of the minorities perceived by themselves. In his theory, all the ethnic minorities were entitled to autonomies but had to remain as parts of the greater socialist federation.<sup>118</sup>

In the Baltic Sea region, Finland was the first country that declared independence from the Russian Empire in December 1917, then Estonia and Lithuania followed in February 1918, while the Latvian declaration was made in November 1918.<sup>119</sup> Meanwhile, due to the deterioration of the legitimacy of the state and conflicts of interest between dominant classes, a civil war broke out in Finland in January 1918 and lasted until May.<sup>120</sup> The Japanese Army and Navy observed the war situations through the military attachés in Stockholm and their main sources of information were Swedish newspapers.<sup>121</sup> When the First World War was concluded by military defeat of Germany on 11 November 1918, the Soviet Bolshevik government

<sup>118</sup> **Benett, G.** *Freeing the Baltic 1918-1920*. Pen & Sword Maritime, Barnsley, 2017, p.30.

<sup>119</sup> **Suzuki, D. & Saunavaara, J. (Eds.)**. *The First Encounter and Connection between Japan and Finland: 100 Years of History of the Relationship (Nihon to Finland no Deai to Tsunagari: 100-nen ni wataru Kankeishi)* Daigaku Kyoiku Shuppan, Tokyo, 2019, p.12.

<sup>120</sup> **Tepora, T. & Roselius, A.** *The Finnish Civil War 1918: History, Memory, Legacy*. Brill, London, 2014, p.52.

<sup>121</sup> Unlike the Estonian and Latvian independence wars, the Japanese military forces did not send any officers (military observers) to Finland during the civil war. This was probably due to German military intervention in the civil war. Japan was at war with Germany during the First World War (1914-1918).

understood that the Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany in March 1918 was annulled by the ceasefire agreement.<sup>122</sup> By the treaty, the Bolsheviks ceded the Baltic States to Germany and the Baltic region remained under German control until the end of the First World War. Estonia and Lithuania declared independence in February 1918, shortly before the arrival of German forces, but the autonomous governments were oppressed by Germany and had to wait until November 1918 when a power vacuum situation occurred after imperial Germany collapsed. Still, as mentioned, Soviet Russia was eager to impose its sovereignty over the Baltic States after the German defeat.

On 28 November 1918 at 5:30AM, the Red Army crossed the border of Estonia into the town of Narva.<sup>123</sup> This small border town was immediately seized by the Bolsheviks, and their puppet regime, commonly known as the ‘Commune of the Working People of Estonia’ (Eesti Tööraha Kommune in Estonian), was proclaimed.<sup>124</sup> At this stage, the objective of the Red Army to replace the Estonian provisional government with a puppet regime became obvious to the Estonians. Although the Communists failed to gain significant support among the populace for various reasons such as the organisation of collective farms and assault on religions<sup>125</sup>, the superiority of the Red Army in terms of strength was absolute. Facing a desperate situation, Professor Ants Piip, Estonian diplomatic representative in Great Britain, issued letters to all the Allies’ diplomatic missions in London, asking for all means of supports to Estonia.<sup>126</sup> The same letter was issued to Ambassador Sutemi Chinda of the Japanese Embassy in London, but not much time was left for the Estonians. Along with a serious lack of weapons and ammunitions, Estonians themselves could not believe the sustainability of the newly established Republic. Although the conscription of men aged 21 to 24 was introduced after the fall of Narva, the Estonian government managed to gather only 12,000–13,000 new soldiers as opposed to the 25,000 expected.<sup>127</sup> In consequence, Estonians had to give up half their territories to the Red Army by 10 December.<sup>128</sup>

Among the Allies, Britain was most concerned about the possibility the Bolsheviks gaining a regional hegemony in the Baltic States. As early as 4

<sup>122</sup> **Wheeler-Bennett, J., W.** The Meaning of Brest-Litovsk Today. *Foreign Affairs*, Oct. 1938, 17, p.148.

<sup>123</sup> **Õun, M., Sammalsoo, P., & Walter, H.** *Struggles in the Baltic*. Grenadier Grupp, Tallinn, 2012, p.43.

<sup>124</sup> **Silverlight, J.** *The Victor’s Dilemma: Allied Intervention in the Russian Civil War*. Barrie & Jenkins, London, 1970, p.293.

<sup>125</sup> Kasekamp, 2000, p.10

<sup>126</sup> Letter from Ants Piip to Ambassador Sutemi Chinda to the United Kingdom, 7<sup>th</sup> December 1918. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA1583.1.49., pp.8-10.

<sup>127</sup> Brüggemann, 2007, p.25

<sup>128</sup> Silverlight, 1970, p.293

November, the British government called the Admiralty to discuss the possibility of deploying British warships to the Baltic Sea.<sup>129</sup> Then, on 20 November, the issue was brought in front of the Lloyd-George's Imperial War Cabinet.<sup>130</sup> It was 12 December when the first British light-cruiser squadron, led by Admiral Alexander-Sinclair, arrived in Tallinn.<sup>131</sup> These events were reported to Tokyo by Lieutenant Colonel Kiyoshi Furuya, Japanese military attaché to Russia in Stockholm, on 16 December. Furuya reported that that the Red Army's operations in the Baltic region has been proceeding well, but the arrival of the British fleet in Tallinn truly encouraged Estonians (see **Evidence No.1**). The British fleet carried some military aids for Estonia, consisting of 5,000 rifles, 148 light machine guns, and 7 million rounds of ammunition as well as two 76mm field guns.<sup>132</sup> Together with the arrival of approximately 3,500 Finnish volunteer troops in December 1918 siding with the Estonian Army<sup>133</sup>, this became the decisive aid to stop the Red Army.<sup>134</sup> Seeing the situation, the Estonian Army turned to an offensive on 7 January 1919 and, by the middle of the month, the Estonians had succeeded in pushing back the Bolsheviks to the opposite bank of the Narva River, where they had launched the invasion against independent Estonia the previous month.

Furuya's Ro-Ko-Den No.290 (露古電 290 号)<sup>135</sup> was recorded in a common format used by the Japanese Army to make a fair copy of the received telegrams. All the series of the telegrams sent by the Japanese Army officers stationed in Estonia between 1919 and 1921 were handed over to the Foreign Ministry in this format. Furuya and his subordinates such as Komatsubara had sent around 100-200 telegrams a year (almost 600–700 telegrams for the 3 years). It is less likely that someone intentionally created such large number of forged documents, otherwise there would had been inconsistency between the things mentioned in the reports and the historical facts. In fact, none of the Ro-Ko-Den sent by Furuya and Komatsubara were inconsistent with the facts in general, but only in the details. Thus, from the perspective of external criticism, Ro-Ko-Den No.290 (and the entire Ro-Ko-Den telegrams) are legitimate material. From the perspective of Internal Criticism, the arrival of the British fleet did take place although the day of the arrival was wrongly recorded. The arrival of the British fleet also meant the arrival of supplies to the Estonians, which greatly encouraged the Estonians. Thus, factual errors in Ro-Ko-Den No.290 were within a permissible range of Internal Criticism.

<sup>129</sup> **Bradley, J., F., N.** Civil War in Russia: 1917-1920. B.T.Batsford, London, 1975, p.143.

<sup>130</sup> Benett, 2017, p.32

<sup>131</sup> Õun, Sammalsoo & Walter, 2012, p.72.

<sup>132</sup> Silverlight, 1970, p.295; Õun, Sammalsoo & Walter, 2012, p.73.

<sup>133</sup> Brüggemann, 2007, p.26

<sup>134</sup> Silverlight, 1970, p.295

<sup>135</sup> Ro-Ko-Den stood for Russia (ロシア), Furuya (古谷), and Telegram (Denpou 電報).

Shortly after Furuya's report, the situation in Estonia turned into a stalemate. The Bolsheviks concentrated their troops on capturing Riga, the capital of Latvia, and the Latvians attempted to resist them together with the remnants of the Imperial German forces and the British fleet. However, the plans failed, and the capital of Riga was occupied by the Bolsheviks on 10 January 1919.<sup>136</sup> The Latvian provisional government and the military forces were forced to retreat far to Libau (Liepāja) and the rest of the Latvian territory fell into the hands of the Bolsheviks.

The intervention of a third force was strongly hoped for by the Estonians and Latvians who desperately needed it to restore their territories. However, it was neither the British or Germans, but the Russians. The White Russian Northern Corps in the Pskov region (Отдельный Псковский русский добровольческий корпус, hereafter the 'Northern Corps') was originally established in October 1918 during the First World War by the Imperial German Army. Its members were released Russian prisoners of war. After the Armistice in November 1918, the Estonian provisional government allowed General Aleksandr Rodzianko to continue working as unit commander and maintain his little Russian army.<sup>137</sup> As their political stance was unclear, the Russians posed a security threat to the newly independent Estonia. In December 1918, the Estonian government concluded an arrangement with them and the Northern Corps formally joined the Estonian Army on 6 December.<sup>138</sup> In March 1919, a more senior officer, General Nikolai Yudenich, arrived from Helsinki to take over command of the Northern Corps<sup>139</sup> and, by April, the corps was strengthened by Estonian aid consisting of 4,830 German Marks, 1,210 rifles and 8 machine guns.<sup>140</sup>

On 13 May 1919, the Estonian Army, together with the Northern Corps and British fleet, launched the first-ever offensive into Bolshevik territory. The purpose of the operation was to establish a buffer state on Russian soil, to be run by the Northern Corps.<sup>141</sup> Soon after the commencement of the offensive, two cities of Jamburg (Kingisepp) and Pskov were taken by the Estonian forces.<sup>142</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Tomomori, the Japanese Army officer who had been sent to the British Expeditionary Forces in Murmansk, reported to Tokyo on 27 May that the Estonian

<sup>136</sup> Silverlight, 1970, p.296.

<sup>137</sup> **Luckett, R.** *The White Generals: An Account of the White Movement and the Russian Civil War.* Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1987, p.270.

<sup>138</sup> Brüggemann, 2007, p.25

<sup>139</sup> Luckett, 1987, p.270

<sup>140</sup> Register of Supply of Goods, with which the Northern Corps has been supplied by the Supply Department of the Estonian War Office, 15 April 1919. **Estonian National Archive (Esti Rahvusarhiiv)**, ERA.495.10.52., pp.30-31.

<sup>141</sup> **Brüggemann, K.** *Defending National Sovereignty against Two Russias: Estonia in the Russian Civil War, 1918–1920.* *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 34, 1, 2007, p.30.

<sup>142</sup> Bradley, 1975, p.151.

forces and the Northern Corps were successfully advancing on the Narva railway and the Bolsheviks were hurrying the fortification of Gatchina.<sup>143</sup> Again, on 31 May, Tomomori reported the Estonian forces took Petergof, only 25km from Petrograd.<sup>144</sup> The offensive seemed successful at the time, but that did not last long.

## 5.1 Komatsubara's First Trip to Estonia and the Observation of the Northeastern Front (June 1919)

On 2 June 1919, the Japanese Legation in Stockholm submitted a request to the local Estonian diplomatic delegation, regarding the detachment of one military officer to Tallinn.<sup>145</sup>

The Japanese Army was in need of gathering as much information as possible about the Bolsheviks. The Japanese Army decided to participate in the multi-national military intervention against Bolshevik Russia in August 1918, together with the other Entente powers such as Britain and the United States. This so-called 'Siberian Intervention' (Shiberia Shuppei シベリア出兵) ostensibly aimed at the rescue of the Czechoslovakian Legion isolated in the middle of Siberia, but it was obvious that the Entente secretly wished to crush the Bolsheviks. In 1919, turmoil was reigning in the Siberian Intervention. In February 1919, the Japanese Army was forced to retreat from Chita<sup>146</sup> and, in the following month, they were severely attacked by the Bolsheviks in Yukhta, near Blagoveshchensk. Over 200 Japanese troops were wounded or killed in the battle.<sup>147</sup> Ito noted that the battle of Yukhta in February 1919 and the conclusion of the Peace Treaty of Versailles for the First World War on 28 June 1919 were turning points of the Siberian Intervention.<sup>148</sup>

While the world was inaugurating a new era of peace, the officers and soldiers of the Japanese Army began to wonder why they were still fighting in the middle of Siberia. They were completely exhausted by the tactics of Bolshevik guerilla warfare.<sup>149</sup> The Japanese impoverishment against the elusive Bolsheviks hidden among the locals can be understood from two events: 1) the Bochkareva Incident (Bochkareva Jiken ボフカレヴァ事件) on 15 March 1919 and 2) the Ivanovka

<sup>143</sup> 1. From 23rd May 1919 to 28th June 1919 (1. Taisho 8-nen 5-gatsu 23-nichi kara Taisho 8-nen 6-gatsu 28-nichi 1. 大正 8 年 5 月 23 日から大正 8 年 6 月 28 日) JACAR, B03051147800.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Request to send Captain Komatsubara to Estonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1919. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**, ERA957.11.30., p.11.

<sup>146</sup> Tokyo Asahi Shimbun, 16<sup>th</sup> February 1919, Morning edition, p.3.

<sup>147</sup> Tokyo Asahi Shimbun, 4<sup>th</sup> March 1919, Morning edition, p.3.

<sup>148</sup> Ito, 2016, p.92.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

Incident (Ivanovka Jiken イワノフカ事件) on 22 March. In the former case, 32 ethnic Latvians on the way to join the Imanta Regiment (anti-Bolshevik voluntary military unit of Latvians in Siberia) were mistakenly arrested as Bolsheviks and executed by the Japanese forces near Bochkareva railway station.<sup>150</sup> The latter event was a Japanese act of retaliation for the battle of Yukhta in February. The 12<sup>th</sup> Division of the Japanese Army which lost the battle of Yukhta attacked the village of Ivanovka near Blagoveshchensk and murdered the villagers including women and children on suspicion of cooperating with the Bolsheviks. According to a Russian source published in February 1920, 291 people were killed by the Japanese Army.<sup>151</sup> The never-ending war against the Bolsheviks made it difficult for the Japanese Army to put its hopes of victory on any of the anti-Bolshevik forces led by Russian generals. In fact, on 17 May 1919, the Japanese government decided to recognise the Omsk government of Admiral Aleksandr Kolchak in an attempt to install a buffer zone in Siberia against the Bolsheviks.<sup>152</sup> The Japanese decision was accepted as a consensus of the Allies and, on 24 May, the conference of heads of state (America, Britain, France, Japan, and Italy) passed a resolution to conditionally recognise the Omsk government.<sup>153</sup> Under such circumstances, Tallinn was selected as a convenient location to send a military observer of the Japanese Army since the White Russian Northern Corps launched its first offensive against Petrograd from Estonia.

In June 1919, Captain Michitaro Komatsubara, an assistant officer of the Japanese military attaché to Russia in Stockholm, departed for Estonia via Finland. In Helsinki, he paid a courtesy visit to the Finnish Foreign Ministry<sup>154</sup>, then visited the Finnish General Staff and Nikolai Yudenich privately to acquire the latest information from the Petrograd front. Yudenich revealed to Komatsubara his intention to relocate his personal Political Council to Narva and aim at the restoration of the old Russian government in Petrograd.<sup>155</sup> On 15 June, Komatsubara arrived in Tallinn by the ferry 'Viola' from Helsinki accompanied by a Russian officer who was detached by the Northwestern Army to the Hotel 'Golden Lion' (Kuld Lõvi) in the heart of the city.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>150</sup> **Karnups, V., P.** Latvian-Japanese economic relations 1918–1940. *Humanities and Social Sciences Latvia*, Volume 24, Issue 1 (Spring-Summer 2016), p.39.

<sup>151</sup> **Asada, M.** *The Siberian Intervention*. (Shiberia Shuppei) Chuo Kouron Shinsha, Tokyo, 2017, pp.101-102.

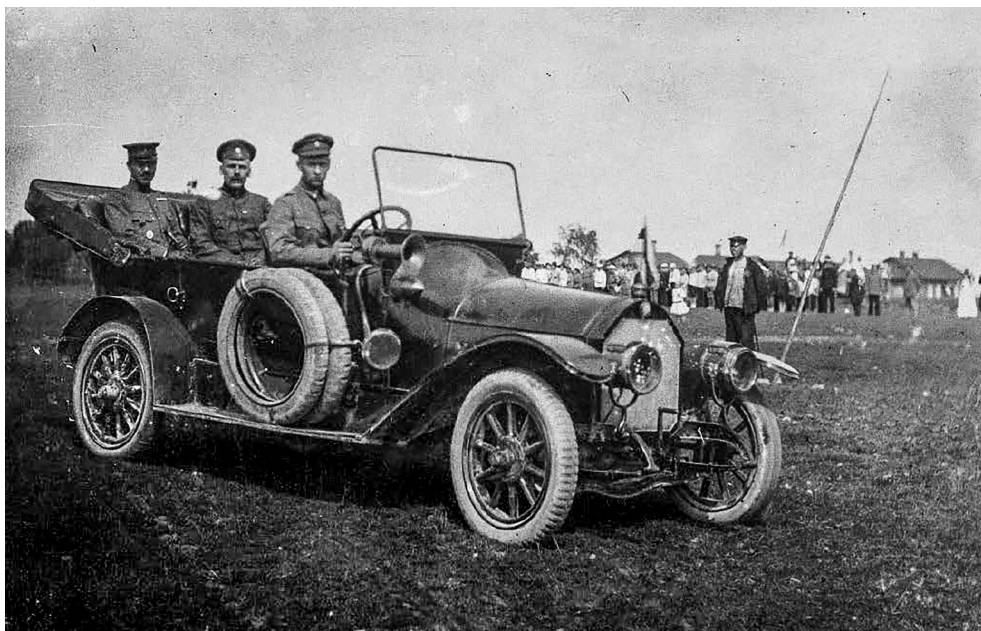
<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p.113. The first Japanese Ambassador to the Omsk government arrived in the city in October 1919.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p.115.

<sup>154</sup> Keski-Uusimaa, 11th June 1919.

<sup>155</sup> JACAR, B03051147800.

<sup>156</sup> Report No.7286 of the Estonian War Office, 14<sup>th</sup> June 1919. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA495.10.51., p.83.



**Picture 1.** Captain Michitaro Komatsubara inspecting the Estonian 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in Narva, Estonia (June 1919) Reference: Estonian Film Archive (Eesti filmiarhiiv), EFA.49.P.A-257-57.

In Tallinn, Komatsubara visited the Estonian General Staff to acquire information about the war and permission to visit the frontline. On 17 June, he sent the first report to Furuya and it was forwarded to Tokyo from Stockholm on 20 June. In the report, Komatsubara noted that two Estonian regiments were stationed in the vicinity of Narva, but they were considered as reserve troops, while fewer than 20,000 Northwestern Army troops and 2,000 Ingrians took part in the offensive as the mainstreams.<sup>157</sup>

On 18 June, the Estonian General Staff granted Komatsubara permission to visit Narva and the frontline in Gatchina.<sup>158</sup> After Komatsubara arrived, Masamoto Kitada, Secretary of the Japanese Legation in Stockholm, also left for Tallinn on 15 June<sup>159</sup> and checked in at Hotel Kommertz in Tallinn.<sup>160</sup> Kitada and Komatsubara

<sup>157</sup> 2. From 16th June 1919 to 14th July 1919 (2. Taisho 8-nen 6-gatsu 16-nichi kara Taisho 8-nen 7-gatsu 14-nichi 2. 大正 8 年 6 月 16 日から大正 8 年 7 月 14 日) JACAR, B03051147900.

<sup>158</sup> Reports No.3578 and 3579 of the Estonian War Office, 18 June 1919. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA495.10.51., pp.98-99.

<sup>159</sup> 5. Regarding the independence of the Baltic States, starting June 1919 (Baruto Sanshu dokuritsu no ken, ji Taisho 8-nen 6-gatsu 5. 波羅の三州独立ノ件 自大正八年六月), JACAR, B03041297000.

<sup>160</sup> Report of Villem Tomingas, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1919. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA495.10.51., p.104.



were asked by the Estonian Foreign Ministry to provide cypher keys in case of emergency, but this proposal was rejected by both of them, and the Ministry had no other choice but to allow Kitada to send encrypted telegrams to Paris, Stockholm and Japan<sup>161</sup>, and Komatsubara probably received the same permission.

On 27 June, Komatsubara returned to Stockholm and Furuya summarised his reports, compiled as two telegrams, Ro-Ko-Den No.22 and No.23. According to the former telegram, the total combined strength of the Finnish Army, the Northern Corps and the Bolshevik forces in the surroundings of Petrograd was about 670,000, but the elite troops of the Bolsheviks were transferred to Siberia to fight the Army of Kolchak, and the core of the remaining troops on the Northwestern front (Petrograd) comprised a cadet unit originally consisting of 2,000 troops, but with only 400 now remaining. Furuya understood that the majority of the Bolshevik troops were products of forced conscription so had extremely low morale. Anyway, he concluded that the occupation of Petrograd would require one or two divisions, and stressed the importance of preparations.<sup>162</sup> While Furuya and Komatsubara embarked upon the daily grind after the reports, the Allies offensive was facing the biggest problem, Internal Strife.

## 5.2 Failure of the First Offensive and the Ingrian Issue (Summer 1919)

On 24 May, British General Sir Hubert Gough arrived at the Baltic States and Finland.<sup>163</sup> Gough was a newly appointed Chief of the Allied Military Missions to the Baltic Region, in charge of the British military missions in the Baltic States and Finland. In his post-WW2 memoirs, Gough revealed that the main objective as head of the Baltic Mission was not to let Finland militarily intervene in the offensive on Petrograd. Lord Curzon, then British Foreign Secretary who sent the order to Gough, was strongly afraid of the establishment of a new Russian government, which might be hostile to Britain.<sup>164</sup> In that sense, Curzon was also concerned about Yudenich's Russian Army and he wanted Gough to support the independence of the Baltic States, which Yudenich and his aides had long been opposing, rather than backing the former's attempt to take Petrograd.

On 13 May, the first offensive of the Northern Corps against the Bolsheviks was launched and Yudenich arrived in Estonia from Finland on 26 May. Yudenich requested both the Estonian ground forces and the British fleet to be put under his

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., p.100.

<sup>162</sup> JACAR, B03051147900.

<sup>163</sup> Benett, 2017, p.112.

<sup>164</sup> **Gough, H.** *Soldiering On*. Morrison & Gibb, London, 1954, p.191.

command, both countries strongly opposed to the Yudenich's ambitious plan.<sup>165</sup> Consequently, following British advice, Yudenich returned to Finland and General Rodzianko was again empowered as a commander of the Northern Corps. After this incident, suspicions were raised among the Allies. During the battles of Sedaya Loshad and Krasnaya Gorka in June, the Bolshevik troops in the two sea fortresses mutinied, but the Estonians failed to offer them efficient support and the Bolsheviks recaptured the fortresses.<sup>166</sup>

The loss of the fortresses made the Allies abandon all planned operations, eventually costing them the offensive against Petrograd. After the failure of the first offensive, General Rodzianko, Yudenich's aide, blamed the Allies, especially the British, for failing to send promised military aid and the Estonians for cutting supplies to the Northern Corps.<sup>167</sup> Meanwhile, it was not only Rodzianko who was pessimistic about the fate of the offensive. The Ingrians<sup>168</sup>, an ethnic Finnish minority residing in the surroundings of Petrograd who had opted to side with the Northern Corps, took a stand against Rodzianko by requesting cultural autonomy. Their mutiny ended in disarmament by the Northwestern Army, and later the Estonian Army accepted the expelled Ingrians.<sup>169</sup> Rodzianko was incapable of solving all the above matters and failed to compromise with all his allies, so Yudenich was recalled from Finland to take charge of the Northern Corps once again. On 20 June, Admiral Kolchak, representative of the Omsk government, appointed Yudenich commander of the White Russian forces in the Baltic region, and his headquarters in Helsinki were relocated to Narva on 23.<sup>170</sup> On 1 July, the Northern Corps was reorganised as the Northwestern Army under a new commander, Nikolai Yudenich.

### 5.3 The Allies Plan for the Next Offensive and Komatsubara in Tallinn (August 1919)

It was August 1919 when Komatsubara returned to Tallinn together with Masamoto Kitada, the aforementioned diplomat of Japan's Stockholm Legation.<sup>171</sup> On 1 August, Envoy Hioki of the Japanese Legation in Stockholm forwarded a report from Kitada to Tokyo. Colonel Kruzenshtern, head of the Foreign Affairs department of

<sup>165</sup> Bradley, 1975, p.151.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Silverlight, 1970, p.307.

<sup>168</sup> In Furuya's telegrams, they were described as 'Ingermanlanders (Ingermanland-jin イングエルマンランド人). In Finnish, they are known as 'Inkerilainen'.

<sup>169</sup> JACAR, B03051147900.

<sup>170</sup> JACAR, B03051147900.

<sup>171</sup> Darbs, Nr.36, August 15 1919, p.2.

the Northwestern Army, secretly told Kitada that, as soon as military aid from Britain arrived, the Army would commence another offensive against the Bolsheviks, and Kruzenshtern was confident about the restoration of the lost territories within two months.<sup>172</sup> Next day in London, representatives of the British Army and Northwestern Army signed a memorandum about future material support for the latter. The British Army agreed on the provision of aid to maintain the existing 50,000 troops of the Northwestern Army and, on the occasion of the successful liberation of Petrograd and Pskov, they promised to provide a sufficient amount of aid to expand the Northwestern Army to 200,000 troops.<sup>173</sup> The information Kitada acquired from Kruzenshtern was correct, and it would actually happen on a larger scale than he had foreseen.

In early August, Furuya visited Helsinki and Tallinn to make acquaintance with the Estonian and Finnish General Staffs. On 12 August, Furuya reported that the Northwestern Army had lost the town of Jamburg to the Bolsheviks on 4 August and, according to information from the Estonian General Staff, the Northwestern Army possessed only 15,000 guns, which meant that only one-fifth of the soldiers were equipped with them. More importantly, Furuya emphasised the Estonian reluctance to support Yudenich, as the old Russian General had long opposed the independence of Estonia. In fact, Estonia had sided with the Northwestern Army merely to secure its sovereignty, but never sympathised with Yudenich's political beliefs.<sup>174</sup> In the frontline, Jamburg was once lost to the Bolsheviks, yet on the same day that Furuya submitted his Ro-Ko-Den No.33 to Tokyo, the Northwestern Army repelled Bolshevik attacks in the outskirts of the town, and succeeded in preventing the Bolsheviks from crossing the Ruga River.<sup>175</sup> The war situation once again turned to a stalemate.

On 8 August, military representatives of Britain, France and the United States suddenly summoned the Yudenich's political advisers to the local British diplomatic mission, and asked them to immediately form a government to represent Russian legitimacy in the Baltic Sea region. This conference was moderated by British General Marsh, on behalf of the British authorities in Estonia, and the Allies also wanted the new Russian government to recognise the sovereignty of Estonia. The Allies held the conference while Yudenich was on a tour of inspection of the battlefield and Yudenich's political staff had no other choice but to accept all the

<sup>172</sup> JACAR, B03051148100.

<sup>173</sup> Memorandum about the help to General Yudenich, 2 August 1919. **Hoover Institution**. Yudenich Collection, Box 12, File 63, p.172.

<sup>174</sup> JACAR, B030511482000.

<sup>175</sup> Report to the Estonian Legation in London from Colonel Soots of the Estonian War Office, 12 August 1919. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA1589.1.69., p.17.

Allied demands as they heavily relied on the latter's financial and military aid.<sup>176</sup> Marsh invited a reporter from the British newspaper *The Times* to the conference, but his report was delayed and not published until 18 August<sup>177</sup>, so Komatsubara was able to report full details of the event to Tokyo a few days prior to the publication of the *Times* article. However, Tokyo received his *Ro-Ko-Den* No.34 only on the morning of 19 August, so could not take advantage of the information.

Meanwhile, the sudden establishment of the so-called 'Northwestern Government for the provinces of Pskov, Novgorod and Petrograd' astonished the Allied diplomatic representatives in Paris who had gathered to discuss solutions to the post-WW1 conflicts all across Europe. On 20 August, during the meeting of delegations of the five Great Powers including Japan's two representatives (Ambassador Matsui to France and Secretary Kawai) at the French foreign ministry, the question of the new Russian government was raised. The British foreign minister Balfour reported the sequence of events, which was consistent with Komatsubara's report and the *Times* article, then added that the events had been planned by the local Allied representatives in Tallinn without consulting their governments. However, the diplomats in Paris, including Balfour himself, rather criticised the Estonians who has been in pursuit of formal recognition of the independence by the Allies and so hardened the Russian attitude.<sup>178</sup>

Komatsubara visited Colonel Kruzenshtern, newly appointed Foreign Minister of the government, to re-confirm the details of the event at the British diplomatic mission on 8 August. Kruzenshtern skillfully evaded sensitive questions from Komatsubara, and objected to the latter's opinion by noting that candidates for new government members and the recognition of Estonian independence had been prepared by the pollical council long before the Allied military representatives handed in the demands. Komatsubara noted Kruzenshtern's lies, then reported to Tokyo that the Northwestern Army had no choice but to accept the Allied requests to be backed by them.<sup>179</sup>

<sup>176</sup> JACAR, B030511482000.

<sup>177</sup> *The Times*, 18 August 1919, p.10.

<sup>178</sup> **Woodward, E., L. & Butler, R. (Eds.)**. *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*. First Series, Volume 1, 1919. His Majesty's Stationary Office, London, 1947, p.448

<sup>179</sup> JACAR, B030511482000.

## 5.4 Yudenich's Second Offensive against Petrograd and the Fate of the Northwestern Army (October 1919)

Throughout summer 1919, skirmishes continued on the Luga front. On 26 August, a conference of the Northwestern Army, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was held in Riga, where they agreed to launch the next offensive against the Bolsheviks on 15 September.<sup>180</sup> The major participants of the conference were General Yudenich, Latvian President Karlis Ulmanis and General Johan Laidoner, Chief of Staff of the Estonian General Staff.

On the following day, 27 August, Komatsubara was formally appointed assistant military attaché to Russia.<sup>181</sup> Still, he had difficulty in finding accommodation in Tallinn and had to temporarily return to Stockholm. On 9 October, Captain Richard Maasing of the Estonian Army sent a telegram to Komatsubara stating that the Estonians were ready to accommodate him.<sup>182</sup> On 12 October, the Northwestern Army commenced the second offensive against Petrograd.<sup>183</sup> Around this period, it seems that his superior Furuya was in Tallinn substituting for Komatsubara. Furuya sent Ro-Ko-Den No. 51 from Tallinn on 15 October.<sup>184</sup> Although the telegram was sent during the offensive, Furuya reported the general political condition of the Bolsheviks but nothing about the operations. On 16th, Furuya sent Ro-Ko-Den No.52 from Helsinki in which he finally reported to Tokyo the commencement of the offensive four days late. Furuya wrote, “Ever since the 7th, the Northwestern Army switched to the offensive and occupied Jamburg on the 11th, and the train stations of Vololyvo, Gashinskaya, Luga and Plussa by the 13th. Furthermore, there is an unconfirmed report that they occupied Krasnoje Selo, Gatchina and Kronstadt by today (16 October). According to the translator (working for Furuya), the Northwestern Army under the command of General Yudenich reached the point roughly 5 Ri [里 Chinese miles, 1 Ri is about 20km – S.M.] from Petrograd.”<sup>185</sup> Furuya's analysis was proved to be precise, as the Northwestern Army entered

<sup>180</sup> General offensive agreed upon at a meeting on August 26, 1919. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA495.10.52., p.82.

<sup>181</sup> JACAR, B16080219400.

<sup>182</sup> Captain Maasing to Captain Komatsubara in Stockholm, 9 October 1919. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA495.10.51., p.224. Richard Maasing became head of the Estonian Second Department (Intelligence department) in the 1930s and led the joint Estonian-German-Japanese intelligence operations against the Soviet Union.

<sup>183</sup> Silverlight, 1970, p.324; **Ullman, R.** Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921, Volume 2. 1968, p.284; Luckett, 1971, p.316.

<sup>184</sup> 1. From 27 August 1919 to 24 October 1919 (1. Taisho 8-nen 8-gatsu 27-nichi kara Taisho 8-nen 10-gatsu 24-nichi 1. 大正 8 年 8 月 27 日から大正 8 年 10 月 24 日) JACAR, B03051148700.

<sup>185</sup> JACAR, B03051148700.

Gatchina on 16 October<sup>186</sup> and soon after, surrounded Tsarskoje Selo, 20km west of Krasnoje Selo.<sup>187</sup> The Northwestern Army pushed on and reached the Pulkovo heights, only 20km from the centre of Petrograd, by 20 October.<sup>188</sup>

On 17 October, Komatsubara visited General Marsh at the British military mission headquarters in Finland. The Northwestern Army occupied Gatchina on 16 October while the Estonian forces were reaching Krasnaja Gorka and Oranienbaum (Lomonosov), and the British fleet was bombarding the Krasnaja Gorka sea fortress. The Northwestern Army expected the occupation of Petrograd on 23 October.<sup>189</sup> On 19 October, Komatsubara followed and the Northwestern Army occupied Tsarskoje Selo, Pulkovo (Pulkovo heights) and Ligo. The Russian government in the Baltic region expected the occupation of Petrograd within the next three days, and Komatsubara planned to enter the city with the Northwestern Army.<sup>190</sup>

On the other hand, Trotsky, Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council who was sent from Moscow to take charge of defence operation of Petrograd, released an order for all Red Army personnel to guarantee reinforcements to the frontline and called the preparations 'the battle to defend the Capital of the Revolution'.<sup>191</sup> Indeed, Trotsky's assumption was accurate in terms of pushing back the Northwestern Army through the numerical superiority of his troops. On 25 October, Komatsubara further reported the advance of the Northwestern Army, which had reached Ligo, Tsarskoje Selo and Pavlovsk, but lack of troops and reinforcements for the Bolshevik troops was putting pressure on the Northwestern Army.<sup>192</sup> The situation was nearly at a deadlock, and the superiority of the Bolsheviks became obvious as time advanced. On 25 October, Komatsubara reported that the Northwestern Army had eight tanks, provided by the British, to break through the frontline.<sup>193</sup> This attempt failed, and by 27 November, the Northwestern Army had been pushed back to Gatchina.

<sup>186</sup> Lockett, 1987, p.317.

<sup>187</sup> Silverlight, 1970, p.324.

<sup>188</sup> Lockett, 1987, p.318.

<sup>189</sup> JACAR, B03051148700.

<sup>190</sup> 2. From 17 October 1919 to 14 November 1919 (2. Taisho 8-nen 10-gatsu 17-nichi kara Taisho 8-nen 11-gatsu 14-nichi 大正 8 年 10 月 17 日から大正 8 年 11 月 14 日) JACAR, B03051148800.

<sup>191</sup> **McCauley, M.** *The Russian Revolution & the Soviet State: 1917-1921 Documents.* The Macmillan Press, London, 1975, p.157.

<sup>192</sup> JACAR, B03051148800.

<sup>193</sup> JACAR, B03051148800; Lockett, 1987, p.319.

## 5.5 Fate of the Northwestern Army and the Peace Treaty of Tartu (November 1919 – February 1920)

On 3 November, the Northwestern Army was forced to retreat further from Gatchina and also from Gdov on 7 November, then finally from Narva on the 14th.<sup>194</sup> As a consequence of the second offensive, the Northwestern Army lost all its territories and, by the end, they had to beg for mercy from the Estonians to allow them to retreat to Estonian territory. However, the existence of the Northwestern Army was nothing more than an obstacle for the Estonian government as the latter was considering the option of suing for peace with the Bolsheviks. Once the Army had entered Estonian territory, the soldiers were immediately disarmed by the Estonians and most sent to detention camps. The Northwestern Army filed a complaint to the Estonian government regarding the treatment of the soldiers and summed it up in a letter to the American diplomatic and military representatives in the Baltic region.<sup>195</sup> Although Yudenich still hoped to recover his Army with the additional support of the Allies, everything was too late. On 24 December 1919, the Northwestern Army was formally ordered to be dissolved by the Estonian government, following British advice.<sup>196</sup>

Between November and December 1919, Komatsubara's telegrams were occupied with progress on the peace conference in Yuriev (Tartu) between Estonia and the Bolsheviks. The first report of the preliminary negotiation was the Ro-Ko-Den No.67 was sent from Tallinn on 16 November. Since 7 November, representatives of the Bolsheviks, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Finland and the Russian government in the Baltic region gathered in Yuriev, and the Bolshevik delegation was led by Maxim Litvinov.<sup>197</sup> Komatsubara stated the purposes of the peace conference to be as follows: 1) Negotiations between the Baltic States and the Bolsheviks in terms of exchange of Prisoners of War and guarantee of a ceasefire agreement, 2) Promotion of collaboration between the Bolsheviks and Baltic States tackling Germany's economic and military influences.<sup>198</sup> In Ro-Ko-Den No.72, sent on 22 November, the actual conditions proposed by the Bolsheviks to the Estonia government were unveiled. The termination of hostile activities was the priority, and it was proposed together with mutual recognition of independence and disarmament

<sup>194</sup> Luckett, 1987, p.321.

<sup>195</sup> From Commander in Chief of the Russian Northwestern Army, November 1919. **Hoover Institution**. Yudenich Collection, Box 4, File 12., p.18.

<sup>196</sup> Bradley, 1975, p.160.

<sup>197</sup> 3. From 12nd November 1919 to 7 January 1920 (3. Taisho 8-nen 11-gatsu 12-nichi kara Taisho 9-nen 1-gatsu 7-nichi 3. 大正 8 年 11 月 12 日から大正 9 年 1 月 7 日) JACAR, B03051148900.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

of the Northwestern Army.<sup>199</sup> Ro-Ko-Den No.72 was the last telegram in which the Japanese Army officers mentioned the Northwestern Army. On 3 January 1920, a conference on the disposition of the Northwestern Army was held in Tallinn. Yudenich refused the disarmament of the troops and instead proposed to Allies such as Britain and France that they be transferred to General Denikin's Ukrainian front against the Bolsheviks.<sup>200</sup> This plan was never initiated because, on 28 January, General Balahowitch, commander of the Northwestern Army who had acceded to the position on 26 November, arrested Yudenich.<sup>201</sup> Yudenich was released by diplomatic pressure from the Allies and allowed to settle in France. He passed away in 1933.

Here, Japanese observations of Nikolai Yudenich and the Northwestern Army came to an end. The role expected for Komatsubara changed from military observer to political analyst on the Soviet regime in Russia after the conclusion of the Tartu peace treaty on 2 February 1920. He remained in Tallinn and provided political reports to Tokyo until summer 1921, when his successor Major Toshiro Obata arrived. In 2011, Professor Hiroaki Kuromiya indicated that Komatsubara might be under the surveillance of the Bolshevik (Soviet) intelligence service during his mission in Estonia.<sup>202</sup> His argument was based on the testimony of a Japanese scholar of anthropology who visited Estonia after WW2. In Estonia, a Russian lady visited the Japanese scholar at his hotel and asked how Komatsubara was doing.<sup>203</sup> Daughter of Jaan Poska, Estonia's then Foreign Minister, claimed she had a common friend with Komatsubara whose name was Anna Lebedeva.<sup>204</sup> From her name, Anna was probably an ethnic Russian and could have been the same person who visited the Japanese scholar in the post-WW2 period. Other evidence found by the author was a report of a Russian driver who was sent to welcome Komatsubara at the port of Tallinn on his first visit to Estonia in June 1919. At the port, Komatsubara and his Russian driver encountered a strange incident. When the former left customs, he was stopped twice by a Russian naval officer in uniform who claimed to be Captain Chetverikov. Chetverikov repeatedly asked Komatsubara's driver about their destination. The Russian driver and Komatsubara both ignored him and soon left the

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> **United States Government Printing Office. (Ed.).** Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. 1936, p.642.

<sup>201</sup> Report of the Northwestern Army, date unknown. **Hoover Institution.** Yudenich Collection, Box 9, File 47, p.102.

<sup>202</sup> **Kuromiya, H.** The Mystery of Nomonhan. *The Journal of Slavic Military Affairs*, 2011, 24, 4, p.665.

<sup>203</sup> **Tanaka, K.** The Nomonhan War: Mongolia and Manchukuo. (Nomonhan Sensou: Mongol to Manshu-Koku) Iwanami Shoten, 2009, p.240.

<sup>204</sup> **Poska-Grünthal, V.** Jaan Poska's Daughter tells the Story. (Jaan Poska tütar jutustab) Ortho, Toronto, 1969, p.53.



port.<sup>205</sup> The incident was reported by the driver to the Estonian General Staff and the headquarters of General Rodzianko.

Anyhow, the Japanese Army decided to keep Captain Komatsubara in Tallinn as an observer of the domestic situation in the Soviet Union, even after the peace treaty between Estonia and the Soviet Union. After the return of Furuya to Japan in Autumn 1919, Major Gakuzo Takeda, new military attaché to Russia in Paris, was appointed a superior of Komatsubara.

However, the observations of the Soviet Union by Komatsubara and his successors after 1920 require collation with the original Soviet political documents such as the minutes of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Also, the reports of Komatsubara and his successors on the Soviet domestic situation varied in their topics from the general economic situation to famine in the Soviet Union, which made it extremely difficult to pursue the facts of each reported case. Furthermore, analyses of the reports on the Soviet economic situation required several different methods that were foreign to the author of this thesis. Thus, in this thesis, the reports of Komatsubara and his successors between 1920 and 1923 were mostly excluded and will only be mentioned in the context of ‘military intelligence’.

<sup>205</sup> Report of the Estonian War Office, 16 June 1919. **Hoover Institution**. Yudenich Collection, Box 4, File 12.

## 6 Japanese Military Intelligence Activities in the 1920s

In the aftermath of the WW1, the intelligence services of the great powers suffered severe financial and personal cutbacks. The only exceptions were the Soviet secret police, the Cheka and its successor organisations (GPU, OGPU and NKVD).<sup>206</sup> For instance, the US Military Intelligence Division (MID) had reduced its number of staff at its headquarters from 1,441 in 1919 to 90 in 1922. Also, in the early 1920s, most of the British intelligence hubs overseas were one-man operations.<sup>207</sup> Along with the Soviet intelligence services, the Japanese counterpart was also an exception to the global trend. Throughout WW1 and the interwar periods, the Japanese Army had expected an inevitable rematch with imperial Russia and its successor the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union had been recognised by the Japanese as a threat to the ideological identity of Japan's capitalist and colonial pursuits within the imperial system. Based on the understanding, the Japanese Army had consecutively sent three officers to Tallinn, Estonia between 1919 and 1923 to observe the economic, political and military situations of the Soviet Union.

It was not only the intelligence services, but also military attachés who faced the cutbacks. For the first time in world history, the abolition of military attachés was forced on the former Central Powers (mainly Germany) in the various peace treaties of 1919. Upon the conclusion of the peace treaties, both sides (the former Central Powers and Entente Powers) understood that the prohibition of military attachés covered the institution of the attachés.<sup>208</sup> This perception was altered by the Bulgarian-Greek border conflict in 1925 and the Polish-Lithuanian border conflict of 1927. In these conflicts, the military attachés of the Western great powers such as Britain and France played important roles as fact-finders and mediators.<sup>209</sup> First of all, we must take the influences of the global Pacifist trend of the post-WW1 period into account in order to start the discussions regarding interwar Japanese intelligence activities.

<sup>206</sup> **Andrew, C.** *The Secret World: A History of Intelligence.* Yale University Press, New Haven, 2018, p.573.

<sup>207</sup> Andrew, 2018, p.573.

<sup>208</sup> **Vagt, A.** *The Military Attaché.* Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1967, p.49.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.49-50.

One of the three Japanese Army officers, Major Toshiro Obata, had played important roles, not only in reporting Soviet information, but also developing cooperation in the intelligence sectors of Estonia and Japan. However, the data Obata provided to Tokyo were mostly economic statistics of the Soviet Union, which requires analyses from the perspectives of economics and economic history. Thus, the author mainly focused on the general intelligence activities of Obata. After the failure of the Siberian Intervention, the Japanese Army was forced to compromise in government policy to cut military expenditure. As a part of the arms reduction plan, the Japanese Army's intelligence agency in Estonia was also forced to shut down. After the last visit of Captain Rinzo Ando, the successor of Obata, to Tallinn in August 1922, mutual communication between the Estonian and Japanese Armies was severed. This relationship was restored only in the late 1920s.

## 6.1 Major Toshiro Obata as Komatsubara's Successor and General Activities of Obata in Estonia (1921–22)

Toshiro Obata was appointed as a military attaché to Russia in June 1920.<sup>210</sup> However, since Japan did not recognise the Bolsheviks in Russia, Obata had resided in the neighbouring countries to monitor the political and military movements. During his three years of residence in Europe, Obata lived in Berlin, Vienna, and Tallinn.<sup>211</sup>

According to the official passport of Toshiro Obata, which is now preserved in the Constitutional Material room of the National Diet Library in Tokyo (Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan Kensei Shiryo-shitsu 国立国会図書館憲政資料室), he had travelled to Europe through Suez by ocean liner. The passport was issued on 7 July 1920 and indicated that he (Obata) “would travel to France via Suez for official duty”. However, although several stamps such as Suez and France were confirmed on the passport, those of Estonia and Germany were not stamped.<sup>212</sup> This gives the possibility that Obata used different identities to acquire visas for Estonia and Germany, which might have been on a different passport issued by the Japanese Embassy in France upon his arrival to Europe. In fact, in the Estonian diplomatic record, Obata's identity is indicated as an unofficial ‘Military Agent’ (Agent Militaire), not a military attaché.<sup>213</sup>

<sup>210</sup> **Suyama, S.** Toshiro Obata: Demon Lord of Operations. (Sakusen no Oni: Obata Toshiro) Fuyou Shobou, Tokyo, 1983, p.193.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., p.194.

<sup>212</sup> **Constitutional Material Room, National Diet Library of Japan.** (Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan Kensei Shiryo-shitsu) Documents related to Toshiro Obata No.186 - ‘Official Passport’. (Obata Toshiro Kankei Monjyo – No.186 ‘Kouyou Ryoken’).

<sup>213</sup> Address of foreign diplomats in Estonia. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv).** ERA.957.11.710, p.6.

At his main residence in Berlin, Obata had been on a mission to supervise two military observers of the Japanese Army stationed in Estonia and Poland. Captain Michitaro Komatsubara was in Tallinn and Captain Masataka Yamawaki in Warsaw. Obata received daily reports from Tallinn and Warsaw in Berlin and forwarded them to the General Staff in Tokyo almost every day. As Komatsubara had previously been sent his daily reports to Tokyo by telegram directly from Tallinn, the stationing of Obata was highly unlikely for economic or technical reasons, such as the high cost of direct telegrams from Tallinn to Tokyo. The aim was presumably rather to select and analyse the information provided to the two young captains by the superior officer Obata, and send the precise analyses to Tokyo. In fact, in the telegram ‘Ro-Jo No.46’<sup>214</sup> sent to Tokyo by Obata on 25 February 1921, Obata wrote that most information that Komatsubara acquired was based on the Bolshevik newspapers and there was a need to compare the information with that in Western newspapers.<sup>215</sup>

On 26 January 1921, Japan formally recognised Estonia alongside its Entente allies (Britain, France, Italy, and Belgium).<sup>216</sup> In Tallinn, Obata had conducted a political observation of the Soviet Union. He had built mutual relations with the Estonian General Staff<sup>217</sup> and Estonian Customs<sup>218</sup> to acquire the latest Soviet political information. Yet, Obata himself did not much appreciate the information provided by the Estonian General Staff. He felt that the Soviet information from them was exaggerated in most cases and warned Tokyo about the use of such information as follows<sup>219</sup>: “1. Among the information from the Estonian General Staff, the fact that the current status of supreme commander of the Red Army appeared to be slightly close to the truth compared to ordinary exaggerated information (from them).”

As mentioned in an earlier section of this thesis, Obata’s reports mostly contained information about the Soviet economic situation. In 1921, the Estonian Custom provided Obata with the details of imported and exported goods into and from the Soviet Union, passing through Estonia. After the Peace Treaty of Tartu in 1920,

<sup>214</sup> ‘Ro-Jo’ (露情) stood for ‘Russia’ (ロシア) and ‘Information’ (Jyouhou 情報).

<sup>215</sup> 6. From 25th February 1921 to 14th March 1921 (6. Taisho 10-nen 2-gatsu 25-nichi kara Taisho 10-nen 3-gatsu 14-nichi 6. 大正 10 年 2 月 25 日から大正 10 年 3 月 21 日) JACAR, B03051151400.

<sup>216</sup> **Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.** Estonian Foreign Service: Biographical Lexicon 1918-1991. (Eesti valisteenistust biograafiline leksikon 1918-1991) 2006, p.151

<sup>217</sup> Obata indicated the Estonian General Staff (Est. Sanbou Honbu エスト参謀本部) as the source of his information in his telegram ‘Ro-Jo No.114’, sent on 25 August 1921. Reference: 8. 20th August 1921 to 29th August 1921 (8. Taisho 10-nen 8-gatsu 20-nichi kara Taisho 10-nen 8-gatsu 29-nichi 8. 大正 10 年 8 月 20 日から大正 10 年 8 月 29 日) JACAR, B03051152600.

<sup>218</sup> Obata clearly indicated his source of information as the Estonian Custom (Estonia Zeikan) in telegram ‘Ro-Jo No.12’, sent on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1921. Source: JACAR, B03041292000.

<sup>219</sup> JACAR, B03051152600.

Estonian ports became the only accessible ports for the Soviet Union in terms of its foreign trade. The reports of Komatsubara and Obata were pessimistic, anticipating a future collapse of the Soviet Union. They both often reported serious famine, lack of natural resources and massive revolts inside the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, Obata's connection with Estonian Customs enabled him to also watch the movement of Japanese Communists in Bolshevik Russia. On 30 September 1921, Obata sent Ro-Jo No.118 (Part 5), which he marked 'strictly confidential'. Ro-Jo No.118 (Part 5) was a report of an intercepted letter from three Japanese citizens in New York to Unzo Taguchi, representative of the Japanese section of the American Communist Party who was on a visit to Moscow.<sup>220</sup> The letter to Taguchi included several plans to organise Communist activities in Japan and the full text was sent to Tokyo by Obata. Also, in December 1921, Obata was again notified, probably by the Estonian Custom, about a letter from American citizen 'Scott' to an ethnic Japanese person in Moscow called Sen Katayama, a central committee member of the Comintern (Communist International), a Soviet-led International organisation of Communists. Through the letter, Obata surmised that Katayama was in charge of the intelligence and propaganda section of the Comintern. Obata's report was summed up as Ro-Jo No.118 (Part 12) and sent to Tokyo on 18 December 1921.<sup>221</sup> In general, the Japanese Army was carefully observing the Comintern and its connection with the Japanese Communist Party (JCP, Nihon Kyosantou 日本共産党 in Japanese) established in July 1922. The JCP orchestrated civil movement in Japan to call for complete withdrawal of the troops from Siberia under the initiative of the Comintern.<sup>222</sup>

While stationed in Tallinn, Obata participated in the so-called 'Secret Agreement of Baden Baden' (Baden Baden no Mitsuyaku 「バーデン・バーデンの密約」) in October 1921. Obata left Tallinn on 7 October<sup>223</sup> and returned to Berlin. Then, on the 27<sup>th</sup>, Obata and two other Japanese Army officers gathered at Hotel Stefany in Baden Baden. The other two officers were Tetsuzan Nagata, military attaché to Switzerland, and Yasuji Okamura, the General Staff officer on a business trip to Europe.<sup>224</sup> In Baden Baden, the three officers pledged themselves to the fundamental reformation of the Japanese Army. They first agreed on overthrowing the Choshu

<sup>220</sup> 3. 10th June 1921 to 10th October 1921 (3. Taisho 10-nen 6-gatsu 10-nichi kara Taisho 10-nen 10-gatsu 10-nichi 3. 大正 10 年 6 月 10 日から大正 10 年 10 月 10 日) JACAR, B03051153100.

<sup>221</sup> 8. From 14th December 1921 to 30 December 1921 (8. Taisho 10-nen 12-gatsu 14-nichi kara Taisho 10-nen 12-gatsu 30-nichi 8. 大正 10 年 12 月 14 日から大正 10 年 12 月 30 日) JACAR, B03051153600.

<sup>222</sup> Asada, 2017, p.200.

<sup>223</sup> **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA.1.1.8490 and ERA1.1.8493, pp.100-2103.

<sup>224</sup> **Kawada, M.** History of the Japanese Army, Volume 1 (Showa Rikugun Zenshi 1). 8<sup>th</sup> Ed., Kodansha, Tokyo, 2015, p.59.

Group (Choshubatsu 長州閥), the ruling class of the Army ever since the Meiji Restoration.<sup>225</sup> The volunteers from Choshu played a significant role in the Japanese Revolution of 1868 and, after the success of the revolution, the Japanese Army had been ruled by a group of privileged officers who were born in the former Choshu region and were called the Choshu Group. Many Japanese scholars think that issues related to either Manchuria or Mongolia were also taken up during the meeting. On the other hand, according to Kitaoka, the three officers did not adopt a concrete method for the organisational reformation of the Japanese Army at Baden Baden, but did so later in Japan once all of them had returned to the country.<sup>226</sup>

On 13 July 1921, Captain Rinzo Ando was named successor to Komatsubara.<sup>227</sup> Ando replaced not only Komatsubara, but also Obata. The last telegram sent by Obata from Tallinn was Ro-Jo No.12 on 29 January 1921. Obata reported that Litvinov, the Soviet Vice Foreign Minister who was on a visit to Estonia between the 21<sup>st</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, told the head of the Second Department of the Estonian General Staff that he had been assured that France would not alter its appeasement policy with the Soviet Union with the appointment of a new acting French Ambassador to Estonia who had known Litvinov personally for years.<sup>228</sup> After sending the Ro-Jo No.12, Obata left Tallinn for Berlin on 3 February 1922<sup>229</sup> and Ando arrived in Tallinn to substitute for Obata. Ando was the last Japanese military person to reside in Tallinn in the 1920s. The mission was given to him unchanged – the economic and political observation of the Soviet Union – just like his predecessors. On 10 June 1922, the Estonian General Staff forwarded a request by Ando to the Estonian Embassy in Berlin that, after his return to Berlin, Ando wished to maintain communication with the Estonians through the Embassy in Berlin.<sup>230</sup> The date of the departure of Ando could not be identified, but it was sometime between 10 June and 25 November 1922 when the Japanese diplomatic office in Tallinn was also closed.<sup>231</sup> Between 13 and 16 August 1922, Ando visited Tallinn from Berlin, for reasons

<sup>225</sup> Choshu was a former name of today's Yamaguchi Prefecture (Yamaguchi-Ken 山口県).

<sup>226</sup> **Kitaoka, S.** The Japanese Army from the Perspective of Bureaucracy (Kanryo-Sei toshite no Nihon Rikugun). Chikuma Shobou, 2012, p.77. Kitaoka indicated the inability of the three officers to change the Army as the reason, since they were only in their 30s when the meeting of Baden Baden had been organised.

<sup>227</sup> 38. Artillery Captain Rinzo Ando, July 1921 (38. Rikugun houhei taii Ando Rinzo, Taisho 10-nen 7-gatsu 38. 陸軍砲兵大尉安藤麟三 大正 10 年 7 月) JACAR, B16080219700.

<sup>228</sup> 4. 20 December 1921 to 8 February 1922 (4. Taisho 10-nen 12-gatsu 20-nichi kara Taisho 11-nen 2-gatsu 8-nichi 4. 大正 10 年 12 月 20 日から大正 11 年 2 月 8 日) JACAR, B03051154200.

<sup>229</sup> Paewaleht, 3 February 1921, p.3.

<sup>230</sup> Instruction of the Estonian Foreign Ministry to the Minister in Berlin, 10 June 1922. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA957.8.52., p.8.

<sup>231</sup> Notification of closure of the Japanese diplomatic office in Tallinn (No.67), 21 November 1922. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA957.8.52., p.10.

unknown.<sup>232</sup> Presumably, the trip was to communicate to the Estonian General Staff for a certain purpose such as the exchange of Soviet information. This was the last known contact between the Estonian and Japanese Armies in the early 1920s.

## 6.2 Failure of the Siberian Intervention and Establishment of the Japanese-Polish Friendship in the Military Intelligence Sector (1922–1923)

The departure of Captain Ando from Estonia in 1922 meant the closure of the Tallinn office of the Japanese Army. Mutual communication between the Estonian and Japanese Armies was then lost for the next seven or eight years.

Such a sudden break was probably caused by the failure of Japan's Siberian Intervention. On 25 October 1922, the Japanese Army completed their withdrawals from Siberia and Vladivostok.<sup>233</sup> According to Ito, within 8 years of its deployment to Russia, the Army had wasted 930 million yen, and over 4,000 troops had perished on Russian soil.<sup>234</sup> In return for this highly political adventure, Japan only succeeded in gaining the mistrust of the international community, which doubted its territorial ambition over Siberia, and the Army merely gained the mistrust of the Japanese populace for such long and meaningless overseas deployment.<sup>235</sup> As a collateral result, the Tallinn office lost its purpose in the aftermath of the Japanese withdrawal from Russia.

The closure of the Tallinn office was probably also linked with severe arms reduction plans implemented in the Japanese Army during the early 1920s. Between 1922 and 1925, the Japanese Army embraced several stages of arms reduction. In the first stage, implemented in 1922, 2,268 officers, 57,300 soldiers and 13,000 horses were retired. As a result, 15% of the Army budget was saved.<sup>236</sup> The most drastic arms reduction was implemented in May 1925, under Army Minister Kazushige Ugaki. This so-called 'Ugaki Military Reduction' (Ugaki Gunshuku 宇垣軍縮) required the Japanese Army to abolish four divisions, roughly 48,000 officers and soldiers.<sup>237</sup> Under such circumstance, it was difficult to maintain the

<sup>232</sup> Tallinn City Archive (Tallinna Linnaarhiiv). TLA1376.1.8.

<sup>233</sup> Ito, M. Rise and Fall of Military Cliques, Volume 2. (Gunbatsu Kouboushi 2). Kojinsha, Tokyo, 2016, p.98.

<sup>234</sup> Asada referred to the book 'History of the Yasukuni Shrine on people perished in wars' (Yasukuni Jinjya Chukon-Shi 靖国神社忠魂史) and indicated that in total, 3,333 troops fell victim to the Siberian Intervention. Reference: Asada, 2017, p.238.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., p.98.

<sup>236</sup> Ito, 2016, p.114.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., p.117.

secret organ in Tallinn, which was not even officially accredited by the local government.

When the Japanese Army lost its connection to the Estonian General Staff in the 1920s, Poland emerged as Japan's new potential ally. There was an official military attaché from the Japanese Army stationed in Warsaw (Captain Masataka Yamawaki) from 1922.<sup>238</sup> In early 1923, Captain Jan Kowalewski was sent to Japan to provide a three-month course on cryptanalysis.<sup>239</sup> The Japanese Second Department decided to detach its officers to Poland to learn more from the Poles. First, in 1926, Major Hyakutake and Major Kudo were sent to Poland and then, in 1929, Major Sakai and Major Okubo.<sup>240</sup> Coincidentally, the Estonian Army also sent Major Artur Normak to Poland in summer 1926 to study radio intelligence and submitted a report to recommend the organisation of radio intelligence in the Estonian Army.<sup>241</sup>

By the middle of the 1920s, the Soviet Union had succeeded in gaining international recognition from Finland, Turkey, Iran, the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), Germany, Poland, Great Britain, Italy, France and China, followed by Japan in 1925.<sup>242</sup> Yet, this was just a temporary cease-fire between Japan and the Soviet Union, as a re-run of the Russo-Japanese War was thought to be inevitable<sup>243</sup> because the existence of the Soviet Union itself posed a security threat to Japan, since the Communist nation stood against the Japanese ideological identity of capitalist and colonial pursuits within an imperial system.<sup>244</sup>

### 6.3 Rise of the Thursday Group and Confidential Order 'San-Mitsu No. 908-1' (1923–1927)

The aforementioned three Japanese Army officers who had gathered at Hotel Stefany in Baden Baden returned to Japan in 1923 and began to hold meetings with their sympathisers. In 1927, the meeting was officially named 'Futaba Group' (Futaba-

<sup>238</sup> **Rutkowska, E. P.** The Russo-Japanese War and Its Impact on Polish-Japanese Relations in the First Half of the Twentieth Century. *Analecta Nipponica*, 2011, 1, p.159. [http://bazhum.muzhp.pl/media/files/Analecta\\_Nipponica/Analecta\\_Nipponica-r2011-t1/Analecta\\_Nipponica-r2011-t1-s11-43/Analecta\\_Nipponica-r2011-t1-s11-43.pdf](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl/media/files/Analecta_Nipponica/Analecta_Nipponica-r2011-t1/Analecta_Nipponica-r2011-t1-s11-43/Analecta_Nipponica-r2011-t1-s11-43.pdf) (Access Date and Time: 23 April 2019, 11:13AM)

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p.28.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p.29.

<sup>241</sup> Juurvec, 2018, p.63.

<sup>242</sup> Kuromiya & Mamoulia, 2016, p.113. Meanwhile, the United States recognised the Soviet Union in 1933.

<sup>243</sup> **May, E., R. (Ed.)**. *Knowing One's Enemies*. Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1986, p.430.

<sup>244</sup> **Koshiro, Y.** *Imperial Eclipse: Japan's Strategic Thinking about Continental Asia before August 1945*. Cornell University Press, New York, 2013, p.16.



Kai 二葉会). Around 20 young officers joined the group including Daisaku Koumoto, who would go on to lead the Manchurian Incident three years later. The group aimed at overthrowing the Choshu Group in the Japanese Army. In fact, between 1922 and 1926, when the members of the Futaba Group were stationed at the Army College as instructors, none of the officers born in Yamaguchi Prefecture graduated from the college.<sup>245</sup> It was the first step of their plan. Also, the Futaba Group started to focus on Manchuria and Mongolia under the influence of Koumoto who was appointed Staff Officer of the Kwantung Army in 1926.<sup>246</sup>



**Picture 2.** Major Kiichiro Higuchi, Japanese military attaché to Poland (first from the left) and Latvian military officers at Krasnaja Gorka during the summer exercise of the Polish Army. This picture was taken by Karl-Ludvig Jakobsen, then Estonian military attaché to Poland. (12th August 1925) Reference: Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv), ERA.1131.1.149.95.

In November 1927, the ‘Thursday Group’ (Mokuyou-Kai 木曜会) was established by young Staff officers of the General Staff. The leader was Teiichi Suzuki, a member of the Operational Department of the General Staff. On 1 March 1928, the Thursday Group held its 5<sup>th</sup> meeting and decided to install a puppet regime in

<sup>245</sup> Kawada, 2015, p.63.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., p.65. The Kwantung Army (or Kanto-Gun 関東軍 in Japanese) was a unit of the Japanese Army in China whose purpose was to secure the South Manchuria Railway and Kwantung Leased Territory. Both were under Japanese control.

Manchuria to prepare for a future war with the Soviet Union, yet the future war with China would require much preparation and it would be done only to secure natural resources. Although Nagata and Okamura were members of the Thursday Group, they did not participate in the meeting on 1 March.<sup>247</sup>

On 6 October 1927, the Japanese General Staff issued an order known as ‘San-Mitsu No.908-1’ (「参密第 908-1 号」)<sup>248</sup> to Colonel Michitaro Komatsubara, who was not serving as the military attaché to the Soviet Union. The General Staff asked Komatsubara to report the details of organisations and persons who might be useful for “espionage, propaganda, and stratagem” (see **Evidence No.2**). Indeed, in 1927 the Japanese Army began to move toward future wars with two gigantic nations: China and the Soviet Union.

## 6.4 Russian Language Learners of the Japanese Army in Riga (1924–1929)

In March 1924, Japanese assistant military attaché to Russia in Berlin residence visited Riga with Captain Noritsune Shimizu.<sup>249</sup> In Riga, there was a Japanese diplomat office ran by First Secretary Sentaro Ueda, which had just been established on 9 June 1923.<sup>250</sup> The Riga diplomat office was Japan’s first official diplomatic mission in the Baltic States.<sup>251</sup>

The assistant military attaché suggested to Ueda that he leave Shimizu in Riga so that he could continue his study programme in Riga. A few days later, Ueda found out through a meeting with Shimizu that the military attaché to Russia resident in Berlin intended to move to Riga which was geographically and politically more convenient for the observation of the Soviet Union than Berlin.<sup>252</sup>

<sup>247</sup> Kawada, 2015, p.67.

<sup>248</sup> ‘San-Mitsu’ (参密) stood for ‘Sanbo Honbu’ (参謀本部, General Staff) and ‘Mitsumei’ (密命, Confidential Order) in Japanese.

<sup>249</sup> 1. Europe/15 Japanese diplomat office in Riga (1. Ou/15 Zai Riga shuchojyo 1. 欧/15 在リガ出張所) JACAR, B15100944400.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> There was a case involving Masamoto Kitada, a Japanese diplomat who was frequently detached to Estonia from the Legation in Stockholm during the Estonian War of Independence (1918-1920), but Kitada was neither formally accredited to Estonia nor had an established diplomatic office in Tallinn. Although Sentaro Ueda was also not a formally accredited diplomat to Latvia, he still established a diplomatic office in Riga so the office is considered to be Japan’s first permanent diplomatic mission in the Baltic States.

<sup>252</sup> JACAR, B15100944400.

Ueda opposed Shimizu's proposal because Japan had not yet established a formal diplomatic mission in Latvia<sup>253</sup> and warned Tokyo that the Japanese Foreign Ministry would lose its dignity if it stationed a military attaché in Riga without the existence of a formal Japanese diplomatic mission in Latvia.<sup>254</sup> The plan of the Japanese Army failed due to the strong opposition of Ueda, yet they decided to detach 'Russian language learners' to Riga consecutively. The second officer sent to Riga was Captain Torashiro Kawabe who arrived in Riga via Moscow on 1 March 1926.<sup>255</sup> Kawabe was given an order to study Soviet military affairs in addition to the Russian language. According to the report to the General Staff, Kawabe was studying the "special facilities designed for the Russian (geographical) circumstance and (Russian) general strategy/tactics" (Rokoku Kokujyo ni Motozuku Tokushu-Shisetsu narabini Ippan Senryaku Senjyutsu 露国の国情に基づく特殊施設並びに一般戦略戦術) during his residence in Riga.<sup>256</sup> However, as Kawabe himself recollected, "there was no way to conduct such research in Riga and the greatest achievement (in Riga) was to master the Russian language".<sup>257</sup>

On 12 October 1926, while Kawabe was still living in Riga, the Japanese diplomat office in Riga was closed due to the fiscal retrenchment of the Japanese Foreign Ministry.<sup>258</sup> The Japanese Army had sent the last student officer to Riga in February 1927.<sup>259</sup> Captain Genzo Yanagida arrived in Riga in April 1927 and researched the Soviet general military affairs there.<sup>260</sup> Yanagida was arrested in Manchuria in August 1945 by the Soviet military forces and records of his interrogations in Moscow were forwarded to the Tokyo War Tribunal. According to Soviet records, Yanagida did not fulfil his duty as a researcher of Soviet military

<sup>253</sup> 'Diplomat Office' (Gaikoukan Shutsuchojyo 外交官出張所) was a temporary instrument for Japanese diplomats who were formally accredited to other countries to be (temporarily) detached to third countries. Thus, the submission of credentials to the local government, which was required in case of the establishment of formal diplomatic missions such as legations and embassies was not always necessary.

<sup>254</sup> JACAR, B15100944400.

<sup>255</sup> Kawabe, 1971, p.25.

<sup>256</sup> Regarding the selection of student officers to be sent overseas in 1928 (Showa 3-nen haken gakoku chuzaiin kettei no ken 昭和3年派遣外国駐在員決定の件) JACAR, C01003722800.

<sup>257</sup> Kawabe, 1971, p.28.

<sup>258</sup> JACAR, B15100944400.

<sup>259</sup> Request of the Japanese Embassy in the Soviet Union to send the Army officer Genzo Yanagida to Estonia, Latvia, and Poland (No.2), 8 March 1927. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA1584.1.710., p.2.

<sup>260</sup> JACAR, C01003722800.

affairs, since he recollected “I (Yanagida) was studying the Russian language in Riga and read several books about the Soviet Union there”.<sup>261</sup>

There is no way to confirm the testimonies of the Japanese officers, as no comparative materials were available on the subject, but one thing that was certain was that none of them was trained for espionage. During the same period when the Japanese officers had been in Riga, Estonia and Latvia were targeted by the Soviet intelligence service’s espionage offensives. On 21 January 1924, shortly after the death of Vladimir Lenin, the Estonian police launched a sweeping operation against underground or semi-official Communist circles across Estonia. As a result, about 200 of the most active Communists were imprisoned.<sup>262</sup> And, on 1 December 1924, a group of Estonian Communists launched an abortive putsch in Tallinn. They targeted the government buildings and military strongholds. However, the putsch was immediately suppressed by the Estonian military forces of which only a few members decided to side with the Communists.<sup>263</sup>

In Latvia, Communist activities had also been intensifying in 1927 and 1928. In Riga, between November and December 1927, 21 persons suspected of being Communists were arrested. At the same time, in Daugavpils, a secret organisation of Soviet collaborators was exposed. The organisation consisted of eight persons led by a Latvian Russian called Yukhno who sent information regarding the Latvian Army to the Soviet Union.<sup>264</sup> Moreover, in June 1928, Karl Lange, head of the Soviet intelligence service in Latvia, was arrested by the Latvian police. Antonia Binzhe, a collaborator of Lange who was arrested with Lange, confessed to the Latvian police that she was trying to acquire classified information about the Latvian Navy.<sup>265</sup> The Soviet government forced the Latvian counterpart to release Lange, threatening that the trade agreement with Latvia would be terminated.<sup>266</sup> The 1920s was the time when Estonia and Latvia experienced their greatest difficulties in dealing with the Soviet Union before the Second World War. There was no room for Japanese officers who barely understood Russian and did not have the espionage training necessary to intervene in local affairs related to the Soviet Union or to collect the information.

<sup>261</sup> GHQ/SCAP Records, International Prosecution Section. Affidavit No.723. Entry No.327 Court Exhibits in English and Japanese, IPS, 1945-47. <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/10274791> (Access Date and Time: 8 March 2019 23:27PM)

<sup>262</sup> **Medijainen, E. & Made, V.** (Eds.). *Estonian Foreign Policy at the Crossroads*. Aleksanteri Institute, Helsinki, 2002, p.47.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, p.43. Medijainen & Made suspected that the putsch was orchestrated by the Soviet intelligence service since there were several reasons for them to support the Estonian Communists. Indeed, a number of Comintern documents preserved in Estonia show their involvement.

<sup>264</sup> Report by New Scotland Yard, originally forwarded by the British intelligence service S.I.S., 14 March 1928. **British National Archive**. KV3.144.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*

Furthermore, the Japanese officers were on their own in providing analyses of these events, since the Japanese diplomat office in Riga was closed on 12 October 1926.

Major problems of the Japanese captains sent to Latvia between 1924 and 1929 were 1) lack of Russian language skills required for analyses of Soviet information and 2) lack of the military experience needed to precisely select and analyse the Soviet information. Before his departure to Latvia, Kawabe took six months of Russian language training,<sup>267</sup> but this was insufficient for the research of foreign military affairs. The failure of the language officers, which would have been experimental for the Japanese Army, ultimately led to the detachment of the first Japanese military attaché to Latvia in July 1931.<sup>268</sup>

## 6.5 Assassination of Zhang Zuolin and Secret Visit of the Japanese Naval officers to Latvia (1928)

In 1928, the Kwantung Army stepped into the occupation of Manchuria according to the plan of the Thursday Group. The information on the Japanese territorial ambition was intercepted by the Soviet OGPU. At the end of 1925, Feliks Dzerzhinskii, chairman of the OGPU, reported to Stalin that the British were canvassing the White emigrés in Prague, Paris and Constantinople on the possibility of cooperation for an invasion of the USSR. According to the information Stalin received, despite the fact that no such British-led coalition had existed, the Japanese were planning to join this anti-Soviet coalition together with the dominant warlord of China, Zhang Zuolin.<sup>269</sup>

Zhang Zuolin, head of the Han Chinese military clique that ruled Manchuria<sup>270</sup> and who had long been supported by the Japanese government, occupied Beijing and sought a decisive battle with the National Revolutionary Army (NRA or 国民革命軍 in Chinese) of the Kuomintang Government in Nanjing. The latter had begun the famous Northern Expedition (北伐) in 1926 to unify China, which had long been in a state of civil war. The NRA reached the outskirts of Beijing and, even though Zhang Zuolin wanted to confront the NRA in early 1928, the Japanese government strongly recommended him to abandon Beijing and Zhang had no choice but to retreat to Manchuria.<sup>271</sup>

It was doubtful whether Zhang's troops would have been able to take on the NRA in Beijing or elsewhere. According to one account, Zhang's Army had 500,000

<sup>267</sup> Kawabe, 1971, p.23.

<sup>268</sup> JACAR, B14090832100.

<sup>269</sup> **Harris, J.** Encircled by enemies: Stalin's Perceptions of the Capitalist World, 1918 – 1941. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 30(3), 2007, p.519.

<sup>270</sup> Zhang's military clique was also known as the Fengtian clique (奉天派) .

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, p.28.

troops at its zenith. However, Wang Yongjing, former political adviser of Zhang, claimed that disarmament of Zhang's Army was necessary due to severe lack of tax revenue. Wang warned Zhang that, compared to 5,100 million yuan of military budget, the revenue was merely 2,300 million yuan. The advice of Wang was never taken into account by Zhang.<sup>272</sup> On the other hand, Zhang followed the advice of the Japanese in 1928 as he probably knew the real ability of his army in a possible long-term war with the NRA. Zhang's train left Beijing at midnight on 3 June 1928 but it was blown up on the way to Shengyang and Zhang was killed. In the aftermath of WW2, it was proven that the explosives used were prepared by agents of Colonel Daisaku Koumoto, a member of the Thursday Group who was then a Staff officer of the Kwantung Army.<sup>273</sup> Zhang Xueliang, son of Zhang Zuolin who succeeded in the position of commander of the Manchurian military clique, threw suspicion on the Japanese Army for the murder of his father. He agreed with the Nanjing government that Manchuria should be opened for nationalist agitating activities. The rapprochement policy of Zhang Xueliang with the Nanjing government made the Manchurian question a major political problem in Tokyo since Manchuria was considered to be in the Japanese sphere of interest.<sup>274</sup>

In Europe in summer 1928, the Japanese Navy was actively working on establishing communication with the Latvian counterpart. Colonel Kisaburo Koyanagi, Japanese Naval attaché to the Soviet Union, and his assistant military attaché Shiro Wakamatsu made secret visits to the Naval bases in Latvia (Riga, Liepaja, and Ventspils).<sup>275</sup> The three ports had previously been reported as 'good natural ports' by Sentaro Ueda, representative of the Riga diplomat office, on 21 October 1923.<sup>276</sup> Their trip would have become known to the Soviet intelligence service as the Riga am Sonntag, a Baltic German newspaper in Latvia, revealed that the two officers had been seen at Kovno, Poland.<sup>277</sup> In 1928, Koyanagi and his army counterpart in Moscow (Japanese military attaché to the Soviet Union from the Japanese Army) also travelled to Persia, Afghanistan, India and even to Central Asia.<sup>278</sup>

<sup>272</sup> **Suyama, S.** Toshiro Obata: Demon of Operations (Sakusen no Oni: Obata Toshiro). Fuyou Shobou, Tokyo, 1983, p.226.

<sup>273</sup> Kawada, 2015, p.30.

<sup>274</sup> **Weland, J.** Misguided Intelligence: Japanese Military Intelligence Officers in the Manchurian Incident, September 1931. *The Journal of Military History*, 58(3), 1994, p.453.

<sup>275</sup> Report of the Latvian War Ministry (No.119), 20 August 1929. **Latvian State Historical Archive (Latvijas Valsts Vēstures Arhīvs)**. LVVA.2570.1.215, p.50.

<sup>276</sup> **Shima, S.** Introduction to Japanese-Latvian Relations between the Wars: (1) The Beginning of Diplomatic Intercourse. *GAKUEN*, 2005, 772, p.95.

<sup>277</sup> Riga am Sonntag, 26 August 1928, p.3.

<sup>278</sup> Kuromiya & Mamoulia, 2016, p.123.

Shortly after, on 31 August 1928, Colonel Shigeyasu Suzuki, military attaché to Poland, was ordered to jointly administer Latvia.<sup>279</sup> A few days later, on 3 September, the Japanese-Latvian Treaty of Commerce and Navigation became effective.<sup>280</sup> In late 1928, the Japanese Foreign Ministry was in preparation for the establishment of a Legation in Riga. Yet, at the moment, it chose to jointly administer Latvia with the Ambassador to Germany also serving as military attaché to Latvia. On 23 October, Ambassador Harukazu Nagaoka to Germany, accompanied by Colonel Shigeyasu Suzuki along with several other Japanese Army officers (Captain Minoru Sasaki and Captain Seiichi Terada) submitted credentials to the Latvian President Gustavs Zemgals.<sup>281</sup> Ambassador Nagaoka and Colonel Suzuki were to jointly administer Latvia from their residences in Berlin and Warsaw.

Japanese intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea region and the Middle East were being monitored by the Soviet intelligence service. On 28 December 1928, the Tallinn branch of the Soviet intelligence service OGPU issued a report for the Commissar for Foreign Affairs (NKID) in Moscow that several changes had been made to the Japanese Embassy in Moscow and, in order to evaluate the effects of the changes, the three agents were sent to several destinations: Sato to Khabarovsk, Kayana to Vladivostok, Naruse to France, and Miura to Japan.<sup>282</sup>

<sup>279</sup> 12. Poland (12. Harankoku 12. 波蘭国) JACAR, B14090833200.

<sup>280</sup> **Karnups, VKir P.** Latvian-Japanese Economic Relations 1918-1940. Humanities and Social Sciences Latvia, Volume 24, Issue 1, 2016, p.42

<sup>281</sup> Latvis, 30 October 1928, p.8.

<sup>282</sup> Report to Kozlovsky, head of the Far Eastern department of the NKID. (No.84669) 28 December 1928. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERAF138sm.1.32, p.63.



**Picture 3.** A group of the Japanese Army officers at the 10th Independence Day parade in Riga, Latvia. (18th November 1928) Colonel Michitaro Komatsubara (second from the right), then military attaché to the Soviet Union, and Colonel Shigeyasu Suzuki (first from the left, front), military attaché to Poland and Latvia, were confirmed. Reference: Estonian Film Archive (Eesti filmiarhiiv), EFA.124.P.A-134.A-134-37.

## 6.6 Conference of Japanese Military Attachés in Berlin and Visits of Japanese Military Officials to the Baltic States and Finland (1929–1930)

1929 and 1930 were turning points for Japanese military intelligence activities in the Baltic States and Finland. On 6 March 1929, Naval attaché Koyanagi, who secretly visited Latvia and several destinations in Central and South Asia in 1928, committed suicide at his office in Moscow.<sup>283</sup> According to Hiroaki Kuromiya, he found out that Koyanagi had been ensnared by the Soviet intelligence service. A month before the suicide on 3 February, Koyanagi held a party at his official residence in Moscow and his Russian language teacher was one of the invitees. According to the local newspaper, Koyanagi wounded the female teacher with a knife and chased her down the corridor while throwing a table and dishes at her as a result of her refusal of his advances.<sup>284</sup> The Polish intelligence service identified the teacher and her friend as OGPU. During the party, one of the OGPU agents attempted to steal keys to the personal safe of Koyanagi,

<sup>283</sup> Tokyo Asahi Shimbun, 9 March 1929, Evening edition, p.2.

<sup>284</sup> Kuromiya, 2011, p.662.



but failed. Thus, the female language teacher pretended to have been publicly threatened by Koyanagi and caused a brawl at the party to conceal the attempt.<sup>285</sup> At least one Japanese newspaper released a similar analysis of the incident, but it was too late to stop Koyanagi from committing suicide for his loss of face as a military officer.

A month later from the tragic death of Koyanagi, a conference of Japanese military attachés stationed in Europe was held in Berlin. The participants of the April 1929 Conference were the attachés from all across Europe, from the Soviet Union to Germany. The moderator was Lieutenant General Iwane Matsui, then head of the Second Department of the General Staff.<sup>286</sup> (see **Evidence No.3**) At the conference, various issues about the organisation of intelligence activities against the Soviet Union were discussed. Colonel Shigeyasu Suzuki suggested that the other Great Powers and the Japanese Army should consider stationing military attachés in Riga. Colonel Michitaro Komatsubara<sup>287</sup>, the military attaché to the Soviet Union, also supported Suzuki's idea of focusing on the Baltic States by emphasising the fact that the Estonian military attaché had been the most successful among the foreign military attachés in Moscow in terms of collecting Soviet information.

Shortly after the April 1929 Conference in Berlin, the political situation in the Far East entered a new stage. On 27 May 1929, a Manchurian police unit searched the Soviet consulates in Harbin, Qiqihar, Manzhouli and Suifenho to find evidence of the organising of a plot against the local Manchurian government under Zhang Xueliang, and it confiscated a number of secret documents about the Soviet plan to seize the China Eastern Railway (CER), which was then jointly operated by the Manchurian and Soviet governments.<sup>288</sup> The search of the Soviet Consulate in Harbin and the subsequent arrests of 39 Chinese and Soviet citizens by the Manchurian police damaged bilateral relations, if not the trilateral relations including the Nanjing government under Chiang Kai-shek. On 10 July, the Manchurian government of Zhang Xueliang closed down the Soviet trade missions in Harbin and expelled the Soviet workers of the CER.<sup>289</sup> The tension between Manchuria and the Soviet Union resulted in the outbreak of the Sino-Soviet conflict in summer 1929. However, in November 1929, facing military defeat the Chinese government agreed on a ceasefire with the Soviet Union. On 22 December 1929, the Khabarovsk Protocol was signed between China and the Soviet Union and, by December, the Soviet troops in Manchuria completed their withdrawal.<sup>290</sup> From the Soviet perspective, at least for the OGPU, the aggressive behaviour and the decision of

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., p.663.

<sup>286</sup> **Boyd, C.** The Berlin-Tokyo Axis and Japanese Military Initiative. *Modern Asian Studies*, 1981, 15, 2, pp.314-315.

<sup>287</sup> The same person who had been stationed in Tallinn between 1919 and 1921.

<sup>288</sup> **Toynbee, A., J.** *Survey of International Affairs 1929*. Oxford University Press, London, 1930, p.344.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., p.349.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., pp.367-368.

Zhang Xueliang to start the war against the Soviet Union was the fault of the British, Japanese, Americans or all three.<sup>291</sup>



**Picture 4.** Colonel Shigeyasu Suzuki, Japanese military attaché to Poland and Latvia, at the headquarters of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division of the Estonian Army, Rakvere. (November 1929?)  
Reference: Estonian Film Archive (Eesti filmiarhiiv) EFA.26.P.0-52069

The conflict in the Far East was carefully observed by American military attachés stationed in Europe. For example, Major George Arneman, American military attaché to Latvia, reported on 28 November 1929 that, despite the war with Manchuria, the Soviet Union was still economically and politically incapable of launching a full-scale war against any foreign countries except China (Manchuria). According to Arneman, “it is only necessary to add that there are enough reliable OGPU regular troops and enough munitions to make a considerable impression in Manchuria against a soldiery as poor as the Chinese. China does not seem to be able to stop Russia. Japan can stop her with a word – when she wants to”.<sup>292</sup> The report of Arneman was merely based on his assumptions and is less reliable from the perspective of historical criticism. Meanwhile, the Japanese Army, especially its detachment to Manchuria (Kwantung Army in English or Kanto Gun 關東軍 in Japanese) was shocked by the Chinese defeat. They decided to prompt the absorption of Manchuria and the elimination of Zhang Xueliang before the Soviet power could

<sup>291</sup> Harris, 2007, p.523.

<sup>292</sup> Report of the American military attaché to Latvia (Riga), 28 November 1929. **American National Archive, College Park, Maryland.** Microfilm Series M1443, Roll No.16, p.366.

do so.<sup>293</sup> As a result, the Japanese Army was forced to revise its war plan against the Soviet Union in 1930.<sup>294</sup>

In November 1929, in Europe, Colonel Shigeyasu Suzuki, Japanese military attaché to Poland and Latvia, visited Estonia and Latvia. In Estonia, Suzuki visited the headquarters of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division of the Estonian Army in Rakvere, and in Latvia, Colonel Giedraitis, Lithuanian military attaché to Latvia.<sup>295</sup> Giedraitis reported to Kaunas that the “Japanese military attaché did not know there is an existing communication line between Kaunas and Warsaw”<sup>296</sup> so Suzuki asked Giedraitis in Riga to forward the letter to the Lithuanian General Staff enclosed in an envelope.<sup>297</sup> Between 14 and 15 July 1930, Major General Eikitsu Ishii, Chief of the Ordnance Survey Department (Rikuchi Sokuryobu 陸地測量部) of the Japanese General Staff, visited Finland on his way to Sweden.<sup>298</sup> In Helsinki, he made a courtesy visit to the Finnish General Staff and had a chance meeting with Major General Kurt Martti Wallenius, then Finnish Chief of the General Staff. This was the first official contact between the Finnish and Japanese Armies in the 1930s. In the context of Finnish history, Wallenius had been an important figure for his leadership in the so-called Lapua Movement (Lapuan liike), a right-wing organisation active between the end of the 1920s and the early 1930s. The author decided to briefly take up the outline of the Lapua movement and the involvement of Wallenius in order to understand how Wallenius approached the Japanese Army.

The early 1930s were days of political upheaval for the Baltic States and Finland. The first change occurred in Lithuania. In 1926, young nationalistic officers of the Lithuanian military forces who strongly opposed the conclusion of the Soviet-Lithuanian non-aggression pact and were influenced by a military coup in Poland, which established the right-wing dictatorship of Marshal Josef Piłsudski in the same year, supported the establishment of similar right-wing dictatorship in their homeland. As a result, in September 1929, the dictatorship of nationalist Antanas

<sup>293</sup> **Erickson, J.** *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History 1918-1941.* Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London, 1962, p.244.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, p.245.

<sup>295</sup> **Lithuanian Central State Archive (Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybės Archyvas).** LCVA. F.929. ap2.6.59.

<sup>296</sup> Poland and Lithuania did not recognise each other until March 1938 due to a territorial dispute over Wilno (Vilnius) which was occupied by Poland on 9 October 1920.

<sup>297</sup> **Lithuanian Central State Archive (Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybės Archyvas).** LCVA. F.929. ap2.6.59.

<sup>298</sup> Report of the Finnish military attaché to the Soviet Union in Moscow (No.210/M/30), 8 July 1930. **Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto).** Sark-1407.14.

Smetona was established in Lithuania, which lasted until the Soviet occupation of Lithuania in summer 1940.<sup>299</sup>

A similar case took place in Finland, but it had an alternative ending. The so-called 'Lapua Movement' between 1929 and 1932 was a "proto-fascist political movement"<sup>300</sup> organised by Finnish right-wingers with anti-Soviet sentiments. It also involved members of the Finnish military forces and the crisis between the Nationalists and Communists, which had been going on since the Finnish Civil War in 1918. However, because of their radicalisation, Lapua Movement supporters were recognised by the Finnish government as a domestic security threat, along with the Communists. In winter 1932, the remnants of the Lapua Movement attempted to overthrow the Finnish government and organised a poorly planned rebellion in the town of Mäntsälä near Helsinki. The coup attempt failed and the leaders were arrested by the government.

In 1929, taking advantage of the economic and political situations, the Finnish Communists strengthened their strongholds in Finland through Communist-led strikes, propaganda and a communistic educational programme targeting the Finnish youth.<sup>301</sup> Then, when the Finnish Communists held a big rally in the town of Lapua, tension with the local peasants reached its height. In November 1929, 400 young Communist sympathisers gathered in Lapua, South Ostrobothnia for the 'Challenge Festival'. Lapua had been known as a place with a fiercely conservative background where a prison camp for Bolshevik Russian PoWs had been located during the Finnish War of Independence.<sup>302</sup>

In Finland, ever since 1929, farm income had been falling drastically and the Agrarian Party government was a one-party minority cabinet with weak political influence, which made it extremely difficult to make decisions and carry them through. Amidst the economic and political turmoil, the farmers were becoming frustrated with the government and also with rapidly growing Communism in Finland.<sup>303</sup> The first meeting of the local anti-Communist farmers was held in Lapua on 1 December 1930, led by Vihtori Kosola. Kosola told the participants

<sup>299</sup> **Shima, S.** *Stories: History of the Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.* (Monogatari: Baruto-Sangoku no Rekishi, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) Chuo Kouron Shinsha, Tokyo, 2017, p.174.

<sup>300</sup> **Koskelainen, S., & Hjelm, T.** Christ vs. Communism: Communism as a Religious Social Problem in Finland's Proto-Fascist Lapua Movement in the 1930s. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 30, 4, 2017, p.769.

<sup>301</sup> Rintala, 1962, p.164.

<sup>302</sup> **Ingman, L.** *The Lapua Anti-Communist Movement in Finland.* Government Printing Office, Helsinki, 1930, p.2.

<sup>303</sup> **Rintala, M.** *Three Generations: The Extreme Right Wing in Finnish Politics.* Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1962, p.164. The biggest concern for Finnish farmers was a possible collectivisation of agriculture if the Communists took power in Finland.

that the destruction of all Communist cells in Finland was necessary. His declaration was followed by a number of similar anti-Communist meetings throughout Finland.<sup>304</sup> The supporters of the anti-Communist movement in Finland declared the enactment of a 'Law of Lapua' (Lapuan laki) which was, in itself, above any of the previous written statutes, which had failed to prevent the emergence of the Communist movement in Finland and could not ensure the existence of an independent White Finland.<sup>305</sup> The basic concept of the Law of Lapua was simple: the total destruction of Communism in Finland. The simple policy was immediately backed by a number of supporters all across Finland and established as the Lapua Movement.

Amidst heated political debates among Finnish politicians to ban Communist activities, which was opposed by the Finnish Social Democrats, several thousand of the Lapua Movement supporters gathered in Vaasa on 4th June 1930 following the planned destruction of the printing presses of a left-wing newspaper in the city.<sup>306</sup> The situation soon turned out to be a major riot between the Lapua Movement supporters and the local left-wingers. It was a turning point for the Lapua Movement which opted for further radicalisation. Borrowing the word of Rintala, the "acts of violence in Vaasa on 4th June initiated a chain reaction of political murders, beatings, and intended to carry out the Law of Lapua".<sup>307</sup>

On 7 July 1930, 12,000 Lapua Movement supporters from all across Finland organised a demonstration march to Helsinki.<sup>308</sup> Facing the radicalisation of the Lapua Movement, the possibility of civil war began to be openly discussed among Finland's leading law enforcement officials in summer 1930, which was known as the 'Summer of Lapua' (Lapuan kesä).<sup>309</sup> In fact, in the same year a member of the Lapua Movement took to the radio to threaten the country with a coup, if anti-Communist legislation in Parliament failed to pass.<sup>310</sup> However, the positive reaction to the Lapua Movement among the Finnish populace did not last long. On 14 October 1930, Kaarlo Juho Ståhlberg, the first Finnish President (1919-1925), was kidnapped by Lapua Movement supporters together with his wife. According to one account, the kidnapping was planned by Major General Kurt Martti Wallenius, then Chief of Staff of the Finnish Army, and other high-ranking military officers.<sup>311</sup> The vast majority of the Finns even including the media opposed to the

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., p.164.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid., p.165.

<sup>306</sup> Rintala, 1962, p.169.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid., p.170.

<sup>308</sup> Ingman, 1930, p.16.

<sup>309</sup> Rintala, 1962, p.170.

<sup>310</sup> Koskelainen & Hjelm, 2017, p.778.

<sup>311</sup> Rintala, 1962, p.172.

policies of Ståhlberg reacted negatively to this act.<sup>312</sup> The accused Wallenius was forced to retire from the army and turned on the Secretary-General of the Lapua Movement.<sup>313</sup> In 1931, Ståhlberg was nominated as a candidate for the Presidential election. The Lapua Movement backed his opponent Perh Evind Svinhufvud and the movement journal *Aktivisti* even targeted Ståhlberg, urging someone to assassinate him.<sup>314</sup>

Between 27 and 28 February 1932, Lapua Movement supporters, mostly armed members of the National Guards (*Suojeluskunta*, Finnish civil guard organisation), gathered in Mäntsälä to disturb a Social Democratic Party rally. They demanded that the National Guards rise in support of staging a coup against the incumbent Finnish government, but the plan failed and the rest of the militia sided with the government. On 6 March 1932, the rebellion in Mäntsälä ended and the Lapua Movement was banned by the Finnish government.<sup>315</sup> Wallenius was arrested and imprisoned twice for a total of over one year. After his release from prison on 23 April 1934, Wallenius wrote to the Japanese Army Minister (Rikugun Daijin 陸軍大臣)<sup>316</sup> and begged for temporary employment as a winter warfare adviser for a term of 3–5 years.<sup>317</sup> Although the connection with the request of Wallenius is unknown, Japanese military attachés stationed in Moscow, both the Army's and Navy's, visited Helsinki in May 1932 to participate in a multi-day conference with the Finnish General Staff.<sup>318</sup> After all, there is no documentary evidence that the Japanese Army ever considered his employment. It took another five years for the Japanese Army to remember the existence of Wallenius. In 1937, nominated by the Japanese military attaché in Helsinki, Wallenius was appointed a war correspondent representing several Finnish newspapers to report on the situation in the Second Sino-Japanese War.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid., p.173.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid., p.172.

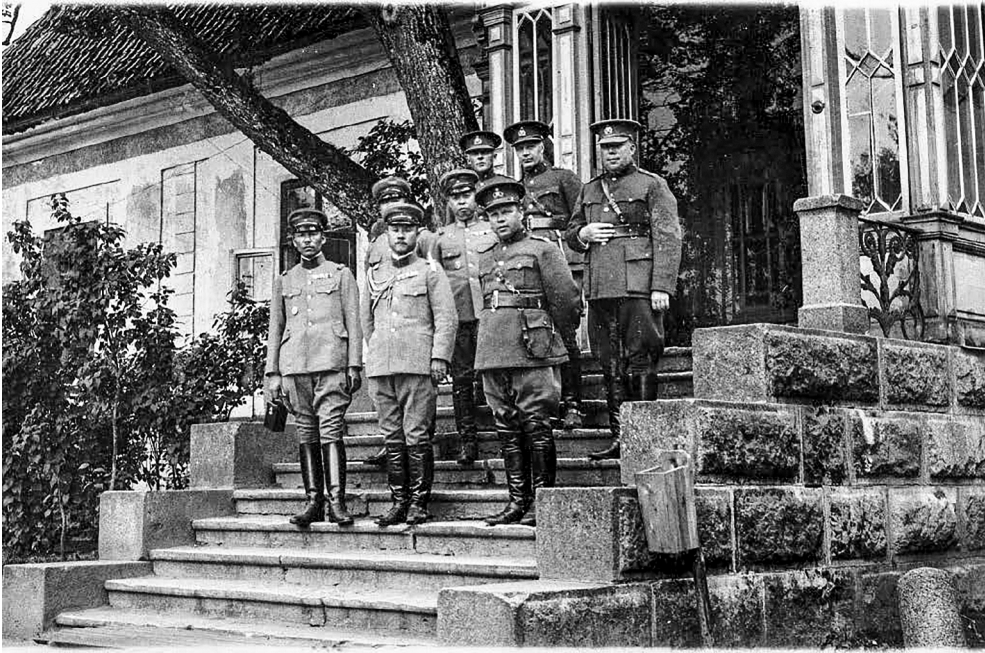
<sup>314</sup> Koskelainen & Hjelm, 2017, p.778.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid., p.780.

<sup>316</sup> The Army Minister at that time was General Senjuro Hayashi.

<sup>317</sup> Letter from Kurt Martti Wallenius to the Japanese Army Ministry (English translation), 23 April 1934. **Kansallisarkisto (Finnish National Archive)**. C10.10.

<sup>318</sup> Report of the American military attaché to Latvia (Riga), 3 June 1932. **American National Archive, College Park, Maryland**. Microfilm Series M1443, Roll No.14, p.1262.; Leskinen, J. *Brother's National Secrets (Veljien Valtiosalaisuus)*. WSOY, Juva, 1999, p.52.



**Picture 5.** A group of Japanese Army officers at the headquarters of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division of the Estonian Army in Rakvere (Summer 1930). Colonel Suzuki (centre, first row) and his successor Major Hikosaburo Hata (first from the left, first row) were confirmed. Courtesy of the Estonian Film Archive (Reference number unknown).

## 7 Japanese Formulation of Intelligence Operational Plans

The Japanese Army's intelligence operations and intelligence structure needed reforming in the aftermath of the Manchurian incident of autumn 1931. Due to the Japanese military occupation of Manchuria and the following birth of Manchukuo, the possibility of war between Japan and the Soviet Union had increased. The tension reached its height in 1933-1934.

In March 1932, secret Japanese diplomatic telegrams were intercepted by the Soviet secret police and the texts were published in *Izvestia*, a Soviet newspaper. The two Japanese diplomats stationed in Moscow (Ambassador and the military attaché) wrote to Tokyo that a war with the Soviet Union was inevitable and, in order to win the war, Japan had to seek the occupation of Eastern Siberia. Indeed, around this period, Soviet leader Stalin was afraid of a simultaneous attack by Japan and Poland.

In October 1932, amidst the rising tension, the Japanese Army formulated the Plan of 1932, the first-ever outline for the Army's intelligence operations against the Soviet Union. According to the plan, the Japanese Army had nurtured friendships with the local military forces of the Baltic Sea region countries such as Estonia and Finland in the middle of the 1930s. Although the details of the Japanese activities around this period could not be fully clarified, the influences of the Eastern Pact, led by France and the Soviet Union, could not be ignored. However, efforts towards the Eastern Pact failed due to the assassination of the French foreign minister and discord among the Baltic States.

### 7.1 The Manchurian Incident and International Reactions to Japanese Territorial Claims (1931–1932)

At around 10 p.m. on the night of 18 September 1931, a Japanese railway maintenance worker detonated a small bomb on the South Manchurian Railway just north of Mukden. Immediately after the explosion, the Kwantung Army, special unit of the Japanese Army stationed in Manchuria to guarantee the safety of the South



Manchurian Railway and the Kwantung Leased Territory which were obtained by Japanese through the victory of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), accused the local Chinese military clique of the explosion and attacked their garrison in Mukden.<sup>319</sup> By the 19<sup>th</sup>, the Kwantung Army was occupying major cities in South Manchuria such as Changchun and Andong.<sup>320</sup> It was obvious that the Japanese military action was well prepared long before the incident on the South Manchurian Railway. With the reinforcement of the Japanese Army unit in Korea (Chosen-Gun 朝鮮軍), which was implemented without the approval of the government in Tokyo, the entire Manchuria was subjugated by the Kwantung Army in February 1932.<sup>321</sup>

Earlier, in June 1931, the Conference of Five Section Chiefs (Gokacho Kaigi 五課長会議) was established at the Japanese General Staff. Major General Yoshitsugu Tatekawa, head of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Department of the General Staff, occupied the chair. Other members of the conference were two officers from the Ministry of the Army (General Tetsuzan Nagata – head of the Military Section and General Neiji Okamura – head of the Control Section) and three officers from the General Staff (General Masataka Yamawaki – head of the Mobilisation Section, General Hisao Watari – head of the Western Section and General Chiaki Shigetou - head of the China Section). In August, Yamawaki was replaced by his successor Hideki Tojo, and several other section chiefs joined. The conference was then renamed the ‘Conference of Seven Section Chiefs’ (Nanakacho Kaigi 七課長会議).<sup>322</sup> The two conferences were unofficial but formally recognised by the Japanese Army.

On 19 June 1931, the Conference of Five Section Chiefs prepared a draft of ‘Future Policies against Manchuria and Mongolia’ and the draft was elaborated into the ‘Guideline for solutions to the Manchurian problem’ (Manshu Mondai Kaiketsu Houshin no Taikou 満州問題解決方針の大綱) which included two items stating that ‘there is a possibility for military action in case of development of anti-Japanese actions in Manchuria’ and ‘Military forces necessary for the military action will be jointly planned by the Kwantung Army and operation section (of the General Staff)’.<sup>323</sup> To sum up, the Manchurian Incident was a well planned military invasion of Manchuria. Shortly after the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident, the Soviet leader Stalin concluded that the event in the Far East had been Japan’s spontaneous movement without consulting other great powers and potentially, Japan might attack the CER as well. His fear was proven to be correct by the information gained through

<sup>319</sup> **Crozier, A., J.** *The Causes of the Second World War*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1998, p.190.

<sup>320</sup> **Kawada, M.** *History of the Japanese Army, Volume 1 (Showa Rikugun Zenshi 1)*. 2nd Ed., Kodansha, 2015, p.9.

<sup>321</sup> Crozier, 1998, p.190.

<sup>322</sup> Kawada, 2015, p.98.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.100-101.

intelligence against Japan. In the middle of December 1931, the OGPU intercepted a letter from Lieutenant Colonel Yukio Kasahara, then Japanese military attaché to the Soviet Union. In the letter to the General Staff in Tokyo, Kasahara advocated a war against the Soviet Union and the annexation of the Soviet Far East and Western Siberia.<sup>324</sup>

On 22 November 1931, Karl Pusta, Estonian Ambassador to France and Belgium, issued a report entitled the ‘Sino-Japanese War’ for the Foreign Ministry in Tallinn. In the report, Pusta showed his concern about the possibility that the “clash between Chinese and Japanese forces would expand into a total war” based on the word of a German journalist von Mutius. He also stressed the haughty attitudes of Japanese diplomatic representatives in Paris, especially Ambassador Yoshizawa, and the Japanese delegation to the League of Nations in Geneva. Furthermore, Pusta emphasised British hesitancy to take up Chinese claims and protest against the Japanese at the Commission of the League of Nations.<sup>325</sup> A day before the submission of the Pusta’s report, on 21 November 1931, the Japanese delegation at the League of Nations made a formal proposal to accept foreign observers to Manchuria. Soon after, a revised proposal including the acceptance of foreign observers from Britain, France and the United States to Manchuria and the prohibition of new military actions was agreed between Japan and the League of Nations.<sup>326</sup>

In the report of 22 November, Pusta reported to Tallinn that the Japanese Army has been occupying Qiqihar for two months.<sup>327</sup> Against Pusta’s concern that the Japanese Army would not retreat from Qiqihar as a result of the agreement at the League of Nations, the Japanese Government ordered the Kwantung Army to retreat from Qiqihar and Prime Minister Reijiro Wakatsuki succeeded in putting the Army under his control.<sup>328</sup> On 15 May 1932, radical young officers of the Japanese Army and Navy attempted to stage a coup in Tokyo and murdered Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai, a successor of Wakatsuki. The ringleaders of the May 15<sup>th</sup> Incident were against Inukai’s policy of deterring the Japanese Army from further territorial expansionism through the authority of the Emperor.<sup>329</sup> Amidst the political upheaval

<sup>324</sup> Harris, 2007, p.525.

<sup>325</sup> Report of the Estonian Legation in Paris (No.4123), 22 November 1931. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA1581.1.1048., p.2.

<sup>326</sup> Kawada, 2015, p.214.

<sup>327</sup> Report of the Estonian Legation in Paris (No.4123), 22 November 1931. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA1581.1.1048., p.2.

<sup>328</sup> Kawada, 2015, p.214. Wakatsuki resigned on 11 December 1931 due to internal strife among the Cabinet and Tsuyoshi Inukai succeeded the position as Prime Minister on 13 December 1931.

<sup>329</sup> Kawada, 2015, p.258. In Article 11 of the Meiji Constitution, enacted in 1890, the Japanese Emperor was a holder of the highest authority (Tousuiken 統帥権) to control the military forces independent of the Cabinet or any of other political entities.

in Tokyo the Kwantung Army, which had obtained permission for further military actions from the General Staff, again sent troops to Qiqihar on 15 December 1931, launched an invasion of Jinzhou, then occupied the city on 3 January 1932. On 5 February, they also occupied Harbin.<sup>330</sup> With the occupation of Harbin, the whole of Manchuria finally fell into Japanese hands. While the Kwantung Army strengthened its stronghold in Manchuria, the League of Nations decided to send the famous Lytton Commission to investigate the background to the Manchurian Incident.<sup>331</sup> While the investigation of the Lytton Commission was continuing, on 1 March 1932 the establishment of the Japanese puppet state of 'Manchukuo' was declared under the initiative of the Kwantung Army.

Like Estonia, Finland was also concerned about Japanese territorial expansionism in Manchuria and the Finnish-Japanese discord became obvious at the Assembly of the League of Nations on 24 February 1933. There, Finland stood for the cause of small states, taking sides with countries condemning Japan for its aggression in Manchuria. However, afterwards, Finnish diplomatic representatives including Foreign Minister Hackzell personally sought appeasement with the Japanese, making the excuse that they might have sided with Japan, but it had not been possible due to the rules of the League of Nations.<sup>332</sup> Hackzell's effort to calm the Japanese was, however, wasted since Japan rejected the recommendation of the League of Nations to withdraw its troops from Manchuria. Instead, they chose to withdraw from the organisation the following month.<sup>333</sup> Hackzell's concern over the Japanese aggression was especially shared by two Finnish government officials specialised in East Asian affairs, George Winkelmann (Minister of Finance) and Karl Gustaf Wähämäki (Consul General in China). Winkelmann was shocked by the assassination of the Japanese Prime Minister Hamaguchi during the Manchurian Incident and<sup>334</sup> Fält concluded that, due to the Japanese aggression in Manchuria, although there were some merits to Finland cooperating with Japan in the security sector, Japan became subject to criticism among high-ranking Finnish officials.<sup>335</sup> The Finnish critical reaction to the Manchurian incident may have been strengthened by disinformation exchanged in London. Between September and October 1931, Colonel Aejmelaesus-Äimä, Finnish military attache in London, had received weekly reports on the development of the event in Manchuria from the Japanese counterpart

<sup>330</sup> Kawada, 2015, p.232.

<sup>331</sup> Crozier, 1998, p.192.

<sup>332</sup> Momose, 1973, p.18.

<sup>333</sup> Kawada, 2015, p.266.

<sup>334</sup> **Fält, O., K.** From Exoticism to Realism: The Traditional Image of Japan in Finland in the Transition Years of the 1930s. (Eksotismista Realismiin: Perinteinen Japanin-Kuva Suomessa 1930-Luvun Murroksessa) Pohjois-Suomen Historiallinen Yhdistys, Rovaniemi, 1982, p.109.

<sup>335</sup> Fält, 1982, p.115.

and forwarded them to Helsinki. However, by middle of October, he concluded that the Japanese reports are impoverished and also contains false information.<sup>336</sup>

In May 1933, the Tangku Truce was concluded between the Kwantung Army and the local Han Chinese military clique, which represented the diplomatic authority of the Nanjing government. The Nanjing government recognised the Japanese presence north of the Great Wall, and a demilitarised zone to the south of it was established.<sup>337</sup> With the Tangku Truce, the Manchurian Incident started in 1931 was officially settled by Chinese concessions.

## 7.2 Formulation of the Plan of 1932 (October 1932)

The establishment of Manchukuo led the Soviet Union to prepare for possible conflict with Japan. The Comintern, the Soviet-led international organisation of Communists, demanded immediate action by member parties to sabotage arms production for and shipment to Japan in February 1932.<sup>338</sup> In accordance with the movement of the Comintern, on 4 March 1932, the Soviet newspaper *Izvestia* published two telegrams proving Japanese intentions to take over Siberia through a war with the Soviet Union. In March 1931, Lieutenant Colonel Yukio Kasahara, Japanese military attaché to the Soviet Union, sent a telegram to Tokyo stating his opinion that Japanese war with the Soviet Union was inevitable and that Tokyo needed set it rapidly in motion. Moreover, Kasahara stated that, in the case of war, Poland, Romania and the Baltic States should join the side of Japan and France should also support the anti-Soviet coalition.<sup>339</sup> The animosity of Kasahara was emphasised by the intercepted telegram of Koki Hirota, Japanese Ambassador to the Soviet Union, who told Tokyo that an ultimate goal for Japanese policy against the Soviet Union should be not only defence against Communism but also the occupation of Eastern Siberia, which was also published in *Izvestia*.<sup>340</sup> Later, during the Tokyo War Tribunal in 1946, Kasahara himself admitted having held a secret meeting with Hirota and Major General Harada, in transit via Moscow, in which the three of them discussed preparations for war against the Soviet Union.<sup>341</sup>

<sup>336</sup> Ruotsalainen, 2020, pp.233–234.

<sup>337</sup> Crozier, 1998, p.193.

<sup>338</sup> **Andrew, C. & Gordievsky, O.** *KGB: The Inside Story of its Foreign Operations from Lenin to Gorbachev.* Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1990, p.140.

<sup>339</sup> Harris, 2007, p.526.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, p.140.

<sup>341</sup> **General Headquarters/Supreme Commander for Allied Powers.** Affidavit No. 693. GHQ/SCAP Records, International Prosecution Section, Entry No.327 Court Exhibits in English and Japanese, IPS, 1945-47. <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/10274725> (Access Date and Time: 27 March 2019 09:38AM)

In Spring 1932, shortly after the establishment of Manchukuo, ethnic minorities of the Soviet Union staged rebellions against Moscow. In Chechnia and Dagestan, the tribal leaders called for self-determination for each nationality, the establishment of a Muslim government under Shariah law and an imam for their people. This uprising was subsequently crushed by the Red Army.<sup>342</sup> The hardline Soviet policy against Japan was embraced by Soviet leader Stalin who at that time was afraid of a simultaneous Japanese-Polish attack on the Soviet Union.<sup>343</sup> However, Stalin's fear was not always shared by his followers. Kuromiya and Mamoulia cited many cases that occurred in 1932 as examples. In this year, *Izvestia* published a poem by Demian Bednyi, the Kremlin's favourite poet, critical of Moscow's apparent inaction against Japan. Stalin criticised the poet and, in the summer, he was angered by the subversive work in Manchuria by the Soviet secret police and Soviet military intelligence that resulted in the arrest of underground Korean operatives of the Manchukuo-Japanese authorities.<sup>344</sup> The facts indicated above, including the fear of Stalin, appeared to be true as Kuromiya and Mamoulia cited the letters exchanged between Stalin and Kaganovich, one of the central figures in the Soviet Politburo, as proof of the stories.<sup>345</sup>

Furthermore, in a report by the Tallinn branch of the Soviet intelligence service OGPU dated 8 March 1932, an émigré Russian called Leonchev (Leontyev) who lived in Koppel (Kopli, one of the coastal districts of Tallinn) told a mole of the OGPU based in Tallinn that at the local émigré committee, he had been approached by newcomers who had supposedly arrived from Germany and claimed to be recruiters for the Japanese.<sup>346</sup> Leonchev was quite old and the Soviet intelligence service did not pay much attention to his confession. The accuracy of the Leonchev report seemed quite poor, but it is worth noting that the OGPU had been concerned about the Japanese intelligence activities in Estonia as early as 1932. Moreover, the fear of Stalin was strengthened by the Japanese acts in Chechnia and Dagestan. Harris suspected that the letter of Kasahara published in *Izvestia* might have been fabricated by the OGPU since the Japanese plans mentioned in the letter appeared to be too ambitious.<sup>347</sup> However, the author admitted a possibility of exaggeration of

<sup>342</sup> Kuromiya & Mamoulia, 2016, p.136.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, p.129.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, p.130.

<sup>345</sup> Kuromiya & Mamoulia referred to the following book written in Russian: **Stalin, J.** Stalin i Kaganovich: Perepiska 1931-1936 gg. ROSSPĖN, 2001. The English version is also available: **Davies, R. W., Khlevniuk, O. V., Rees, E. A., Kosheleva, L. P., Rogoyava, L. A.** The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence, 1931-1936. Yale University Press. 2003.

<sup>346</sup> Report of the Tallinn branch of the Soviet secret police OGPU (No.L/17), 8 March 1932. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERAF138sm.1.39.

<sup>347</sup> Harris, 2007, p.527.

the content possibly added by the OGPU, but Kasahara's letter itself did exist, as was ascertained by the number of the Japan-related events in the aforementioned areas.

In 1932, the Soviet Union concluded non-aggression pacts with Finland, Latvia, Estonia, Poland and France, as well as a similar treaty with Italy.<sup>348</sup> The Soviet appeasement policy against its old enemies in the West was a result of Stalin's fears. In fact, according to Torashiro Kawabe, the then Japanese military attaché to the Soviet Union (1932-1934), "Stalin first concentrated on elimination of his political rivals, and then, shifted to enrich the national strengths of the Soviet Union...Internationally, he actively worked on building peaceful relationships while strengthening the military power domestically".<sup>349</sup> On the other hand, in preparation for a possible war with the Soviet Union, the Japanese military attaché in Riga (Major Taketo Kawamata) was also carefully observing the Soviet rapprochement with the Baltic States.<sup>350</sup>

In October 1932, special instruction for planning a stratagem in Europe, targeting the Soviet Union, was issued to Kawabe<sup>351</sup> (see **Evidence No.4**). Kawabe had been in contact with his predecessor Kasahara and had told Kawabe that "military preparations for war against the Soviet Union are completed and the war is necessary to consolidate Manchuria".<sup>352</sup> The special instruction, which was named as the 'Plan of 1932' by the author, was a historic turning point for the Japanese Army to step into actual military intelligence operations against the Soviet Union. The gist of the Plan of 1932 was to organise subversive activities against the Soviet Union, mainly through independence movements in Ukraine, Georgia and Azerbaijan. To implement the plan, as noted on the original texts of the Plan of 1932, the Japanese Army began to seek cooperation with the local intelligence services, military forces and émigré Russian organisations in neighbouring countries of the Soviet Union such as Estonia and Finland.

Kawabe suggested two possibilities for the enactment of the Plan of 1932<sup>353</sup>: 1) the indifference of the Soviet Union during the Manchurian Incident and 2) the 'Crisis of 1934 or 1935' discourse among the Japanese populace. Concerning the

<sup>348</sup> Kuromiya and Mamoulia, 2016, p.128.

<sup>349</sup> Kawabe, 1971, p.53.

<sup>350</sup> Telegram from the military attaché to Latvia, 19 May 1932. (No.26) **JACAR**, B04013518900. In the telegram, Kawamata reported the conclusion of the bilateral Estonian-Soviet non-aggression pact.

<sup>351</sup> **General Headquarters/Supreme Commander for Allied Powers**. Affidavit No. 2409. GHQ/SCAP Records, International Prosecution Section, Entry No.327 Court Exhibits in English and Japanese, IPS, 1945-47. <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/10278948> (Access Date and Time: 26 March 2019 18:15PM)

<sup>352</sup> Andrew & Gordievsky, 1990, p.141.

<sup>353</sup> Kawabe, 1971, pp.54-55.

former possibility, the Soviet Union indeed adopted strict neutrality during the Manchurian Incident.<sup>354</sup> Soviet neutrality was officially declared by the Soviet Foreign Minister Litvinov on 14 November 1931.<sup>355</sup> Bridges claimed the Sino-Soviet Conflict of 1928 had been caused by the Soviet policy of merely protecting its interests in the CER against spontaneous Chinese action to monopolise the railway.<sup>356</sup> He surmised that the Soviet Union had reacted to the Chinese action only by defensive means. Bridges was probably correct as the Soviet troops immediately withdrew from Chinese territory when peace was accorded. Additionally, Major Arneman, the aforementioned American military attaché to Latvia who submitted the report on the Sino-Soviet Conflict, wrote to Washington on 28 November 1929 that “Russia (Soviet Union) is in no condition, economically or politically to engage in offensive warfare on a large scale...the attitude of Japan is important. Russia does not dare occupy Manchuria without Japanese approval. Therefore, every foot of Manchuria that is occupied by Russia is an indication that Japan consents to just that much occupation”.<sup>357</sup> Economic, political and military circumstances surrounding the Soviet Union would not have changed much in late 1931 when the Manchurian Incident broke out. On 1 October 1928, the Soviet Union initiated the first Five-Year Plan to achieve industrialisation and it was scheduled to be completed in 1932.<sup>358</sup> The Soviet Union was not yet prepared to enter the war with Japan at the moment.

The second possibility, the ‘Crisis of 1934 or 1935’ discourse, was widely accepted among the Japanese populace, according to Kawabe.<sup>359</sup> It was rather a Japanese delusion probably influenced by sensational the Japanese media, which was also cited by Kawabe himself. Some of the Red Army’s high-ranking officials such as Vasily Blyukher, commander of the Special Far Eastern Army<sup>360</sup>, and Kliment Voroshilov, Soviet Defence Minister, did not hesitate to make public declarations of the Japanese danger. However, when the Japanese troops reached the Sino-Soviet border in pursuit of the retreating Chinese General Su Ping-wen and his troops at the end of 1932, both Japan and the Soviet Union opted for the path of meditation rather

<sup>354</sup> **Bridges, B.** Yoshizawa Kenkichi and the Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact Proposal. *Modern Asian Studies*, 1980, 14, 1, p.113.

<sup>355</sup> **Degras, J. (Ed.)**. *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Volume II 1925–1932*. Oxford University Press, London, 1952, p.514.

<sup>356</sup> Bridges, 1980, p.113.

<sup>357</sup> Report of the American military attaché to Latvia (Riga), 28 November 1929. **American National Archive, College Park, Maryland**. Microfilm Series M1443, Roll No.16, p.366.

<sup>358</sup> “The First Five Year Plan, 1928-1932”. University of Waterloo. <https://uwaterloo.ca/library/special-collections-archives/first-five-year-plan> (Access Date and Time: 6 August 2019, 04:21AM)

<sup>359</sup> Kawabe, 1971, pp.54-55.

<sup>360</sup> Special military unit of the Red Army established on 7 August 1929 whose mission was to defend the Soviet Eastern border in Asia. Reference: Erickson, 1962, p.240.

than military confrontation.<sup>361</sup> In reality, in 1932, neither power was yet ready for full-scale war.

According to the Plan of 1932, between 1932 and 1933, the Japanese military attaché in Riga concentrated on building a mutual friendship with the Finnish military forces instead of the Estonian counterpart. On 2 December 1932, Major Taketo (Osato) Kawamata, the then military attaché in Latvia, and his assistant officer Captain Tanaka visited the Finnish General Staff and the headquarters of the National Guards (a Finnish militia organisation, commonly known as Suojeluskunta in Finnish or Skyddskår in Swedish) in Helsinki.<sup>362</sup> Kawamata again visited Finland some time in March 1933 and had meetings with Chief of the Finnish General Staff and Per Zilliacus, Principal of the Finnish Army Academy.<sup>363</sup> Kawamata had learnt that the Finnish General Staff and its high-ranking officials were eager to build a mutual cooperative relationship with the Japanese Army as follows: “Given the prevailing idea of Greater Finland, the anti-Soviet and pro-Japanese feeling among the Finnish people – especially in the military circles and the Finnish Army’s unique facility for fighting in early winter”.<sup>364</sup> Zilliacus used to be the head of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division (Osasto 2, also known as the Foreign Division) of the Finnish Second Department between December 1930 and January 1931.<sup>365</sup> The career record of Zilliacus proved that his connection with the Japanese Army had probably been established during his term of office in the Finnish Second Department.

Sometime between March and April 1933, the Japanese Army officially decided to deploy its first military attaché to Finland. On 8 April 1933, the Japanese Foreign Ministry summed up the negotiation with the Army with regard to the plan to detach the first military attaché to Finland. At the end of March 1933, Major Toshio Fujitsuka of the Russian Section of the Japanese Second Department requested Nishi, Chief of the First Section of the Eurasian Department of the Foreign Ministry, to consider the possibility of stationing the Japanese Army’s military attaché to Finland. At the time when the proposal was made to the Foreign Ministry, the Army had not yet decided whether there would be an independent military attaché in Finland or the existing positions in neighbouring countries like Latvia to jointly administer Finland.<sup>366</sup> Thus, the two trips of Kawamata to Finland may have been related to the plan of stationing a military attaché in Finland. In fact, Kawamata

<sup>361</sup> Erickson, 1962, p.337.

<sup>362</sup> Visit of Japanese officers (Japanilainen upseeri vierailu), 3 December 1932. **Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto)**. C11.403.

<sup>363</sup> Per Zilliacus was a remnant and relative of Konni (Konrad) Zilliacus who cooperated with the Japanese Army during the Russo-Japanese War.

<sup>364</sup> Momose, 1973, p.17.

<sup>365</sup> Elfvengren, 2000, p.192.

<sup>366</sup> JACAR, B14090834900.



previously stressed that the Finnish military officials had pro-Japanese sentiments. The Finnish General Staff was also keen to extend cooperation with the Japanese Army. They may have ordered the military attaché in Poland to research Japanese military influences on the country. On 21 February 1933, the Finnish military attaché to Poland reported to the General Staff that the Polish media truly stood on a pro-Japanese stance and Lieutenant Colonel Hikosaburo Hata, previous Japanese military attaché to Poland, used to be a central figure among foreign military attachés stationed in Warsaw.<sup>367</sup>

In the Far East, ever since 1 January 1933, clashes between the Chinese and Japanese Armies were becoming more frequent. On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Japanese Army occupied the Shanhai Pass in Hebei Province after one day of combat. The Kwantung Army again began to act arbitrarily without consultation with Tokyo. On 23 February, it invaded the rest of Hebei province including Peiping (Beijing). Even after the shocking event at the League of Nations on 24 February, the Kwantung Army did not stop. On 10 April, it finally crossed the Great Wall of China to invade further into Northern China.<sup>368</sup> On 31 May 1933, a ceasefire (the Tanggu Truce) was concluded between the Chinese and Japanese armies.<sup>369</sup> According to this agreement, the Kwantung Army would retreat to the line of the Great Wall (Chojyosen 長城線). Through this truce, the upheavals that had lasted ever since the Manchurian Incident in 1931 finally came to an end.

The plan of the Japanese Army to send its first military attaché to Finland did not show any progress during summer 1933, likely due to the Sino-Japanese conflict. On 8 August 1933, the Finnish General Staff sent a letter to Lieutenant Colonel Genzo Yanagida, Japanese military attaché to Poland, confirming the detachment of one Japanese Army officer to study at the Finnish Army unit in Lappeenranta from autumn 1933.<sup>370</sup> According to this letter, Yanagida had previously been to Finland to negotiate the issue with the Finnish General Staff.<sup>371</sup> The visit of Yanagida to Finland seemed peculiar since Kawamata in Riga had previously been in charge of the negotiation with the Finnish military about the stationing of a military attaché to Finland.

<sup>367</sup> Report of the Finnish military attaché in Poland (No.29), 21 February 1933. **Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto)**. Sark-1403.17.

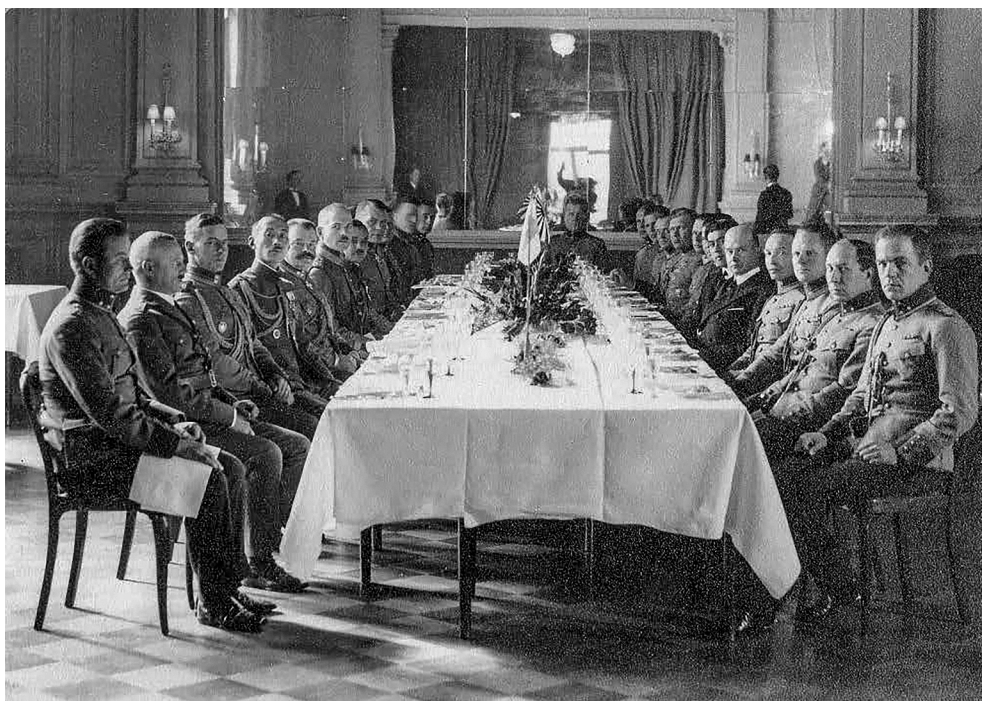
<sup>368</sup> Kawada, 2015, pp.269-270.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid., p.271.

<sup>370</sup> Letter from Genzo Yanagida (Japanese military attaché to Poland) to the Finnish Second Department, **8<sup>th</sup> Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto)**. Sark-1403.18.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid. Yanagida sent a gratitude letter to the Finnish General Staff on 14 August, for their hospitality during the stay in Finland.

On 29 August 1933, Lieutenant Colonel Tsutomu Ouchi, a successor of Kawamata, arrived in Riga.<sup>372</sup> Immediately after his arrival, Kawamata introduced Ouchi to the Estonian and Finnish General Staffs. They entered Estonia on 4 September and left for Helsinki the same day. The two Japanese officers spent 4 days in Finland and returned to Estonia.<sup>373</sup> The inclination to Finland meant that the Japanese Army revised the 1932 Plan in 1933, likely on account of the prioritised establishment of mutual friendship with the Finnish military forces rather than the Baltic counterparts.



**Picture 6.** Visit of two Japanese Army officers to Helsinki. (September 1933) Lieutenant Colonel Tsutomu Ouchi (fourth from the front) and his predecessor Major Taketo (Osato) Kawamata (fourth from the back) were confirmed. Reference: Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto), Sark-1403.18.

<sup>372</sup> 7. Latvia (7. Latviakoku 7. ラトヴィア国) JACAR, B14090835300.

<sup>373</sup> Entrance to Estonia from the port of Tallinn, 5 September 1933. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA495.11.5., p.24. Their departure from Helsinki and the arrival to Tallinn was reported on Page 41 of the same file.

### 7.3 Impacts of the Eastern Pact and the Baltic Entente (1933–1934)

In the early 1930s, a major diplomatic issue involving Northern and Eastern Europe arose from the West. It was the so-called ‘Eastern Pact’, the last attempt in the interwar period to install collective security covering Central, Eastern and Northern Europe, which was jointly proposed by France and the Soviet Union. On 31 October 1933, Paul-Boncour, French Foreign Minister, had a meeting with his Soviet counterpart Litvinov in Paris. There, the diplomatic representatives of the two countries established the principle of some form of firm Franco-Soviet alliance based on the premise that the Soviet Union would agree to join the League of Nations.<sup>374</sup> By December, the Soviet Ambassador to France handed over to Paul-Boncour a written draft of a possible Franco-Soviet alliance.<sup>375</sup>

The French rapprochement with the Soviet Union was caused by the rise of National Socialism in Germany in 1931 and the German withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference of the League of Nations.<sup>376</sup> It was not only France and the Soviet Union that felt uneasy about the new German policies, but also Poland. Interwar Poland, also known as the Second (Polish) Republic, had always been anxious about its geopolitics, located as it was between the two great powers of Germany and the Soviet Union. Jozef Piłsudski, the Polish leader, was probably planning a war against Hitler’s Germany at a very early stage of his term of office.<sup>377</sup> On two separate occasions, Piłsudski shared with France, interwar Poland’s greatest ally, his idea of launching a pre-emptive war on Germany. He also shared the idea with Britain. However, France and Britain responded negatively to the idea, so he abandoned it. The next plan of Piłsudski was to act in concert with his new Foreign Minister Jozef Beck (from November 1932) who thought of putting Poland into a relationship with Germany.<sup>378</sup> On 26 January 1934, Germany and Poland concluded a non-aggression pact that should have lasted until 1944.<sup>379</sup> In April 1934, Louis Barthou, the new French Foreign Minister, visited Warsaw and Prague. In February, Barthou was officially informed by the Soviets that the Soviet Union would soon

<sup>374</sup> **Radice, L.** The Eastern Pact, 1933-1935: A Last Attempt at European Co-operation. *The Slavic and East European Review*, 1977, 55, 1, p.47.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, p.47.

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*, p.47.

<sup>377</sup> **Stachura, P., D.** Poland, 1918-1945: An Interpretive and Documentary History of the Second Republic. Routledge, London, 2004, pp.115–116.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, p.116.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, p.120.

join the League of Nations and was willing to conclude a regional assistance pact.<sup>380</sup> However, he did not tell the Polish officials about the Soviet proposals.<sup>381</sup>

On the other hand, in the first half of the 1920s, the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) sought either to form a ‘small Baltic Union’ (the three Baltic States) or a ‘large Baltic Union’ (the three plus Finland and Poland).<sup>382</sup> According to Feldmanis & Stranga, these efforts to realise either small or large alliances failed due to Lithuania’s opposition to the large Baltic Union and German-Soviet attempts to hamper Inter-Baltic cooperation.<sup>383</sup> As noted, Lithuania had a territorial dispute with Poland over Vilnius (Wilno) and neither country recognised each other’s sovereignty. The Lithuanian government actually welcomed the Eastern Pact, but the Lithuanians were high-minded as they requested the French government not to make any revisions to the current status of the Polish-Lithuanian border.<sup>384</sup> It was obvious that, if Poland did not agree to the Lithuanian proposal, there would be no possibility of it, although Lithuania could be considered a potential partner of the Eastern Pact since the aim of the pact was the containment of Germany by France, Poland and the Soviet Union. Indeed, in May 1934, Barthou considered the opinion of Poland and its signature on the Eastern Pact, as more vital than Lithuania’s.<sup>385</sup> As Radice cited<sup>386</sup>, Barthou may have looked down on Poland and may have thought that the Central European country would act in concert with France after all. The distrust between France and Poland became more apparent during the meeting of Barthou and Beck on 4 June 1934. The inclusion of Germany and Poland in the Eastern Pact had already been agreed between France and the Soviet Union, but Beck told Barthou that he disliked the Eastern Pact and, from the Polish perspective, it had already concluded a number of non-aggression pacts with its neighbouring countries, including Germany and the Soviet Union, which would have secured its own security.<sup>387</sup>

The biggest concern for the Baltic States upon the proposal of the Eastern Pact was the possible stationing of the Red Army on their territories. Some time in mid-July 1934, Grosvalds, Latvian Ambassador to the Soviet Union, submitted a report which stated: “The main danger to Russia’s neighbouring countries lies in the fact that eventually, they will have to let the Red Army onto their territory”.<sup>388</sup> Probably

<sup>380</sup> Radice, 1977, p.48.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, p.49.

<sup>382</sup> Feldmanis & Stranga, 1994, p.14.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14.

<sup>384</sup> Feldmanis & Stranga, 1994, p.42.

<sup>385</sup> Radice, 1977, p.49.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, p.49.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*, p.49.

<sup>388</sup> Feldmanis & Stranga, 1994, p.42.

as an attempt to pre-emptively prevent the Soviet proposal to station the Red Army in the Baltic States, in July 1934 Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania declared to the Soviet Union that they favoured the idea of the Eastern Pact, but since there was no agreement text at that point, they demanded the preservation of their rights to propose any amendments to the pact in future.<sup>389</sup> Internationally, the Baltic joint declaration was seen as an agreement to the Eastern Pact proposals.<sup>390</sup> During conferences of foreign ministers in November and December 1934, the three Baltic States reaffirmed their positive attitude toward the Eastern Pact.<sup>391</sup>

The entire situation was changed by the German declaration of rearmament on 16 March 1935 in violation of the Treaty of Versailles of 1919 as well as the reintroduction of conscription. Quickly reacting to the new situation, on 6 April, the Soviet government proposed to the Baltic States that the Eastern Pact be defunct without the (planned) participations of Germany and Poland. Britain was rather passive but somehow agreed on the inclusion of Germany and Poland in the Eastern Pact.<sup>392</sup> In an attempt to pre-emptively contain the militarily growing Germany, the Soviet Union concluded mutual assistance pacts with France and Czechoslovakia in May 1935.<sup>393</sup> The Soviets felt relieved by the conclusion of the mutual assistance pact with France, since it was a formal creation of an anti-German bloc<sup>394</sup>, but the sudden formation of a French-Soviet front infuriated the Baltic States as they felt betrayed by France.<sup>395</sup> With the birth of the French-Soviet front, the Soviets began to underestimate the value of the Baltic States and that of the Eastern Pact itself since the mutual assistance pact with France guaranteed assistance from Paris in case of conflicts with Germany.<sup>396</sup>

By late 1935, the Eastern Pact had lost its popularity in Europe. One of the biggest reasons was the assassination of Louis Barthou on 9 October 1934.<sup>397</sup> Pierre Laval, Barthou's successor, moved to restore friendship with Germany, if not appeasement.<sup>398</sup> Laval was once forced by Litvinov to reactivate the Eastern Pact negotiations, but the problem was Poland. Laval also failed to recognise Poland as

<sup>389</sup> Ibid., p.43.

<sup>390</sup> Radice, 1977, p.51. At the same time, during summer 1934, Czechoslovakia also announced its agreement with the Eastern Pact. Radice (1977) felt that the declarations were products of the Soviet diplomatic pressure on the Baltic States and Czechoslovakia.

<sup>391</sup> Feldmanis & Stranga, 1994, p.45.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid., p.46–47.

<sup>393</sup> Radice, 1977, p.58; Feldmanis & Stranga, 1994, p.47.

<sup>394</sup> Feldmanis & Stranga, 1994, p.50.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid., p.48.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid., p.50.

<sup>397</sup> Radice, 1977, p.53. Barthou was implicated in the assassination of Yugoslavian King Alexander on a visit to France.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid., p.53.

an equal power, hence Poland did not alter its negative stance on the Eastern Pact. Another big reason was Laval's approach to Italy. The plan to involve Italy in the context of strengthening the Eastern Pact was originally an idea of his predecessor and Laval elaborated on it in the conclusion of the Rome Protocol of January 1935. French appeasement with another Fascist nation, Italy, made the Little Entente (Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania) and the Soviet Union nervous as France would then be inclined towards the development of relationships with the Fascist nations of Germany and Italy. While the original idea of the Eastern Pact began to rapidly altered, the French-Soviet front begged Britain to mediate in renegotiating it with Germany and Poland. However, little could have been done to change the minds of the Germans and Poles. Hitler refused to agree to any agreements of mutual assistance, especially any involving the Soviet Union, because of its ideological threat as a key player. Beck fully backed the stance of Hitler and clearly noted that Poland was only interested in bilateral agreements.<sup>399</sup> This was then the fate of the Eastern Pact. Along with the Locarno Treaty of 1925, it was listed as one of interwar Europe's failed attempt to install collective security. At the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference of Baltic Foreign Ministers in May 1936, the Baltic States jointly declared a positive attitude to collective security, but restrained any moves toward conclusion of the Eastern Pact over their heads.<sup>400</sup> At this point, the Eastern Pact was no longer seen as a diplomatic option for the Baltic States. During the Eastern Pact turmoil, the Baltic States became occupied with realising another possibility for collective security. It was a tiny, regional collective security concept in comparison with the Eastern Pact, but was the first-ever attempt of the three Baltic States to jointly guarantee their security.

As mentioned in the earlier part of this chapter, Intra-Baltic security cooperation had been disturbed by outsiders such as Germany and the Soviet Union. Formulation of the so-called 'Baltic Entente' between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania almost failed for the same reasons why the Baltic States could not afford the Eastern Pact. despite the official joint statement supporting it. The rapid changes in international politics such as German rearmament forced the Baltic States to re-concentrate on the formulation of the Baltic Entente.

In spring 1933, a number of articles appeared in the Latvian press claiming that the Baltic union was the most effective counterforce to defend the three Baltic States. On 27 May 1933, the foreign ministers of Estonia and Latvia agreed to make every effort to involve Lithuania in closer cooperation with both nations (Estonia and Latvia).<sup>401</sup> Lithuania had altered its hostility against the Baltic Entente project by the

<sup>399</sup> Ibid., pp.55–59.

<sup>400</sup> Feldmanis & Stranga, 1994, p.51.

<sup>401</sup> Feldmanis & Stranga, 1994, pp.22–23.

end of 1933 due to a new territorial dispute with Germany over Klaipeda (Memel). The Lithuanians were seriously concerned about the German-Polish non-aggression pact signed on 26 January 1934, which would allow either the Poles or Germans to be more aggressive towards Lithuania in terms of their territorial disputes with the country.<sup>402</sup> On 12 September 1934, the first-ever written agreement among the three Baltic State to begin the creation of the Baltic Entente was signed in Geneva, with a special clause of exemption for Lithuania's specific (territorial) problems from the agreed diplomatic cooperation of the three states.<sup>403</sup>

The attitudes of the Japanese Army toward the Eastern Pact and Baltic Entente were unclear since no documents on the topic were available in Japanese archives. However, the movements toward collective security in the Baltic Sea region affected the Plan of 1932 when the Japanese Army tried to send a second student officer to Estonia in 1934. (see **Chapter 7.5**) Also, in June 1936, Makoto Onodera, the then Japanese military attaché to Latvia, visited the Estonian General Staff in Tallinn to discuss with General Nikolai Reek, Estonian Chief of Staff, about the political situations surrounding Estonia and the Soviet Union. There, Onodera heard from Reek that the Estonian military did not like the concept of the Eastern Pact and, due to several circumstances, Reek found out that the Soviet Union was not a threat to Estonia. Reek would have well understood the miserable situation surrounding the Eastern Pact and found it safe to provide a politically sensitive comment to Onodera. (see **Evidence No.6**) It appeared awkward when Onodera asked Reek about the outdated negotiations for the Eastern Pact in summer 1936.

Onodera's intention can be explained from the perspective of the Estonian-German relationship. In early 1936, Estonia was in a difficult situation in terms of cooperation with Germany. On 24 February 1936, General Johan Laidoner, Estonian Commander-in-Chief, made a speech critical of Germany on Estonian independence day. The speech was a strong message to Germany that Estonia would side with neither Germany nor the Soviet Union, but would defend its independence on its own. However, the stance of Estonian military officials changed immediately after the German occupation of Rhineland on 7 March. In a private talk with Hans Frohwein, German Ambassador to Estonia, Laidoner explained that he only intended to criticise the German minority (Balto-Germans) in Estonia, not Germany itself.<sup>404</sup> Ilmjärv surmised that, at this point, Laidoner had already made up his mind to

<sup>402</sup> Ibid., pp.26–27.

<sup>403</sup> Feldmanis & Stranga, 1994, p.31. In the confidential protocol attached to the Geneva agreement, only the Wilno issue was mentioned as Lithuania's specific problem. Regarding the Memel issue, Estonia and Latvia backed Lithuania for its territorial integrity.

<sup>404</sup> **Ilmjärv, M.** The Baltic States Military and Their Foreign and Defense Policies 1933-1938. Acta Historica Tallinnensia, 2003, p.74.

cooperate with Germany, irrespective of Estonia's neighbours such as Latvia and Lithuania.<sup>405</sup> Moreover, in the same month when Onodera visited Reek, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, head of the Abwehr, secretly visited Estonia to conclude an agreement with Colonel Richard Maasing, head of the Estonian Second Department, to exchange military information concerning the Soviet Union.<sup>406</sup> Onodera probably tried to (re-)confirm the Estonian diplomatic stance and the assurance that Estonia would not restart negotiations for the Eastern Pact which had first been proposed by the Franco-Soviet alliance, but to side with Germany. Indeed, from 1936, the Japanese Army also began to deepen cooperation with Germany including the Abwehr.

## 7.4 Three Japanese Student Officers to Estonia, Latvia and Finland (1933–34)

As explained in the earlier chapter, the Soviet Union in the early 1930s concluded a number of non-aggression pacts with neighbouring countries. Japan was a target country for this, but it rejected the Soviet proposal on 13 December 1932.<sup>407</sup>

On 16 March 1933, Karakhan, the Soviet Vice Foreign Minister, severely criticised Japanese attempts to militarily seize the China Eastern Railway (CER or Tōshin Tetsudō 東清鉄道 in Japanese).<sup>408</sup> The main 'Eastern Line' of the CER was repeatedly attacked by bandits, and severe damage to the trains and railway installations occurred.<sup>409</sup> On 2 May 1933, after a series of incidents on the CER, the Soviet Foreign Minister Litvinov suggested to Japanese Ambassador Ota in Moscow the purchase of the CER by Manchukuo.<sup>410</sup> The formal sales agreement of the CER to Manchukuo was concluded on 23 March 1933. The acquisition of the railway by Manchukuo enabled the Kwantung Army to focus on confrontation with the Red Army along the Soviet-Manchukuo border. Thus, in 1933 the war plan of the Japanese Army against the Soviet Union was drastically altered. Colonel Toshiro Obata<sup>411</sup>, Chief of the First Department of the General Staff (Operations), which was responsible for the formulation and implementation of the war plan, and his successor Colonel Yorimichi Suzuki concentrated on full-scale attacks on the Soviet

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid., p.75.

<sup>407</sup> **Bridges, B.** Yoshizawa Kenkichi and the Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact Proposal. *Modern Asian Studies*, 14, 1, 1980, p.124.

<sup>408</sup> **Degras, J. (Ed.)**. *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Volume 3: 1933-1941*. Oxford University Press, London, 1953, p.12.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid., p.13.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid., p.17.

<sup>411</sup> The same officer who was stationed in Tallinn in the early 1920s.



forces along the border and stressed the need to destroy the submarine base in Vladivostok and air bases in the Primorsk region where the Soviets were able to operate heavy bombers targeting the Japanese mainland.

Meanwhile, Tetsuzan Nagata, the then Chief of the Japanese Second Department, sought appeasement with the Soviet Union to buy some time for the modernisation of Japan's military forces for future conflicts with the Soviets, and for cooperation with Germany to deter the Soviet military threat. Nagata's focus was not on the Soviet Union, but rather on Inner Mongolia and Northern China to secure the natural resources needed to modernise the Japanese Army.<sup>412</sup> Sugita noted how the disagreement between the First and Second Departments, or between Obata and Nagata, had led to the later factional conflict between the Imperial Way faction and the Control faction in the middle 1930s<sup>413</sup> (for the factional conflict, see **Chapter 8.1**).

The Japanese military relations with the Baltic States and Finland finally showed some progress in 1934. In late 1933, as a result of negotiations with the local military forces by Lieutenant Colonel Yanagida<sup>414</sup>, three captains of the Japanese Army were detached to Estonia, Latvia and Finland to study with their military forces. Between December 1933 and January 1934, Captain Akio Doi was with the Häme Cavalry Regiment (Hämeen Ratsuväki rykmentti) in Lappeenranta, Finland.<sup>415</sup> Doi entered Finland from Estonia, accompanied by Ouchi, and arrived in Lappeenranta on 1 December 1933.<sup>416</sup> The mission of Doi in Finland was unknown, but it fits with the Plan of 1932 to strengthen Finnish-Japanese friendship and use Finland as a hub for Japanese intelligence activities against the Soviet Union. It was more than just a study programme. Doi spontaneously analysed the strengths of the Finnish Army and the National Guard in case of war with the Soviet Union. The recollection of Akio Doi was summed up as follows:

<sup>412</sup> Sugita, 1988, pp.13-14.

<sup>413</sup> Ibid., p.15.

<sup>414</sup> **Doi Akio Den Kankokai**. Biography of Lieutenant-General Akio Doi: Life of A Military Officer of Patriotism. (Ichigunjin no Yuukoku no Shogai: Rikugun Chujo Doi Akio Den). Hara Shobo, 1980, p.59.

<sup>415</sup> **Niitemaa, V.** History of the Finnish Cavalry, Volume 1. (Suomen Ratsuväen historia, osat I) Uudenmaan rakuunarykmentin säätiö, 1979, p.577.

<sup>416</sup> Doi Akio Den Kankokai, 1980, p.59.

The Finnish Army of 1933 consisted of 30,000 troops in total, together with 20 aircraft. However, the cavalry unit was merely a brigade (two regiments) and possessed fewer than 2,000 horses.

The cavalry unit consisted of one brigade, two regiments and fewer than 2,000 horses. However, their fighting spirit against the Soviets was ferocious and they swore to inflict heavy casualties on the Soviets in winter warfare. I was lucky to witness one of their training sessions in which each horse pulled two ski infantrymen and up to four if necessary. Thus, the infantrymen could flexibly perform either offensive or defensive actions. The horses also pulled light or heavy machine guns, and infantry guns were probably handled in the same manner.

In Finland, there were two civil defence organisations called 'Skyddskår' [Swedish name of the Finnish militia organisation 'National Guard' or 'Suojeluskunta' in Finnish – S.M.] and 'Lotta' ['Lotta Svärd', Finnish auxiliary organisation for women – S.M.] to cover the entire land of Finland. (The troops) of the two organizations were especially concentrated in the border regions with the Soviet Union. (In peacetime), members of Skyddskår stockpiled rifles, hand grenades, mortars or either light or heavy machine guns and ammunition in their houses. In case of emergency, they formed either a platoon or a squad (in their villages) to organise defensive operations.

On the other hand, members of Lotta kept first-aid boxes in their houses. In case of emergency, they were instructed to follow and support Skyddskår in terms of hygiene and recuperation issues. The members of the two organisations were also obliged to bring field rations of their own when mobilised.

**Reference 1.** Analysis of the Finnish Army in 1933 by Akio Doi. <sup>417</sup>

The recollections of Akio Doi were made in the post-WW2 period, hence their credibility must be examined. There is a possibility that his analyses of the Finnish military forces were altered or even created by Lieutenant Colonel Yozo Miyama who served as an aide to Doi in the late 1930s<sup>418</sup> and was also stationed in Helsinki for a short period before the Winter War (1939-40). Miyama also stressed that the two Finnish military organisations (Suojeluskunta and Lotta Svärd) were the key defensive factors for Finland during the Winter War.

In Estonia, between January and March 1934, Captain Tadamasu Shimanuki belonged to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Flying Division of the Estonian Air Force.<sup>419</sup> At the same time, Captain Kazuo Tanigawa was also sent to study with the Latvian Air Force.<sup>420</sup> Although less is known about the experience of Tanigawa in Latvia due to lack of primary sources, the Estonians gave a warm reception to Shimanuki. The official

<sup>417</sup> Ibid., p.60.

<sup>418</sup> Miyama served as the assistant military attaché to the Soviet Union under supervision of Doi in 1939.

<sup>419</sup> **Shimanuki, T.** Memorial Writings for Tadamasu Shimanuki (Tsuito Bunshu: Shimanuki Tadamasu). Taikosha, Saitama, 1988, p.110.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid., p.111.

purpose of his visit to Estonia was to research flying conditions for winter warfare.<sup>421</sup> However, he was unable to research due to the exceptionally warm winter in Estonia, but he was able to test aircraft several times, flying over Tallinn. In the officers' quarters of the base, Shumanuki was always surrounded by Estonian officers and was frequently questioned about Japanese culture.<sup>422</sup>



**Picture 7.** Captain Takeharu Shimanuki at his farewell party at Hotel 'Golden Lion' (Kuld Lõvi) in Tallinn.(3 March 1934) Reference: Estonian Film Archive (Eesti filmiarhiiv) EFA.77.P.A-11.A-11-16.

Neither Doi nor Shimanuki were told of the background behind their studying programmes, but they perfectly achieved the objectives of the Plan of 1932. Based on the successes, in March 1934 Major General Masataka Yamawaki was appointed as the new Japanese military attaché to Poland. The Japanese Army intended to expand intelligence activities against the Soviet Union and decided to organise conferences for the military attachés stationed in Europe more regularly.<sup>423</sup>

<sup>421</sup> Ibid., p.111.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid., p.110.

<sup>423</sup> **Matsumura, T.** *Diary of Vice Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army.* (Kantou-Gun Sanbou-fukuchou no Shuki) Fuyou Shobou, Tokyo, 1977, p.15. Matsumura was a student officer and an assistant military attaché to Poland between 1933 and 1936.

## 7.5 Sudden Change of Estonian Attitude toward the Japanese Army (1934)

In late 1934, the Japanese Army sent Captain Toshio Nishimura to Estonia to study at the Estonian Army. Nishimura arrived in Tallinn from Riga on 4 September 1934<sup>424</sup> but, according to Shin Sakuma, Japanese Envoy to Latvia, Nishimura was temporarily rejected by the Estonian Army for two possible reasons: 1) the stationing of the Japanese military attaché in Finland and 2) the conclusion of a new economic agreement between Estonia and the Soviet Union.<sup>425</sup>

Still, Nishimura remained in Europe and travelled around Northern Europe including the Soviet Union<sup>426</sup>, while waiting for the final decision of the Estonian Army. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Tsutomu Ouchi, the then Japanese military attaché to Latvia, submitted a visiting request to the Estonian Second Department on 30 September<sup>427</sup> and, in early October, Ouchi visited Major Richard Maasing, head of Section A of the Estonian Second Department, to give him samples of the tinned rations of the Japanese Army. Ouchi also asked Maasing to send some examples of the Estonian tinned rations.<sup>428</sup> It was possibly that the aforementioned information on the Estonian attitude told by Ouchi, included in the report of Sakuma, was probably gained from Maasing by Ouchi himself during the meeting in Tallinn. Major Seiichi Terada, the Japanese military attaché to Finland, might have joined the meeting too, if he had not been dissuaded to do so by the Estonian Army. On 5 October, Terada arrived in Tallinn from Helsinki.<sup>429</sup> The purpose of his visit was unknown, but he was possibly persuaded to do it by the Estonian General Staff in accordance with the policy of Ouchi.

As a result of the constant efforts of the two Japanese military attachés, some time after 25 October<sup>430</sup> Nishimura was finally allowed to study with the Estonian Army for a short period, probably until the end of that year. He belonged to the

<sup>424</sup> Entrance from the Valga border checkpoint, 5 September 1934. (No.907) **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA1.1.8147.

<sup>425</sup> 23. Latvia (23. Latviakoku 23. ラトヴィア国) JACAR, B14090839400.

<sup>426</sup> One Swedish record proves that Nishimura's entry to Sweden from the Soviet Union was made on 10 October 1934. Reference: **Swedish National Archive (Riksarkivet)**. P1034 (22.2 98, 980222 9972).

<sup>427</sup> Letter from Ouchi to the Colonel Maasing, head of the Estonian Second Department, 30 September 1934. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA495.12.119., p.29.

<sup>428</sup> Ibid., p.27.

<sup>429</sup> Entry to Estonia via the port of Tallinn, 6 October 1934. (No.411) **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA1.1.8147.

<sup>430</sup> Nishimura entered Estonia from the southern border checkpoint in Valga (Valka) on 25 October 1934, accompanied by Captain Yoshiharu Tomochika, the then Japanese assistant military attaché to Germany. Reference: Entrance from the Valga border checkpoint, 26 October 1934. (No.1169) **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA1.1.8147.

Armoured Battalion (autotanki pataljõn) of the Estonian Army.<sup>431</sup> Nishimura was a little ambivalent about Estonia and Estonians, probably due to the troubles related to his acceptance in the Estonian Army. In his memoir, he praised the pro-Japanese attitude of the Estonians in general, but severely criticised the national defence policy of interwar Estonia. For instance, Nishimura called the Estonian Defence League (Kaitseliit), a militia organisation similar to the Finnish National Guards, an “awkward imitation of the Finnish National Guards in which the mentality for national defence was completely immature (in comparison with the Finnish counterpart)”.<sup>432</sup>



Garnijoni Meeremängu Klubi ballit lauapäeval Ohw. Keefõõga kaitinos. Basafult: kol. Tuiß, prl. Lango, lpt. Martinson, hr. Frühlings, prl. Leis, tanstal: pr. Luks, prl. Martinson, pr. Tuiß, major Lango, pr. Koitmetõ, Jaapani lpt. Nishimura, pr. Kaido, tw. amein. Hofmann, lpt. Luks, pr. Muru.

**Picture 8.** Captain Toshio Nishimura (sixth from the left, at the back) at the officer's club of the Armoured Battalion. (November 1934) Reference: Uudisleht, 25 November 1934, p.5.

In November 1934, the Japanese Foreign Ministry discussed the possibility of stationing either an independent envoy or chargé d'affaires in Latvia to jointly administer Estonia and Lithuania from Riga (see **Evidence No.5**). As noted at the beginning of the Minutes, the stationing of a formal diplomatic representative and the joint administration of Estonia and Lithuania had long been concerns of the Japanese Foreign Ministry. In January 1931, Yujiro Sugishita, the first Chargé d'affaires to Latvia (1929-1931), offered his opinion on the joint administration of Estonia and Lithuania, based on the cases of other countries that had administered the two countries from Riga for the first time.<sup>433</sup>

<sup>431</sup> **Nishimura, T.** Patriotism of Races of Baltic Sea Countries. (Hokuou Shominzoku no Sokoku-Ai) Nihon Minshu Kyokai, 1960, p.164.

<sup>432</sup> Ibid., p.179.

<sup>433</sup> 1. Regarding the joint administration of Estonia by the Envoy to Latvia (1. Zai Latvia koushi wo shite Estoniakoku wo kenkatsu seshimuru ken 1. 在ラトヴィア公使をしてエストニア国を兼轄せしむる件) JACAR, B14090891200.

The Japanese Foreign Ministry also spontaneously analysed the causes of the refusal of Nishimura by the Estonians and came up with two possibilities: 1) a face-saving compromise by the Estonians and 2) Estonian rapprochement with the Soviet Union (see **Evidence No.5**). In all the reports related to the refusal of Nishimura, the demotion of high-ranking officials of the Estonian political and military circles was mentioned by Ouchi. Still, Major General Gustav Jonson was not actually demoted, since he was appointed a member of the National Defence Council (Riigikaitse nõukogu) on 9 March 1934<sup>434</sup>, shortly before the coup of Konstantin Päts, and Chief of Internal Defence on the 12<sup>th</sup> by Päts.<sup>435</sup> Jonson had been known as one of the ringleaders of the 1934 coup, but his young relative believed that Jonson was ‘forcefully involved’ (kampa tõmmata) with the plot.<sup>436</sup> The connection between Jonson and the Japanese Army could not be confirmed from any of the sources in either Estonia or Japan. There is a slight possibility that it was based on his personal relationship with Ouchi rather than with the Japanese Army. Jonson was an inspector for cavalry units of the Estonian Army (Ratsaväe-inspektor) and Ouchi, the then Japanese military attaché to Latvia who was in charge of the negotiation with the Estonian Army regarding the issue of Captain Nishimura also had a background in the cavalry.<sup>437</sup>

In order to understand the correlations of Jonson, the author decided to briefly mention the outline of the Vaps movement, which promoted Jonson to the Estonian government’s military circles. The Estonian War of Independence Veteran’s League (Eesti Vabadussõjalaste Liit, hereinafter the ‘League’) held its first general meeting on 10 October 1926 and the Central League was founded on 2 June 1929.<sup>438</sup> They elected Andres Larka, former Minister of War during the Independence War, as Chairman of the League. Like its Finnish counterpart, the right-wing Vaps Movement had grown up as a major political organisation during the Great Depression. The first wave of the Great Depression hit Estonia in October 1931, when Britain left the gold standard. This caused a catastrophic fall in the foreign

<sup>434</sup> Appointments of the members of the National Defence Council, 9 March 1934. (No. 169) **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA31.3.13664., p.1.

<sup>435</sup> **Päts, K.** Estonian Nation, Volume II (Eesti riik II). Ilmamaa, Tartu, 2001, p.411.

<sup>436</sup> **Marandi, R.** Under the Black and White Flag: Movement of the War of Independence Veterans in Estonia 1929-1937 II. The Illegal War of Independence (1934-1937). (Must-valge lipu all: Vabadussõjalaste liikumine Eestis 1929-1937 II. Illegaalne vabadussõjalus (1934-1937) Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 1997, p.141.

<sup>437</sup> After returning from Latvia in 1935, Ouchi served as a head of the Army’s cavalry unit (Kihei Shudan 騎兵集団) and a lecturer at the cavalry school (Kihei Gakkou 騎兵学校). Reference: **Fukukawa, H.** Encyclopedia for the Japanese Army Officers. (Nihon-Rikugun Shokan Jiten) Fuyou Shobou, Tokyo, 2001, p.140.

<sup>438</sup> **Kasekamp, A.** The Radical Right in Interwar Estonia. Macmillan Press, London, 2000, pp.24-25.

currency reserves of the Bank of Estonia, held in British Sterling, and a sharp decline in the value of Estonian goods in foreign markets.<sup>439</sup> The Estonians asked the government to devalue the Estonia kroon in order to tackle the economic crisis. However, the government's inability to effectively respond to the crisis led the Estonians to recognise the weakness of their political system, their lack of strong political leadership, to be precise.<sup>440</sup> Through political struggles to establish a presidency in Estonia, the Vaps Movement gained popularity and finally became a political party in 1934. It challenged the existing parties in rural and municipal elections in January 1934 and won in Estonia's three largest cities of Tallinn, Tartu and Narva.<sup>441</sup> However, due to the concern of the Estonian government about the league's infiltration and destabilisation of the effects on the armed forces, Prime Minister Konstantin Päts proposed a law forbidding all military personnel from belonging to political organisations. This law passed the Estonian parliament on 27 February.<sup>442</sup> Subsequently, on 12 March 1934, the Estonian government stepped up to eliminate the league. Päts declared a state of emergency and all the leading members of the league except for Larka were arrested on that day.<sup>443</sup> Päts justified his decision to eliminate the League as he prepared for a coup d'état to topple the current Estonian government.<sup>444</sup>

Back to the analysis of the Japanese MoFA report on the Nishimura incident, the stationing of the Japanese military attaché to Finland, which took place in early 1934, was mentioned in the document as one of the causes of the face-saving compromise of the Estonians (see **Evidence No.5**). Estonia and Latvia, the two proponent nations of the Baltic Entente, sought cooperation with Finland to upgrade the political alliance to an actual military alliance. The establishment of close contacts between the Finnish and Latvian foreign ministers and the General Staffs were agreed upon during the visit of Antti Hackzell, Finnish Foreign Minister, to Riga in December 1933. Estonia, which also counted on Finnish support for the Baltic Entente, attempted to strengthen ties with Finland in terms of economic and military cooperation. However, as a result of the meeting of the Finnish and Latvian foreign ministers in Helsinki in January 1934<sup>445</sup>, Latvian Foreign Minister Vilhelms Munters declared in 1935 that Finland could not be considered a potential member of the

<sup>439</sup> Ibid., p.32. According to Kasekamp (2000), the value of Estonian exports fell by nearly two-thirds between 1929 and 1932, also influenced by British and German restrictions on imports from Estonia. (p.32)

<sup>440</sup> Kasekamp, 2000, p.33.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid., p.56.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid., pp.95-98.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid., p.100.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid., p.101.

<sup>445</sup> Ibid., p.34.

Baltic Entente for two reasons: 1) Finnish pursuit of the Scandinavian Dreams and 2) Finnish-Soviet border disputes in Karelia.<sup>446</sup> In contrast, Estonia had pursued cooperation with Finland, mainly in the military sector. The idea of the Estonian-Finnish military alliance arose during the Estonian War of Independence. At the end of October 1920, after the Peace Treaty of Tartu, the Estonian government resumed its plan to conclude a military alliance with Finland.<sup>447</sup> In December 1920, Colonel Paul Lill of the Estonian General Staff was sent to Finland to consult with the Finnish government regarding the conditions of the military alliance and if possible, to obtain signatures on a draft of the proposed alliance from Finnish government officials.<sup>448</sup> Despite the positive attitudes of the Finnish government officials including President Kaarlo Juho Ståhlberg on the military alliance issue with Estonia, the Finnish General Staff were strongly opposed to the plan. According to General Oscar Enckell, head of the Finnish General Staff, the military capability of the Red Army was too limited to launch invasions against Estonia or Finland, and the Soviet Union would be severely damaged by the economic sanctions, which would be imposed because of the invasions. For these reasons, Enckell did not agree with the proposal of his Estonian counterpart Lill.<sup>449</sup> Therefore, the plan of the Estonian-Finnish military alliance was rejected in 1920 and had to wait until 1925 when Kurt Martti Wallenius replaced Enckell as head of the Finnish General Staff, to promote the Estonian-Finnish military cooperation. Wallenius viewed the Finnish officers who had been educated within the Imperial Russian Army with distrust and, for him, Enckell was no exception. Wallenius rejected the defensive war plan enacted by Enckell and his staff and revised it with quite an offensive plan. As part of his war plan, the construction of a joint ammunition factory with Estonia was planned, but it was never realised.<sup>450</sup> After several secret meetings between the Estonian and Finnish General Staffs in the 1920s, on 29 November 1932 both agreed to formalise the first joint war plan and conduct a blockade of the Baltic Sea.<sup>451</sup> Before the meeting of November 1932, the Estonian and Finnish General Staffs discussed the possibility of a blockade of the Baltic sea with the mines and coastal batteries of both countries in February 1930.<sup>452</sup> Throughout the 1930s, joint coastal defence exercises between Estonia and Finland had continued and were extended to bilateral naval cooperation,

<sup>446</sup> Ibid., p.80. Munters referred to Finnish pursuit of Scandinavian-style neutrality which ruled foreign policies of Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Sweden, and Norway) in the early 1930s.

<sup>447</sup> Leskinen, 1999, p.19.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid., pp.21–22.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid., pp.27–29.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid., pp.32–33.

<sup>451</sup> Leskinen, 1999, p.38.

<sup>452</sup> **Leskinen, J. & Juutilainen, A. (Eds.).** The Little Giant of the Winter War (Talvisodan pikkujättiläinen). WSOY, Helsinki, 2009, p.131.



mainly in the use of submarines.<sup>453</sup> In July and September 1938, General Hugo Österman, Commander of the Finnish Army, and Major Ingelius of the Finnish General Staff visited Tallinn and discussed the bilateral military cooperation, to be precise, the coastal defence of the Gulf of Finland. Despite the failure of transforming naval cooperation into an actual military alliance<sup>454</sup>, Estonia and Finland had maintained a good relationship, especially in the 1930s. Medijainen & Made also referred to Estonian-Finnish military cooperation in the inspection of the Gulf of Finland, stating that it was more successful than the Estonian-Latvian military alliance.<sup>455</sup> Thus, it is less likely that the stationing of the Japanese military attaché to Finland in early 1934, which was indicated as one of the reasons for the refusal of Nishimura in Estonia, really affected Estonian-Japanese relations.

Regarding the Estonian rapprochement with the Soviet Union, Estonia and the Soviet Union concluded an economic agreement on 31 October 1934, which supplemented the existing bilateral economic treaty signed on 17 May 1929.<sup>456</sup> Thus, the agreement itself did not alter the Estonian diplomatic stance, and was probably used as an excuse by the Japanese diplomats for the deterioration in relations with the Estonians. However, during the summer and autumn of 1934, the Soviet Union showed a positive attitude toward the Baltic Entente as it could ultimately lead to the Baltic States participating in the Eastern Pact and working as a buffer zone against Germany. As mentioned in the earlier chapter, the period between late November and early December 1934 was the most sensitive period for the Baltic States, hence the Estonian authorities were also taking measures to distance themselves from the Japanese Army, which had been in a long struggle with the Soviet Union ever since the establishment of Manchukuo.

To sum up, the efforts of the Japanese Army to cultivate friendships with the military forces of Baltic Sea countries in the early 1930s, before the initiation of the joint military intelligence activities in the region were successful except for Estonia. Upon the successes of the student officers, the Japanese Army had sent two additional officers, Kyoji Tominaga and Shinichi Tanaka, to Germany and France in 1933 to take command of the initiation of the plan.<sup>457</sup> The two officers established

<sup>453</sup> Ibid., pp.132–134.

<sup>454</sup> **Salo, U.** Estimation of Security Threats and Estonian Defence Planning in the 1930s. *Acta Historica Tallinnensia*, 2008, p.41. Salo surmised that the failure was brought by Finnish diplomatic orientation with Scandinavian-style neutrality.

<sup>455</sup> Medijainen & Made, 2002, p.95.

<sup>456</sup> **Slusser, R., M. & Triska, J., F.** *A Calendar of Soviet Treaties: 1917-1957*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1959, p.97.

<sup>457</sup> **Nishiura, S.** *Secret Records of the Japanese Army in the Showa Era (Showa Rikugun Hiroku)*. 2014, Nihon Keizai Shimbun Shuppansha, p.217. Nishiura noted that the two officers were chosen by Akira Muto, the then chief of the Fourth Section of the Japanese General Staff.

special intelligence agencies in Berlin and Paris in December 1933, but the Paris office was forced to close in December 1934 due to the diplomatic pressure from the Soviet Union whilst the Berlin office was maintained until the 1940s.<sup>458</sup>

<sup>458</sup> Kuromiya & Mamoulia, 2016, p.137.

## 8 Japanese Implementation of the Intelligence Operational Plan

Implementation of the Plan of 1932 was affected by the factional conflict inside the Japanese Army, which was mainly among its military strategists. One of them, the Imperial Way faction, emphasised the realistic possibility of a war with the Soviet Union whereas its rival, the Control faction, focused on a possible war with China. By early 1936, the latter faction had gained control of the Japanese Army.

There are contradictions between the victory of the Control faction and the intelligence strategy implemented by the Japanese Army in the late 1930s. The actual causes of the Army's aggressive policy against the Soviet Union in terms of its intelligence operations were not clarified. However, a change in the Japanese attitude was brought about by the 7<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the Comintern in summer 1935. Instigated by the provocative stance of the Comintern, Germany and Japan began cooperating against the Soviet Union. The first step was the creation of the Anti-Comintern Corridor across Eurasia. The plan consisted of the construction of air bases along the Soviet borders in Inner-Mongolia, Xinjiang and Afghanistan, but it was abandoned due to the political situations of the countries involved.

### 8.1 Imperial Way Faction and Control Faction: Internal Strife of the Japanese Army (1934–1936)

While the Japanese Army was initiating the Plan of 1932 in Europe, internal strife in the Army between the Imperial Way faction (Koudou-Ha 皇道派) and the Control faction (Tousei-Ha 統制派) eroded inter-personal relationships. Between 1935 and 1936, this escalated into a violent dispute.

The root of the confrontation was the meeting of Baden Baden in 1921 between the three young officers of the Japanese Army who pledged to carry out organisational reform in the Army. The young officers established the Thursday Group (Mokuyou-Kai 木曜会) upon their return to Japan. The Thursday Group merged with another reformist group called the Sprout Group (Futaba-Kai 二葉会) in February 1929 and were re-established as the Evening Group (Isseki-Kai 一夕会

) on 19 May 1929. At this point, the Evening Group officialised the three policies to implement the organisational reform of the Japanese Army for the first time: 1) reform of the personal system of the Army, 2) emphasis on the resolution of the Manchurian and Mongolian issues, and 3) promotion of their philosophical leaders (Sadao Araki, Jinzaburo Mazaki, and Senjyuro Hayashi).<sup>459</sup> The Japanese Army of the late 1920s was controlled by Prime Minister Giichi Tanaka, a former Army General who belonged to the Choshu Group, and Kazushige Ugaki, a former Army Minister. The Evening Group aimed at the reform of the Army through the promotion of non-Choshu officers.<sup>460</sup> At this point, the interests of the Evening Group were limited to the establishment of a new order in the Japanese Army.

Amidst the political confusion during the Manchurian Incident, on 12 December 1931 General Sadao Araki, one of the philosophical leaders of the Evening Group, was appointed Army Minister of the Inukai administration.<sup>461</sup> In January 1932, Jinzaburo Mazaki became Vice Chief of Staff (Sanbou Jichou 参謀次長).<sup>462</sup> In February 1932, Toshiro Obata, a loyal henchman of Araki and a strategist who played a significant role in formulating the Imperial Way faction's war plan against the Soviet Union, was appointed Chief of the Second Section of the 1<sup>st</sup> Department (Operations) of the General Staff (Sanbou Honbu Dai-ichibu Dai-Ni Kacho 参謀本部第一部第二課長), and in April he was promoted to Chief of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Department (Transports and Communication) of the General Staff (Sanbou Honbu Dai-San Bucho 参謀本部第三部長).<sup>463</sup> The Evening Group then seized the initiative in the Japanese Army,<sup>464</sup> but since the appointment, Araki had turned to conservatism. He emphasised spiritualism for a future war with the Soviet Union and denied the modernisation of the Army. For instance, the basic policy of Araki in terms of the military operation plan against the Soviet Union was to conduct the traditional tactics of nocturnal assaults combined with close combat to defeat the enemy and ultimately trigger a decisive battle of brief duration to win the war.<sup>465</sup> It is also worth noting

<sup>459</sup> Kitaoka, 2012, p.76.

<sup>460</sup> **Kawada, M., Mizoguchi, T., & Hattori, A.** Letters from Nagata Tetsuzan to Mazaki Jinzaburo. (Journal of Human Environmental Studies, 9(2), 2011, p.113. Kawada, Mizoguchi & Hattori called the philosophical leaders the "Saga Group" (Saga-Kei 「佐賀系」) since Jinzaburo Mazaki, the most influential figure among the philosophical leaders, was born in Saga Prefecture in the Kyushu region.

<sup>461</sup> Ibid., p.84.

<sup>462</sup> Kawada, 2015, p.244.

<sup>463</sup> Suyama, 1983, p.378. Toshiro Obata was the same person who was stationed in Tallinn in the early 1920s.

<sup>464</sup> Then Chief of Staff of the Japanese Army was Prince Kan'in Kotohito, member of the Imperial family. He served as the Chief between 1931 and 1940. However, he was seen rather as a figurehead and the Vice Chief was actually responsible for commanding the Army.

<sup>465</sup> Kitaoka, 2012, p.84.

that Araki's faction (Imperial Way) was in the minority among the Japanese Army and consisted of officers who had not graduated from the Army College (Rikugun Daigaku 陸軍大学).<sup>466</sup>

Araki's conservatism soon became a controversial issue among the Japanese Army. Reformists who understood the necessity of full-scale modernisation of the Army under a new philosophical leader, Tetsuzan Nagata. Because of the conflict between Araki and Nagata, the Evening Group had begun to break up from the middle of 1933.<sup>467</sup> The faction led by Nagata was later became known as the Control faction (Tousei-Ha) and intended to build a National Defence State (Koudo Kokubou Kokka 高度国防国家) in which the objectives were to enable mobilisations of human and material resources needed to wage a total war.<sup>468</sup> Furthermore, Nagata personally believed in the so-called 'Single Blow with China' discourse (Tai-Shi Ichigeki Ron 对支一击論), according to which the Army needed a decisive victory over China, first in concentrated fashion, then with the full strength of the Japanese Army to militarily confront the Soviet Union.<sup>469</sup> This theory originated from the 'Concept of China's New Policy toward Japan and Formulation of Japan's Countermeasures' (Shina no Shin Tai-Nichi Taido to Waga Taisaku Jyuritsu no You 支那の新対日態度と我が対策樹立の要) written by Major General Kenji Doihara, the then head of the Special Intelligence Agency of the Kwantung Army in Mukden, on 29 March 1935. In the document, Doihara denied the rule of the Kuomintang government in Nanjing over the whole of China and one-sidedly defined China as a land of uncivilised 'pre-sovereign state' which did not need a central government but to be ruled by a number of cliques.<sup>470</sup> This racist policy ultimately led to the aforementioned discourse and the entire Japanese Army including the Kwantung Army inclined to the disparagement of China. Thus, the confrontation between Araki and Nagata was also a faction conflict between those seeking war against China and those for a war against the Soviet Union.

According to Ito, the antipathy against Araki among the young Japanese Army officers was caused not only by his conservatism but also his indecisiveness. Soon after Araki assumed office, the young officers requested the total reform of the Japanese Army by staging a military coup against the Japanese government. However, as head of the Army, Araki had no choice but to refuse their requests. The

<sup>466</sup> **Tobe, R.** The Imperial Japanese Army and Politics. *Armed Forces and Society*, 14(4), 1988, p.521.

<sup>467</sup> **Kawada, M.** (川田稔) *History of the Japanese Army, Volume 2 (Showa Rikugun Zenshi 2)*. Kodansha, Tokyo, 2014, p.59.

<sup>468</sup> Tobe, 1988, p.521. In comparison with the Imperial Way faction, the Control faction consisted of elite officers who had graduated from the Army College.

<sup>469</sup> Kawada, 2015, p.314.

<sup>470</sup> Mori, 2009, p.54.

change of attitude of Araki frustrated the young officers who had supported him to install a new order in the Army.<sup>471</sup> In January 1934, Araki's resignation was accepted and Araki was succeeded by Senjuro Hayashi, former commander of the Japanese Army unit in Korea (Chosen-Gun 朝鮮軍) who decided to spontaneously dispatch the unit to Manchuria during the Manchurian Incident in 1931 without the authorisation of Tokyo. At the same time, Jinzaburo Mazaki also turned to the Inspectorate General of Military Training (Kyouiku Soukan 教育総監) from the Vice Chief of Staff. Under the initiative of Hayashi, Nagata, leader of the Control Faction, was appointed Adjutant General of the Army Ministry (Rikugun-Sho Gunmu-Kyokuchō 陸軍省軍務局長) and he began to act like an aide of Hayashi.<sup>472</sup> Although the Control faction almost took over the initiative of the Japanese Army, there were still two forces of resistance: 1) remnants of the Choshu Group represented by Kazushige Ugaki and 2) the Imperial Way faction represented by Jinzaburo Mazaki.<sup>473</sup> According to the advice of Nagata, Hayashi attempted to remove the Imperial Way faction members including Jinzaburo Mazaki from major positions of the Japanese Army, but the personnel affairs of Generals needed to be decided by the Conference of the Three Director Generals (San-Chokan Kaigi 三長官会議, consisted of the Army Minister, Chief of Staff and Inspectorate General of Military Training), and the approval of the Emperor was necessary.<sup>474</sup> As Mazaki repeatedly refused to accept the recommendation of Hayashi concerning the retirement from the Inspectorate General for Military Training at the Conference of the Three Director Generals between 10 and 15 July 1935, Hayashi spontaneously asked the Emperor to dismiss Mazaki, which was immediately approved on the 15<sup>th</sup>.<sup>475</sup> The retirement of Mazaki meant a further decline of the influence of the Imperial Way faction.<sup>476</sup>

Shortly after, two defamatory works of literature citing Nagata as the true cause of the retirement of Mazaki, and Interior Minister Goto, who was in charge of the Japanese Police, were delivered to the sympathisers of the Imperial Way faction. The documents consisted of politically provocative phrases and were attractive enough to move the young Army officers who sympathised with the philosophy of the Imperial Way faction. The second document, in particular, referred to the theory of the Japanese Emperor as an organ of government (Tennou Kikan-Setsu 天皇機関説), defining the Emperor himself as merely the highest organ of decision-making and

<sup>471</sup> Ito, 2016, p.233.

<sup>472</sup> Ibid., pp.245–246.

<sup>473</sup> Kawada, 2014, p.84.

<sup>474</sup> Ibid., p.85.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid., p.87.

<sup>476</sup> Ito, 2016, p.251.

stating that his decisions must be based on the advice of political leaders such as the Prime Minister. This theory invited a major backlash from a majority of the Japanese Army officers who had traditionally thought that the Imperial Reign should be independent of any products of modern democracy, thus the Army should be under the direct command of the Emperor.<sup>477</sup> On 7 October 1935, Hugo Valvanne issued a report to Helsinki about the intensification of faction conflict among the Japanese Army. Valvanne summed up the characteristics of the Imperial Way factions as follows: “It (the Imperial Way faction) fervently worships the Emperor, while condemning capitalism and the parliamentary system, instead of which they want to install some form of military dictatorship.” (Se palvoo kiihkeästi keisaria, mutta tuomitsee yksityiskapitalismin ja parlamentaarisen järjestelmän, jonka sijaan se haluaisi jonkinlaisen sotilasdiktatuurin).<sup>478</sup> His analysis of the Imperial Way faction was mostly correct.

The confrontation between the two factions reached its height in two incidents between summer 1935 and winter 1936. On 12 August 1935, Tetsuzan Nagata was assassinated at the Army Ministry by Major Saburo Aizawa, a sympathiser of the Imperial Way faction. At around this period, Nagata was trying to force reformists in the Army including the Imperial Way faction to unite the organisation under the initiative of the Control faction.<sup>479</sup> In November 1934, eight Army cadets were arrested at the Army College on suspicion of planning a coup. This so-called ‘November Incident’ (Jyuichigatsu Jiken 11月事件) angered young officers of the Japanese Army who had been fighting for the reform of the organisation. In addition to the Imperial Way Faction, the young officers were inspired by the concepts of National Socialism proposed by Japanese philosopher Ikki Kita.<sup>480</sup> Then, in the aftermath of the assassination of Nagata, in February 1936, 1,500 Army troops, led by the reformist officers, staged a coup in Tokyo.<sup>481</sup> After the failure of the coup, sympathisers of the Imperial Way faction were accused by the Control faction of being responsible for the coup attempt and were either forced to retire or were demoted. However, the memory of the terror caused by the Army placed a restraint on Japanese politics. Borrowing the words of Ito, “Patriots who challenged the nation

<sup>477</sup> Ito, 2016, p.258. Kawada (2014) found that the Ultranationalistic movement was influenced by Jinzaburo Mazaki who attempted to cause a sweeping change of the Army’s top-ranking officials such as Hayashi and Nagata. (p.94)

<sup>478</sup> Report of the Finnish Minister Hugo Valvanne, titled “Japanese Army and Politics” (Japanin armeija ja politiikka), 7 October 1935. (No.35) **Finnish Foreign Ministry Archive (Ulkoministeriönarkisto)**. 5.C15.

<sup>479</sup> Kawada, 2014, p.90.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid., p.94.

<sup>481</sup> Ito, 2016, p.282. The coup attempt was later named the ‘February 26<sup>th</sup> Incident’ (Ni-Ni-Roku Jiken 2・26事件).

with fair argument had disappeared, progressive intellectuals began to work as flatters (for the Army), and a ‘pro-Army faction’ was established among Parliamentarians whose election campaign funds were saved from the Army’s emergency armaments expenditures.’<sup>482</sup>

The internal strife of the Japanese Army had also affected the Japanese military attaché office in Riga. Makoto Onodera, the third military attaché to Latvia (1936-38), had a good relationship with Toshiro Obata. Obata was demoted to Executive Secretary of the Army College (Rikugun Daigakko Kanji 陸軍大学校幹事) in March 1934.<sup>483</sup> According to Suyama, Obata had strongly opposed Nagata and his plan to establish a military dictatorship (to realise the National Defence State) as a believer in the Imperial Reign. However, lacking the political support of Araki to defend Obata, he was sent to the Army College.<sup>484</sup> There, Obata came across a young strategist called Makoto Onodera who was then an instructor at the College. Onodera was also specialised in researching military strategy against the Soviet Union. According to Onodera, he was invited by Obata to the Army College and Obata recommended him to be an assistant military attaché to Poland.<sup>485</sup> In his post-WW2 recollections, Onodera called him “Obata Toshiro-san” (小畑敏四郎さん) while addressing Tetsuzan Nagata by his last name only. Onodera also praised Obata’s excellent capability as a strategist.<sup>486</sup> In the aftermath of the February 26<sup>th</sup> Incident, Obata was also forced to retire from the Army, bowing to pressure from the new Army Minister Hisaichi Terauchi who belonged to the Control faction.<sup>487</sup> Terauchi implemented a thorough purge of the Army (Shukugun 肅軍) between March and August 1936 to terminate the influences of the reformists regardless of their origins. Even General Kouhei Kashii, commander of the Tokyo garrison who had contributed to the subjugation of the coup units during the February 26<sup>th</sup> Incident, became an object of the purge and was forced to retire from the Army in April 1936.<sup>488</sup>

Before the February 26<sup>th</sup> Incident, Makoto Onodera was appointed military attaché to Latvia in October 1935.<sup>489</sup> It was possibly Obata who took the initiative in

<sup>482</sup> Ibid., p.329.

<sup>483</sup> Suyama, 1983, p.378.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid., p.280.

<sup>485</sup> **Onodera, Y.** *Generals Talks: Major General Makoto Onodera – Military Attaché to Sweden.* (Shougun wa Kataru: Onodera Makoto Shoushou – Sweden Koushikan-tsuki Bukan) Kaiko, 1986, p.5.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid., pp.5-6. Prior to the stationing to the Army College, Onodera had clashed with Tetsuzan Nagata regarding the sales of book written by Onodera himself regarding the Soviet military affairs. (Kaiko, 1986, p.6)

<sup>487</sup> Suyama. 1983, p.317.

<sup>488</sup> Fujii, 2015, p.38

<sup>489</sup> Onodera, 1986, p.6.



detaching Onodera to Latvia, and Obata may have foreseen the outcome of the radicalisation of the young officers of the Army.

## 8.2 The 7th World Congress of the Comintern and Its Influences (1935)

On 1 August 1935, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) released the so-called ‘August 1<sup>st</sup> Declaration’ (Bā Yī xuānyán 八·一宣言 in Chinese), the purpose of which was to form a united front of Chinese people against Japanese Imperialism regardless of its social and political class origins. The Kuomintang Government in Nanjing, which had long been at war with the CCP, was of course included.<sup>490</sup> The declaration was based on the resolution for the formation of the ‘Anti-Fascism People’s Front’ adopted during the 7<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the Comintern in Moscow, a Soviet-led International organisation of Communists.<sup>491</sup>

The 7<sup>th</sup> Comintern Congress had been noted as the historical turning point for not only the Comintern but also the Soviet Union. A new policy adopted by both entities was interpreted as the abandonment of the pursuit of the Communist world revolution by the Comintern and the Soviet Union.<sup>492</sup> Such a policy change was brought about by the rise of Fascism in Germany and Italy during the Eastern Pact negotiation at the time.<sup>493</sup> In addition to the Eastern Pact, the details of which were explained in **Chapter 7.3**, Germany and Japan were posing political and security threats to the Soviet Union. Their political ideologies, Fascism and Imperialism, were political threats which, in Stalin’s eyes, outweighed the existing threats of Capitalism from Britain and France.<sup>494</sup> This was obvious from the fact that the Soviet Union had agreed on a cooperative pact with France during the negotiation of the Eastern Pact.

Thus, during the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress, Japan and Germany, as well as Italy which was attempting to militarily conquer Abyssinia (Ethiopia)<sup>495</sup>, were the targets of severe criticism. According to Captain Etsuo Kotani, then Japanese assistant military attaché in Moscow, Dimitrov who represented the Bulgarian Communist Party and Ercoli, a representative of the Italian Communist Party, were the two greatest

<sup>490</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 14 February 1971, Morning edition, p.19. The CCP declared war on Japan in 1932.

<sup>491</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 16 February 1971, Morning edition, p.21.

<sup>492</sup> **McKenzie, K., E.** The Soviet Union, the Comintern and World Revolution: 1935. Political Science Quarterly, 1950, 65(2), p.214.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid., p.218.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid., p.218.

<sup>495</sup> Italy went to war with Abyssinia on 3 October 1935.

proponents of the claim.<sup>496</sup> The Soviet Union intentionally avoided appearing on the stag, so it fell to these two foreign Communists to criticise Japan and Germany. However, the influences of Stalin on Dimitrov and Ercoli were obvious from the declaration of Ercoli, who was also the Secretary-General of the Comintern, “We (Comintern members) not only defend the Soviet Union in general. We defend concretely its whole policy and each of its acts”.<sup>497</sup>

Also, facing greater threats than Capitalism, the Soviet Union chose to strengthen ties with the Social Democrats of each country through the Comintern, and ultimately tried to isolate Japan and Germany by the International encirclement of ‘United Fronts’, a group of Social Democratic parties in each country.<sup>498</sup> However, according to McKenzie, this attempt failed due to the Soviets clinging to the leadership in the Comintern, which was based on the Leninist concept of justifying the ‘Democratic Centralism’ of the leadership by the Soviet Union created by the experience of the Russian Bolsheviks.<sup>499</sup> In consequence, the 7<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the Comintern in summer 1935 was a prelude to the growing German-Japanese cooperation in the late 1930s.

### 8.3 The German-Japanese Project of the Anti-Comintern Corridor (1935)

The German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact of November 1936, which aimed at the containment of the Comintern and the Soviet Union, has been repeatedly taken up by many scholars over the decades, but its focus has mainly been on the negotiation between Hiroshi Oshima, Japanese military attaché to Germany, and Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Foreign Minister. Borrowing the words of Professor Nobuo Tajima, the Anti-Comintern Pact itself had long been seen as an ‘Insubstantial Alliance’ without any concrete results achieved, along with a secret bilateral agreement related to military intelligence cooperation known as the Canaris-Oshima Agreement signed in 1937.<sup>500</sup>

Bilateral negotiation for the Anti-Comintern Pact between German and Japan started in Autumn 1935. In September 1935, German arms dealer Dr Friedrich Hack

<sup>496</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 16 February 1971, Morning edition, p.21. Kotani translated the Pravda articles on the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress and sent them to Tokyo.

<sup>497</sup> McKenzie, 1950, p.220.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid., p.221. According to McKenzie, the ‘United Front’ was a group of Social Democrats in each country and was expanded into the ‘People’s Front’. It included not only the Social Democrats, but also the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and certain ‘advanced’ sections of the intelligentsia in each country. Reference: McKenzie, 1950, p.222.

<sup>499</sup> McKenzie, 1950, p.227.

<sup>500</sup> Tajima, 2017, p.109.

visited Hiroshi Oshima, the Japanese military attaché to Germany, with a proposal from Admiral Canaris to conclude a bilateral military agreement. Despite strong opposition from the German Foreign Ministry (Auswärtiges Amt) and War Ministry (Reichskriegsministerium), Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, head of the German military intelligence service (Abwehr), received personal encouragement from two generals, Blomberg and Keitel, to continue the negotiation with the Japanese in terms of the exchange of intelligence information and infiltration methods.<sup>501</sup> In November 1935, Joachim Ribbentrop, head of the Foreign Affairs section of the Nazi Party<sup>502</sup>, joined the negotiation and it was revised as an agreement to defend the two countries from the Comintern and enable the exchange of Soviet information.<sup>503</sup>

To research the backgrounds of the potential agreement, Lieutenant Colonel Tadakazu Wakamatsu, chief of the Fourth Section of the Japanese Second Department, was sent to Germany in January 1936.<sup>504</sup> In the 1970s, Takanobu Manaki, a lieutenant colonel who was an aide to Wakamatsu in the Fourth Section, and Jyugo Saigo, a captain who was an assistant military attaché to Germany, made fallacious testimonies about the mission of Wakamatsu in Germany. Manaki falsely testified that Wakamatsu had been sent to Germany to give the military attaché office in Berlin a special Japanese Army brochure on the budget allocation, and Saigo gave almost the same testimony. Although Wakamatsu died in the 1950s, both the former officers who closely worked with Wakamatsu attempted to stir the Japanese journalist who interviewed them.<sup>505</sup> Professor Nobuo Tajima suspected that there had been many secret meetings between Wakamatsu and Canaris in Berlin.<sup>506</sup> They had probably raised issues related to bilateral military cooperation based on the original proposal of the agreement. The fallacious testimonies of Manaki and Saigo were probably intended to conceal negotiations about the Canaris-Oshima Agreement concluded on 11 May 1937, terms of which were very poor compared to the purely defensive pact against the Comintern, following the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact on 25 November 1936.

In recent years, Japanese researchers such as Professor Nobuo Tajima and Hisao Mori have found that the common objective for the two nations was to establish an ‘Anti-Comintern Corridor’ (Boukyou Kairou 防共回廊) across Eurasia to contain

<sup>501</sup> **Mueller M.** Canaris: The Life and Death of Hitler’s Spymaster. Pen & Sword Books, South Yorkshire, 2017, p.109.

<sup>502</sup> The Foreign Affairs section of the Nazi Party was independent from the German Foreign Ministry (Auswärtiges Amt). It was also called the Ribbentrop Office (Büro Ribbentrop) until 1935 and the Ribbentrop Organ (Dienststelle Ribbentrop) from 1935.

<sup>503</sup> Tajima, 2017, pp.99–100.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid., p.101.

<sup>505</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 18 July 1972, Morning edition, p.21.

<sup>506</sup> Tajima, 2017, p.102.

the Soviet Union and prepare for a future war against it. The first step of the plan was to construct airbases between Inner Mongolia and Afghanistan. In East Asia, the Japanese Army had already stepped into Inner Mongolia in early 1933. In March 1933, the Kwantung Army used several Japanese-backed irregular Manchurian and Mongolian forces to seize control of Dolonnur, a town near the Chahal-Jehol border. Soon after the seizure of Dolonnur, the Kwantung Army established many special intelligence agencies (Tokumu Kikan 特務機関) in the surroundings of the town.<sup>507</sup> At the end of August 1935, Ryukichi Tanaka, a staff officer of the Kwantung Army, explained to Captain Tadao Matsui, an assistant officer of the Special Intelligence Agency in Dolonnur, Inner-Mongolia, the general concept of the stratagem of the Japanese Army targeting Inner Mongolia. In the conversation, Tanaka indicated the purpose of the stratagem as ‘the establishment of the Anti-Comintern Corridor’ with Germany. In the original concept, the construction of airbases in Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang were included.<sup>508</sup> The airbases were to be used to open up a new air route between Asia and Europe and to conduct air raids over the Siberian Railway and the Soviet industrial zones of Kuzbass (Kuznetsk Basin) in case of war.<sup>509</sup> The testimony of Matsui presents the possibility that the Nazi Party had made some unofficial contacts with the Japanese Army before autumn 1935 regarding the conceptual Anti-Comintern Corridor.

<sup>507</sup> **Boyd, J.** *Japanese-Mongolian Relations, 1873-1945: Faith, Race and Strategy*. Brill, 2010, p.151.

<sup>508</sup> **Mori, H.** *The Japanese Army and the Stratagem against Inner-Mongolia*. (Nihon Rikugun to Naimo Kousaku) Kodansha, 2009, p.58.

<sup>509</sup> **Tajima, N.** *Stratagem of the Japanese Army against the Soviet Union* (Nihon Rikugun no Tai-So Bouryaku). Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2017, p.83.



**Picture 9.** Eurasian air traffic map as of 30 April 1935. Excerpt from 'Völkerbund: The Disarmament Conference' No.126-130, Journal of the German association for League of Nations question. It can be seen that there was already an air route connecting Chinese Xinjiang (Urumqi) and Soviet Kazakhstan (Bachty), probably operated by the Soviet airline. Reference: Microfilm Series M1443, Roll No.17 (American National Archive, College Park, Maryland)

The story told by Tanaka sounded preposterous even from the perspective of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century but, already in April 1933, Pan American Airways of the United States unveiled a plan to open up a new air route connecting Chengdu in Southwestern China to Bachty of Soviet Kazakhstan via Xinjiang.<sup>510</sup> This was technically possible although such a long-distance flight would have been a challenge for the aircraft of the early 1930s.

At the end of May 1935, as a part of preparations for the Anti-Comintern Corridor project, Tanaka visited Demchugdongrub, an ethnic Mongolian leader who was also known as Tokuo (徳王) in Japanese or Prince De in English (hereinafter 'Prince De'), to explain the basic concept of the Independent State of Mongolia (Mengkukuo 蒙古国) which was outlined by the Kwantung Army. Prince De, as the leader of the progressives knowns as the 'Young Mongols' sought greater autonomy

<sup>510</sup> The New York Times, 2 April 1933, p.9.

from the Nanjing government.<sup>511</sup> In August 1936, General Seishiro Itagaki, accompanied by Colonel Akira Mutou and his aides, visited Prince De and other Mongolian leaders in Inner Mongolia. According to Kakiou Izumi, one of the Itagaki's aides, the Kwantung Army finally found the best location for the airbase in Ejina during the Inner Mongolia tour of Itagaki.

Professor Tajima claimed the reports of the Japanese Army delegation visiting Europe in October 1936 as proof of the Army's enthusiasm for planning aerial bombardment operations against the Soviet Union. The Japanese Army delegation concluded that there was almost no chance of defeating the great Western powers by aerial bombardment since these nations were strongly united by patriotism. Countries like the Soviet Union, on the other hand, where the people distrusted the Communist Party regime and has an extremely long borderline to maintain could be defeated by massive aerial bombardment upon the outbreak of war. In the report, they cited Italian air raids during the war with Ethiopia as successful cases of an aerial bombardment operation.

In spring 1936, the idea of constructing airbases across Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang to destroy the Siberian Railway and Soviet airbases was shared with the German Army by the Japanese General Staff.<sup>512</sup> A comparison of the facts written in the books of Mori and Professor Tajima shows contradictions regarding the period when the German and Japanese armies agreed on the project to construct the airbases and, ultimately, the Anti-Comintern Corridor through Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang. Yet, it is certain that Germany had received an offer to participate in the Anti-Comintern Corridor project around this period.

A German diplomat in Tokyo at least showed a positive attitude toward the Japanese move. Colonel Ott, the German military attaché to Japan, was eager to deepen cooperation with Japan in the military sector. On 28 November 1935, Hugo Valvanne, Finnish Envoy to Japan, reported to Helsinki that he had had a private meeting with him. According to Ott, "there is a certain group of officers among Japanese military circles who are seeking the introduction of new leadership to strengthen the nation of Japan. And, the Japanese Army is controlled by large enterprises (financial cliques, also known as *Zaibatsu* 財閥 in Japanese) such as Mitsui and Mitsubishi."<sup>513</sup> Ott's analysis was, however, quite biased since the so-called 'Showa Restoration' (Showa Ishin 昭和維新) to eliminate politicians and military officers who were thought to be bridled and controlled by the *Zaibatsu* was

<sup>511</sup> Boyd, J. *Japanese-Mongolian Relations, 1873-1945: Faith, Race and Strategy*. Brill, 2010, p.152.

<sup>512</sup> Tajima, 2017, pp.83–84.

<sup>513</sup> Report of the Finnish Minister Hugo Valvanne, titled "Mood in the Japanese military circles" (Mieliala sotilaspiireissä), 28<sup>th</sup> November 1935. (No.49) **Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto)**. 5.C15.

a popular dogma of the Imperial Way faction (Koudou-Ha) of the Japanese Army. Still, the report indicated the possibility that Ott was deeply involved with and influenced by the faction in late 1935. At the end of the report, Valvanne summed up the words of Ott as follows: “The Japanese Army did not start the war with the Soviet Union when the cost (for the war) was cheapest. [“at the best moment” would be the precise translation – S.M.] Meanwhile, the North China Area Army of the Japanese Army (Kita Shina Haken Gun 北支那派遣軍) succeeded in seizing Northern China from the Chinese Army without a single shot being fired. It was a historic achievement.”<sup>514</sup> Ott referred to the Chinese concession of Hebei province on 10 June 1935.<sup>515</sup> Also, on 27 June 1935, the Kwantung Army succeeded in pushing the Chinese Army back from the Chahar province of Inner Mongolia.<sup>516</sup> Between 1935 and 1937, the Kwantung Army organised the North China Buffer State Strategy (Kahoku Bunri Kousaku 華北分離工作, NCBSS) which was an attempt to install new puppet regimes in five Chinese Provinces (Hebei, Chahar, Suiyuan, Shanxi, and Shandong) in Northern China. The NCBSS was approved by the Japanese General Staff on 6 August 1935.<sup>517</sup>

In December 1935, the Kwantung Army occupied Chahar Province where they were able to exert influence over Shanxi Province and Suiyuan Province in Inner Mongolia.<sup>518</sup> In August 1936, the aforementioned Ryukichi Tanaka was appointed commander of the Special Intelligence Agency in Dehua, Inner Mongolia. Four months later, without the permission of the Kwantung Army, he mobilised the Inner Mongolian forces belonging to Prince De to provoke the army of Fu Zuoyi (傅作義), the local Han Chinese ruler who was loyal to the Nanjing government of Chiang Kai-shek.<sup>519</sup>

Boyd claimed that Tanaka’s action was based on the Kwantung Army’s ‘Outline of Policy toward (Northwest) Mongolia’ (Tai-Mo Seihoku Shisaku Yoryo 對蒙西北施策要領). The first step of the plan was to install an administrative league for the four Western Banners (regions) of Chahar under Japanese sponsorship. In response to the Japanese movement to unify Inner Mongolia, the Han Chinese government organised the Suiyuan Mongolian Political Council, which consisted of

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

<sup>515</sup> Kawada, 2014, p.105. On 10 June 1935, the so-called ‘He-Umezu Agreement’ (Umezu-Ka Okin Agreement 「梅津・何応欽協定」 in Japanese) was secretly signed between China and Japan. By virtue of the agreement, the Chinese Army retreated from Hebei province.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid., p.108. It was based on the so-called ‘Chin-Doihara Agreement’ (Doihara-Shin Tokujun Kyotei 「土肥原・秦徳純協定」 in Japanese) between China and Japan.

<sup>517</sup> Kawada, 2014, p.108.

<sup>518</sup> Boyd, 2010, p.152.

<sup>519</sup> **Sekioka, H.** The Japanese Army and Never-Ending Dream of the Anti-Comintern Corridor. (Teikoku Rikugun: Mihatenu Bokyo-Kairou) Shodensha, 2010, p.82.

Mongolian princes opposed to Prince De.<sup>520</sup> While the tension among the Chinese, Japanese and Inner Mongolian regimes was increasing, on 9 November 1936 the Inner Mongolian forces of Prince De invaded Suiyuan province under the control of Fu Zuoyi. Between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, the Chinese Army of Fu took Bailingmiao from Prince De's troops.<sup>521</sup> Despite the fact the troops of Prince De were supported by the Kwantung Army, the Suiyuan Incident ended with the loss of 29 Japanese army officers stationed in the Special Intelligence Agency of Bailingmiao, and the Kwantung Army lost face since it was the first-ever Chinese victory against the Kwantung Army since the Manchurian Incident of 1931.<sup>522</sup>

The defeat in Suiyuan forced the Kwantung Army to postpone the planned construction of airbases in Inner Mongolia and consequently halted the entire Anti-Comintern Corridor project. Following the Suiyuan Incident, on 12 December 1936 the so-called Xi'an Incident (西安事件) occurred. Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Nanjing government, was detained by Zhang Xueliang in Xi'an. Chiang promised Zhang and Zhou Enlai, a representative sent from the Chinese Communist Party in Yanan, to halt the civil war in China and jointly tackle Japanese imperialism with the CCP.<sup>523</sup>

## 8.4 Coordinating Point for the Anti-Comintern Corridor Project (1933–1937)

On 12 November 1933, the establishment of the Republic of East Turkestan was proclaimed in today's Xinjiang, a Muslim region in Western China.<sup>524</sup> Sekioka found that the official history book of the Chinese Communist Party on the history of East Turkestan (Xinjiang)<sup>525</sup> entitled the 'History and Current Situation of Chinese Xinjiang' published in 2003, stated that the Soviet Union became cautious about the diplomatic approach between Japan and East Turkestan since the latter region might be used as airbases by the Japanese Army in the case of war against the Soviet Union.<sup>526</sup> The author decided to investigate the details of the East Turkestan conflict

<sup>520</sup> Boyd, 2010, p.153.

<sup>521</sup> **Tajima, N.** Stratagem of the Japanese Army against the Soviet Union. (Nihon Rikugun no Tai-So Bouryaku). Yoshikawa Koubunkan, Tokyo, 2018, p. 106.

<sup>522</sup> Sekioka, 2010, p.82. This incident was later named the Suiyuan Incident (Suien Jiken 綏遠事件).

<sup>523</sup> **Hatano, S., Tobe, R., Matsumoto, T., Shouji, J., & Kawashima, S.** Decisive Edition: The Second Sino-Japanese War. (Kettei-ban: Nicchu Sensou) Shinchosha, Tokyo, 2018, p.45.

<sup>524</sup> Sekioka, 2010, p.203.

<sup>525</sup> The term 'Xinjiang' means 'New Territory' in Chinese, it has been in use ever since the establishment of Xinjiang Province in 1912 under the Han Chinese rule of the Republic of China (1912–1949).

<sup>526</sup> Ibid., p.204.



between China, Japan and the Soviet Union in this thesis since it was relevant to British and German diplomatic reactions toward Japan and the Japanese military attaché office in Riga in the late 1930s.

Indeed, in the aforementioned report of Stülpnagel published on 28 March 1934, he stated that agents and supporters of Britain, Japan and the Soviet Union were actively working in East Turkestan.<sup>527</sup> According to one account, Japan did provide some arms and intelligence support to East Turkestan between 1931 and 1934.<sup>528</sup> For instance, in September 1933 two Japanese military officers without proper visas were detained in Gansu, where their flight to East Turkestan was aborted owing to bad weather.<sup>529</sup> Thus, the Chinese official history book of Xinjiang was correct about the Soviet attention on East Turkestan-Japanese diplomatic relations since the Chinese author could not know about the Anti-Comintern Corridor project, the details of which were discovered by Japanese scholar Hisao Mori in 2009.

In 1934, the Republic of East Turkestan lost troops in a battle against the Muslim military clique of Ma Chungying (馬仲英). With the collapse of its military forces, East Turkestan was incorporated into Xinjiang province under the Han Chinese ruler, Sheng Shicai (盛世才).<sup>530</sup> After this incorporation, the remnants of the former East Turkestan Army fled to Afghanistan to seek Japanese support to regain the independence of their homeland. The representatives of former East Turkestan approached Japanese Envoy Masamoto Kitada in Kabul for this support.<sup>531</sup> Kitada was a promoter of the Anti-Comintern Corridor project. On 1 June 1935, he wrote that it would be possible for the Japanese to easily disturb or destroy the Siberian Railway in the Tomsk region of Xinjiang in the case of war.<sup>532</sup> Yet, the plan to recover East Turkestan (Xinjiang) was nothing more than a pipedream. After the re-incorporation of East Turkestan into China, Sheng Shicai who was known as the King of Xinjiang approached the Soviet Union and the whole region became a Soviet colony, with a permanent Soviet military base and an extensive secret police network staffed by Soviet and Comintern-trained Chinese officials.<sup>533</sup> Stalin well understood the geographical importance of Xinjiang. The distance from Urumqi, the biggest city

<sup>527</sup> Tajima, 2017, p.62.

<sup>528</sup> **Kuromiya, H.** Stalin's Great Terror and the Asian Nexus. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2014, 66, 5, p.783.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid.

<sup>530</sup> Sekioka, 2010, pp.207–208.

<sup>531</sup> The same Japanese diplomat who temporarily lived in Estonia during the Independence War (1919-1920). By 1934, Kitada had become known as one of the best Russian experts in the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

<sup>532</sup> Tajima, 2017, p.86.; JACAR, B02031847600.

<sup>533</sup> Kuromiya, 2014, p.783.

in Xinjiang, to Novosibirsk in the Soviet Union, known as the Capital of Siberia, was only about 1,200km.<sup>534</sup>

The Japanese moves in Xinjiang and Afghanistan were closely monitored by Britain and its intelligence service. The Japanese military presence in both regions was not acceptable to the British either, as the regions were too close to the British Raj (India), which was their main sphere of interest in South Asia. On 18 March 1935, Hugo Valvanne, Finnish Envoy to Japan, reported what he had heard from British military attaché James in Tokyo. According to James, the Japanese Army had been carrying out larger military intelligence operations abroad than any of the armies of the Great Powers. Together with the ‘formal representation’ of the Japanese Army, by which he meant the military attachés, to various locations in the world including Bucharest and Kabul, James claimed that there were a large number of secret agents of the Japanese Army in Mongolia and Xinjiang.<sup>535</sup>

In Afghanistan, the British and Japanese military intelligence services also clashed in 1937. Major Yoshikazu Miyazaki, the second de facto Japanese military attaché to Afghanistan, arrived in Kabul on 12 November 1936.<sup>536</sup> Ever since his arrival, Miyazaki had employed a number of locals as moles, and created espionage networks along Afghanistan’s northern border with the Soviet Union and the Pamir mountains. Furthermore, from Kabul he had orchestrated secret operations to disturb the Soviet Turkestan region in Central Asia and restore the independence of the Emirate of Bukhara in Soviet Uzbekistan, which had been disestablished by the Soviet invasion of 1920. These activities soon became known to the British and Soviet intelligence services, as Miyazaki himself was not knowledgeable about local issues in Afghanistan and mistakenly hired some of the local British and Soviet moles.<sup>537</sup> The exposure of the Japanese political and military activities in Afghanistan and the Soviet Union eventually led to the expulsion of Miyazaki from Afghanistan in October 1937.<sup>538</sup>

In the East of Xinjiang, even after the Suiyuan Incident, the Kwantung Army maintained a special intelligence agency in Ejina and did not lose its hope of restarting the Anti-Comintern Corridor project. However, due to the failure of the Suiyuan Incident and the subsequent closures of the neighbouring special

<sup>534</sup> Ibid., p.782.

<sup>535</sup> Report of the Finnish Minister Hugo Valvanne entitled “Japanese military attachés abroad” (Japanin sotilasiamiehet ulkomailla), 18 March 1935. (No.11) **Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto)**. 5.C15.

<sup>536</sup> **Tajima, N.** Expulsion of Japanese Military Attaché to Afghanistan in 1937. (Afghanistan Nihon Rikugun Bukan Tsuihou Jiken 1937-Nen) *Seijo Law Review*, 85, 2017, p.108. [https://www.seijo-law.jp/pdf\\_slr/SLR-085-095.pdf](https://www.seijo-law.jp/pdf_slr/SLR-085-095.pdf) (Access Date and Time: 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019 08:15AM)

<sup>537</sup> Ibid., p.110.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid., p.117.

intelligence agencies, the Ejina office was isolated deep inside Chinese territory controlled by Fu Zuoyi. On 24 January 1936, a conference of the Manchurian Aviation Company (Manshu Koukuu 満州航空) accompanied by Hiroshi Oshima (Japanese military attaché to Germany), Lufthansa, and the German National Aviation Industry League was held in Berlin to discuss a possible air route via Afghanistan and East Turkestan and to form the Anti-Comintern Corridor. Representatives of the German airline Lufthansa did not accept the Japanese proposal to fly over the two regions without the approval of the Chinese government. The German Foreign Ministry shared the concern with Lufthansa and concluded that the Anti-Comintern Corridor project could not be continued due to enormous geographical, technical and political difficulties.<sup>539</sup> On 8 July 1936, based on the agreement with Afghanistan to build a weather observation facility, a Lufthansa aircraft loaded with a group of scientists arrived in Kabul. The Afghan government warned Lufthansa about the danger of crossing the Wakhan Corridor since the Soviet border guard might open fire on the aircraft.<sup>540</sup>

The German concerns were obvious warnings to the Japanese to slow down its territorial expansion in China yet, on 10 July 1936, the Kwantung Army filed the first flight plan between Dehua and Ejina. It intended to operate regular flights to Ejina in the near future.<sup>541</sup> On 18 December 1936, a special aviation agreement was signed between Lufthansa and the Manchurian Aviation Company. The agreement (the German-Japanese-Manchurian Aviation Agreement or the ‘Nichi-Man-Doku Koukyu Kyotei’ 日滿独航空協定 in Japanese) established an air route for regular flights connecting Berlin and Tokyo via Rhodes (Greece), Baghdad (Iraq), Kabul (Afghanistan), Anxi (China) and Hsingking (Manchukuo, today’s Changchun). If the Chinese refused the use of Anxi for the flights, Ejina was considered as an alternate airfield.<sup>542</sup> In May 1937, a transportation unit of the Manchurian Aviation Company left the Western Sunid Banner in Inner Mongolia with 300 Camels carrying barrels of aviation fuel destined for Ejina.<sup>543</sup> In July 1937, upon the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, the unit’s troops were arrested and executed by the troops of Ma Bufang, Han Chinese ruler of Qinghai region, midway through the journey to Ejina.<sup>544</sup> The Special Intelligence Agency in Ejina was also targeted by the Chinese Army and the arrested Japanese officers were executed in Lanzhou.<sup>545</sup>

<sup>539</sup> Tajima, 2017, p.90.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid., p.90.

<sup>541</sup> Mori, 2009, p.215.

<sup>542</sup> Tajima, 2017, pp.109–112.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid., p.114.

<sup>544</sup> Mori, 2009, p.236.

<sup>545</sup> Sekioka, 2010, p.83.

Meanwhile, there were major rebellions by local Muslims in the Kashgar region of Xinjiang in April 1937, in protest against the Chinese-Soviet domination of the province. Despite the fact that the Japanese were neither involved in or organised the uprisings, the Soviet government attributed the uprisings to a ‘mixture of Japanese and British intrigue’. Disappointed with Sheng’s incapability to suppress the rebellions, in May 1937 Stalin ordered a detachment of 5,000 troops reinforced with an air unit and an armoured regiment to Xinjiang. By the time the rebellions were crushed by the Soviet forces, Xinjiang had completely fallen into the hands of Stalin. After the failed Muslim rebellions, Sheng who remained as a ruler of Xinjiang became a puppet of Stalin. As a leader, he followed Stalin’s example, and implemented the Great Purge in Xinjiang. According to Chinese sources, 100,000 people were arrested in Xinjiang in 1937-1938 alone.<sup>546</sup> Throughout the 1930s and even during the 1940s, the Japanese Army could not reach Xinjiang and was unable to turn the region into a stronghold against the Soviet Union. Ironically, even if they had succeeded in establishing either a special intelligence agency or airbases in Xinjiang, with the help of the local Muslims who had previously rebelled against Sheng and Stalin there could have been repetitions of the tragic ending of the Special Intelligence Agency in Ejina and the annihilation of the MAC fuel transport unit in summer 1937.

Also, there would have been a slight effect of the German-Soviet negotiation to normalize the diplomatic relations on the Anti-Comintern Corridor project. In December 1936, David Kandelaki, Stalin’s secretary who was sent to Germany as Commercial Attaché of the Soviet Embassy in Berlin, approached Hjalmar Schacht, German Economic Minister, to inquire about the possibility of expanding Soviet-German trade.<sup>547</sup> On 29 January 1937, Kandelaki visited Schacht with Mr. Friedrichson (an NKVD officer) with a joint verbal proposal from Stalin and Molotov for the opening of direct negotiations. On 10 February, German Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath told Hitler that the Soviet proposals were not proceeding but, if the Soviet government was “to develop further along the lines of absolute despotism supported by the Army”, contact should certainly be made.<sup>548</sup> Despite the fact that this negotiation failed and bilateral relations were not normalised until the late 1930s, the German government decided to suspend the Anti-Comintern project of negotiation with the Soviet Union, possibly until after 8 July 1936 when the Afghan government warned, Lufthansa flights that they should not overfly the Wakhan Corridor.

<sup>546</sup> Kuromiya, 2014, pp.785-786.

<sup>547</sup> **Conquest, R.** *The Great Terror: Stalin’s Purge of the Thirties.* The Macmillan Company, New York, 1968, p.217.

<sup>548</sup> *Ibid.*, p.218.

In Tokyo, the Anti-Comintern Corridor project became known to Hugo Valvanne by summer 1938. On 17 August 1938, Valvanne submitted a report to Helsinki about the German-Japanese project to open up a new air route connecting Berlin and Tokyo. He found out that the experimental flight of Lufthansa from Berlin to Lanzhou via Afghanistan had experienced many (technical and political) difficulties. Also ‘by accident’, Valvanne heard of Japanese secret plans to open up a new air route from Tokyo to Berlin. He spontaneously assumed that the Berlin-Tokyo flights would go through Afghanistan via Lanzhou and Xinjiang.<sup>549</sup> At the end of the telegram, Valvanne added that the project would not be successful since many of the regions intended for the Berlin-Tokyo flights were under the control of the Chinese and Soviet governments and called the plan ‘impossible’.

As a conclusion, it was the Second Sino-Japanese War that finally put an end to the ambitious Anti-Comintern Corridor project. Moreover, it could be concluded that the project was impossible based on the aeronautical and aviation technologies of the times. In August 1938, Lufthansa carried out the maiden non-stop flight of a Focke-Wulf Fw-200 ‘Condor’ between Berlin and New York (6,370 km).<sup>550</sup> The Fw-200 was able to fly 3,550 km on regular commercial flights and the range was more than three times longer than the existing Ju-52 (870 km). On 30 November, an Fw-200 registered as ‘D-ACON’ landed at Tokyo-Tachikawa airbase 46 hours and 35 minutes after departing Berlin. It was not a non-stop flight, but the aircraft opened up a new era of long-haul non-stop flights. For example, on the way to Japan, Fw200 ‘D-ACON’ stopped at Basra in Iraq<sup>551</sup> and from there flew directly to Karachi in the British Raj (India).<sup>552</sup> There was no longer a need for Lufthansa to stop in politically sensitive regions like Afghanistan or the Wakhan Corridor, as it could reach Xinjiang directly. For example, the distance between Basra and Hotan to the west of Xinjing was 3,041 km. In such a case, the Japanese plan to build numerous air bases along

<sup>549</sup> Report of the Finnish Minister Hugo Valvanne entitled “Air connections to Japan” (Lentoyhteydet Japaniin), 17 August 1938. (No.26) **Finnish Foreign Ministry Archive (Ulkomministeriönarkisto)**. 5.C15.

<sup>550</sup> **Rönnqvist, R.** Plans to Open a Direct Air Link from Europe to Japan during the Second World War. (Suunnitelmat avata suora lentoyhteys Euroopasta Japaniin toisen maailmansodan aikana) feeniks, 2010, p.24.

<sup>551</sup> Iraq declared independence from Britain in 1932. Yet, even as a sovereign state, the country continued under strong British influences since the oil industry was controlled by Britain and the British military forces including the air units permanently stationed in Iraq. However, the Iraqi military forces were ruled by pro-German or pro-Axis sentiments since they believed Germany would be the only power capable of tackling Britain imperialism. In May 1941, shortly after the successful military coup d'état by the pro-German Iraqi officers, two squadrons of the Luftwaffe (German Air Force) arrived in Mosul, Iraq, to support the new military regime during the British invasion of Iraq (Anglo-Iraqi War).

<sup>552</sup> Ibid.

the Soviet Union's southern borders would be completely abandoned or revised, since there was no need for so many airbases for Germany. Due to the rapid development of aeronautical and aviation technologies, the Anti-Comintern Corridor project became obsolete in November 1938.

According to Mori, the Japanese Army once considered restarting the project in 1940 due to changes in the international situation. However, in 1940, the Anti-Comintern Corridor was no longer necessary due to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939, which established German-Soviet friendship for the first time in the interwar period. The Manchurian Aviation Company representing Japan and Manchuria formulated a flight plan to Germany via Siberia. However, the plan was scrapped by the outbreak of the German-Soviet War in June 1941.<sup>553</sup>

<sup>553</sup> Mori, 2009, p.241.

## 9 The Second Sino-Japanese War, Émigrés and the Japanese Army

In the late 1930s, the Japanese Army, in cooperation with Germany, developed cooperation with Estonia and Finland in terms of its intelligence activities against the Soviet Union. Although the details were not fully revealed due to lack of sources, the way in which Germany and Japan tried to use Estonia and Finland as hubs for their intelligence operations were partially revealed.

Both Estonia and Finland were diplomatically and politically inclined towards Germany in the late 1930s. Therefore, they were inevitably involved with German-Japanese intelligence cooperation at the same period. Meanwhile, there were slight differences between Estonia and Finland in intelligence cooperation with Japan, despite the inclination of both of them towards Germany. In January 1937, the E.K. (renamed VALPO in 1937), the Finnish secret police, refused to organise joint operations with the Japanese Army. Major Yoshihide Kato, the then Japanese military attaché to Finland, decided not to organise the operations in Finland but to use the country in the course of Japan's war against China from summer 1937. Kato selected Kurt Martti Wallenius, former Finnish Chief of Staff who was accused of being an extreme right-winger and collaborator, and Wallenius was sent to Japan as a war correspondent representing several Finnish newspapers.

In Estonia, the Japanese Army organised a secret operation to send the agents into the Soviet Union through Estonian territory. The details of the operation cannot be clarified due to lack of sources, but it was jointly organised by the Estonian, German and Japanese intelligence services. The so-called Gavrilov group was under the direct command of the Japanese Army and the Estonian second department was in a supportive position.

### 9.1 Estonian Rapprochement to Germany and the Finnish Stance on Germany in the Military Intelligence Sector (1936–1939)

In 1936, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, head of the German military intelligence service (the Abwehr) visited Estonia for the first time to agree to exchange Soviet military

information with General Nikolai Reek, Chief of the Estonian General Staff and Colonel Richard Maasing, head of the Estonian Second Department. Based on the agreement, a special branch of the Abwehr 'Group 6513' (Gruppe 6513 in German) handling espionage matters, was established in Estonia, and Baron Andrei von Uexküll (Andreas von Uexküll), a Baltic German who was a veteran of the Estonian Independence War, was named as a liaison between the Estonian and German intelligence services.<sup>554</sup> However, Estonian historian Ivo Juurvee claimed that the number 6513 was a codename for a German diplomat at the German Legation in Tallinn whose activities as an intelligence agent began only in 1940.<sup>555</sup> In June 1936, Colonel Richard Maasing, head of the Estonian Second Department, visited Berlin to discuss further about the details of the Estonian-German cooperation, and the Abwehr received the permission of the Estonian government to use Estonian territory for anti-Soviet espionage.<sup>556</sup> Estonian historian Magnus Ilmjärv claimed that, as early as September 1935, the Estonian Intelligence Service decided to establish contacts with the Abwehr and cooperate in anti-Soviet intelligence activities.<sup>557</sup> According to him, Americans who analysed the captured Abwehr documents after the Second World War concluded that the information embedded in the documents could have originated only from the Estonian Second Department.<sup>558</sup>

The political situation surrounding Estonia was slowly but drastically changing in the 1930s. Poland gave up its support for Estonia and Britain, which had been the biggest contributor to the independence of Estonia in 1919, but could no longer guarantee Estonian independence. At the end of 1934, Major Firebrace, British military attaché to the Baltic States in Riga, reported that Estonia believed that Britain would support Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Finland in case of conflict with the Soviet Union. However, in February 1935, Firebrace found out that the Estonian military leaders no longer expected British wartime protection of Estonia.<sup>559</sup> This led to the possibility of the Estonians finding an alternative country to rely on, presumably Germany.

There were two sources indicating that the question of Estonian cooperation with Germany was secretly handled by a few high-ranking officials of the Estonian Army.

<sup>554</sup> Ilmjärv, 2003, p.75: **Mader, J.** Hitler's generals from intelligence to say: a documentary report on the composition, structure and operations of the Central Intelligence Agency OKW foreign/defense to a chronology of its operations from 1933 in 1944. Verlag der Nation, 1972, p.307.

<sup>555</sup> **Juurvee, I.** KGB, Stasi, and Estonian Intelligence History. (KGB, Stasi ja Eesti luureajalugu) Tuna, 2, 2008, p.49.

<sup>556</sup> **Juurvee, I.** Estonian Interwar Radio-Intelligence. Baltic Defence Review, 10, 2003, p.124.

<sup>557</sup> Ilmjärv, 2003, p.74: Mader, 1972, p.307.

<sup>558</sup> Ilmjärv, 2003, p.78.

<sup>559</sup> Ibid., p.73.



On 25 October 1938, Colonel Karl-Ludwig Jakobsen, Estonian military attaché to Germany, visited the German Foreign Ministry, and there he expressed his extreme pro-German attitude. In this vein, Jakobsen regretted that “Estonia had been practically swamped with British and French agents” and the fact there were no German agents stationed in Tallinn to counteract the British and French agents back then.<sup>560</sup> Additionally, according to the Soviet observation, all the low-ranking officers of the Estonian Army were against cooperation with Germany. Nevertheless, the Estonian Second Department led by Colonel Richard Maasing and Lieutenant Colonel Johannes Soodla, Chief of the General Staff, spontaneously promoted cooperation with Germany.<sup>561</sup> There is no doubt that Maasing sought cooperation with Germany to strengthen Estonia’s military intelligence against the Soviet Union.

Finland was also one of the countries in the Baltic Sea region approached by the Abwehr. In 1934, the German and Finnish military forces agreed on a comprehensive exchange of intelligence on the Soviet Union.<sup>562</sup> Then in 1936, Admiral Canaris established the Estonian and Finnish section of the Abwehr with Commodore Alexander Cellarius.<sup>563</sup> Earlier, in the 1920s, the Secret Intelligence Services (SIS) of Britain had offices in Helsinki and also in Sortavala. However, when Finland grew closer to Germany in the late 1930s, the British intelligence activities in Finland were regarded as “more dangerous than the proletarian espionage of the Soviet Union.”<sup>564</sup> A Germanophile attitude among Finnish social elites during the interwar period also cannot be ignored. The memory of the Finnish-German success in the containment of the Finnish socialists and the Bolshevik supporters of Russia in 1918 emphasised this tendency, especially among the leading figures of the Finnish military forces.<sup>565</sup> Both Estonia and Finland continued to be subject to German diplomatic offensives throughout the late 1930s. In summer 1939, General Franz Halder, Chief of the German General Staff, visited both countries.<sup>566</sup> Although there is still an argument

<sup>560</sup> **Her Majesty’s Stationary Office. (Ed.).** Documents on German Foreign Policy: 1918–1945. Series D (1937–1945), Volume V, Poland, Latin America, The Small Powers, June 1937–March 1939. Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, London, 1953, p.476.

<sup>561</sup> Report of the agent No. 292 in Estonia, 6th June/July 1939. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**, ERAF138sm.1.8., p.84.

<sup>562</sup> **Faulkner, M.** The Kriegsmarine, Signals Intelligence and the Development of the B-Dienst Before the Second World War. *Intelligence and National Security*, 25(4), 2010, p.539.

<sup>563</sup> **Rislakki, J.** Finland’s Military Intelligence in War and Peace. *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence*, 21(3), 2008, p.463.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*, p.464.

<sup>565</sup> **Kinnunen, T. & Kivimäki, V. (Eds.).** Finland in World War II: History, Memory, Interpretations. Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, 2012, p.55.

<sup>566</sup> **Ilmjärv, M.** Silent Submission: Formation of Foreign Policy of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. *Studia Baltica Stockholmiensia*, Stockholm University Department of History, Stockholm, 2004, p.319.

regarding the true purposes of Halder's visits, Colonel Maasing told Hynninen, Finnish Envoy to Estonia, that Halder had recommended German-oriented neutrality to Estonia.<sup>567</sup> Halder stressed the geopolitical importance of the Estonian islands for Germany and hence that Estonian neutrality must be secured.<sup>568</sup> Taking the testimony of Maasing into account, the same proposal to maintain the (German-oriented) neutrality was made to Finland through Halder, since the interwar Estonian-Finnish military cooperation was based on the idea of jointly deterring the Soviet Baltic fleet with coastal fortresses in both countries.

Due to a lack of documentary evidence, it was extremely difficult to highlight the differences between Estonia and Finland in terms of their stances on establishing military cooperation with Germany in the 1930s. However, for the Japanese Army, the two countries were treated differently due to the differences in their attitudes toward cooperation with the Japanese.

## 9.2 Failed Attempt of the Japanese Army to Mobilise Émigrés in Finland (January 1937)

Japanese intelligence activities in Finland during the early 1930s are missing details due to lack of primary sources. One of the few well-known facts was that the Japanese Army closely collaborated with the State Police (E.K.).<sup>569</sup> In January 1935, Major Terada, the first-ever Japanese military attaché to Finland, made an inquiry to the E.K. about an émigrée Russian lady called Dampf to conduct a background check for her before her employment as a clerk.<sup>570</sup> Again, when Major Yoshihide Kato, Terada's successor, arrived in Helsinki in 1936, Kato inquired about his new secretary, Tatjana Arhipoff [Tatiana Arhipov? – S.M.] to the E.K. The Finnish Secret Police did not oppose the employment of Arhipoff, but requested Kato to keep his eyes on the new secretary, and issued a report about émigré Russians in Finland in summer 1935.<sup>571</sup>

Relations between Japanese military attachés to Finland and E.K. remained until 1937. On 15 January 1937, Major Yoshihide Kato visited the E.K. headquarters in Helsinki and had a talk with an officer named J.S. The E.K. officer exchanged opinions on the use of Russian émigrés for intelligence operations, and possible

<sup>567</sup> Ibid.

<sup>568</sup> Some of the Estonian islands e.g. Naissar were heavily fortified with coastal guns, and the situation was the same for Finnish islands e.g. Kuivasaari.

<sup>569</sup> In December 1937, the E.K. changed its name to 'Valtiollinen poliisi' (VALPO).

<sup>570</sup> Memo of the E.K. officer (name unknown), 23 March 1935. **Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto)**. M36. 3134.

<sup>571</sup> Report of the E.K. officer J.S., 11 December 1936. (No.3223) **Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto)**. M36. 3134.

security threats such as ‘Trust’ and ‘Prometheism’ (see **Evidence No.7**). This section examines the so-called J.S. report in detail. First of all, its authenticity is high from two perspectives: 1) correlation between the events and the written dates, and 2) an additional primary source to support the existence of the meeting. On pages 2 and 3, there were two organisations mentioned: ‘Trust’ and ‘Prometheism’ (Prometheus Movement). ‘Trust’ was a counter-revolutionary organisation established by the Soviet Union in the play of their writing.<sup>572</sup> The details of Prometheism will be explained in **Chapter 9.7**.

On 11 May 1937, a secret agreement concerning special cooperation between the Abwehr and the Japanese Army was signed between Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, the Abwehr chief, and Major General Hiroshi Oshima, Japanese military attaché to Germany. The attachment to the agreement noted, “Be aware of interventions by Prometheism activists” (“Ueberwachung der Prometheus-Bewegung” in German or “Promitee-Ha no Kousaku ni Chuui 「プロミテー派の工作に注意」) for the operational plan of 1937.<sup>573</sup> Thus, it was rational for Kato to be concerned about the Prometheus Movement in January 1937, before planning the joint intelligence operation with the E.K. There were no more materials confirmed in the Finnish National Archives related to the interwar connections between the Japanese Army and the E.K. However, it is highly questionable whether the latter would take the risk of information leakage by double agents among the Russian émigrés when cooperating with the Japanese.

General Severin Dobrovolski whose name was mentioned in the report was a former Major General of the White Russian Army in Arkhangelsk led by Yevgeni Miller. After the defeat of the Miller’s Army against the Bolsheviks, Dobrovolski defected to Finland in the 1920s as a political refugee and, based in Viipuri (Vyborg), he was involved in several activities of Russian émigrés against the Soviet Union such as the publication of ‘Klitsch’, an anti-Semitic and extreme right-wing magazine. The J.S. report above was the first primary source indicating a connection between Dobrovolski and General Sadao Araki, one of the high-ranking officials of the Japanese Army. During the First World War, at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, Araki was detached to the Imperial Russian Army to observe the field operations.<sup>574</sup> As an officer of the Imperial Russian Army, Dobrovolski served in the 11<sup>th</sup> Army in

<sup>572</sup> Report of the E.K. titled the “Russian Emigrants” (Venäläinen emigratio), May 1937. **Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto)**. M36. KE05.2824.

<sup>573</sup> The text of the agreement between the military forces of Germany and Japan regarding the exchange of the Soviet information and stratagems, 7 October 1938 at Berlin (Tai-So jyohou koukan oyobi bouryaku ni kansuru nichu-doku ryokoku gunbu no torikime shubun, okeru Berlin, 1938-nen 10-gatsu 7-nichi 対ソ情報交換及謀略に関する日独両国軍部の取極主文 於柏林 1938年10月7日) JACAR, C14061021200.

<sup>574</sup> Sugita, 1988, p.23.

Ukraine and it was there that Araki and Dobrovolski came across. According to one account, Dobrovolski was one of the many émigré Russians approached by the German and Japanese intelligence services. He was hired by the Japanese to open up new routes for the émigré agents to cross the Soviet borders.<sup>575</sup>

Furthermore, Kato's analysis of émigré Russians, those who turned to the Soviets, was true. The Japanese government estimated in summer 1937 that there were approximately 50,000 Soviet agents in Japan and Manchuria.<sup>576</sup> Among them, most émigré Russians were probably included. In this regard, the Kato Statement was found out to be a trustworthy primary source from the points above. The reason why the E.K. had rejected the Japanese proposal was unclear, but Fält found that the Japanese were suspecting rapprochement between Finland and the Soviet Union during the 1930s.<sup>577</sup>

### 9.3 Japanese Implementation of the Intelligence Operational Plans and the Soviet Great Purge (1937–1939)

After the conclusion of the Anti-Comintern Pact at the end of 1936, a secret agreement regarding bilateral intelligence cooperation was signed between Hiroshi Oshima, the Japanese military attaché to Germany, and Admiral Canaris on 11 May 1937.<sup>578</sup>

In the original text of the agreement, Provision 6 was “Without the agreement of both signatories, the third country shall not be involved in the operation” and 7 was “Within the limited realm of necessities, military forces of both signatories shall promote cooperation with their political counterparts and the military forces shall protect the operation from any interventions by irresponsible powers”.<sup>579</sup>

The attachment to the Canaris-Oshima Agreement was more ambitious in the sense that it showed a five-year plan to train émigré agents and cooperate with the local military forces to organise espionage and subversive activities in broad regions between Europe and the Middle East.

<sup>575</sup> **Elfvengren, E., & Laidinen, E., P.** Spying behind the Eastern Border: The General Staff Intelligence in the Soviet Karelia (Vakoilua itärajan takana: Yleisesikunnan tiedustelu Neuvosto-Karjalassa). Minerva Kustannus Oy, Helsinki, 2012, p.197.

<sup>576</sup> Kuromiya & Mamoulia, 2016, p.135.

<sup>577</sup> Fält, 1982, p.213.

<sup>578</sup> JACAR, C14061021200.

<sup>579</sup> Ibid.

The original provisions were translated into English by Professor Tajima as follows<sup>580</sup>:

1. Joint operation (in the Soviet territories) shall include (a) strengthening of nationalist movements of all ethnic groups; (b) anti-Communist propaganda; and (c) preparations for instigating revolutionary, terrorist and riotous activities at the outbreak of war.
  2. The required preparations shall be made in respect to the entire Soviet Union, which shall therefore be divided into three spheres of interest: (a) the region bordering Europe to the West, from Finland to Bulgaria, shall be Germany's primary sphere of interests; (b) the region bordering Europe to the Southwest (Turkey and Iran) shall be a common sphere of interest to both signatories; and (c) the region bordering Asia to the East shall be Japan's primary sphere of interests.
  3. The joint operation shall be conducted from 1937 to 1941, in accordance with the appended five-year plan.
  4. The cost of operations in the common sphere of interest shall be borne in equal shares by both signatories.
  5. Each signatory shall constantly keep the other fully informed of the subversive conditions in its sphere of interest.
- (6 and 7 omitted here)
8. In the event that either signatory is drawn into war against the Soviet Union, the other signatory shall use all possible means to strengthen its strategic operations in its primary sphere of interest and in the common sphere of interest, as defined in Article 2.

On 3 March 1937, the Japanese Army ordered the military attaché to Lavia to jointly administer Estonia and Lithuania.<sup>581</sup> This decision was based on the opinion of Major Akio Doi, head of the Russian Section of the Japanese Second Department. Doi proposed the joint administration of Estonia by the military attaché in Riga for two reasons: 1) the accuracy and usefulness of the Soviet information provided by

<sup>580</sup> **Tajima, N.** *The Origins of the Berlin-Tokyo Axis Reconsidered: From the Anti-Comintern Pact to the Plan to Assassinate Stalin.* Seijyo Hougaku, 2002, p.19.

<sup>581</sup> JACAR, C01007505900.

the Estonian General Staff, and 2) the pro-Japanese attitude of the Estonian General Staff.<sup>582</sup>

After the failure of the Eastern Pact and the Eastern Locarno, the Soviet Union altered its isolationism. It intervened in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) through the provision of arms and ammunitions as well as a detachment of military officers and political commissars to the Spanish Republic (Republicans). The plan to provide assistance to the Republicans was approved by the Soviet government on 29 September 1936. Soviet assistance comprised not only the provision of military equipment, but also detachments of military specialists and advisers to Spain.<sup>583</sup> Susumu Nishiura, a captain of the Japanese Army who was sent to Spain to research Soviet-made weapons, claimed he witnessed the dead body of an official Soviet soldier belonging to the Republican Army, who carried an identification paper of a Soviet military unit in Kiev.<sup>584</sup> Indeed, between 1936 and the first six months of 1937, Soviet military specialists were sent to Spain. However, the military intelligence found by the Soviet officers would not be helpful for the Republicans due to the complexity of the characteristics of the war.<sup>585</sup> In early 1937, Nishiura concluded a series of observatory reports on the Spanish Civil War, stating that “the Soviets decided to retreat from the Spanish Republic, but they also will test the military capability in the Far East soon”.<sup>586</sup> The analysis of Nishiura was probably correct, referring to the reality of the Soviet military advisers sent to Spain. Most of them were poorly educated in their professions due to the influence of the Great Purge, which happened at the same time as the Spanish Civil War.<sup>587</sup>

According to one account, between 1937 and 1938, the NKVD arrested 1,575,259 people, leading to 1,344,923 convictions and 681,692 executions by 1939, and well over 2 million people were imprisoned in labour camps, colonies and prisons.<sup>588</sup> The numbers vary by source, but a more surprising fact was that a majority of the accused were suspected of fabricating their connections with foreign intelligence services. NKVD official statistics from 1937-1938 indicated that 101,965 people were arrested as Polish spies, 52,906 as Japanese spies, and 39,300

<sup>582</sup> JACAR, B14090839400.

<sup>583</sup> **Sarin, O., & Dvoretzky, L.** *Alien Wars: The Soviet Union's Aggression against the World 1919-1989*. Presidio Press, Novato (CA), 1996, p.2.

<sup>584</sup> **Nishiura, S.** *Secret Records of the Japanese Army in the Showa Era (Showa Rikugun Hiroku)*. 2014, Nihon Keizai Shimbun Shuppansha, p.135.

<sup>585</sup> Sarin & Dvoretzky, 1996, p.5.

<sup>586</sup> Nishiura, 2014, p.136. Nishiura may have meant the retreat of the Soviet military advisers since the Soviet secret police used the civil war as a chance for deep penetration into the Spanish Republic.

<sup>587</sup> Sarin & Dvoretzky, 1996, p.5.

<sup>588</sup> **Viols, L.** *The Unknown Gulag: The Lost World of Stalin's Special Settlements*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007, p.160.

as German spies.<sup>589</sup> The most shocking event during the Great Purge was the arrest and execution of Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky of the Red Army. Through the interrogations of the arrested NKVD and Red Army officers between 22 and 25 April 1937, a special department of NKVD found criminal links between the former NKVD Chief Yagoda, Tukhachevsky and several others.<sup>590</sup> Stalin's pursuit of finding enemies within the Red Army did not stop here. On 2 June, Stalin told the Soviet Military Council that Tukhachevsky, as a German mole, had given the Soviet operational plan to the German Reichswehr.<sup>591</sup> A few weeks later, on the 11<sup>th</sup>, the Soviet Prosecutor's Office released a public statement that a 'conspiracy' in the Red Army (against the Soviet government) had been discovered by the NKVD. Following the statement, Voroshilov, the Soviet Defence Minister, publicly announced the execution of the traitors, the arrested Soviet military officers including Tukhachevsky, on the 14<sup>th</sup>.<sup>592</sup> Tukhachevsky confessed during the interrogation of the NKVD that he had directly worked under Trotsky, the former Soviet Central Committee member who was assassinated in Mexico by a local sympathizer of Stalin in August 1940. At the end of January 1936, during his visit to Britain, Tukhachevsky was approached by General Gerd von Rundstedt, head of the German government's military delegation to Britain. Rundstedt passed Tukhachevsky information concerning future German war plans against the Soviet Union. In the event of war, the Germans had been preparing to gain a decisive victory over the Red Army in Ukraine.<sup>593</sup> The operations in Belarus and Ukraine were to be jointly implemented by the German-Polish military forces, according to the testimony of Tukhachevsky.<sup>594</sup>

Major Gustav Guenther, the American military attaché in Riga, quoted a Polish article of 5 July 1938 indicating the estimated loss of Red Army commanders due to the Great Purge: two Marshals out of a total of five, three First Category Army commanders among six, ten Secondary Category Army commanders among 13, 57 Corps commanders among 85, 110 Division commanders among 193, and 202 Brigade commanders among 406.<sup>595</sup> These statistics have been cited in many

<sup>589</sup> **Kuromiya, H. & Peplonski, A.** The Great Purge: Polish-Japanese Connections. Edition de l'EHESS, 2009, p.647. <http://journals.openedition.org/monderusse/9736> (Access Date and Time: 4 May 2019, 20:15PM)

<sup>590</sup> **Main, S., J.** The Arrest and Testimony of Marshal of the Soviet Union M.N. Tukhachevsky (May-June 1937). *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 10(1), p.152.

<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*, p.154.

<sup>592</sup> *Ibid.*, p.155.

<sup>593</sup> *Ibid.*, p.167.

<sup>594</sup> *Ibid.*, p.189.

<sup>595</sup> **Grantz, D., M.** Observing the Soviets: U. S. Army Attachés in Eastern Europe During the 1930s. *The Journal of Military History*, 55 (2), 1991, p.180.

publications, but Guenther himself added that the numbers probably emanated from Japanese sources and he slightly doubted the Polish report.

Throughout 1937, accusations were extended to the civilians. In the meantime, the NKVD launched special ‘Country Operations’. Examples of such operations were the Polish operation (NKVD Order No. 00485) ordered on 11 August 1937 and the Kharbinsky operation (NKVD Order No. 00593) ordered on 20 September 1937. The country operations of NKVD targeted people who might have connections with foreign intelligence services of the countries indicated in the titles of the operations. The Kharbinsky operation was aimed at the arrest of Russian returnees from Harbin after the sale of the China Eastern Railway to Manchukuo in 1935. The returnees were suspected of working for the Japanese intelligence service and, in the context of the Kharbinsky operation, ethnic Koreans residing near the Soviet-Japanese border regions in the Far East were also deported as far away as Central Asia.<sup>596</sup> McLaughlin & McDermott surmised that those actions were clearly tied to the reading of Stalin in early 1937 of rear-guard uprisings against the Spanish Republican government based on the argument of Ukrainian historian Oleg Khlevniuk on Stalin’s fear of the so-called ‘fifth column’ inside the nation. For Stalin, elimination of the fifth column was necessary as it posed security threats in the event of wars with Germany or Japan.<sup>597</sup> At the end of November 1938 when the Great Purge was concluded on the orders of the Soviet leaders, nearly 766,000 individuals were arrested. Among them, almost 385,000 individuals were arrested as Category I enemies and scheduled to be executed.<sup>598</sup> The correlations between the Great Purge and the Japanese Army’s intelligence operations against the Soviet Union are further examined in **Chapter 9.8**.

## 9.4 The Second Sino-Japanese War and Wartime Propaganda which Changed the Tide of the War (1937–1938)

The outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in summer 1937 drastically altered the situation surrounding Japan in international society. On the night of 7 July 1937, the 8<sup>th</sup> Company of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the China Garrison Army (of the Japanese Army) engaged in a small battle with a unit of the Chinese Army at the Marco Polo

<sup>596</sup> Kuromiya & Peplonski, 2009, p.648.

<sup>597</sup> **McLaughlin, B. & McDermott, K. (Eds.)** *Stalin’s Terror: High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union*. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2003, p.104.

<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.*, p.103.



bridge in the outskirts of Beijing.<sup>599</sup> Which side first pulled the trigger is still the greatest mystery of the Second Sino-Japanese War.

Yet, the Marco Polo bridge incident was merely a coincidental accident. In fact, on 11 July, a ceasefire agreement was concluded between the Japanese Army and the local Chinese military authority. However, on 19 July Chang Kai-Shek's nationalist Chinese government in Nanjing refused to recognise the ceasefire agreement and asked the Japanese government to negotiate the agreement with the Nanjing government instead of the local military unit.<sup>600</sup> Hatano, Tobe, Matsumoto, Shouji and Kawashima<sup>601</sup> claimed that Chang Kai-Shek was attempting to avoid a repetition of the Manchurian Incident in 1931.<sup>602</sup> However, with the Battle of Shanghai on 13 August, a full-scale war broke out between China and Japan.

On 7 August, Major Makoto Onodera visited the Estonian Foreign Ministry and the General Staff in Tallinn.<sup>603</sup> Onodera seldom visited the Foreign Ministry but, more peculiarly, this time he visited it alone. His visit was recorded in a book entitled "Provision of Information Materials, Rules and Other Books from the Foreign Military Attachés" (Välisriikide sõjaväe esindajatele antud informatsioonimaterjali ja eeskirjade ja muude raamatute kohta) compiled by the Estonian Second Department. Thus, Onodera brought book(s) for the both Estonian Foreign Ministry and the Second Department. He was probably questioned by the Estonian officials about the war, but there was no documentary evidence to prove the provision of any war information to the Estonians by Onodera.

The upheavals in the Far East also caught the attention of the Estonians in Estonian newspapers such as *Postimees* and *Päewaleht*, and news of the Sino-Japanese conflict frequently received front-page coverage. On the 6<sup>th</sup>, *Postimees*, Estonia's oldest and most popular newspaper, reported a possible expansion of fronts

<sup>599</sup> **Hatano, S., Tobe, R., Matsumoto, T., Shouji, J., & Kawashima, S.** Decisive Edition: The Second Sino-Japanese War. (Kettei-ban: Nicchu Sensou) Shinchosha, Tokyo, 2018, p.47.

<sup>600</sup> **Foreign Ministry of Japan. (Ed.)**. Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy, Sino-Japanese War 1937-41, Volume 1. Rokuichi Shobou, Tokyo, 2011, p.17.

<sup>601</sup> Their book was based on results of the official joint research project of China and Japan on the Second Sino-Japanese War between December 2006 and December 2009, known as the 'Chinese-Japanese Joint Historical Research' (Nichi-Chuu Rekishi Kyodo Kenkyu). The project was agreed between Chinese President Hu Jintao and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Autumn 2006. The five authors participated in the project as representatives of Japanese scholar society. As of summer 2019, their book represents the latest research results on the Second Sino-Japanese War.

<sup>602</sup> **Hatano, S., Tobe, R., Matsumoto, T., Shouji, J., & Kawashima, S.** Decisive Edition: The Second Sino-Japanese War. (Kettei-ban: Nicchu Sensou) Shinchosha, Tokyo, 2018, p.49.

<sup>603</sup> Visit of Major Onodera, Japanese representative. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA495.12.196., p.23.

into Southern China.<sup>604</sup> The visit of Onodera to Estonia did not have any effect on the national sentiment of the Estonians. While the majority of the Estonian newspapers remained neutral towards the war, on the 8<sup>th</sup>, Estonian newspaper *Uus Eesti* published an article by French journalist Jules Sauer entitled ‘Why the Japanese are showing tenacity to Northern China’ (Miks Jaapanlased tahmad wallutada Põhja-Hiinat), raising questions about Japanese foreign policies against China since the time of the Manchurian Incident in 1931.<sup>605</sup>

Ever since 13 August 1937, the Japanese Navy had been conducting a series of aerial bombardments over Nanjing and Nanchang based on the operation plan enacted in July.<sup>606</sup> On 4 October 1937, the American Magazine ‘Life’ published the historic picture of a baby alone crying in the middle of the ruins caused by Japanese air raids on the Shanghai railway station.<sup>607</sup> In comparison to the Chinese war propaganda, that of the Japanese was unsophisticated and never infiltrated the societies of the Great Powers. Instead, the Japanese were engulfed by the furious flame of international society. As there were few possibilities for Japanese propaganda to succeed in the societies of the Great Powers, at some point the Japanese Army decided to promote its ‘righteousness’ among smaller nations, which already had a pro-Japanese tendency. In the Baltic Sea region, Finland was a prioritised target for this new stratagem.

Meanwhile, attitudes to the wartime Japanese propaganda machine overseas were sceptical. For instance, on 23 March 1937 Makoto Onodera invited representatives of Latvian media to his residence and showed them a Japanese propaganda film, which promoted the might of the Japanese military forces.<sup>608</sup> Hatano, Tobe, Matsumoto, Shouji & Kawashima wrote, “the more Japanese forces gain victory (against Chinese counterparts) by force and promote military victory, the greater the possibilities to prove the antipathy of the other Great Powers”.<sup>609</sup> Although the majority of the media in the Baltic States and Finland remained neutral towards the Second Sino-Japanese War, with the exception of *Uus Eesti*, the effects of Japanese propaganda in the Baltic Sea region remained minimal.

From the perspective of military technology, the Second Sino-Japanese War caught the attention of the Finnish Army. On 26 November 1937, the head of the Fourth Section of the Finnish Second Department submitted a request to Major Yoshihide Kato, Japanese military attaché to Finland, regarding details (mainly the

<sup>604</sup> Postimees, 6 August 1937, p.3.

<sup>605</sup> *Uus Eesti*, 8 August 1937, p.5.

<sup>606</sup> Hatano, Tobe, Matsumoto, Shouji & Kawashima, 2018, pp.64–66.

<sup>607</sup> *Ibid.*, p.126.

<sup>608</sup> *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 24 March 1937, p.9.

<sup>609</sup> Hatano, Tobe, Matsumoto, Shouji & Kawashima, 2018, p.134.

designs and detonators) of the Soviet-made explosives used by the Chinese forces upon their retreat, and Japanese aerial bombardment targeting Chinese bridges.<sup>610</sup> For the latter, the Finns inquired about the following:

- a) From what height were the bridges bombed?
- b) What was the hit percentage?
- c) How heavy were the bombs used (the explosive quantity)?
- d) What was the impact of the bombs on various types of bridges (concrete, stone and wooden)?

The Finnish inquiry document did not carry any answers from Kato. There are two possibilities for this: 1) Kato's refusal to provide the answers to the Finnish Army, and 2) the answers were too sensitive to be provided in written form and were given orally. The former reason is possible since the information concerning the accuracy of the aerial bombardment was top-secret for the Japanese Army, so Kato might not even have known it and might have had to request it from the General Staff in Tokyo.

Regarding the reaction of Moscow to the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, it is known that Max Clausen, a member of a Soviet agent group, infiltrated the German Embassy in Tokyo and forwarded the views of the German diplomats in Japan. Clausen reported to Moscow on 8 October 1937 that the Sino-Japanese War was a strong obstacle for Japan to establishing a second front against the Soviet Union, and also an obstacle to continuing German military support for China. Clausen's source was Colonel Ott, German military attaché to Japan, but Ott's analysis was also shared with von Dirksen, the German Ambassador to Japan.<sup>611</sup>

In consequence, the Second Sino-Japanese War caused miscommunication between the German and Japanese military forces. In January 1938, a formal negotiation between Ott and Major General Masaharu Homma, head of the Japanese Second Department, took place in Tokyo. Ott, on behalf of the German Wehrmacht, questioned Homma about whether Japan would wage war against the Soviet Union upon the conclusion of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Homma's answer was negative for several reasons such as the need to station a large number of Army troops in China even after the war for security reasons, and the resultant

<sup>610</sup> Letter to Major Kato from the Foreign Office (Ulkomaaosasto) of the Finnish second department, 26 November 1937. (No. 314: IV.sal.) **Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto)**. Sark-1408.9.

<sup>611</sup> **Fesyun, A., G. (Ed.)**. File of Richard Sorge: Documents Unknown (Дело Рихарда Зорге : неизвестные документы). Letnij sad, Moscow, 2000, p.80.

fiscal concerns. Also, Ott spontaneously estimated that it would take at least a year and probably up to two years for Japan to start a war against the Soviet Union.

<sup>612</sup>

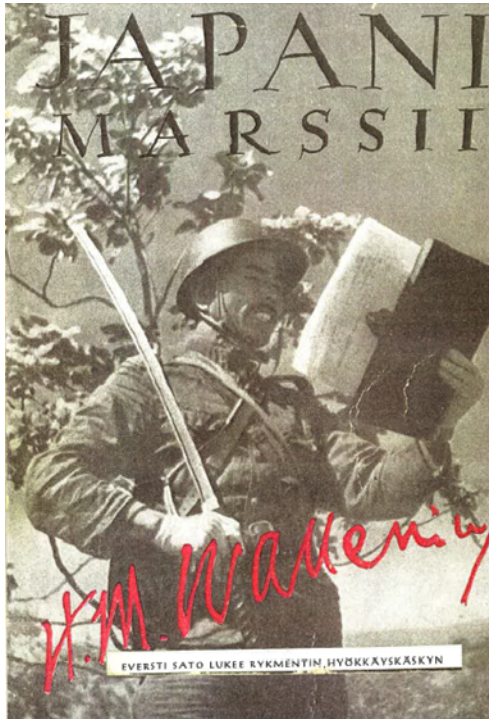
## 9.5 Trip of Kurt Martti Wallenius to China and Japan (1937–1938)

In January 1937, Major Yoshihide Kato, Japanese military attaché to Finland, visited the E.K. headquarters in Helsinki. Shortly after his visit, on 29 January, two American diplomats stationed in Helsinki visited the E.K. It became obvious from the report of 29 January 1937 that E.K. did not appreciate the Japanese intelligence capability. This was probably one of the reasons why the E.K. abandoned cooperation with Japan. The existence of this document, in turn, proves that the E.K. did consider cooperation with Kato since it would not have had to contact the American Legation in Helsinki if it had not considered Kato's proposal carefully.

Kato was an active member of the Finnish-Japanese Society (Suomalais-Japanilainen Yhdistys ry), which had been established by his predecessor Seiichi Terada. Kato frequently organised parties and invited high-ranking officials of the Finnish military and their families. Through the activities of the Finnish-Japanese Society, he expanded his network among the Finnish upper-class. Kurt Martti Wallenius, a former Finnish General who welcomed Japanese General Ishii in 1930 as Chief of Staff, also belonged to Kato's clique<sup>613</sup> In the history of Finland, Wallenius was a controversial figure for his involvement with the interwar Finnish right-wing organisation called the 'Lapua Movement' (Lapuan liike), the details of which were explained in **Chapter 6.6**.

<sup>612</sup> Ibid., p.83.

<sup>613</sup> Kato, 1985, p.41.



TENNO HEIKA, BANZAI!

Syyskuun 1. päivänä vuonna 1923 87 sekuntia ennen kello 12 päivällä alkoivat Tokion ja Jokohaman talot kaatua. Oli juuri päivällisen keittoaika ja tuli jokaisen perheen liedessä. Puusta ja paperista seinä seinään tehdyissä taloissa riehahti tuli liikkeelle kuin myrsky. Tulen ja tuulen ero paperilla on yhdessä ainoassa kirjaimessa, mutta sortuvassa kaupungissa tulen veto on väkevämpi.

Kun luonto poikkeaa säännöstä, silloin parhaita ihminen ja pakenee, eläin lymyy, kasvi värähtää, kivi tuntee olemisensa juuren. Peto haakee raukan seuraa. Taivaan ja maan välinen rako käy ahtaaksi.

Uskon näin ajatelleen niitten ihmisten, jotka silloin olivat kaatuviissa kaupungeissa. Osa heistä pakeni avonaiselle paikalle, josta armeijan pukimo oli juuri siirretty uuden-alkaisiin tehtaisiin ja parakit jo purettu. Paikka on laaja; siinä on toisiinsa painautuneina 40.000 elävää ihmistä, ja sittenkin tulen pyörremyrsky nielee kaiken. Sillä paikalla on nyt puisto, tempelli ja museo, ja niissä on nähtävissä järkyttäviä valokuvia korkeista harmaan ja valkoisen kasoista: tuhkaa ja louta.

47

**Picture 10.** Front Page of 'Japan Forward' (Japani Marssii), written by Kurt Martti Wallenius in 1938, and an excerpt from Page 47: 'TENNO HEIKA, BANZAI!' (Hurray for the Japanese Emperor!). Courtesy of the Feeniks Library of the University of Turku.

Wallenius arrived in Japan on 13 November 1937.<sup>614</sup> Only a week later, between 23 November and 1 December, he visited Shanghai as a war correspondent.<sup>615</sup> Japanese newspapers sensationalised the arrival of Wallenius in Japan. His status in Japan was that of a war correspondent representing several Finnish conservative newspapers such as *Uusi Suomi* and *Kuvalehti*.<sup>616</sup> In Tokyo, Wallenius soon became popular among the Japanese upper class. He was invited to parties and receptions almost every day and night. Such events were held not only by the Japanese Army and the Foreign Ministry but also the Finnish Legation in Tokyo and many civilian organisations such as the Finnish-Japanese Association (*Nichi-Finn Kyokai* 日芬協会) and the Pan-Pacific Club of Japan (*Han-Taiheiyo Club* 汎太平洋クラブ). The visit of Wallenius to Tokyo made headlines in the Japanese newspapers.

<sup>614</sup> Tokyo Asahi Shimbun, 14 November 1937, Evening edition, p.2.

<sup>615</sup> **Wallenius, K., M.** *Japan Forward. (Japani Marssii)* K.J. Gummerus Osakeyhtiö, Jyväskylä, 1938, p.175.

<sup>616</sup> Tokyo Asahi Shimbun, 14 November 1937, Evening edition, p.2.

Wallenius was indeed a ‘Japonophile’(Shin-Nichi Ka 親日家) who had long been anticipated by Japanese citizens. One day, together with Finnish Envoy Hugo Valvanne, he attended a farewell party for Shigeo Nagashima, a Japanese citizen who had been drafted by the Japanese Army. A few days later, Shigeo wrote to both Valvanne and Wallenius as follows:

“On the day of the enlistment, although I had acted selfishly, His Excellency (Hugo Valvanne) saw me off. I was totally impressed from the bottom of my heart...During the party, I had the pleasure of receiving a medal promoting the elimination of Communism, directly from General Wallenius. I have totally recognised the fact that Finland is following the same course as the Japanese Empire.”

**Evidence 11.** Letter from Shigeo Nagashima to Kurt Martti Wallenius and Hugo Valvanne, Finnish Envoy to Japan. (date of written unknown, possibly 1938?) Translated from the original document in Japanese into English by the author. Reference: Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto), C10.78.2.

At the same time, however, Valvanne was concerned about the mistreatment of Wallenius in the Japanese press. In his eyes, the Japanese media were willfully spreading misinformation. In a report to the Finnish Foreign Ministry dated 27 December 1937, Valvanne noted that the Japan Times, one of the leading English-language newspapers in Japan, referred to the word which Wallenius would have said: “Finland sympathises with Japanese people and sincerely supports them [in their quest] for a decisive victory.”<sup>617</sup> Still, the existence of the two documents, the official diplomatic report to Helsinki and the personal letter from one Japanese citizen to Valvanne, are contradictory.

In Tokyo, Wallenius was approached by the Russian Fascist Party (RFP), an anti-Soviet organisation ran by émigré Russians in the Far East. The RFP was originally established on 7 January 1934 on the initiative of the Special Intelligence Agency of Harbin (Harbin Tokumu Kikan ハルビン特務機関) of the Kwantung Army. The organisation consisted of two groups of émigré Russian activists, some led by Ataman Semyonov, a former White Russian activist, and others sympathising with Fascism.<sup>618</sup> ‘Ataman’ was a honorific title for tribal leaders of the Cossacks, and indeed Grigorii Semyonov was in charge of the Trans-Baikal Cossacks during the Russian Civil War. In 1921, after the defeat of the White Russian armies in the civil

<sup>617</sup> Report of the Finnish Minister Hugo Valvanne, titled “Major General Wallenius in Japan” (Kenraalimajuri K.M.Wallenius Japanissa), 27 December 1937. (No.36) **Finnish Foreign Ministry Archive (Ulkoministeriönarkisto)**. 5.C15.

<sup>618</sup> **Saito, M.** Japanese Spymaster: Truth of Major General Shun Akikusa. (Nihon no Supai Ou: Akikusa Shun Shoushou no Shinjitsu) Gakken, 2016, p.33.

war, Semyonov defected to China and, from 1934 under the Japanese sponsorship, supported the establishment of the RFP.

Before the establishment of the RFP, in 1932 some émigré Russians cooperated in the occupation of Harbin by the Kwantung Army. One of the Russian collaborators, Konstantin Rozaevsky, became one of the leading figures of the RFP.<sup>619</sup> Despite the fact that the RFP closely collaborated with the Kwantung Army, due to an abundance of funds collected by its administrative body called the 'Executive Office for Émigré Russians' ('BREM' in Russian or Hakkei Rojin Jimukyoku 白系露人事務局 in Japanese), the RFP did not have to rely on financial support from Japan.<sup>620</sup> Thus, the RFP was financially and, in a few cases, politically independent of the Kwantung or the Japanese armies.

There was probably a reason why the Japanese hesitated to provide financial support to the RFP, at least not publicly. On 22 March 1932, shortly after the Japanese occupation of Harbin with the support of the local émigré Russians including Rozaevsky, the Soviet Foreign Ministry (Narkomindel) released a statement on the Japanese Ambassador's reply to Soviet inquiries about the relationship between the émigré Russians and the Japanese authorities in Manchuria. Koki Hirota, Japanese Ambassador to the Soviet Union, was previously summoned by Karakhan, the Soviet Vice Commissar for Foreign Affairs, regarding Japanese support for the émigré Russians in Manchuria. Hirota denied the story, but through its intelligence channel, the Soviets acquired a report by the Japanese Army Ministry dated 27 February, the purpose of which was to deny the existence of the émigré Russian division whose task was to threaten the Soviet frontier and Japanese support for any émigré units using the name of the Japanese Army as cover. Soon after, on 15 March, Hirota assured Karakhan that Japan would not allow the Whites (émigré Russians) to undertake anything against the Soviet Union, following the decision of the Japanese government to guarantee its non-intervention policy with the émigré Russians.<sup>621</sup>

In a letter dated 26 January 1938, an unknown collaborator of the RFP recommended that Wallenius meet with Vasil Balykov, head of the information section of the RFP. During this private meeting, the collaborator showed Wallenius a letter, likely a letter of recommendation, from Chiune Sugihara, the aforementioned Japanese diplomat at the Legation in Helsinki. (see **Evidence No.10**) The sender was Vasil Petrovich Balykov, as shown by the signature on the first page of the letter. Balykov was a member of the RFP branch in Tokyo and worked closely

<sup>619</sup> Ibid., p.35.

<sup>620</sup> Ibid., p.36.

<sup>621</sup> **Degras, J. (Ed.)**. Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Volume II, 1925-1932. Oxford University Press, 1952, p.527.

with Ataman Semyonov. Balykov's background could not be identified but, as noted in the letter to Wallenius, he had resided in Tokyo and worked for the RFP.



**Picture 11.** Left: Ataman Semyonov and Vasil Balykov in Atami, Japan. (1938?) and right: a portrait of Vasil Balykov, probably taken at his residence in Tokyo (1938?) Reference: Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto), C10.6K.

While Wallenius was in Japan, Kato visited the Eastern parts of the Finnish Karelia region between 15 and 20 November 1937. He reported to Tokyo his impression of the visits as follows:<sup>622</sup>

- 1) The local sentiment about Japan was extremely good and (the locals) wished Japan success in the Second Sino-Japanese War.
- 2) Questions I encountered almost everywhere were “When will the war with China be concluded?” and “Does Japan also wish to start a war with the Soviet Union?”. Presumably, their interests were in a (possible) war between Japan and the Soviet Union.
- 3) The local sentiment about the Soviet Union near the border was extremely bad and there was much to learn from their concept of national defence.

<sup>622</sup> Regarding the trip of the Japanese military attaché to Finland to Karelia (Furan koushikan tsuki bukan Karelia chihou ryokou no ken 芬蘭公使館附武官カレリア地方旅行の件) JACAR, C010043956000.



As a result of the trip to Finnish Karelia, Kato gained confidence in the publication of Wallenius' book 'Japan Forward'. The book not only included the details of Wallenius' trip, but also a general introduction to Japanese culture including that of the military forces. On 28 January 1939, Tokyo Asahi Shimbun reported that Wallenius had sent seven copies of 'Japan Forward' to the Japanese Foreign Ministry officials who had helped him during the trip to Japan, carried by Lieutenant Colonel Yoshihide Kato.<sup>623</sup> Presumably, Kato would have personally supported the publication of the book and so took the initiative to spread the propaganda of "Japanese righteousness and the bravery of the Japanese soldiers in the war with China" as the newspaper article concluded. However, the effects of the Japanese Army's propaganda were limited to Finland and, through the publication of the book 'Japan Forward', the Army repeated the critical mistake of their wartime propaganda: the ostentation of military might.

## 9.6 Chiune Sugihara and His Possible Connection with the VALPO (1938–1939)

The Finnish intelligence service VALPO refused to cooperate with the Japanese Army in January 1937, and it was Chiune Sugihara, the second-rank interpreter (Nitou Tsuyakukan 二等通訳官) of the Japanese Legation in Helsinki with whom VALPO decided to cooperate. Sugihara has been mentioned in many academic and non-academic publications for his wartime activity of issuing transit visas for Jewish refugees at the Japanese Consulate in Kaunas, Lithuania, but his activities in Helsinki, where he was stationed before Kaunas, have been shrouded in mystery due to lack of primary sources.

It is still unclear from the materials available in the Finnish National Archives how Sugihara and VALPO agreed to collaborate. There are many possibilities, but one suggestion is that Sugihara was specially sent to Helsinki for espionage against the Soviet Union.<sup>624</sup> Moreover, Sugihara who had expertise in Russian affairs but was demoted to a position in Helsinki against his own will due to the Soviet declaration of *persona non grata*,<sup>625</sup> might have caught the attention of VALPO, which was maybe still seeking cooperation with Japanese authorities to strengthen intelligence activities against the Soviet Union. In fact, his life in Helsinki was tough as was that of his wife Yukiko. Minister Shuichi Sako, the then Japanese Envoy to Finland, forced Yukiko to act as a substitute hostess at official diplomatic events

<sup>623</sup> Tokyo Asahi Shimbun, 28 January 1939, Morning Edition, p.2.

<sup>624</sup> **Levine, H.** In *Search of Sugihara: The Elusive Japanese Diplomat Who Risked His Life to Rescue 10,000 Jews from the Holocaust*. Free Press, New York, 1996, p.118.

<sup>625</sup> *Ibid.*, p.118.

since he did not bring his wife to Helsinki.<sup>626</sup> During those days in Helsinki, Sugihara operated at least one agent called Sven Johansson, whose real name is unknown, under the supervision of VALPO. (see **Suspicious Document No.1**)

Suspicious Document No.1 is subject to source criticism as it was filed alone in the VALPO dossier of 'Japanese Spying in Finland' (Japanin vakoilu Suomessa) created in 1945. After the Armistice of the Continuation War (1941-1944) between Finland and the Soviet Union in September 1944, on 26 January 1945 Andrei Zhdanov, head of the Allied Control Commission for Finland (Liittoutuneiden valvontakomissio), agreed to reform VALPO with Yrjö Leino, newly appointed Finnish Interior Minister who was a Communist sympathiser.<sup>627</sup> Leino implemented his own great purge on the existing VALPO staff and, in consequence, seriously harmed Finland's only counter-intelligence agency. Among Finns, 'Red VALPO' (Punainen VALPO) was a common phrase to describe the situation surrounding VALPO between 1945 and 1948. The VALPO dossier of 1945 on 'Japanese Spying' comprised several surveillance reports on the activities of former employees of the Japanese Legation and the military attaché office as well as Tsutomu Kuwaki, a professor at the University of Helsinki who was an ethnic Japanese. Most of the reports were dated between January and June 1945 and, in that sense, it was unnatural to place the report on Sugihara and his connection with Vermala from 1939 in the dossier. Furthermore, in the same dossier, there were no other documents mentioning Sven Johansson.

Although the document was written in the official format of VALPO, it is unclear how Sven Johansson, whose name was never mentioned on any other VALPO reports, suddenly popped up as the informant of Sugihara. The author has no doubt that this report was formally written by VALPO, but its credibility is low due to the current location of the document and the sudden appearance of Sven Johansson and other informants of Sugihara. Thus, Suspicious Document No.1 requires source criticism due to its collation with other materials regarding Sugihara's activities in Helsinki so, hereinafter in this thesis, the persons or phenomena mentioned in the document will not be considered as evidence to prove the relationship between Sugihara and VALPO.

<sup>626</sup> Ibid.

<sup>627</sup> **Rentola, K.** 50 Years of the State Police. (Isänmaan Puolesta: Suojelupoliisi 50 vuotta) Gummerus, Helsinki, 1999, pp.46–47.

## 9.7 Connections between the Japanese Army and Émigré Networks in the Interwar Europe (1937–1939)

At the Tokyo War Tribunal in 1946, Hiroshi Oshima, the former Japanese Ambassador and military attaché to Germany, testified that there were a number of émigrés in interwar Berlin and he had a connection with Haider Bamat, a leader of one of the émigré organisations (see **Evidence No.16**).

Oshima's testimonies during the Tokyo War Tribunal are subject to source criticism as there are many versions of them, especially regarding his role in the negotiations of the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1935.<sup>628</sup> Indeed, the Canaris-Oshima Agreement of 1937 indicated that Germany and Japan mobilised the émigrés for espionage and subversive activities against the Soviet Union. The first attempt to mobilise the émigrés for intelligence activities against the Soviet Union during the interwar period was made by Poland. At the end of 1928, one émigré organisation called "Prometheus" (hereinafter, the "Prometheus Movement") was established in Warsaw<sup>629</sup>. The formal name of the organisation was "the Prometheus Club – A League of the Oppressed Peoples of Russia: Azerbaijan, Danube, Karelia, Georgia, Idel-Ural, Ingria, Crimea, Komi, Kuban, North Caucasus, Turkestan and Ukraine". The purpose of the organisation was to weaken Soviet influences over Eastern Europe and ensure the regional hegemony of Poland.<sup>630</sup> Prior to the establishment of the Prometheus Movement, in May 1928, Poland and the Soviet Union had a diplomatic clash related to an assassination attempt on Lizarev, trade delegate of the Soviet Union in Poland, by émigré Russians in Poland.<sup>631</sup> The Soviet Union was cautious about a repetition of the assassination of Voikov, the Ambassador to Poland, on 7 June 1927. Voikov was also assassinated by an émigré Russian.<sup>632</sup> Complying with the strong Soviet protest, the Polish government immediately expressed its deepest regret over the incident.<sup>633</sup> However, the Polish government did not alter its hostility to the Soviet Union even after the assassination of Voikov, and kept secret its support of the émigré Russians, according to the Soviet Foreign Minister

<sup>628</sup> **Morley, J., M. (Ed.)**. *Deterrent Diplomacy: Japan, Germany, and the USSR, 1935-1940*. Columbia University Press, New York, 1976, p.24.

<sup>629</sup> Kuromiya & Mamoulia (2016) cited the establishment of Prometheism was in Summer 1926. (p.116)

<sup>630</sup> **Komar, V.** *Activities of the Anti-Soviet Emigration in Turkey During the Inter-War Period*. *Vakanüvis- Uluslararası Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2017, pp.244–245.

<sup>631</sup> **Degras, J. (Ed.)**. *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy: Volume II 1925–1932*. Oxford University Press, London, 1952, p.315.

<sup>632</sup> **Korbel, J.** *Poland between East and West: Soviet and German Diplomacy toward Poland, 1919–1933*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1963, p.217.

<sup>633</sup> *Ibid.*, p.218.

Litvinov.<sup>634</sup> Furthermore, the Prometheus Movement was under the control of the Eastern Section of the Ekspozytura No.2 (Bureau No.2) of the Second Department (Intelligence) of the Polish General Staff.<sup>635</sup> Litvinov's analysis of the Polish stance on the Soviet Union was correct, referring to the establishment of the Prometheus Movement the purpose of which was to get rid of the Soviet influences over Eastern Europe.

As a public organisation, the club actively and openly expanded its networks all across Europe, from Finland to Turkey, as if encircling the Soviet Union. Proponents of the Prometheus Movement were Polish citizens who were detached or frequently travelled to the target nations as diplomats, military attachés and academics. In Finland in 1933, Professor Gustaf Ramstadt, a former Envoy to Japan, was an active member of the Prometheus Club in Helsinki (Helsingin Prometheus Kerho).<sup>636</sup> Supported by the local upper class, the Prometheus Club in Helsinki had grown in size in the middle of the 1930s. Even after the death of Jozef Pilsudski in 1935, the Polish head of state who was the biggest political sponsor of the Prometheus Movement, the new orientation did not stop.<sup>637</sup>

By 1937, Japan and Germany arose as new political obstacles to the activities of the Prometheus Movement. This was a result of the German-Japanese alliance formed by the conclusion of the Anti-Comintern Pact on 25 November 1936 and the Canaris-Oshima Agreement on 11 May 1937. However, in summer 1937 Japan was still seeking the opportunity to involve Poland in the Anti-Comintern Pact. The efforts of the Japanese Army, especially those of Oshima, had started back in 1935 by promoting closer ties between Germany and Poland, since the Japanese Army had already concluded a secret agreement with the Polish counterpart for the exchange of data concerning the Soviet Union. The first step was an exchange of political prisoners between Germany and Poland. Canaris took advantage of the event and made a proposal to Polish Ambassador Lipski in Berlin regarding cooperation in the military intelligence sector with the Polish General Staff. However, the German attempt failed and the Poles warned that any collaboration between the German and Japanese armies would automatically eliminate existing arrangements between Japan and Poland.<sup>638</sup> Even after receiving this warning from the Poles, the effort of the Japanese Army to include Poland in the Anti-Comintern Pact continued. On 13

<sup>634</sup> Ibid., p.218.

<sup>635</sup> Kuromiya & Mamoulia, 2016, p.117.

<sup>636</sup> Report of the Finnish secret police E.K. on the Prometheus Club in Helsinki. (Koskeva "Prometheus"-yhdistystä), 23 January 1933. (No.133) **Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto)**, M36 KE05.2403.

<sup>637</sup> Kuromiya & Mamoulia, 2016, p.169.

<sup>638</sup> **Chapman, J., W., M.** *Ultrnationalism in German-Japanese Relations, 1930–45: From Wencker to Sasakawa.* Global Oriental, Kent (UK), 2011, pp.48–49.

August 1937, a special meeting between German experts on Poland and Romania, and Japanese diplomatic representatives took place in Berlin. In attendance were Hiroshi Oshima, General Shigeru Sawada (military attaché to Poland), and Lieutenant Colonel Yoshinaka (representative of the Japanese Foreign Ministry who was in transit via Berlin). They discussed the possibility of “drawing other states (Poland and Romania) into cooperation in the tasks of the German-Japanese Agreement”.<sup>639</sup> This, the “German-Japanese agreement” would have meant either the Anti-Comintern Pact or the Canaris-Oshima Agreement but, considering the confidentiality of the latter agreement and since all the German participants were civilians who had connections with the German Foreign Ministry, it is rational to think that the meeting was about the former treaty. The participants agreed on the difficulty of inviting the two countries, Poland and Romania, to the German-Japanese alliance. Still, the military attaché Sawada pointed out the possibility that there could be a (good) chance for it if Germany made a friendly gesture to Poland, because ethnic minorities including the German minorities in Poland had been a big problem for the Polish state.<sup>640</sup>

In early 1938, the German-Japanese press agency ‘Agence Telepress’ in Geneva attempted to outdo the Promethean counterpart ‘Ofinor’.<sup>641</sup> As discussed between the E.K. officer and Kato (Japanese military attaché to Finland) in January 1937, the Prometheus Movement was quickly losing its influence before the German-Japanese intelligence alliance. In May 1938, the Polish government provided a formal reply to Japanese Ambassador Sako in Warsaw that Poland rejected participation in the Anti-Comintern Pact since the nation was pursuing neutrality to either Germany or France. The Poles also hesitated to conclude a special agreement on intelligence cooperation with the Japanese Army.<sup>642</sup> Borrowing the words of Ambassador Sako, the Poles were avoiding any sort of formal diplomatic agreements with Japan but seeking ‘substantive cooperation’.<sup>643</sup> Due to the Polish diplomatic ambiguity, the Japanese Army promoted an intelligence alliance with Germany in the late 1930s rather than with Poland.

<sup>639</sup> **His Majesty’s Stationary Office. (Ed.).** Documents on German Foreign Policy: 1918-1945. Series D (1937-1945) Volume 1, From Neurath to Ribbentrop (September 1937-September 1938). 1949, p.750.

<sup>640</sup> Ibid., p.751.

<sup>641</sup> Kuromiya & Mamoulia, 2016, p.170.

<sup>642</sup> **Foreign Ministry of Japan. (Ed.).** Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy, Showa Period III Volume 1: Between Years 1937 and 1941 Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Relationship. (Nihon Gaikou Bunsho: Showa-Ki III Dai-Ikkan Showa Jyuni-Jyuroku Nen Gaikou Seisaku/Gaikou Kankai) Hakuhou-Sha, Tokyo, 2014, pp.101-103.

<sup>643</sup> Ibid.; Kuromiya & Mamoulia, 2016, p.171.

On the other hand, in Riga Makoto Onodera hired two émigrée Georgians as his secretaries: Nina Shvangiradze and Maria Maglakelidze.<sup>644</sup> The former was a Latvian citizen born to a Baltic-German father and an émigré Georgian mother. She was often used by Onodera and his successors as a messenger. At the bar of Hotel Rome in the heart of Riga, Nina would exchange envelopes with collaborators.<sup>645</sup> She also introduced Onodera to a former primary school teacher called ‘Ezavitov’, a member of the Belarussian émigré organisation in Riga. The latter woman, Maria Maglakelidze was the wife of famous Georgian émigré activist Shalva Maglakelidze. Shalva established the first émigré Georgian organisation in Riga, but moved to Germany with his wife in the late 1930s. Makoto Onodera advised him to publish ‘Kartlossi’ (Kartlosi), a journal supporting the independence movement in Georgia.<sup>646</sup> In 1937, Ezavitov introduced Onodera to the staff of the headquarters of the Belarussian Democratic Republic (BDR) in Prague, Czechoslovakia and a group of Belarussian independence activists in Wilno (Vilnius), Poland.<sup>647</sup> Onodera met Kozlov, a leader of the local Belarussian group, in Wilno.<sup>648</sup> For centuries, Wilno had been the philosophical capital of Belarussian nationalism.<sup>649</sup> However, according to his wife, Yuriko Onodera, Makoto’s plan to mobilise the Belarussians in Wilno had failed due to ‘Protest from Poland’.<sup>650</sup> Ever since independence, Poland and Lithuania had not established diplomatic relations and had no intention to do so since the latter did not recognise the incorporation of Wilno, the historic Capital of Lithuania, into Poland which had happened in 1922. As of 1937, Wilno was a disputed ground for the two countries and reasons for the Polish protest were to avoid further diplomatic conflict with Japan while relations with the Prometheus Club were on the verge of a breakdown, and to avoid possible Japanese political intervention in the Polish-Lithuanian territorial dispute. Also, at about the same time as Onodera was approaching the Belarussian émigré organisation, Colonel Yuitsu Dobashi (Tsuchihashi), then military attaché to France, organised an operation to take photocopies of the Soviet diplomatic code book. Dobashi bribed an Azerbaijani worker at the Soviet Embassy in Paris to steal the codebook. However, Tokyo was not very interested in the copies of the Soviet codebook so it cancelled the promised

<sup>644</sup> Ibid., p.148.

<sup>645</sup> Diena, 15 May 1993.

<sup>646</sup> Kuromiya & Mamoulia, 2016, p.148.

<sup>647</sup> Onodera, 1985, p.53.

<sup>648</sup> **Onodera, Y.** Intelligence Activities of Major General Onodera: 1935–1946, Volume 1. (Rikugun Shoushou Onodera Makoto Jyoho Kinmu Kiroku, Jyo-Kan) Yasukuni Kaiko Bunko, Reference Number: 390-281-O., 1992, p.35.

<sup>649</sup> **Rudling, P., A.** The Rise and Fall of Belarussian Nationalism: 1906-1931. University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 2015, p.17.

<sup>650</sup> Onodera, 1985, p.53.

funding for the operation.<sup>651</sup> The émigrés had been the most useful human resources for the Japanese Army in its intelligence operations in Europe.

Additionally, in Berlin, a special organ of the Japanese Army run by Lieutenant Colonel Shigeki Usui had secretly established an office in Kurfürstendamm in the heart of Berlin, and was also renting a house in Falkensee through a middleman. The house in Falkensee was used as a base for six émigré Belarussian agents hired by Usui and they printed anti-Soviet propaganda leaflets there.<sup>652</sup> The propaganda leaflets were mainly shipped to Poland and there, other agents threw the packages together with confections into a river that flowed into Soviet territory.<sup>653</sup> In February 1938, Commissar Litvin, head of the NKVD branch in Leningrad, issued a report that the German, Japanese and Polish intelligence services were actively working against the Soviet Union in the Baltic States and also in Finland. The mentions of the Japanese activities in the report were minimal, merely stating that Lennartti Pohjanheimo, Finnish Lieutenant Colonel, had been an agent of the Japanese intelligence service in Helsinki.<sup>654</sup> Pohjanheimo was first named as a Japanese agent in 1934 by a Finnish newspaper based on information provided by a correspondent of the Soviet newspaper Pravda. According to the Finnish newspaper, a special organ of Pohjanheimo was established in Helsinki in the middle of 1933. The Pohjanheimo organ was specialised in researching the topography of the region between the Karelian Isthmus and Leningrad, and especially marked airports in the region.<sup>655</sup> Between the early 1930s and late 1940s, the Finnish State Police (E.K.) observed Pohjanheimo and the activities of his organ in connection with the independence movements of Soviet Karelia and Ingria. There was no documentary evidence to prove the connection between the Japanese Army and Pohjanheimo among the VALPO dossiers of Pohjanheimo.

On 29 March 1934, Karl Heinrich von Stülpnagel, Chief of the Third Section (Liaison Section with Foreign Armies) of the German General Staff, submitted a report on Japanese policy over Asia. The report mentioned a Japanese agent in Finland although the name was unknown.<sup>656</sup> Taking the Finnish newspaper article into account, this agent was probably Lennartti Pohjanheimo, but there is no

<sup>651</sup> Dobashi, 1985, p.327.; Kuromiya & Mamoulia, 2016, p.175.

<sup>652</sup> Affidavit No.488, GHQ/SCAP Records, International Prosecution Section, Entry No.327 Court Exhibits in English and Japanese, IPS, 1945–47. <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/10274286> (Access Date and Time: 28th February 2019, 15:38PM); Leverkuehn, 1960, p.132.

<sup>653</sup> Suzuki, 1979, pp.92–93.

<sup>654</sup> Report of Commissar Litvin in Leningrad to Ezhov, head of the Soviet Secret Police NKVD, February 1938. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**, ERAF138sm.1.56., p.76.

<sup>655</sup> Article of Finnish newspaper (company unknown) on the Pohjanheimo organ, 21 October 1934. **Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto)**. VALPO II: No.3215-71.

<sup>656</sup> Tajima, 2017, p.62.

evidence to support this assumption. The establishment of the Pohjanheimo organ in the middle of 1933 correlated with one mysterious event related to the Japanese military intelligence activities in Finland. Sometime during summer 1933, definitely before August, Genzo Yanagida (then Japanese military attaché to Poland) visited Finland to negotiate the detachment of one student from the Japanese Army to the Finnish Army unit in Lappeenranta. Before the visit of Yanagida, Finland had been administered by the Japanese military attaché to Latvia and his visit was unusual and mysterious. During the visit to Finland, Yanagida may have made the acquaintance of Pohjanheimo at some point and agreed to include him in the plan to station the first-ever Japanese military attaché (Seiichi Terada) to Finland and to make him a collaborator for Terada.

In 1938, there were several negotiations organised between Usui and the Abwehr representatives such as Major Helmuth Groscurth and his working colleague Erwin Stolze. Finally, Canaris and Oshima concluded an extensive agreement. According to Stolze, the detail of this agreement was as follows<sup>657</sup>:

- 1) The activities of the Ukrainians in Europe would be in charge of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Department of the Abwehr. (Abwehrabteilung II) and the Japanese counterpart would be informed about the current progress of the joint activities with the Ukrainians.
- 2) In the Far East, the Japanese would establish a connection with the Ukrainian settlements in the 'Green Corner' [This is the area southwest of Vladivostok where China and Korea border the Soviet Union – noted by Julius Mader – S.M.]
- 3) The activities against the Soviet Union on the Asian-European border, in the Caucasus, would be carried out together (between Germans and Japanese).

Mader did not mention the time when the special agreement was concluded but, taking the aforementioned Oshima-Keitel Agreement on 8 October 1938 into account, it was most likely signed after October 1938.

<sup>657</sup> Mader, 1972, p.197.





**Picture 12.** Shigeki Usui (right-end) and Haider Bammat (left-end) (1938). Usui had returned to Japan in 1938 and the command of his special organ in Berlin was succeeded by Colonel Takanobu Manaki and began to be called the Manaki Organ. Reference: M. Bammat Family Archive

## 9.8 Intensification of Intelligence Activities of the Japanese Army against the Soviet Union (1938)

On 11 February 1938, Max Clausen reported to Moscow that the Japanese Army was planning an offensive against the Soviet Union. The Japanese plan was to flood the city of Blagoveshchensk before the Soviet attack on Manchukuo while the Japanese attacking forces turned towards Khabarovsk to isolate the entire Primorsk region.<sup>658</sup> The source of the information was Colonel Ott.

<sup>658</sup> Fesyun, 2000, pp.84–85. The flooding of Blagoveshchensk may have merely been a Japanese bluff as Clausen reported that the plan was shared with a Belgian military officer by General Kenkichi Ueda, Commander of the Kwantung Army.

The Japanese war plan was known as Operational Plan No.8 (Hachi-gou Sakusen Keikaku 8号作戦計画).<sup>659</sup> There were two concrete plans in 1938, one known as Plan A (Ko-an 甲案), which aimed at two-pronged operations in Heilongjiang province in Manchukuo and Ussuri in the Soviet Union. After the defeat of the Soviet forces in the two areas, the main attacking forces were to head to the direction of Great Hingan (Greater Khingan) and defeat the Soviet forces there. The other plan, Plan B (Otsu-an 乙案), aimed at the defeat of the Soviet forces in the east of Chita and the occupation of the entire Trans-Baikal region.<sup>660</sup> The Kwantung Army selected Plan B and proposed it to Tokyo in May 1939. The Imperial Headquarters (Dai-Hon-Ei) concluded that the implementation of Plan B was impossible due to deficiency in military logistics.<sup>661</sup> In comparison with the outline of Operational Plan No.8, the information acquired by Clausen was similar to Plan A. Thus, the Japanese war plan partially leaked to Moscow through Colonel Ott in Tokyo. More details such as the influences of the border conflicts between Japan and the Soviet Union in 1938-39 will be taken up in **Chapter 10.1**. At this point, neither Germany nor Japan reported the leak of information and continued the intelligence operations against the Soviet Union using émigrés.

On 23 May 1938, one Ukrainian émigré was assassinated in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, by an agent of the Soviet intelligence service.<sup>662</sup> His name was Yevhen Konovalts, leader of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) ever since its foundation in 1929. According to one account, the OUN was funded mainly by Ukrainian émigrés settled in the United States.<sup>663</sup> Konovalts ran a training facility in Carpatho-Ukraine, an autonomous region near the Carpathian mountains, which declared autonomy from the Czechoslovakian government in Prague following the loss of Sudetenland to Germany in 1938<sup>664</sup>, for roughly 20,000 Ukrainian émigrés. This anti-Soviet education programme was supported by the Manaki Organ in Berlin

<sup>659</sup> The official name of the OP No.8 was the ‘Operational Plan against the Soviet Union for 1943’ (Shouwa Jyu-hachi nen Tai-So Sakusen Keikaku 昭和18年対ソ作戦計画). The Japanese Army intended to start all-out war against the Soviet Union by 1943.

<sup>660</sup> Volume 1, Issue No.1/Chapter 5 Operational Plan No.8 (Dai ikkan Dai ippen/dai go sho hachi-gou sakusen keikaku 第1巻 第1編/第5章 8号作戦計画) JACAR, C13010001000.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid.

<sup>662</sup> **Sudoplatov, P., & Sudoplatov, A.** *Special Tasks: The Memoir of an Unwanted Witness – A Soviet Spymaster*. Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1995, p.27.: **Suzuki, K.** *Hiroshi Oshima - Ambassador to Germany (Chudoku Taishi Oshima Hiroshi)*, Fuyou Shobou, Tokyo, 1979, p.94.

<sup>663</sup> **Leverkuehn, P.** *The Secret Intelligence Service of the German Wehrmacht at the War. (Der geheime Nachrichtendienst der deutschen Wehrmacht im Kriege)* Verlag Für Wehrwesen Bernard & Graefe, Frankfurt am Main, 1960, p.131.

<sup>664</sup> Kuromiya & Mamoulia, 2016, p.172. Carpatho-Ukraine declared independence in March 1939 following the collapse of Czechoslovakia, but was immediately annexed by Hungary. Reference: Ibid., p.173.

and the trained émigrés there were to take political control of Ukraine after toppling the Soviet regime.<sup>665</sup> In January 1938, Konovalts was honoured with a banquet hosted by Shigenori Togo, Japanese Ambassador to Germany. There, Konovalts announced a large congress of the OUN to take place in September but was assassinated before the event took place.<sup>666</sup>

After the assassination of Konovalts, the OUN was led by Andriy Melnyk.<sup>667</sup> In 1938, the Abwehr established a special training school for young Ukrainian émigrés near Lake Chiemsee, Southern Germany. The purpose of the school was to teach them guerilla tactics. There were also other émigré groups sent to the research facilities of the Second Department of the Abwehr (Abwehrabteilung II) in Tegel near Berlin and Quenzgut near Brandenburg, where they specialised in handling explosives.<sup>668</sup> The OUN had actively worked not only in Czechoslovakia and Germany but also in Finland. According to the observation of VALPO, in September 1936 the organisation was running schools at several locations of Finland such as Helsinki and Viipuri (Vyborg) to teach Ukrainian language, literature and an anti-Semitic spirit to fight Communism which was, from their perspective, organised by Jews as they taught at Ukrainian schools under the direct supervision of Konovalts. The identity of the OUN combined radical Ukrainian nationalism with racism, anti-Semitism, Fascism, a cult of war and violence, anti-democracy and anti-Communism.<sup>669</sup> During Summer 1935, Colonel Roman Suschko (Sushko), one of the central figures of the OUN, had temporarily lived in Finland to monitor Soviet attempts to infiltrate the OUN.<sup>670</sup> The activities of the OUN were also monitored by Pavel Sudoplatov, a mole of the NKVD who built a close relationship with Konovalts. Once, Sudoplatov was on the way to Ukraine via Finland, accompanied by Roman Suschko, and he was arrested near the Finnish-Soviet border by a Finnish border patrol and interrogated by VALPO in Helsinki.<sup>671</sup> According to Sudoplatov, he was released from the jail after Poluvetko, the OUN's representative in Helsinki who worked for both VALPO and the Abwehr, guaranteed his identity.<sup>672</sup> The

<sup>665</sup> Suzuki, 1979, p.93.

<sup>666</sup> **Muller, R., D.** *Enemy in the East: Hitler's Secret Plans to Invade the Soviet Union.* I.B. Tauris, London, 2015, p.80.

<sup>667</sup> Leverkuehn, 1960, p.130.

<sup>668</sup> *Ibid.*, p.131.

<sup>669</sup> **Rossoliński-Liebe, G.** *Survivor Testimonies and the Coming to Terms with the Holocaust in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia: The Case of the Ukrainian Nationalists.* *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, 34(1), 2020, pp.223–224.

<sup>670</sup> Report of the E.K., titled "Russian Emigrants in Finland" (*Venäläinen emigratio Suomessa*), 21 September 1936. (No.359) **Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto)**, M36. KE05. 2824., p.4.

<sup>671</sup> Sudoplatov & Sudoplatov, 1995, p.20.

<sup>672</sup> *Ibid.*, p.20.

VALPO report on the activities of the OUN in Finland may have been based on information gained through the interrogations of Sudoplatov. The activities of the OUN in the 1930s, as well as its connections with German and Japanese military intelligence services, caught the attention of the Soviet intelligence service, and Konovalts became a target for assassination.

Indeed, it was the years of 1937 and 1938 when Japanese intelligence activities against the Soviet Union in Europe reached their height. Makoto Onodera, the third Japanese military attaché to Latvia (1936-1938) who began to jointly administer Estonia and Lithuania from 1937, confessed to his child in 1978 that the Japanese intelligence activities, at least in the Baltic Sea region, showed the biggest progress in 1937. In the confession, Onodera mentioned his good friendship with Shigeki Usui and Hiroshi Oshima. According to Onodera, Oshima highly respected him and Usui was proud of Onodera for being a successful intelligence officer.<sup>673</sup> According to Yuriko Onodera, Hiroshi Oshima and Shigeki Usui visited her husband in Riga some time in summer 1937, together with Yoshihide Kato, then Japanese Army attaché to Finland.<sup>674</sup> The story appeared to be true as the Estonian National Archives hold their entry and exit records for Estonia around that period.<sup>675</sup>

On 10 June 1937, a group of Japanese Army officers (Hiroshi Oshima, Shigeki Usui, Yoshihide Kato and Makoto Onodera) arrived in Estonia from Helsinki by ferry and air. The following day, the 11<sup>th</sup>, the officers left Estonia for Berlin on a Lufthansa flight.<sup>676</sup> Yuriko Onodera also recollected that the visit of the Japanese Army officers was exactly at the same time as the execution of Marshal Tukhachevsky, former Soviet Minister of War who was arrested by the secret police on suspicion of collaborating with the German intelligence service.<sup>677</sup> The execution of Tukhachevsky was made public on 11 June 1937,<sup>678</sup> when the Japanese officers including Makoto Onodera were on their way to Berlin. Later, Onodera also acquired the information about the Great Purge, possibly from the Latvian General Staff, and reported it to Tokyo in December 1937 (see **Evidence No.9**). The Great Purge was indeed a historic event and observed by many, but the Tukhachevsky incident made Onodera focus on the side effects of the event: a chance to organise subversive activities within the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, Captain Etsuo Kotani, the former assistant military attaché to the Soviet Union who had just returned to Japan

<sup>673</sup> **Okabe, N.** Disappeared Yalta Telegram. (Kieta Yaruta Mitsuyaku Kinkyuden) Shinchosha, Tokyo, 2013, p.114.

<sup>674</sup> Onodera, 1985, p.54.

<sup>675</sup> **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv).** ERA495.11.22, pp. 148–149.

<sup>676</sup> **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv).** ERA495.11.22, pp. 148–149.

<sup>677</sup> Onodera, 1985, p.54.

<sup>678</sup> **Main, S., J.** The arrest and ‘Testimony’ of Marshal of the Soviet Union M. N. Tukhachevsky (May-June 1937). *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 10, 1, 1997, p.152.

in April 1937, was invited for the annual meeting of the Diplomatic Association of Japan (Nihon Gaikou Kyokai 日本外交協会) to give a lecture about the arrest and execution of Marshal Tukhachevsky. Kotani felt that his death would not affect the Soviet military command structure for long.<sup>679</sup> Susumu Nishiura also recollected that the execution of Tukhachevsky did not have a major impact on the actual Soviet military strength.<sup>680</sup>

One question regarding the visit of the Japanese officers to Estonia in June 1937 was why they spent a night in Tallinn, as no Japanese diplomatic mission existed in the city. The answer could be that, in the city, the four officers had a secret meeting with Estonian military officials to plan a joint intelligence operation against the Soviet Union. In fact, following the conclusion of the Canaris-Oshima agreement on 11 May 1937, Lieutenant Colonel Mitsuji Sannomiya, who was likely an assistant military attaché to Germany, visited Estonia on the 13<sup>th</sup>. Sannomiya entered Estonia from the Southern border checkpoint in Valga,<sup>681</sup> the border with Latvia, and left for Helsinki on the 13<sup>th</sup>.<sup>682</sup> The next day, Captain Okikatsu Arao, assistant military attaché to Poland, entered Estonia from Valga<sup>683</sup> and left for Helsinki from Tallinn as Sannomiya did.<sup>684</sup> It was unnatural for the Japanese officers to visit Estonia without clear purposes, especially during this hectic period immediately after the conclusion of the Canaris-Oshima agreement, and it is reasonable to think that Estonian-Japanese intelligence cooperation was first offered to the Estonians sometime between May and June 1937.

## 9.9 Joint Estonian-German-Japanese Intelligence Operation against the Soviet Union (1938)

In her memoirs of the 1980s, Yuriko Onodera mentioned how her husband Makoto had mature cooperation with the Estonian General Staff.<sup>685</sup> In the post-WW2 interrogation at Sugamo Prison, Makoto Onodera also confessed to American interrogators that the Estonian Second Department ran intelligence organs in Leningrad (a small group in which the leader was a doctor), Moscow, small Estonian

<sup>679</sup> 18. Recent Soviet internal affairs: Consideration of the Tukhachevsky incident (Captain Etsuo Kotani) (Saikin no Soren naijyou: Tukhachevsky jiken no kentou Rikugun hohei taii Kotani Etsuo 最近のソ連内情：トハチェフスキー事件の検討 陸軍歩兵大尉甲谷悦雄), JACAR, B02030915600.

<sup>680</sup> Nishiura, 2014, p.234.

<sup>681</sup> **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA495.11.22, p.1270.

<sup>682</sup> **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA495.11.22, p. 83.

<sup>683</sup> **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA495.11.22, p.1272.

<sup>684</sup> **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA495.11.22, p.86.

<sup>685</sup> Onodera, 1985, p.52.

communities in the Volga region and Eastern Siberia. According to him, the Latvian Information Department also had a special espionage school in Daugavpils and ran small intelligence organs in Ostrov, Pskov and the neighbouring frontier region.<sup>686</sup> This information is consistent with the Soviet analyses of the Baltic and Finnish intelligence services shown in the report of February 1938 (see **Evidence No.11**). Makoto Onodera, together with his wife Yuriko and their children, left Riga on 16 April 1938.<sup>687</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Tamotsu Takatsuki, the new military attaché to Latvia, succeeded the command of the joint Estonian-Japanese intelligence operation against the Soviet Union together with a newly appointed assistant military attaché who was stationed in Tallinn (Major Takeharu Shimanuki).

Then, after the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union in August 1940, the Soviets arrested Rudolf Velling, former deputy head of Section C of the Estonian Second Department. The investigator's record of an oral statement by Rudolf Velling and copies of it were attached to the dossiers of Richard Maasing and Villem Saarsen, two Estonian intelligence officers who headed the Second Department. The author found the document by checking the digitalised dossiers of both persons at the Estonian National Archives (Eesti rahvusarhiiv) in Tallinn in January 2019. Considering how the NKVD obtained information from Velling and other suspects, the records of the Soviet secret police must be open to source criticism. For instance, after the occupation of the Baltic States, the NKVD arrested General Johan Laidoner, Supreme Commander of the Estonian Defence Forces, and he was deported to Penza in the Soviet Union. Shortly after the outbreak of the German-Soviet War in June 1941, Laidoner was interrogated to try to uncover the interwar connections between him and his organisation (the Estonian Second Department) with Germany. During the interrogations, Laidoner did not tell the truth to the Soviet interrogators and ultimately misled them about the Estonian connection with Germany during the interwar period.<sup>688</sup>

To call for a broad discussion of source criticism over the interrogation record of Rudolf Velling, the author of this thesis decided to attach the whole texts (see **Evidence No.15**). There are three reasons why the so-called 'Velling Statement' is a trusted primary source: 1) the quality of the statement, 2) the immaturity of Rudolf

<sup>686</sup> **Strategic Services Unit (SSU)**. Japanese Wartime Intelligence Activities in Northern Europe. 30th September 1946. Reference Number: DB#1225. p.24. [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/ONODERA%2C%20MAKOTO%20201-0000047%20%20%20VOL.%20\\_0022.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/ONODERA%2C%20MAKOTO%20201-0000047%20%20%20VOL.%20_0022.pdf) (Access Date and Time: 31 August 2019, 22:25PM)

<sup>687</sup> *Latvijas Kareivis*, 17 April 1938, p.5.

<sup>688</sup> **Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia Ajaloo Instituut**. President and the Supreme Commander in front of NKVD. (President ja Sõjavägede Ülemjuhataja NKVD ees) Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia Ajaloo Instituut, Tallinn, 1993, p.140.

Velling in terms of his counter-intelligence capability, and 3) the possibility of extortion against Velling based on his ethnic background.

The first reason to trust the authenticity of the Velling statement arose from its details. On 16 September 1940, almost all the Estonian officials whose names were revealed by Velling were either arrested by the Soviet authorities or defected to foreign countries such as Germany or Finland. In September 1940, Major Aksel Kristian, former head of Section C of the Estonian Second Department who was probably a superior of Velling, fled to Finland where he was appointed military attaché from Estonia, which no longer existed as a result of its annexation by the Soviet Union. Velling should have been aware of the Soviet arrests of the officers mentioned in his statement. Thus, he was confident that most of the Estonian intelligence officers were already either arrested or had successfully defected. Furthermore, the names given in the statement itself prove that this document is legitimate. Otherwise, it would have been highly risky for Velling to give so many names without certain pieces of knowledge of the interwar Estonian-Japanese secret intelligence operation against the Soviet Union.

There is also an interesting finding by Julius Mader. Mader was an officer specially assigned by the Stasi, the Secret Police of East Germany. In 1972, he revealed that, from 1940, the Abwehr began to deploy several espionage and diversion groups, including the Gavrilov Group, in the Soviet Union via Estonia with the help of the Estonian Second Department.<sup>689</sup> The mention of the Gavrilov Group indicates a possibility that Mader had accessed the Velling Statement before the publication of his book in 1972. However, there are some contradictions in comparison with the original statement. Based on the Velling Statement, the Gavrilov Group was already established in Summer 1938 and Takatsuki visited the Estonian Second Department to blame Kristian for postponing the deployment of the group to the Soviet Union. In 1940, the Estonians were occupied with finding a man suitable for secret deployment to Pskov and the plan was abandoned once the Soviet occupation of Estonia started in June 1940. If Mader visited Tallinn's NKVD archives and checked the Velling Statement, why did he write about the Gavrilov Group in the way against the statement? Furthermore, Mader mentioned Richard Maasing and Villem Saarsen, two heads of the Estonian Second Department who were collaborators of the Abwehr, but not Kristian or Velling. This suspicion leads to only one answer: the possible existence of other materials mentioned about the activities of the Gavrilov Group, in archives either in former East Germany or former Soviet Union countries. Anyway, the Gavrilov Group was a top-secret organ of interwar Estonian-German-Japanese cooperation in the military intelligence sector

<sup>689</sup> **Mader, J.** *Hitler's Intelligence Generals to Say. (Hitlers Spionagegenerale sagen aus)* Verlag der Nation, East Berlin, 1972, p.312.

and, although there are some contradictions in the details of Mader's book, the Velling Statement seems highly authentic, since the top-secret Gavrillov Group was mentioned in the book.

The second reason to trust the Velling Statement was that it seemed to be too descriptive compared to the Soviet interrogation records of Johan Laidoner, the former Supreme Commander of the Estonian Defence Forces. For instance, in the interrogation of 9 July 1941, Laidoner mentioned that German and Japanese military officers visited him during the interwar period. However, he did not give the Soviet interrogator any of the Japanese military officers' names as "I cannot remember, but heard that the officer was in charge of all the Japanese military attachés in Europe". He also confessed about an interwar connection with Admiral Canaris, head of the Abwehr, but never mentioned any details.<sup>690</sup> There is no doubt that being a professional military officer, Laidoner skillfully evaded the questions of the Soviet interrogators. In contrast, Velling, as a young intelligence officer with less education and experience of counter-intelligence, could not act in the same manner as Laidoner and, probably under torture, he was forced to confess everything.

Back to the analysis of the Velling Statement, the collaborator 'Puusepp' was Herbert (Henn) Puusepp, a senior officer of the Estonian Political Police (Poliitiline Politsei) branch in Irboska (Izborsk). His name first appeared as senior officer of the Political Police branch in Petseri (Pechory) in a report by the Soviet NKVD issued in May 1937.<sup>691</sup> In early 1940, Puusepp received a direct order from Villem Saarsen, head of the Estonian Second Department, to find someone to covertly cross the Estonian-Soviet border from Irboska and reach Pskov in the Soviet Union. Although Puusepp found a suitable candidate, the plan was never initiated due to the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States in June 1940.<sup>692</sup> Velling was executed together with Henn Puusepp on 23 June 1941, a day after the commencement of Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union.<sup>693</sup>

<sup>690</sup> Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia Ajaloo Instituut, 1993, p.60.

<sup>691</sup> List of agents of the Estonian political police branch in Petseri (Pechory), date unknown (May 1937?). **Estonian National Archives (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERAF138sm.1.58, p.15.

<sup>692</sup> Interrogation record of Rudolf Velling, 9 October 1940. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERAF138sm.1.12., pp.46–47.

<sup>693</sup> **Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity**. ESTONIA 1940-1945: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity. Estonian Foundation for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity, Tallinn, 2006, p.343.



## 9.10 Examination of the Velling and Puusepp Statements

In July 2020, the author visited the Estonian National Archives in Tartu, which keeps many of the former OGPU-NKVD-KGB documents in paper format (mostly non-digitalised or restricted access due to privacy concerns). A new find at the archives was NKVD-era dossiers about the prosecutions of Rudolf Velling and Henn Puusepp. In addition to the aforementioned Velling Statement, which was compiled into the personal dossiers of Richard Maasing and Villem Saarsen, there were a number of interrogation records of Velling and Puusepp. The dossiers contained an enormous amount of information, so required close attention in terms of citing any parts from them, since there were dangers of thought manipulation by the Soviet secret police who compiled the documents. However, for the same reasons that the aforementioned Velling statements were trustworthy, and in comparison with the materials available outside the Soviet Union which were mostly published before the declassification of the Puusepp/Velling dossiers in Estonia in 2005, the conclusion of the author of this thesis was that the Soviet-era records were appropriate for the citations.

During the interrogations, Puusepp mentioned Gavrilov and the collaboration with him in terms of the operations to send the agents into the Soviet Union three times: the interrogations on 29 August 1940, 2 September 1940 and 5 November 1940. The oldest interrogation record of 29 August showed the first step of planning the operations to send the agents to the Soviet Union. In May 1938, Puusepp was called to Tallinn by Kristian as the latter was planning to send six agents in total, crossing the border in pairs, from a point 5-6 km north of Vasknarva by boat.<sup>694</sup> The agents were ordered to reach the nearest train station and head to their destinations. At the time of the meeting between Puusepp and Kristian, the tasks had already been given to the agents and they were awaiting their departure to the Soviet Union. Puusepp was also requested to find a way to send the agents across the land border with the Soviet Union near Irboska (Izborsk) so that they could reach Porkhov (Порхов) and continue the journeys to their destinations by train.<sup>695</sup>

About a month later, in June 1938, Puusepp was again summoned to Tallinn by Kristian. At his office inside the Estonian General Staff building, Puusepp was told that Captain Kaze of the Estonian border guard who was stationed in Vasknarva would help the border crossing operations and that he was fully aware of the details.<sup>696</sup> On the same day, at around 9 o'clock in the morning, Puusepp had his first

<sup>694</sup> Interrogation record of Henn Puusepp, dated 29 August 1940. ERAF130sm.1.13015 Dossier No.1 (1.0), pp.132–133.

<sup>695</sup> Ibid. p.133.

<sup>696</sup> Ibid.

chance to meet Gavrilov in the old town of Tallinn and he recollected that Gavrilov uttered the name of someone called ‘Vladimilov’ (Владимиров) whom Puusepp did not know. Puusepp was also asked by Gavrilov to bring maps of the border region and the former promised to bring them from the Estonian General Staff after the meeting.<sup>697</sup> Back at the Estonian General Staff building, Puusepp was given two maps by Kristian, one of the Narva region and the another of the Petseri (Pechory) region. The maps were in Russian and some areas were marked as possible border crossing points by Kristian. Puusepp visited the apartment of Gavrilov in Tallinn to hand over the maps and there, he encountered a man who lived in the same room as Gavrilov but the stranger went out shortly after Puusepp entered the room. At this place, Puusepp exchanged mailing addresses with Gavrilov and the former decided to use an alias ‘Karl Melnyk’ (Карл Мельник). After the meeting with Gavrilov, Puusepp returned to the Estonian General Staff building to report to Kristian his conversation with Gavrilov. There, Kristian showed Puusepp 20 tin boxes, 10 larger ones featuring fish called ‘gobies’ (Бычки) and 10 smaller boxes. They were all filled with explosives and Kristian gave Puusepp two large boxes and two small ones.<sup>698</sup> The canned bombs were to be provided to the agents for the purpose of suicide before their arrest by Soviet authorities. Also, Puusepp received four Browning pistols for each agent together with two clips and 14 cartridges. Puusepp was also given funds for the operation: 36,000 Soviet rubles, 3,000 for each agents. Kristian told Puusepp that the funds would support only the short-term activities of the agents inside the Soviet Union.<sup>699</sup>

Then, according to the interrogation record of 2 September, at the end of June 1938, Puusepp received an invitation from Gavrilov to visit Tallinn.<sup>700</sup> In Tallinn, Puusepp was invited to the residence of Gavrilov, known as the ‘Tourist House’ (Turistide Kodu) at 41, Pärnu Street. Puusepp was asked for more detailed maps of the areas where his agents would cross the Soviet border and to forward the request to Kristian.<sup>701</sup> Also, in the same room where Gavrilov lived, Puusepp met a man whom he called ‘Boroda’ (meaning ‘Beard’ in Russian). Gavrilov asked Puusepp for support for ‘Boroda’ who would visit Petseri (Pechory) and Irboska (Izborsk) for a preliminary topographical survey before the operation. After the survey by Boroda, at the end of September 1938, the first attempt to send the agent was conducted. Gavrilov visited Petseri with two people whom Puusepp never met. Puusepp handed

<sup>697</sup> Ibid.

<sup>698</sup> Ibid., p.134.

<sup>699</sup> Interrogation record of Henn Puusepp, dated 29 August 1940. ERAF130sm.1.13015 Dossier No.1 (1.0), p.135.

<sup>700</sup> Interrogation record of Henn Puusepp, dated 2 September 1940. ERAF130sm.1.13015 Dossier No.1 (1.0), p.151.

<sup>701</sup> Ibid.

over the two canned bombs and a Browning pistol to the agents before crossing the Soviet border.<sup>702</sup> Puusepp saw 'Boroda' off near the Soviet border, but he was surprised to see him again in a street in Irboska (Izborsk) a few days later. Gavrilov explained to Puusepp that Boroda was ill and preparing to send another two agents to the Soviet Union.<sup>703</sup>

The second attempt was made in the middle of September 1938. Kristian wrote to Puusepp about the arrivals of Gavrilov and his new agents at the border region. Upon their arrival, Puusepp called a colleague in the Estonian border guard, Captain Kaze. Before crossing the Soviet border, the agents were given forged Soviet passports. Next morning, Puusepp was told by Kaze that one of the agents had already returned to the Estonian side of the border after just a few hours. On the train from Narva to Tallinn, Gavrilov joined Puusepp and told him that another agent would also shortly return to Estonia.<sup>704</sup>

The third attempt was made some time in the first days of October 1938. Gavrilov came to Petseri (Pechory) with a new agent and Puusepp joined them from Irboska (Izborsk). Gavrilov and the new agent remained at Hotel Palladium in Petseri until the night. Puusepp gave the agent two canned boxes and a Browning pistol before he left. At 7 o'clock in the evening, Puusepp again arrived in Petseri to pick up the agent while Gavrilov left for Tallinn by train at the same time. Puusepp and the agent moved to the village of Podtsubye, 7 km from Irboska, near the Soviet border. The agent then crossed the border wire fence and moved into the Soviet territory south of the village of Mylovo.<sup>705</sup> Two hours later, Puusepp received a telephone call from the border post of the village of Poddubya and was told that a young man had been caught near the border and wished to return to Irboska. The agent returned to Irboska and, before sending him back to Petseri, Puusepp ordered him to return all the items he had been given: two canned boxes, the Browning pistol, and the forged Soviet passports.<sup>706</sup> Then, either at the end of October or in early November 1938, Puusepp was called to Tallinn by Kristian and returned all the items needed for the operation (canned boxes, pistols and Soviet rubles). He was also told that Kristian would not send any other agents to the Soviet Union until next year and would cut ties with Gavrilov as his command capabilities were lower than expected. According to Kristian, all the agents of Gavrilov had already returned to Estonia by

<sup>702</sup> Interrogation record of Henn Puusepp, dated 2 September 1940. ERAF130sm.1.13015 Dossier No.1 (1.0), p.152. Puusepp recollected that he also provided the agents 6,000 Soviet rubles each.

<sup>703</sup> Ibid.

<sup>704</sup> Ibid., p.153. Puusepp stayed at the house of Captain Kaze during the night and took a boat to Narva, then returned to Tallinn by train, meeting Gavrilov on board.

<sup>705</sup> Ibid., pp.153-154.

<sup>706</sup> Interrogation record of Henn Puusepp, dated 2 September 1940. ERAF130sm.1.13015 Dossier No.1 (1.0), p.154.

the time of the meeting between Puusepp and Kristian.<sup>707</sup> After the meeting, Puusepp was instructed to work with Rudolf Velling, deputy head of Section C, since Kristian had to work on another issue rather than with the operation to send agents to the Soviet Union.<sup>708</sup>

In the latter interrogation on 5 November 1940, Puusepp repeated that three agents belonging to the Estonian Second Department had been sent to the Soviet Union for special activities. Moreover, Puusepp confessed that Kristian had ordered the agents to commit suicide using the canned bombs if their identities were discovered by the Soviets.<sup>709</sup> In May 1938, Puusepp was called by Kristian to visit Tallinn to send a total of six agents to the Soviet Union for the long term. Puusepp was then introduced to Gavrilov. At the first meeting with Gavrilov, Puusepp introduced himself under the alias of ‘Melnyk’ (Мельник) given to him by Kristian.<sup>710</sup> During the second meeting, Gavrilov told Puusepp that consultation with ‘Vladimilov’ (Владимиров) was necessary, and asked to borrow maps of the border region from Kristian.<sup>711</sup> When Puusepp brought the maps to the house of Gavrilov, the latter outlined the operation for him. According to Puusepp, Gavrilov intended to send his agents from north of Lake Peipsi in the Narva region [sic] to reach one of the train stations on the Pskov-Leningrad railway.<sup>712</sup> At the end of September 1938, Puusepp received a letter from Kristian who requested to meet Gavrilov at Jõhvi (Йыхви) train station and, on the day, Puusepp welcomed Gavrilov and his two agents at the station.<sup>713</sup> The two agents were transferred to Puusepp and Gavrilov left them, probably returning to Tallinn by train. From Jõhvi, Puusepp drove the agents to the border region and handed them over to Captain Kaze of the Estonian border guard who helped them to cross the border in the evening.<sup>714</sup> Puusepp recollected that he had provided two canned bombs, Browning pistols and 6,000 Soviet rubles to each of the agents. The next morning before leaving for Narva, Puusepp was notified by Kaze that one of the agents had returned to Estonia half an

<sup>707</sup> Ibid.

<sup>708</sup> Ibid.

<sup>709</sup> Interrogation record of Henn Puusepp, dated 5 November 1940. ERAF130sm.1.13015 Dossier No.1 (1.0), p.210.

<sup>710</sup> Ibid., p.211. The alias ‘Melnyk’ was probably named after Andriy Melnyk, the aforementioned OUN member.

<sup>711</sup> Ibid. Puusepp did not know the identity of Vladimilov and assumed he was also an agent working for the Estonian Second Department.

<sup>712</sup> Ibid., p.212.

<sup>713</sup> Interrogation record of Henn Puusepp, dated 5 November 1940. ERAF130sm.1.13015 Dossier No.1 (1.0), pp.212-213.

<sup>714</sup> Ibid., p.213. Since Kaze was explained as a chief of the border guard unit stationed in Vasknarva in the interrogation record of Puusepp on 29 August 1940, the agents were sent to the Soviet Union through a point 5-6 km north of Vasknarva.

hour later followed soon after by the other one.<sup>715</sup> Puusepp confessed that he had been involved in the border crossings of three agents in total: two from Narva and one from Irboska (Izborsk).<sup>716</sup> The two interrogation records of Puusepp contained a contradiction. Puusepp explained in the first interrogation that there were three attempts to send the agents of Gavrilov, two from Irboska and one from Vasknarva. Then, during the second interrogation, he replaced Irboska with Narva (Vasknarva?).

In order to examine the interrogation records of Puusepp, the author compared them with those of Rudolf Velling, former deputy head of Section C of the Estonian Second Department. Velling mentioned Gavrilov and his group activities in the interrogations of 8 and 11 October 1940 and 18 December 1940. In the interrogation of 8 October, Velling confessed that the Gavrilov group (Группой Гаврилова) had been trained in Berlin and the intermediary tasks were carried out by Lieutenant Colonel Tamotsu Takatsuki, then Japanese military attaché to the Baltic States in Riga.<sup>717</sup> Velling remembered there were three agents: ‘Andryushenko’ (Андрюшенко or Андрюшев), ‘Vladimilov’ (Владимиров), and a middle-aged man with a beard known as ‘Boroda’ (Борода).<sup>718</sup> Vladimilov and Boroda appeared during the interrogations of Puusepp and the existence of both persons were thus confirmed. In the interrogation of 8 October 1940, Velling continued that he had visited the apartment of Gavrilov and witnessed a map of the areas between Pskov (Псков) and Porkhov (Порхов) in a scale of 2 km. Gavrilov asked Velling about the railway connecting Pskov and Porkhov, then Velling said that the railway led to the city of Luga (Луга).<sup>719</sup> After the failure of the operations, Velling heard that the agents of Gavrilov came from Yugoslavia and after their departure, Gavrilov also left Estonia. Velling did not know where they headed and assumed Gavrilov was living in Berlin or somewhere else.<sup>720</sup> The tasks assigned to Gavrilov and his agents were not explained to Velling by Kristian, but by Gavrilov. According to Gavrilov, the main sabotage operation was to be carried out by agents stationed in Moscow.<sup>721</sup>

In the interrogation of 11 October 1940, Velling confessed about the exchange of Soviet military information with foreign intelligence counterparts. The Gavrilov

<sup>715</sup> Ibid.

<sup>716</sup> Ibid. Puusepp recollected it was Narva, yet it was most likely Vasknarva.

<sup>717</sup> Interrogation record of Rudolf Velling, dated 8 October 1940. ERAF130sm.1.13015 Dossier No.1 (1.2), p.1. No page numbers were given in this dossier and the author decided to note the page numbers on each interrogation record.

<sup>718</sup> Ibid.

<sup>719</sup> Interrogation record of Rudolf Velling, dated 8 October 1940. ERAF130sm.1.13015 Dossier No.1 (1.2), p.3.

<sup>720</sup> Ibid., p.4.

<sup>721</sup> Ibid., p.5.

group, which was organised in Berlin, was transferred to the Soviet territories and information about the location of the Soviet military units in the Far East was exchanged with the Japanese. Velling stressed that Lieutenant Colonel Takatsuki of the Japanese Army was a figure with whom he had established mutual contact.<sup>722</sup> Then, Velling again told the interrogator about the incident of July 1938 when Takatsuki visited Tallinn and left a message with Kristian to immediately send the agents of Gavrilov to the Soviet Union. The incident was first mentioned in the Velling statement issued on 16 September 1940 (see **Evidence No.15**). Along with Takatsuki, Velling again admitted he had connections with the Japanese military attachés: Colonel Onouchi (Takatsuki's successor), Colonel Onodera (Takatsuki's predecessor), and Major Shimanuki (Japanese military attaché in Estonia). Among them, only Onouchi was mentioned as the 'Japanese spying colonel' (японской разведки полковник) who received the information on the Soviet military units in the Far East from Aksel Kristian.<sup>723</sup> Velling further confessed that the information was about the locations and commanders of the Soviet military units in the Trans-Baikal military district.<sup>724</sup> The Japanese Army's intention of collecting Soviet military information from the Trans-Baikal district will be explained in the upcoming **Chapter 10.1**. In the interrogation record of 18 December 1940, Velling merely mentioned that the Gavrilov group was in cooperation with Henn Puusepp.<sup>725</sup>

At this point, the author examined some details of the Velling and Puusepp statements and compared them with the materials available outside the former Soviet Union. Most of the materials were available before the collapse of the Soviet Union and the declassification of the Puusepp/Velling dossiers in Estonia in 2005. The purpose was to find out whether the Soviet interrogation records were falsified in the details of the operations. Firstly, regarding the number of agents of Gavrilov, Makoto Onodera recollected in 1976 that there were two or three agents belonging to the Manaki Organ who were also trained in Berlin. He had the impression that the agents were either Ukrainian or Russian.<sup>726</sup> The testimony of Onodera was consistent with the interrogation records of Puusepp and Velling regarding the number of agents. However, Velling had the impression that, during the first meeting at the Tallinn

<sup>722</sup> Interrogation record of Rudolf Velling, dated 11 October 1940. ERAF130sm.1.13015 Dossier No.1 (1.2), p.5. No page numbers were given in this dossier and the author decided to note the page numbers on each interrogation record.

<sup>723</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6.

<sup>724</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>725</sup> Interrogation record of Rudolf Velling, dated 18 December 1940. ERAF130sm.1.13015 Dossier No.1 (1.2), p.1.

<sup>726</sup> Okabe, 2013, p.111.

railway station with Gavrilov, the latter was a Russian.<sup>727</sup> In March 2021, the author was notified by Research Fellow Ivo Juurvee (Ph.D.) of the ICDS about the discovery of a personal registration card of the Estonian Political Police. According to the card, the full name of Gavrilov was Valentin Gavrilov, holder of a Belgian passport who was born in 17 May 1898, but neither the identities of the agents nor any other details of Gavrilov were found, hence they are still shrouded in mystery.

Secondly, regarding the tasks given to the agents, Onodera recollected that he had carried bombs once or twice from Berlin to Estonia and the bombs were intended for sabotage activities by the special agents in Estonia.<sup>728</sup> The canned bombs mentioned by Puusepp during the interrogation of 29 August 1940 were probably those delivered by Onodera. The second meeting between Puusepp and Kristian when the latter showed the former 20 canned bombs took place in June 1938. Onodera was relieved of his position as military attaché in March 1938<sup>729</sup> and left Riga for Japan on 16 April 1938.<sup>730</sup> According to Onodera, the special activities including the Gavrilov group could have been organised only in 1937.<sup>731</sup> Although the tasks themselves were unclear, the delivery of the bombs from Berlin to Tallinn might have already taken place in 1937. In the list of special equipment for intelligence operations published by the Japanese Army Ministry on 26 January 1939, several types of disguised canned bombs were registered. The canned bombs codenamed 'Hai-Kai' (ハイカイ) and 'Haro-Kiu' (ハロキウ) were meant to destroy objects. The Haro-Kiu could be disguised as a coffee can or confectionary box.<sup>732</sup> There was also the 'Hari-Hani' (ハリハニ), presumably a smaller type of canned box whose purpose was self-defence. The Hari-Hani could also be disguised as a normal tin can.<sup>733</sup> Presumably, the features of the Japanese canned bombs corresponded to the confession of Henn Puusepp on 29 August 1940. Puusepp witnessed 20 canned bombs at the office of Aksel Kristian in the Estonian General Staff building. Ten larger cans disguised as goby (Бычки) fish cans and 10 smaller cans. The former type of the bomb was presumably either the Hai-Kai or the Haro-

<sup>727</sup> Interrogation record of Rudolf Velling, dated 8 October 1940. ERAF130sm.1.13015 Dossier No.1 (1.2), p.2.

<sup>728</sup> Okabe, 2013, p.112.

<sup>729</sup> Onodera, 1985, p.57.

<sup>730</sup> Latvijas Kareivis, 17 April 1938, p.5.

<sup>731</sup> Okabe, 2013, p.114.

<sup>732</sup> Use of codenames for equipment for stratagems and intelligence operations (Bouryaku oyobi Chouhou-you Shokizai Rui Fugou Shiyou no Ken 謀略及び諜報用諸機材類符号使用の件), JACAR, C01004658600, p.8.  
<https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp/aj/meta/listPhoto?LANG=default&BID=F2006083120405298499&ID=M2006083120410998549&REFCODE=C01004658600> (Access Date and Time: 26 December 2020 17:45PM)

<sup>733</sup> Ibid.

Kiu and the latter was probably the Hari-Hani since Kristian required the agents to commit suicide before their arrest by Soviet authorities.

Thirdly, regarding the boat operation from Vasknarva to the Soviet Union, the Japan Times published an article of Isobel Wylie Hutchison, a Scottish botanist who had recently visited Estonia on 23 November 1938. In the article, Hutchison mentioned an incident at the Estonian-Soviet border in Vasknarva, hence the article was entitled the “Estonian-Soviet Border Scene of Many Incidents” by the Japan Times.<sup>734</sup> Her original article was published in the London Times on 15 October 1938. Since interwar Japanese publications were subject to police censorship, the author suspects possible alterations made to the article in the Japanese newspaper. However, no differences were found regarding the Vasknarva story in the article in comparison with the Times. In the original Times article, the border incident was reputedly caused by two Estonian-Russians who used a boat to cross the Soviet border at the Narva River. The two men were sighted by the Soviet border guard and were gunned down. According to Hutchison, although she did not witness the event and her story was based on hearsay, one of the Estonian Russians was killed by gunfire and the other was able to go back to the Estonian side of the border by boat.<sup>735</sup> The Estonian newspaper Uus Eesti reported that the border incident took place in Skamja, a district of Vasknarva on 22 August 1938. The two local Estonian-Russians, Alexander Rjabow and Gennady Gladōshew, received their wages in the afternoon and, due to personal troubles they had in Estonia, decided to cross the Soviet border by boat. While crossing the Narva river at night, they were spotted and fired on by the Soviet border guard and Gladōshew was killed. The story published was based on the interrogations of Rjabow who had returned to the Estonian side of the border.<sup>736</sup> There are consistencies among the Times, the Japan Times, and the Uus Eesti articles as far as the story is concerned.

Meanwhile, the story also correlates with the recollection of Velling who was given the information about the sending of the agents of Gavrilov, two agents each time, to the Soviet Union from a point 5-6 km north of Vasknarva by boat. Moreover, the publication of Estonia-related articles was extremely rare in the interwar Japan Times and eventually, the news of the Estonian-Soviet border incident made the headlines. The publication may have had the purpose of sharing the information of the incident broadly with the Japanese Army’s intelligence network overseas. Yet, this hypothesis relies too much on assumptions at this point. Thus, nothing certain was clarified through the existence of different sources about the incident.

<sup>734</sup> The Japan Times, 23 November 1938, p.1.

<sup>735</sup> The Times, 15 October 1938, p.13.

<sup>736</sup> Uus Eesti, 6 September 1938, p.3.



## 10 Reorganisation of the Japanese Intelligence Activities against the Soviet Union

Due to rapidly changing political and military situations in Europe and the Far East, the Japanese Army slightly altered its intelligence operational plans against the Soviet Union in the late 1930s. It had started with the defections of two Soviet military officers (Hjalmar Front and Genrikh Lyushkov) in summer 1938. During the interrogations of Lyushkov conducted by the Japanese, the German military representatives were allowed to access the interrogation records and even allowed to participate in the interrogation of Lyushkov based on the Canaris-Oshima and Oshima-Keitel agreements. The information obtained was forwarded to Berlin by the German Ambassador in Tokyo. The German reports were secretly acquired by Richard Sorge who infiltrated the German Embassy in Tokyo and forwarded it to Moscow.

After the defection of Hjalmar Front, the Japanese Army enacted a new strategic plan for its intelligence activities against the Soviet Union on 21 June 1938. The so-called 'Plan of 1938' was a minor revision of the Plan of 1932. The use of stratagems for the purpose of oppressing and conquering the Soviet Union was stressed compared to the 1932 plan. Also, the Japanese Army established the first-ever special school for its espionage agents (TSRSO) in July 1938. In the meantime, the defection of Lyushkov was followed by the outbreak of the Lake Khasan (Changkufeng /Zaozernaya) border conflict between Japan and the Soviet Union. Another and larger conflict on the Manchurian-Mongolian border during summer 1939 (Khalkhin Gol/ Nomonhan Incident) proved the military inferiority of the Japanese Army against the Soviet Red Army. The impacts of the border conflicts in 1938 and 1939 on the Japanese Plan of 1938 were cannot be evaluated due to so many uncertainties.

In January 1939, Germany and Japan sent a group of agents to assassinate Stalin in his Winter villa in Sochi, but the operation failed and the agents were arrested and executed. Then, during the Khalkhin Gol (Nomonhan) conflict, Germany suddenly opted to cooperate with the Soviet Union in August 1939. This brought an end to the

German-Japanese intelligence cooperation and, between 1939 and 1940, the Japanese Army reinstated its Polish-Japanese intelligence cooperation.

## 10.1 The Soviet-Japanese Border Conflicts (1938–1939)

There were two important external factors affecting the Japanese Army's intelligence operations in the Baltic Sea region in 1938 and 1939: 1) the Soviet-Japanese border conflicts and 2) the Czechoslovakian crisis engulfing Europe.

In summer 1938, a series of surprising events occurred in the Far East. On 29 May 1938, Major Hjalmar Front, a staff officer of the Soviet military forces in Outer-Mongolia, defected to Manchukuo.<sup>737</sup> Front was an ethnic Finn who turned to the Soviet Red Army after the defeat of the Red Guards during the Finnish Civil War.<sup>738</sup> Almost a year later, on 26 May 1939, VALPO asked Sugihara for information about the appearance of Hjalmar Front<sup>739</sup> (see **Evidence No.14**). Sugihara had worked for the Foreign Ministry of Manchukuo between 1932 and 1935.<sup>740</sup> Front had been stationed in Chita, near the Manchukuo-Soviet border, between 1934 and 1938 as a member of the Soviet 36<sup>th</sup> Division.<sup>741</sup> Again, there is no documentary evidence for this, but there remains a slight possibility that Front and Sugihara would have been in contact during the period. Unlike the aforementioned suspicious VALPO document on Sugihara's connection with the Finnish intelligence agency, the location of this document was the so-called Japan (Japanese) dossier M36.3134 in which VALPO placed almost all its documents on its surveillance and relations with the Japanese Army and diplomats in Helsinki. Thus, from this point, the credibility of the document is comparably high. Despite questions of how Sugihara and Front knew each other and the fact that Sugihara's connection with VALPO is subject to criticism, compared to the previous VALPO document on the intelligence network shared with Sugihara, it appears to the author that the document is credible for one

<sup>737</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 2 July 1938, Evening edition, p.1.

<sup>738</sup> The Finnish Civil War broke out on 27 January 1918 and lasted until 15 May 1918. The war was fought between the White Guards (Suojeluskunta) led by General Mannerheim and the Red Guards led by Ali Aaltonen. The former was backed by Imperial Germany and the latter by the Bolsheviks in Russia. The defeated Red Guards defected to Russian territories under the control of the Bolsheviks and many of them were re-educated as professional military officers at the St.Petersburg International Military School to join the Red Army.

<sup>739</sup> Inquiry regarding the appearance of Hjalmar Front, 26 May 1939. (No.1292) **Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto)**. M36.3134.

<sup>740</sup> "Biography of Chiune Sugihara". Official Website of the Sugihara House in Kaunas, Lithuania. <http://www.sugiharahouse.com/en/chiune-sugihara/biography> (Access Date and Time: 31 August 2019, 20:10PM)

<sup>741</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 2 July 1938, Evening edition, p.1.

reason: if it was a forged document, it would be less valuable as a source from which to criticise either Sugihara or VALPO for their connections with Front. There was only vague information about Front himself (and his brother) and only the appearance of Front was described in detail.

After Front's defection, on 13 June 1938, Genrikh Lyushkov, Commissar 3<sup>rd</sup> Class (equivalent to Major General in the Japanese Army) who was head of the NKVD units in the Soviet Far East,<sup>742</sup> defected to Manchukuo via Chanlingtzu heights near Vladivostok.<sup>743</sup> The Polish intelligence service received information on the defection of Lyushkov via Riga on 24 June.<sup>744</sup> On 2 July, the Japanese Press finally reported the defection and it caused a sensation all across the world except for the Soviet Union, which remained silent on the news.<sup>745</sup> In Tokyo, Lyushkov was repeatedly interrogated by the Japanese Army. The German military intelligence service the Abwehr sent a special agent to Tokyo to participate in the interrogation of Lyushkov. It transpired from this that Lyushkov had been in close contact with Stalin for years and was involved in long-term covert activities in Germany. That was why the Germans were interested in the former Soviet high-ranking official.<sup>746</sup> The information acquired by the German special agent had fallen into the hands of Stalin when Richard Sorge, a Soviet mole, infiltrated the German Embassy in Tokyo.<sup>747</sup> Coox found four types of information that the Germans acquired through the interrogation of Lyushkov, which was forwarded to Moscow by Sorge<sup>748</sup>:

- 1) Lyushkov's own anti-Communist-like attitude
- 2) Criticisms of Stalin and of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee
- 3) Lyushkov's view that, since the power of the oppositionist faction in Siberia was great and since discontent was pent up in the Red Army (as far as the internal situation of the Siberian forces was concerned), if the Japanese Army would only attack it, the Soviet Army would collapse overnight.

<sup>742</sup> **Coox, A., D.** L'Affaire Lyushkov: Anatomy of a Defector. *Soviet Studies*, 1968, 19, 3, p.405; *Ibid.*, p.408.

<sup>743</sup> *Ibid.*, p.405.

<sup>744</sup> *Ibid.*, p.406.

<sup>745</sup> *Ibid.*, p.407.

<sup>746</sup> **Matthews, O.** *An Impeccable Spy: Richard Sorge. Stalin's Master Agent.* Bloomsbury Publishing, London, 2020, p.194.; Coox, 1968, p.411. The name of the German special agent was Colonel Greiling.

<sup>747</sup> Matthews, 2020, pp.196–197.

<sup>748</sup> Coox, 1968, p.412. Although Coox was able to find this information in West German archives, the book of Fesyun published in 2000 did not contain any of the telegrams of the Sorge group regarding the interrogations of Lyushkov.

- 4) Very detailed information about the deployments and military radio codes of the Red Army in Siberia and Ukraine, etc.

In Helsinki, some of the information gained by the interrogation of Lyushkov in Tokyo was handed over to the Finnish secret police VALPO on 21 September 1938 by Chiune Sugihara, then Japanese Envoy to Finland.<sup>749</sup> The original documents of the correspondence regarding the exchange of information between Sugihara and VALPO were not confirmed and the event was only noted in VALPO's diary for secret correspondence. Thus, there was no clue about how Sugihara himself had access to the top-secret information gained from Lyushkov. Meanwhile, the Japanese Army was shocked by the facts provided by Lyushkov that the Soviet Far Eastern Army consisted of some 25 rifle divisions (400,000 troops) and 2,000 military aircraft, combining with the Trans-Baikal Military District and the Lyushkov's NKVD forces.<sup>750</sup> Yet, Saburo Hayashi, one of the best Russian experts in the Japanese Army, recollected in the post-WW2 period that what Lyushkov provided to the Japanese were "sets of meaningless information".<sup>751</sup> Although the correlation with the defection of Lyushkov was unknown, on 29 July, a clash between the Japanese and Soviet border guards broke out in the vicinity of Shachaofeng (Bezmyannaya). Already in early July, there was a concentration of Soviet troops in Changkufeng (Zaozernaya).<sup>752</sup> The border conflict intensified into the so-called Battle of Lake Khasan (Lake Khasan border conflict) between the Japanese and Red Armies. On 11 August 1938, a ceasefire took effect.<sup>753</sup>

The aforementioned Operational Plan No.8 (see **Chapter 9.8**) was deeply affected by the Lake Khasan conflict. On 3 August 1938, Sorge reported to Moscow that the border conflict would not lead to war with Japan unless the Red Army stepped into Manchukuo or Japanese-occupied Korea. Sorge noted that the Japanese were eager to go to war with the Soviet Union, but not by the Lake Khasan conflict.<sup>754</sup> However, shortly after, on 2 September, Sorge reported the change in Japanese mindset. The Japanese government began to seek for more decisive military action against the Soviet Union, and the reinforcements were already concentrated in the

<sup>749</sup> The secret letter diary (Erittäin salainen kirjediaari) between 1 April and 31 December 1938. **Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto)**. M36. KE05.983, p.76.

<sup>750</sup> Matthews, 2020, p.195.

<sup>751</sup> **Hayashi, S.** How we conducted intelligence activities against the Soviet Union. (Wareware wa donoyou-ni tai-so choho kinmu wo yattaka). (N.B.: Written date is unknown) Reference Number: Chuo-Gunjigyosei Sonota - 151. National Institute for Defence Studies (NIDS) Archive, Tokyo, p.5.

<sup>752</sup> **Coox, A., D.** The Lake Khasan Affair of 1938: Overview and Lessons. *Soviet Studies*, 1973, 25, 1, p.51.

<sup>753</sup> *Ibid.*, p.53.

<sup>754</sup> Fesyun, 2000, p.90.

border regions near Khabarovsk and Vladivostok for defensive purposes.<sup>755</sup> As noted in **Chapter 9.8**, the draft of Operational Plan No.8 was leaked to Moscow through Clausen before the Lake Khasan conflict. In the aftermath of the border conflict, the Japanese war plan was finally formalised. On 27 November 1938, either Clausen or Sorge reported to Moscow that the Japanese Army had formulated three plans for an offensive against the Soviet Union: 1) occupation of Vladivostok and the Siberian railway, 2) occupation of Chita and Irkutsk with a simultaneous attack on Sakhalyan-Suikh [sic] sector, and 3) a landing operation in the Primorye [sic] region after the destruction of the Soviet Pacific fleet.<sup>756</sup> Among these, the second plan is consistent with Plan B of Operational Plan No.8. The occupation of the Trans-Baikal region was the best choice for the Japanese Army. Moreover, on 20 December 1938, Sorge reported that the Japanese Army had decided to prioritise the attack on the Siberian railway north of Vladivostok in the event of war.<sup>757</sup> This meant that there were priority-related discussions regarding Operational Plan No.8 within the Japanese Army after the Lake Khasan border conflict. As a result, the Imperial Headquarters rejected the war plan in 1939. Under these circumstances, in summer 1938 there were three major events in terms of Japanese military intelligence activities: 1) the formulation of a new strategic plan to disturb the Soviet Union through espionage, 2) the establishment of a special training school for espionage agents, and 3) the inclination of the Estonian military forces towards Germany.

The formulation of a new strategic plan against the Soviet Union by the Japanese Army took place on 21 June 1938 (see **Evidence No.12**). The author called it the 'Plan of 1938' as a minor revision to the Plan of 1932. In June 1938, the Japanese Army expected Soviet military intervention in the Second Sino-Japanese War,<sup>758</sup> and the use of the stratagem to disturb the Soviet Union from inside was prioritised to prevent such intervention. The Plan of 1938, however, did not indicate the methods and targeted areas of disturbance. Thus, the author of this thesis assumed there were no changes made to the Plan of 1932 in terms of the methods and targeted areas. The policy of the Japanese Army, which emphasised the stratagem (Bouryaku 謀略 in Japanese) was confirmed by the diary of Shinichi Tanaka, head of the Military Affairs Section of the Army Ministry. Tanaka wrote on the 23 April 1937 that the Army needed to promote stratagems in two regions, Europe and Mongolia, to

<sup>755</sup> Fesyun, 2000, p.92.

<sup>756</sup> Ibid., p.95.

<sup>757</sup> Ibid., p.96. All the information gathered by Clausen and Sorge was obtained through either Ott or Major Scholl, an aide to Ott.

<sup>758</sup> The Japanese Army might have been expecting border conflict with the Soviet Union ever since the defection of Lyushkov.

“oppress and conquer the Soviet Union” (“Soren appuku no tame” 「ソ連圧服の為」).<sup>759</sup>

The special aspect of the Plan of 1938 was the emphasis of the Japanese Army on the promotion of military strength to seek the approval of a hardline policy against the Soviet Union by the Japanese government and also the Japanese public. This meant that the Japanese Army had not understood or learned the lesson of wartime propaganda during the early stage of the Second Sino-Japanese War. In order to realise the international encirclement of the Soviet Union with the cooperation of the Western Great Powers such as Britain and the United States, which was indicated as Outline No.2.4 of the Plan of 1938, it was necessary for the Japanese Army to change its stance on the wartime propaganda. As noted in **Chapter 9.4**, the Japanese propaganda, which had been meant to show off its military power, actually had the opposite effect with the emergence of anti-Japanese sentiment, especially in the United States. On 20 July 1938, Japanese Consul General Kaname Wakasugi in New York reported to Tokyo that sensationalism and sentimentalism were the two essential requirements for successful propaganda in the United States and, at that moment, the sacrifice and suffering of the Chinese people in the war against Japan met the criteria, which was why anti-Japanese coverage was popular in the United States.<sup>760</sup> In February 1940, 77% of Americans supported China and only 2% Japan.<sup>761</sup> In consequence, the Japanese Army underestimated the value of democracy among the Western Great Powers when formulating its strategy against the Soviet Union.

Secondly, in July 1938, the Japanese Army established a semi-official special training school called the ‘Training School for Rear-Service Officers’ (Kouhou Kinmu Youin Youseiijyo 後方勤務要員養成所) in the Nakano district of Tokyo. The school aimed to train specialists in espionage, propaganda and counter-intelligence.<sup>762</sup> The first group of students consisting of 19 persons from various backgrounds, not only limited to active Army officers, graduated from the school in August 1939.<sup>763</sup> According to Saito, the Japanese Army first considered the establishment of such a special training school in December 1937.<sup>764</sup> In August 1940,

<sup>759</sup> Kawada, 2014, p.190.

<sup>760</sup> Hatano, Tobe, Matsumoto, Shouji & Kawashima, 2018, p.134.

<sup>761</sup> Ibid., p.144.

<sup>762</sup> **Saito, M.** Japan’s Spymaster: Truth of Major General Shun Akikusa – Founder of the Nakano School (Nihon no Spy Ou: Rikugun Nakano Gakkou no Sousetsusha Akikusa Shun Shoushou no Shinjitsu). Gakken Publishing, 2016, p.61.

<sup>763</sup> Ibid., p.62.

<sup>764</sup> Ibid., p.61.

the TSSRO was officially renamed the ‘Nakano School’ and the Japanese Army trained 2,131 officers there over a seven-year period.<sup>765</sup>

Finally, in summer 1938 a German Naval aviation unit visited Estonia. During the welcome reception at the German Legation in Tallinn, Major General Nikolai Reek, Estonian Chief of Staff, had a confidential talk with German Envoy Frohwein. Reek asked Frohwein to supply Estonia with weapons and ammunition in the event of a Soviet invasion of Estonia.<sup>766</sup> Estonia had shown an inclination towards Germany since the middle 1930s, but this was the first official approach by Estonia to Germany in terms of direct support in case of war against the Soviet Union. The Lake Khasan border conflict could have triggered such a decisive move.

In October 1938, conferences of Japanese military attachés stationed all across Europe were held in two cities: Paris and Riga. The military attachés from Turkey, Romania, Poland, Latvia, Finland and the Soviet Union attended the Riga conference. Moderated by Colonel Akio Doi, military attaché to the Soviet Union, the Japanese officers frankly exchanged opinions on possible aggrandisement of the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany. In the end, they concluded that the Anti-Comintern Pact should not be strengthened as it might risk the security of Japan. This conclusion was also reported to Tokyo, but Doi himself noted that Tokyo would have ignored it.<sup>767</sup> The Riga conference was secretly observed by a British intelligence service called the Anglo-Foreign Information Bureau (AFIB). The British agency informed the Latvian Legation in London about the conference of the Japanese military attachés and details such as the joint German-Japanese war plan against the Soviet Union and the inefficiency of Soviet aid to China at war with Japan.<sup>768</sup>

The British motive in leaking to the Latvians the information about the top-secret Japanese conference in Riga was unknown, as the official records of the AFIB are not yet declassified in Britain (or such records have not been preserved at all) and none of the correspondence between the British Legation in Riga and the Foreign Office in London around this period mentioned such secret observation. The British stance on Germany and Japan could be understood from the aforementioned report of the Finnish Envoy to Japan and the incident in Afghanistan. Additionally, around November 1938, the British Foreign Ministry was anticipating that the Anti-

<sup>765</sup> Ibid., p.84.

<sup>766</sup> **Her Majesty’s Stationary Office. (Ed.).** Documents on German Foreign Policy: 1918–1945. Series D (1937–1945), Volume V, Poland, Latin America, The Small Powers, June 1937–March 1939. Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, London, 1953, p.460.

<sup>767</sup> Doi Akio Den Kankokai, 1980, p.102.

<sup>768</sup> Report of the Latvian Minister Zariņš to the United Kingdom, 17 October 1938. (No.5837) **Latvian State Historical Archive (Latvijas Valsts Vēstures Arhīvs).** LVVA2574.2.7231, pp.3–5.

Comintern Pact would be strengthened, in other words, upgraded to a formal military alliance. On 3 November 1938, British Ambassador to Japan, Sir Robert Craigie, reported to London that he had uncovered a movement of influential elements in Japanese society possibly seeking a military alliance with Germany and Italy,<sup>769</sup> although Japanese highest circles opposed the idea.<sup>770</sup> Craigie did not indicate who the proponents of the trilateral military alliance were, but even in the Japanese Second Department (Second Department of the Japanese General Staff – Military Intelligence section), the trilateral alliance was taken as prearranged. Major Ichiji Sugita, a staff officer of the Western (America and Britain) section of the Japanese Second Department who was temporarily stationed in Britain, submitted a report of his trip to European countries<sup>771</sup> to the General Staff and the Army Ministry in April 1939. Sugita summed up the situation as follows:<sup>772</sup>

“...Britain trusted the commitment of Hitler and Prime Minister Chamberlain chose to compromise, however, Britain will never take the same attitude regarding the Polish issue. Here is a crisis of war in Europe. If Japan is to ally with Germany and Italy, which are taking the joint stand against Britain, within this Autumn [Autumn 1938 – S.M.], it is as if Japan is intervening in other’s quarrels and as a result, Japan will be stared by different others (America and Britain).”

For his submission of the report on the anti-trilateral alliance tendency, Sugita was reprimanded by his superiors including Lieutenant Colonel Shigeki Usui, who returned from Germany in 1938 and became head of the 8<sup>th</sup> Section (Stratagem section) of the Japanese Second Department. According to Sugita, Usui and his followers were forcibly promoting the trilateral alliance within the Japanese Army.<sup>773</sup> The proponents were also fully backed by Colonel Seizo Arisue, chief of the Military Affairs section (Gunmu-Ka 陸軍省軍務課) of the Army Ministry, and Colonel Hideo Iwaguro, chief of the Military section (Gunji-Ka 軍事課) of the Army

<sup>769</sup> Italy joined the Anti-Comintern Pact on 6 November 1937.

<sup>770</sup> **Woodward, E., L. & Butler, R. (Eds.)** Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939, Third Series, Volume III, 1938–39. Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, London, 1955, p.179.

<sup>771</sup> Sugita travelled Germany, Poland, Latvia, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Italy, France, Switzerland in Autumn 1938 amidst the Sudeten Crisis in September and the following Munich Agreement on 29 September. Reference: Sugita, 1988, p.97.

<sup>772</sup> Sugita, 1988, p.100.

<sup>773</sup> Ibid., p.101.



Ministry.<sup>774</sup> Sugita had more foresight than the pro-German officers since the Japanese economy was completely reliant on exports from and imports to America and Britain. In the 1920s, 50-60% of Japanese imports and 30-50% of exports were dependant on the two countries. Economic dependence on America was particularly apparent with 38.8% of the Japanese exports and 31.4% of imports. After all, Japan's war against China could not be continued without trade with the two countries.<sup>775</sup> Craigie, the British Ambassador to Japan, also warned London on 2 December 1938 that, if the trilateral alliance was realised, the "process of ultimate reconciliation with Great Britain would be obviously retarded, if not completely arrested".<sup>776</sup>

In January 1939, the Manaki Organ launched a joint operation with the Abwehr to assassinate Josef Stalin at his villa in Sochi.<sup>777</sup> 10 émigré agents trained by the Manaki Organ in Berlin were sent to the Soviet Union via Turkey, but all of them were arrested and executed by the Soviet border guards immediately after crossing the Soviet-Turkish border.<sup>778</sup> According to Soviet NKVD research, there were two Japanese operations to assassinate Stalin in 1939. The first attempt was by the aforementioned group executed in the Caucasus on the initiative of Genrikh Lyushkov, Soviet defector of 1938. The second attempt was to set an explosive device inside Lenin's Mausoleum in the heart of Moscow and remotely detonate the device on May Day to assassinate Stalin. The NKVD informant called "Leo" (Лео) played important roles in preventing the Japanese attempts.<sup>779</sup>

In February 1939, the Japanese Army held a conference of military attachés stationed in Europe, in Paris. The moderator was Yuitsu Dobashi (Tsuchihashi),

<sup>774</sup> Ibid.; The Military Affairs section and the Military section both belonged to the Bureau of Military Affairs (Gunmu-Kyoku 軍務局) of the Japanese Army Ministry (Rikugun-sho 陸軍省). The former was in charge of national defence policy-making, negotiations with the Parliament and the philosophical education of national defence. Thus, the national defence policy-makers of Japan were all on the side of Shigeki Usui and his followers. Reference: Aji-Reki Glossary "Gunmu-Kyoku" (アジ歴グロッサリー「軍務局」) <https://www.jacar.go.jp/glossary/term1/0090-0010-0060-0010-0030.html> (Access Date and Time: 30 July 2019, 23:32PM)

<sup>775</sup> Hatano, Tobe, Matsumoto, Shouji & Kawashima, 2018, p.189.

<sup>776</sup> Woodward & Butler, 1955, p.290.

<sup>777</sup> **Tajima, N.** The Origins of the Berlin-Tokyo Axis Reconsidered: From the Anti-Comintern Pact to the Plan to Assassinate Stalin. *Seijyo Hougaku*, 69, 2002, p.23.

<sup>778</sup> Ibid., p.24.

<sup>779</sup> **Dugin, A., N. (Дугин, А.Н.)** Secrets of the Archives, NKVD, USSR: 1937-1938. (ТАЙНЫ АРХИВОВ НКВД СССР: 1937–1938) Direct MEDIA, Berlin, 2020, p.29. According to one account, the informant 'Leo' was Boris Brzemansky, interpreter of the Manchukuo Foreign Ministry. Reference: "The Japanese General Staff was preparing an assassination attempt on Stalin" (Японский Генштаб готовил покушение на Сталина) *Mir Novosti*, 20 July 2014. <https://mirnov.ru/obshchestvo/japonskii-genshtab-gotovil-pokushenie-na-stalina.html> (Access Date and Time: 18 April 2021, 08:15AM)

military attaché to France. The participants were Japanese military attachés to France, Italy, Turkey, Germany, Finland, Austria and the Soviet Union.<sup>780</sup> The military attachés had concluded that Germany would not move towards further territorial expansionism.<sup>781</sup> The February 1939 Conference was not mentioned in any other materials, but it was an indicator that the Japanese Army was reluctant about the German political adventure. In March 1939, Sorge reported to Moscow about the arrival of a new German diplomat to Tokyo who was a close friend of Hermann Göring. The German diplomat told Sorge that Germany would start a war against Poland to annex Danzig in September and the next step would be the seizure of Ukraine. Sorge cross-checked the rumour with the information acquired from Colonel Ott who had had a conversation with Ernst-August Köstring, German military attaché to the Soviet Union on his visit to Japan. According to Köstring, Poland was a priority target for Germany and Ukraine would be the next.<sup>782</sup> In Berlin, Japanese Ambassador Hiroshi Oshima visited Major Helmuth Groscurth, liaison officer of the Abwehr with the German General Staff on 25 February, and strongly criticised the policy of Alfred Rosenberg, a principal ideologue of the Nazi party.<sup>783</sup> According to a Polish intelligence report in 1937, Rosenberg strongly supported Poltavets-Ostranitsa, a pro-Nazi émigré Ukrainian Cossack leader in Germany. Also, according to the French intelligence report in December 1938, Rosenberg had been in charge of supporting the Ukrainian independence movement through anti-Bolshevik propaganda campaigns and terrorist operations.<sup>784</sup> After the failure of the Caucasus operation in early 1939, Oshima would have been anxious about a new power joining or possibly disturbing the intelligence operations with the Abwehr based in Ukraine. The conflict between Oshima and Rosenberg, or ideological problems and conflicts related to Ukraine on a larger scale than just a personal conflict, may have been the reasons for the German-Japanese misunderstanding and discord in February 1939.

In summer 1939, almost a year after the Lake Khasan conflict, another major border conflict broke out in East Asia. It occurred in Northern China, on the border between the Japanese puppet state Manchukuo and the Soviet puppet state of Outer

<sup>780</sup> Kato, 1985, p.42.

<sup>781</sup> Ibid.

<sup>782</sup> Fesyun, 2000, pp.99-100. The new German diplomat in Tokyo told Sorge that Ukraine was needed by Germany due to the existence of natural resources.

<sup>783</sup> **Groscurth, H.** *Diary of One Abwehr Officer: 1938–1940 (Tagebücher eines Abwehroffiziers 1938–1940)*. Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, 1970, p.168.

<sup>784</sup> **Kellogg, M.** *The Russian Roots of Nazism: White Émigrés and the Making of National Socialism, 1917–1945*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005, p.258.

Mongolia.<sup>785</sup> The 23<sup>rd</sup> Division of the Kwantung Army, dispatched to the conflict zone, was led by Lieutenant General Michitaro Komatsubara, former intelligence officer stationed in Estonia between 1919 and 1921, and his aide Colonel Tsutomu Ouchi, former military attaché to Latvia between 1933 and 1935. Professor Kuromiya suggested the possibility that Ouchi may have been murdered by Komatsubara.<sup>786</sup> During the battle, *Karys*, the official newspaper of the Lithuanian military forces, published an article on the war situation in the Far East based on the article of *Krasnaya Zvezda*, the official newspaper of the Soviet military forces. According to the Lithuanian article, the Japanese Army had lost more troops than the Soviets, and the Lithuanian stance made the Japanese military attaché to the Baltic States extremely upset. Lieutenant Colonel Hiroshi Onouchi, the Japanese military attaché, came to Kaunas, strongly protested to Colonel Kostas Dulksnys, liaison officer of the Lithuanian Second Department, and requested the replacement of phrases in the *Karys* article to show the Japanese as victors and the Soviets as losers. Dulksnys promised Onouchi that he would forward the request to his superior, General Stasys Raštikis. The Lithuanians decided not to make changes to the *Karys* article as they were yet to figure out which side was the true victor of the Battle of Khalkhin Gol (Nomonhan).<sup>787</sup> Onouchi recalled that he had disliked Lithuania and Lithuanians “without clear reasons” (“Douyu wakeka” 「どういうわけか」).<sup>788</sup> Onouchi was probably aware of the Lithuanian intention not to provoke the Japanese and the Soviets, but it had appeared to him that the Lithuanian military officials had decided to distance themselves from the Japanese Army.

In early June 1939, Colonel Akio Doi, the then Japanese military attaché to the Soviet Union who had studied with the Finnish Army in 1933, noticed the danger of the Japanese miscalculation in the Battle of Khalkhin Gol and travelled to Tokyo to report it along with his aide, Lieutenant Colonel Yozo Miyama, assistant military attaché to the Soviet Union.<sup>789</sup> They saw the Soviet military transports to the East

<sup>785</sup> Surprising, the book of Fesyun did not contain any telegrams from either Clausen or Sorge between July and the end of August 1939. For more details of the Battle of Khalkhin Gol (Nomonhan), please see **Coox, A., D.** *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*. Stanford University Press, 1990. For Japanese language speakers, TV documentary ‘Nomonhan: Battlefield of Irresponsibility’ (Nomonhan: Sekinin-naki-Senjou 「ノモンハン：責任無き戦場」) in August 2018, created by Japanese national broadcaster NHK, is also an excellent option based on number of testimonies of Japanese military officers involved in the conflict, recorded in the post-WW2 period by an American scholar, and recently declassified Soviet primary sources on the conflict.

<sup>786</sup> Kuromiya, 2011, p.670.

<sup>787</sup> **Raštikis, S.** *Fighting for Lithuania: War Memories, Volume 1*. Lietuvių dienos, Los Angeles, 1956, pp.475-476.

<sup>788</sup> *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 25 March 1974, Evening edition, p.3.

<sup>789</sup> Sugita, 1988, pp.110–111.

with their own eyes while on the railway journey back to Japan. By the time Doi arrived in Manchukuo from Moscow, he was convinced that more than two Soviet divisions equipped with more than 80 heavy artillery units reinforced by ‘countless’ tanks were on their way to the East, Khalkhin Gol.<sup>790</sup> Doi also warned the General Staff about the Soviet military capability, which could transport so many units to the East in a week and emphasised the need to consider a full-scale war with the Soviet Union in case of escalation of the border conflict.<sup>791</sup> In Tokyo, Doi tried to persuade high-ranking officials of the Japanese Army to send full-scale reinforcements to Khalkhin Gol, but they were thought that the battle was merely a border conflict of limited scale, which would not escalate.<sup>792</sup>

In Khalkhin Gol, the Red Army and Mongolian troops under the command of the Red Army destroyed the Japanese counterpart and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Division led by Komatsubara, which recorded a 76% loss that was considered an annihilation.<sup>793</sup> The Battle of Khalkhin Gol officially ended on 15 September 1939 with a bilateral cease-fire agreement.<sup>794</sup> Despite the fact that the true victor of the Battle of Khalkhin Gol is still unclear to this day, it became obvious that the Japanese Army had been neglecting intelligence on the Soviet Union. Indeed, the Japanese Army failed to achieve any of the objectives indicated in the Plan of 1938 upon the conclusion of the Battle of Khalkhin Gol (Nomonhan), and, due to the changing diplomatic situation in Europe, Germany also began to reduce its hostility to the Soviet Union. As a result, the Japanese Army completely lost face in August 1939.

## 10.2 Suspension of the German-Japanese Strategic Partnership (August 1939)

The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact on 23 August 1939 surprised the world. The sudden German-Soviet rapprochement caused the general resignation of the Hiranuma administration, which took coordinated action to upgrade the Anti-Comintern Pact into a formal military alliance. Also, between September and October 1939, the Japanese General Staff underwent a major personnel reshuffle in the aftermath of the defeat at the Battle of Khalkhin Gol (Nomonhan).<sup>795</sup>

Professor Nobuo Tajima indicated two reasons for the termination of the interwar bilateral strategic partnership between Germany and Japan: 1) the Japanese defeat at the Khalkhin Gol (Nomonhan) Incident of summer 1939 and 2) the conclusion of the

<sup>790</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 5 July 1974, Evening edition, p.7.

<sup>791</sup> Ibid.

<sup>792</sup> Ibid.

<sup>793</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 23 September 1975 Evening edition, p.7; Sugita, 1988, p.111.

<sup>794</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 23 September 1975, Evening edition, p.7.

<sup>795</sup> Kawada, 2014, p.295.

Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact on 23 August 1939.<sup>796</sup> On 24 August, Manaki visited Helmuth Groscurth and protested that, with the conclusion of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the “whole Anti-Comintern Pact became defunct”.<sup>797</sup> On the 27<sup>th</sup>, Hiroshi Oshima also tried to protest to the German Foreign Ministry, but his request was rejected.<sup>798</sup> Due to the conclusion of the Motolov-Ribbentrop Pact, by the end of September 1939 the Abwehr was prohibited to provide any support to the OUN, the aforementioned radical Ukrainian nationalist organisation, including funding.<sup>799</sup> Meanwhile, the secret printing office of anti-Soviet materials in Falkensee, originally established by Shigeki Usui, kept running even during August-September 1939. The Japanese Army coordinated and provided support to the Ukrainian émigrés until June 1941 when Germany once again became interested in cooperation with them upon the commencement of Operation Barbarossa to conquer the Soviet Union.<sup>800</sup>

In contrast, Germany welcomed the settlement between Japan and the Soviet Union. On 16 September 1939, Colonel Ott sent a highly confidential telegram to the Foreign Minister. In it, he called the ceasefire agreement of the Nomonhan Incident the “first practical step (to the improvement of the bilateral relations between Japan and the Soviet Union)”. Furthermore, based on the assumptions of his informants, Ott said that Japanese rapprochement with the Soviet Union could be a good thing as Japan would be able to stop Soviet support for Chiang Kai-shek but, in return Japan might have to recognise Soviet influence over Mongolia, Sinkiang (Xinjiang) and Tibet, as Russian spheres of interest.<sup>801</sup> It was clear in September 1939 that Germany had completely given up its joint project with Japan to establish an air route over the Eurasian continent. Oshima also lost his enthusiasm for the project after the German-Soviet victory over Poland and began focusing on Japan’s future territorial expansion into Southeast Asia. On 20 September, in a private conversation with Ribbentrop before a dinner hosted by Hitler to celebrate the arrival of Japanese General Hisaichi Terauchi<sup>802</sup> in Sopot (Zoppot), Oshima noted the preparedness of the Japanese Navy to make an advance in South East Asia and even against British Hong Kong. Oshima stressed that Japanese military advance in the

<sup>796</sup> Tajima, 2017, pp.163-164.

<sup>797</sup> Tajima, 2017, p.164; Groscurth, 1970, p.181.

<sup>798</sup> Groscurth, 1970, p.187.

<sup>799</sup> Leverkuehn, 1960, p.132.

<sup>800</sup> Ibid., p.132.

<sup>801</sup> **Her Majesty’s Stationary Office. (Ed.).** Documents on German Foreign Policy: 1918-1945. Series D (1937–1945), Volume III, The War Years (September 4, 1939 – March 18, 1940). 1954, p.76.

<sup>802</sup> General Hisaichi Terauchi of the Japanese Army. Terauchi was invited by Hitler to the Nuremberg Rally of the Nazi Party planned in summer 1939. He arrived to Naples, Italy, on 30 August 1939. Reference: **Tokyo Asahi Shimbun**, 31 August 1939, Evening edition, p.1.

region would go quite far.<sup>803</sup> Thus, the German-Japanese project came to an end. Professor Tajima summed up the outcome in one sentence: “The Nomonhan Incident and Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact completely ruined all the achievements of the Japanese Second Department and the Second Department (Intelligence) of the Kwantung Army”.<sup>804</sup>

At this point, the biggest mystery of the interwar Japanese intelligence activities was the number of failures in actual operations. Their causes were also unclear. Firstly, there were number of failures on the Japanese side. Saburo Hayashi, former Chief of the Russian Section of the Japanese Second Department, published a memoir on the interwar and wartime intelligence activities against the Soviet Union meant for new intelligence officers of the Japan Self-Defence Forces (JSDF). In the memoir, Hayashi recollected the tough Soviet border control as follows<sup>805</sup>:

“1. To monitor illegal entry into the Soviet Union, the Soviet border guards (HKBD) [sic] were stationed along the borderline like a mesh. The situation is probably unchanged even today. HKBD [sic] was the best-equipped unit with the highest percentage of the Communist Party members in the Soviet Union. Their doctrine was to monitor the zones 75 km in front of the border and 25 km behind it, and the latter was declared an off-limits zone to enable HKBD [sic] to identify and arrest any persons who entered the zone...

3. The system of a ‘Domestic Passport’ was strictly implemented inside the Soviet Union. The system was applied not only in the border region but also other regions. The purpose was to find illegal residents...the Soviet counter-intelligence agency frequently renewed the domestic passport to prevent the use of fake passports and inspections were randomly organised. Inspections were frequently carried out, especially on trains running the Far East region,.

4. Due to the circumstances mentioned above, we felt it extremely difficult to send our agents into the Soviet Union. Firstly, the agents must be Russian émigrés, but we highly suspected that (a majority of) the émigré Russians were double agents between us and the Soviets. Secondly, it was not easy for our agents to cross the border and the off-limits zone. Finally, even if the agents

<sup>803</sup> Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1954, pp.132–133.

<sup>804</sup> Tajima, 2017, p.166.

<sup>805</sup> **Hayashi, S.** How we conducted intelligence activities against the Soviet Union. (Wareware wa donoyou-ni tai-so choho kinmu wo yattaka). (N.B.: Written date is unknown) Reference Number: Chuo-Gunjigyosei Sonota - 151. National Institute for Defence Studies (NIDS) Archive, Tokyo, p.6.

succeeded in overcoming the aforementioned difficulties, their activities inside the Soviet territories were strictly restricted due to the Soviet regulations on accommodation, food and transportation. Thus, we did not expect much of the agents.”

The domestic passport, also known as the ‘Internal Passport’, and the registration system was introduced in the Soviet Union in early 1933 to prevent flows of anti-social elements, such as those not tied to productive labour and Kulaks (rich farmers), into main cities, industrial zones and border areas.<sup>806</sup> After the completion of the initial passportisation of Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov, Magnitogorsk and several other cities by the end of March 1933, Yagoda, head of the Soviet secret police OGPU, issued a circular, Number 96, to announce rules for the ‘non-judicial repression of citizens violating laws relating to the passportisation of the population’ on 13 August 1933.<sup>807</sup> By the end of 1933, several millions of individuals who did not meet the requirements for passportisation were arrested and sent to either special camps, special colonies or near exile.<sup>808</sup> In the middle of 1936, operations against suspected foreign spies and saboteurs began.<sup>809</sup> However, in 1936 the main aims of the NKVD operation, which incorporated OGPU, were de-Kulakisation and the struggle against social disorder rather than the foreign spies.<sup>810</sup> In August 1937, Stalin ordered NKVD to launch a series of operations targeting the former Kulaks, criminals and other anti-Soviet elements. Soon after, he again ordered the inclusion of persons of potential threat due to their ethnicity or possible contact with hostile foreign governments.<sup>811</sup> This was the beginning of the Yezhovshchina, literally the ‘Era of Yezhov’ in Russian. Nikolai Ezhov, who replaced Yagoda in September 1936, was truly loyal to Stalin, obeying and implementing his orders without question. As mentioned in the earlier part of this thesis, millions of people were accused either of being anti-Soviet elements or foreign spies, between 1937 and 1938. The recollection of Hayashi was mostly and certainly correct. Meanwhile, despite the fact that many of those accused by NKVD were innocent of being foreign spies, there were exceptions. According to historian Robert Conquest, Konar, Assistant People’s Commissar of Agriculture arrested by NKVD, was a genuine Polish agent who was given the papers of a dead Red Army soldier in 1920.<sup>812</sup> It is

<sup>806</sup> McLaughlin, B. & McDermott, K, 2003, p.93.

<sup>807</sup> Ibid., pp.94–95.

<sup>808</sup> Ibid., p.95.

<sup>809</sup> **Hagenloh, P.** *Stalin’s Police: Public Order and Mass Repression in the USSR, 1926–1941.* Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington DC, 2009, p.222.

<sup>810</sup> McLaughlin & McDermott, 2003, pp.101–102.

<sup>811</sup> Hagenloh, 2009, p.227.

<sup>812</sup> **Conquest, R.** *The Great Terror: A Reassessment.* Pimlico, London, 1992, p.270.

also obvious from the facts taken up in this thesis that, throughout the late 1930s, Germany and Japan repeatedly attempted to disturb the Soviet Union and even to assassinate Stalin.

According to one account, the Manaki Organ detached up to 30 agents to neighbouring countries of the Soviet Union (Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and Turkey) annually during the interwar period.<sup>813</sup> Furthermore, Lieutenant Colonel Masao Ueda, Japanese military attaché to Poland (1938-1939) who arrived in Warsaw on 28 April 1938,<sup>814</sup> recollected that he had recruited two agents from the émigré Russian organisation in Yugoslavia and, with the help of the Polish Second Department, the two agents were sent to the Soviet Union.<sup>815</sup> Ueda noted that the agents could not reach anywhere beyond Siberia due to strict Soviet surveillance.<sup>816</sup> In March 1945, the Soviet NKGB arrested Elyashevich Bronislav Stanislavovich (Ельяшевич Бронислав Станиславович), a former Polish intelligence officer, in Bucharest. During the interrogations in Moscow, Stanislavovich confessed that Ueda had recruited the agents from an organisation called ‘The National Alliance of Russian Solidarists’ (Национально-трудового союза нового поколения, NTS)<sup>817</sup> in Yugoslavia, and the agents were trained at a school for the Polish intelligence officers along with other agents recruited from France.<sup>818</sup> On the other hand, Mozokhin is an active-duty officer of the Russian Army, so the utmost caution is required when citing his work. His original source of the confession of Stanislavovich was the interrogation record of NKGB which is now preserved at the FSB archives in Moscow. We cannot fully believe the story until the original document is made public. However, if the confession of the former Polish intelligence officer was true, the agents of Gavrilo who were thought to be émigrés from Yugoslavia may also have been recruited from the NTS. According to Mozokhin, based on the materials from the FSB archives, the Executive Bureau of the NTS decided in 1936 to carry out the assassination of Stalin and, if not, either Molotov or Kaganovich. Therefore, the NTS soon established contact with the Japanese Army.<sup>819</sup> The two agents of the NTS, Okolovich Georgy Sergeevich and

<sup>813</sup> Suzuki, 1979, p.93.

<sup>814</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 29 March 1974, Evening edition, p.7.

<sup>815</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 1 April 1974, Evening edition, p.5.

<sup>816</sup> Ibid.

<sup>817</sup> In Russian, the organisation is abbreviated to ‘NTSNP’ (НТСНП). It was originally established as the ‘National Union of Russian Youth Abroad’ (был Союз русской национальной молодёжи, СРНМ) in June 1930 at the first congress of Russian youth in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. The aim of the organisation was to topple the Soviet Union.

<sup>818</sup> **Mozokhin, O. V. (Мозохин, О. В.)** The OGPU-NKGB in the fight against the special services of Japan. (ОГПУ–НКГБ в борьбе со спецслужбами Японии) Direct MEDIA, Berlin, 2019, pp.165–166.

<sup>819</sup> Ibid., p.225.



Kolkov Aleksandr Georgievich (Околович Георгий Сергеевич and Колков Александр Георгиевич), were supposed to throw bombs at the seats of the Soviet government's high-ranking officials during the May Day parade in Moscow, but failed and returned to Poland. After the failure, the NTS's subversive activities were put under political pressure by the Japanese. Major General Torashiro Kawabe, the then Japanese military attaché to Germany, decided to recruit more agents for the NTS to strengthen their transfer to the Soviet Union. According to Mozokhin, in 1938 the NTS received a detailed map of Moscow with the help of the Polish intelligence service and the Japanese counterpart was also intrigued by this.<sup>820</sup> Although it is difficult to believe the entire story due to concerns related to source criticism, there are similarities with the details of the Estonian-German-Japanese intelligence operations of 1938 such as the agents arriving from Yugoslavia, mainstream operations planned in Moscow, and the use of bombs.

Secondly, the Soviet counter-intelligence capability including the double agents should be examined. In June 1941, General Johan Laidoner, former supreme commander of the Estonian Defence Forces, admitted to his Soviet NKVD interrogators that the results of the Estonian military intelligence operations were exchanged with the Latvian, Finnish, British, French, Polish and German military intelligence services.<sup>821</sup> Laidoner deliberately excluded Japan<sup>822</sup> from the list of countries collaborating with the Estonian Second Department. However, the Soviets were fully aware of the revitalisation of the Japanese intelligence activities in Estonia. The NKVD report issued in December 1938 indicated the existence of an ethnic Japanese agent in Estonia codenamed 'Sato' (Cato) who had been given the registration code 148.<sup>822</sup> There was no record of Sato at the Estonian National Archives, but one Japanese citizen emerged as a suspect as he always followed the Japanese military attaché Takatsuki. His name was Toshio Miyano, claiming to be a writer.<sup>823</sup> Miyano visited Estonia in August 1938 together with Takatsuki and Misao Nagata, representative of the South Manchuria Railway company.<sup>824</sup> Also, on 15 November Miyano left Tallinn for Berlin by air accompanied by Takatsuki.<sup>825</sup> There is no evidence, however, to prove Miyano was Sato.

The Soviet counter-intelligence capability could also be estimated from a different perspective: the mysterious deaths of Japanese officers involved in the

<sup>820</sup> Mozokhin, 2019, p.226.

<sup>821</sup> Ilmjärv, 2003, p.77.

<sup>822</sup> A list of the agents in Estonia, December 1938. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)** ERAF138sm.1.56, p.72.

<sup>823</sup> Film ja Elu : Huvitav shumaalleht, 2 September 1938, p.5.

<sup>824</sup> Ibid.

<sup>825</sup> Departure from the Tallinn border checkpoint, 15 November 1938. (No.457) **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA495.11.29, p.349.

activities. During the Battle of Khalkhin Gol (Nomonhan) in summer 1939, Colonel Tsutomu Ouchi, Chief of Staff of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Division led by General Komatsubara and a military attaché to Latvia (1933-1935), was killed in action on 3 July.<sup>826</sup> According to Professor Kuromiya, there is a possibility that Ouchi was killed with the malice aforethought of Komatsubara.<sup>827</sup> Awkwardly, Lieutenant Colonel Tadamasu Shimanuki, Chief of Staff of the Second Flying Group (Dai-Ni Hikou Shudan 第二飛行集団) who studied with the Estonian and Polish air forces in 1934, was also killed in action on the same day.<sup>828</sup> Coox indicated a possibility that Shimanuki was alive and had been captured by the Soviets together with the top-secret documents he carried.<sup>829</sup> Additionally, Lieutenant Colonel Tamotsu Takatsuki, a staff officer of the Northern China Army who used to be an essential figure in the joint Estonian-German-Japanese intelligence operations in 1938, was assassinated in Beijing on 29 November 1940.<sup>830</sup> According to Yomiuri Shimbun, Takatsuki was shot by an anti-Japanese activist in front of the American Church.<sup>831</sup> The suspect was arrested in January 1941 and declared himself an agent of the Blue Shirts Society (BSS or 藍衣社 in Chinese), an intelligence organ of the Chinese Nationalist government.<sup>832</sup> The connection between the BSS and the Soviet government could not be confirmed, but it was obvious that Japan was a common target for both the Chinese and Soviet intelligence services. Due to the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Nationalist Chinese and Soviet governments concluded a non-aggression pact on 21 August 1937 and already, from September of that year, China began to receive Soviet military aid. Within four months of the delivery of the first batch, China received 62 heavy bombers, 101 fighters, 62 fighter-bombers, 82 tanks, 400 trucks, 2,000 anti-tank canons, anti-aircraft batteries, machine guns, ammunition and other materiel worth more than US\$485 million in total.<sup>833</sup> The first Soviet military aid to China had surpassed the total amount of arms imported from Germany in all the previous

<sup>826</sup> **Coox, A., D.** *Nomonhan: Japan against Russia, 1939. Volume 1.* Stanford University Press, California, 1985, p.327.

<sup>827</sup> Kuromiya, 2011, p.670.

<sup>828</sup> Shimanuki, 1988, p.2.

<sup>829</sup> Coox, 1985, p.574.

<sup>830</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 1December 1940, Morning edition, p.2.

<sup>831</sup> Ibid.

<sup>832</sup> Asahi Shimbun, 17 January 1941, Morning edition, p.2. The BSS was a predecessor organisation of the Military Intelligence Bureau (MIB) of the Kuomintang, more commonly known as the 'Juntong' (軍統) in Chinese. The organisation was led by deputy head General Dai Li (戴笠). The Dai Li's Juntong is known for its assassination attempt against Wang Jingwei (汪兆銘) in Hanoi (March 1939), former high-ranking official of the Kuomintang government who later became head of the Japanese puppet state in mainland China.

<sup>833</sup> **Yu, M.** *The Dragon's War: Allied Operations and the Fate of China 1937-1947.* Naval Institute Press, Maryland, 2006, p.13.

years.<sup>834</sup> Also, the Soviet Union was an influential moneylender to China. Between September 1939 and summer 1941, China spent US\$173 million, about two-thirds of the total amount of Soviet financial loans stipulated by the Sino-Soviet agreements.<sup>835</sup> Despite the fact China was economically and militarily dependant on the Soviet Union throughout the late 1930s, Chiang Kai-Shek instructed the Ambassador to the League of Nations to abstain when the Soviet Union became subject to expulsion from the international organisation due to the invasion of Finland in November 1939. The Chinese decision was taken as a betrayal by the Soviet Union<sup>836</sup> and, in November 1940 when the assassination of Takatsuki occurred, Sino-Soviet relations were at rock bottom. The impacts of the diplomatic incident could not be ignored, but the Soviet financial aid to China continued until summer 1941 when Stalin had to concentrate on defending his own country rather than supporting China.<sup>837</sup> This meant that there was still a possibility that the Chinese intelligence organ either cooperated with or worked on behalf of the Soviet counterpart.

Through the interrogations of Henn Puusepp and Rudolf Velling in summer 1940, the Soviet intelligence service had acquired information that Takatsuki was deeply involved with the Gavrilo group. If the deaths of Ouchi and Shimanuki during the Battle of Khalkhin Gol were related to their past activities against the Soviet Union as claimed by professors Kuromiya and Coox, the assassination of Takatsuki must be counted as Soviet retaliation for the Japanese secret intelligence activities in Estonia. Meanwhile, if all the above-mentioned hypotheses are true, it is unclear why the Soviet intelligence service targeted neither Richard Maasing nor Villem Saarsen, heads of the Estonian Second Department who fled to Stockholm shortly before the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States. Both persons were under the surveillance of the Soviet intelligence branch in Stockholm during the Second World War and there were an enormous number of surveillance records created by the NKVD branch in Stockholm.<sup>838</sup>

<sup>834</sup> Ibid.

<sup>835</sup> Yu, 2006, p.14.

<sup>836</sup> Ibid., p.21.

<sup>837</sup> Ibid., p.14.

<sup>838</sup> NKVD kept eyes on both persons throughout the 1940s and even in the 1950s. The surveillance records preserved at the Estonian National Archive in Tartu were mostly written in 1944 and 1945. There were only a few mentions of the intelligence activities in which both were involved in the 1930s. This could be one of the reasons why they did not become targets of Soviet retaliation.

### 10.3 German-Soviet Invasion of Poland and Beginning of the Second World War (Autumn 1939)

Shortly before the conclusion of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Major General Torashiro Kawabe, a Japanese military attaché to Germany who succeeded Hiroshi Oshima in the position, travelled to Tallinn between 30 June and 4 July 1939, accompanied by two assistant officers from Berlin.<sup>839</sup> In Tallinn, Kawabe visited General Johan Laidoner, Supreme Commander of the Estonian Defence Forces at his villa in Viimsi, on the outskirts of Tallinn. There, the two generals frankly exchanged opinions about the current tension between Germany and Poland.<sup>840</sup> The conversation between Kawabe and Laidoner was recollected by Kawabe himself and Villem Saarsen, an officer of the Estonian Second Department. According to Kawabe, Laidoner severely criticised the tough stance of Poland against Germany and “such attitude will only lead to another tragedy for them and their tragedy would be a tragedy for the Estonians too.”<sup>841</sup>

The critical comment of Laidoner against Poland was intentionally deleted from the memoirs of Saarsen entitled ‘What I Saw’ (See mis ma nägin), published in 1978.<sup>842</sup> Saarsen fled to Sweden after the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States in 1940 and, in the post-WW2 period, he was a popular activist of the émigré Estonian movement in Sweden, calling for the restoration of the independence of Estonia. Presumably, Saarsen hesitated to infuriate the Poles who, likewise, were forced to flee overseas including to Sweden as a result of the Soviet installation of a Communist regime in Poland after WW2. Anyhow, Laidoner’s opinion would have remained in the heart of Kawabe. Later, sometime in either July or August 1939, three Japanese military attachés, Torashiro Kawabe (Germany), Masao Ueda (Poland), and Hiroshi Onouchi (Latvia) gathered in Warsaw to discuss the possibility of a German-Polish war. They concluded that war was imminent and inevitable. Ueda and Kawabe agreed that the Polish hardline policy against Germany was motivating the Polish populace to fight against Germany.<sup>843</sup>

On 1 September 1939, Germany began the invasion of Poland. Two days later, Britain and France declared war on Germany signalling the beginning of the Second World War. On 5 September 1939, the group evacuation of several diplomats

<sup>839</sup> Entrance to Estonia from the Tallinn border checkpoint, 1 June 1939. (No.178) **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA495.11.44, p.214.; Ibid., p.231.

<sup>840</sup> Kawabe, 1971, p.101.

<sup>841</sup> Ibid., p.102. Laidoner metaphorically indicated a possibility of a partition of Poland by the great powers.

<sup>842</sup> **Saarsen, V.** What I Saw. (See mis ma nägin) V.L. Saarsen, Stockholm, 1978, p.187.

<sup>843</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 1 April 1974, Evening edition, p.5.; Kawabe, 1971, p.102.

including Vice Consul Goto and Japanese citizens in Warsaw was arranged by the Japanese Embassy. Lieutenant Colonel Ueda explained the situation based on the information gained from the Polish military that two German divisions infiltrating from East Prussia had reached within just 70 km of Warsaw.<sup>844</sup> After the closure of the Japanese Embassy in Warsaw, on the 6<sup>th</sup> Ueda left Warsaw for Krzemieniec (Kremenets), a small town near the Polish-Romanian border where the Polish General Staff were settled.<sup>845</sup> In Krzemieniec, he was approached by the Soviet military attaché to Poland and had the impression that the Soviets were preparing something. Ueda immediately crossed the Romanian border and sent a telegram to the Japanese General Staff to warn them about possible Soviet military action. However, he was no longer allowed to go back into Poland as the border was closed and he had to stay in Bucharest, Romania.<sup>846</sup>

Two weeks after the German invasion of Poland, on 17 September the Red Army began to invade Poland according to the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The Soviet Government justified the military intervention as offering protection to ethnic Ukrainians and Belarusians residing in Poland<sup>847</sup> and, on the same day, Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, announced the termination of all the bilateral treaties concluded between Poland and the Soviet Union due to the absence of a proper Polish government and the loss of Polish sovereignty.<sup>848</sup> According to Saburo Hayashi, the aforementioned Japanese intelligence officer, the Japanese military attaché office in Moscow noticed a sign of the Soviet invasion of Poland from the Soviet newspapers before the commencement and succeeded in warning Tokyo in advance.<sup>849</sup> However, the Soviet military intervention was not secret at all since the Soviet Union officially declared the partial mobilisation of reserves in the Ukraine, Belarus, Leningrad, Moscow, Kaliningrad and Orlov military districts on 10 September 1939.<sup>850</sup> Then, on 15 September 1939, the New

<sup>844</sup> **Shigemitsu, A.** *Russians in My Memories (Waga Onoide no Rosia-jin)*, Self-Publishing, 1988, p.31.

<sup>845</sup> The Polish Government and the General Staff evacuated Warsaw in early September, and first settled in the city of Brześć (Brest in today's Belarus, also known by the historic name of 'Brest-Litovsk'), but with the rapid advancement of the German Army, both organisations were relocated to the southern mountain region near the Polish-Romanian border.

<sup>846</sup> *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 13 May 1983, Evening edition, p.2.

<sup>847</sup> **Degras, J. (Ed.)**. *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Volume III, 1933–1941*. London: Oxford University Press, 1953, p.374.

<sup>848</sup> *Ibid.*, p.375. The Polish government at the time of the Soviet invasion was located in Kut, near the Polish-Romanian border. Soon after the commencement of the Soviet invasion over Poland, the Polish government officials crossed the border into Romania and all the activities of the government ceased.

<sup>849</sup> Hayashi, written date unknown, p.30.

<sup>850</sup> **Degras, J. (Ed.)**. *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Volume III, 1933–1941*. London: Oxford University Press, 1953, p.372.

York Times reported that the Soviet invasion of Poland was imminent after an unofficial German-Soviet declaration of the establishment of a buffer state in Poland.<sup>851</sup> On the other hand, in contrast to the testimony of Hayashi, Akio Doi, the Japanese military attaché in Moscow, recollected that the attaché office was not aware of the possibility of the German-Soviet partition of Poland until the announcement of the Soviet invasion of Poland on the radio on the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup>.<sup>852</sup>

The defeat of Poland and the outbreak of war in Europe, based on the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact with Germany, enabled the Soviet Union to abandon its respect of neutrality in the Baltic States. Through the presence of its military power, the Soviet Union exercised gunboat diplomacy against the Baltic States in autumn 1939. In consequence, by the end of October the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were forced to conclude security pacts with the Soviet Union, and more than 25,000 Soviet troops and the Baltic fleet were stationed in or relocated to the Soviet military bases newly established in the Baltic States.<sup>853</sup> On 11 November 1939, Major General Hikosaburo Hata, commander of the Special Intelligence Agency in Harbin (Harbin Tokumu Kikan ハルビン特務機関), submitted a request to the General Staff in Tokyo for the strengthening of the armaments of the Japanese Army and preparation for the imminent possibility of war against the Soviet Union. Hata indicated three reasons for the request: 1) incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet sphere of interests, 2) Soviet extortion [sic] against Finland, and 3) the possibility of Germany becoming a Communist nation. Hata also added that the concentration of Soviet troops in Siberia had recently been confirmed.<sup>854</sup> Despite the request of Hata, the Japanese Army opted not to militarily confront the Soviet Union again, and decided to ease the military pressure on the Soviet Union in July 1940 through the conclusion of a bilateral non-aggression pact in order to concentrate on the war against China. This new policy was officialised by the Army and shared with the Japanese Navy.<sup>855</sup>

<sup>851</sup> New York Times, 15 September 1939, p.1.

<sup>852</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 23 September 1975, Evening edition, p.7.

<sup>853</sup> **Van Dyke, C.** *The Soviet Invasion of Finland 1939–40.* Frank Cass Publishers, Portland, 1997, pp.11–13.

<sup>854</sup> Request of Hata, head of the Special Information Agency in Harbin regarding strengthening armaments against the Soviet Union, 11 November 1939. (Tai-So Heibi Jyujitsu ni Kansuru Hata Harbin Tokumu Kikan-cho no Iken Gushin – Shouwa 14-nen 11-Gatsu 11-Nichi 対ソ兵備充実に關する 秦哈爾濱特務機關長の意見具申 昭和 14 年 11 月 11 日) JACAR, C13071223300.

<sup>855</sup> Outline of Solving Current Affairs upon Changing Situation of International Politics. Minutes of a Liaison Conference (between the Japanese Army and the Navy), 27 July 1940. (Sekai Jyosei no Suii ni Tomonau Jikyoku Shori Youkou. Renraku Kaigi Gijiroku. Shouwa 15-nen 7-Gatsu 27-Nichi. 世界情勢の推移に伴う時局処理要綱 連絡會議議事録 昭和 15 年 7 月 27 日) JACAR, C12120201000.

## 10.4 Japanese Military Intelligence Activities during the Winter War (1939–1940)

The German-Soviet partition of Poland was a prelude to more tragedies for small nations in Europe. After a series of mutual assistance pacts were concluded between the Baltic States and the Soviet Union in autumn 1939, which allowed the Soviets to station their troops in the Baltic States, on 30 November 1939 the Soviet Union launched an invasion of Finland. The so-called ‘Winter War’ (Talvisota) continued until March 1940.

The root of the war was the diplomatic negotiations between Finland and the Soviet Union regarding the cession of Finnish territories to the Soviet Union, which took place in autumn 1939. During the Czechoslovakian crisis in Autumn 1938, the Soviet Union implemented the partial mobilisation of its armed forces and sent the Baltic fleet to the Åland islands, a Finnish self-governing archipelago in the Baltic Sea and also considered to be a demilitarised zone according to the Paris Treaty concluded in 1856.<sup>856</sup> The Soviet military threat to the islands led to a Finnish-Swedish agreement on the refortification of the Åland islands concluded in January 1939. Seeing the Finnish-Swedish cooperation to deter the Soviet military threats, on the 3 March, Stalin’s unofficial representative Yartsev was sent to Finland to present the proposals of the Soviet government regarding the Åland islands issue. The proposal asked Finland to defend the islands itself from a possible German invasion with Finnish military forces that would be provided with Soviet-made weapons in exchange for Soviet approval of the refortification of the Åland islands and also Suursaari island in the Baltic Sea.<sup>857</sup> The Soviet demands to Finland extended to March 1939, when they requested leases of Suursaari and four smaller islets in the gulf for a period of 30 years. In exchange, the Soviets were ready to provide a large slice of the disputed Karelian borderland.<sup>858</sup>

While the Finnish-Soviet negotiations were continuing, Lieutenant Colonel Yozo Miyama was appointed assistant military attaché to Finland. He arrived in Helsinki on 8 September 1939,<sup>859</sup> and resided in Finland until 24 October 1939.<sup>860</sup> His mission was to find out both the Finnish and Soviet conditions for the disputed Karelia region in the bilateral negotiation. For this purpose, he approached the

<sup>856</sup> Van Dyke, 1997, p.3.

<sup>857</sup> Ibid., p.4.

<sup>858</sup> Trotter, 1991, p.13.

<sup>859</sup> Request for diplomatic passport for Lieutenant Colonel Yozo Miyama, 23 September 1939. (No.28) **Finnish Foreign Ministry Archive (Ulkomministeriönarkisto)**. 6.0 (Japani).

<sup>860</sup> No.107 Returning from the Soviet Union (Lieutenant Colonel Yozo Miyama) (Soren yori kaerite: Rikugun kihei chusa Miyama Yozo ソ連より帰って：陸軍騎兵中佐美山要蔵) JACAR, B02030926600.

Finnish General Staff and the former Finnish Envoy to Japan who was a member of the Finnish-Japanese Society. Despite his efforts, Miyama failed to accomplish his mission due to top-level Finnish intelligence security.<sup>861</sup> It seems the Japanese Army had been constantly collecting information about the Finnish-Soviet territorial negotiations ever since the beginning of 1939, even before Miyama. On 20 April 1939, Toshio Nishimura, the then Japanese military attaché to Finland and Sweden, reported the situation of the Finnish-Soviet negotiation to Tokyo as follows<sup>862</sup>:

“The Soviet Union had persistently requested from Finland either a cession or a lease of the Suursaari island (the biggest island in the Gulf of Finland) to construct an auxiliary base for the naval port of Kronstadt. After two weeks of negotiation, Finland finally rejected the Soviet proposal.”

It seemed there was a contradiction between Miyama’s recollection and the telegram of Nishimura. Nishimura had succeeded in gaining the precise details of the Finnish-Soviet territorial negotiation whereas Miyama had failed to gain any information concerning the negotiation. Thus, presumably, the situation surrounding the Finnish-Soviet negotiation changed some time between April and October 1939 and, during this period, the Finnish government tightened security surrounding information concerning the bilateral negotiation. While Miyama was in Helsinki, on 7 October 1939 Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov summoned Aarno Yrjö-Koskinen, Finnish Envoy to the Soviet Union, to warn him of the possibility of war if Finland refused the Soviet territorial proposal.<sup>863</sup> Already at the end of June 1939, Stalin was considering war with Finland as part of his strategic plan to militarily defeat both Germany and Japan.<sup>864</sup> At the end of July, after major operational revisions, the war plan against Finland was approved by Stalin and the Main Military Soviet.<sup>865</sup> The author assumes that the Finnish policy on information security changed either after 7 October when the Soviet Union threatened Finland with the possibility of war, or July 1939 when the Soviet government formulated its war plan against Finland.<sup>866</sup>

Returning to the Finnish-Soviet diplomatic negotiation, between 11 and 12 October 1939 in Moscow, a Finnish diplomatic delegation to negotiate with the

<sup>861</sup> Ibid. The Finnish person could be Gustaf Ramstedt, the first Finnish Envoy to Japan.

<sup>862</sup> Regarding the information about Finland (Furan ni kansuru jyoho no ken 芬蘭に関する情報の件) JACAR, C01004631200.

<sup>863</sup> **Edwards, R.** *White Deaths: Russia’s War on Finland, 1939-40.* Weidenfield & Nicolson, London, 2006, p.74.

<sup>864</sup> Van Dyke, 1997, p.8.

<sup>865</sup> Ibid.

<sup>866</sup> There was no documentary evidence confirmed on Finnish interception of the information on the Soviet approval of the war plan against Finland in July 1939.



Soviet Union about the Karelian problem entered talks with Soviet representatives. The Finnish delegation was instructed by the government in Helsinki to discuss only either leasing or swapping three small islands in the Gulf of Finland for the disputed Karelian border region.<sup>867</sup> In contrast, Stalin's demands on Finland included the transfer of Finnish territories such as the areas on the Karelian Isthmus 20 km west of Viipuri, the three islands in the Gulf of Finland and the Rybachi Peninsula. In exchange, the Soviet Union was ready to cede 5,500 km<sup>2</sup> of East Karelia, north of Lake Ladoga. The October negotiation has been controversial, but the Soviet requests also included the destruction of the so-called Mannerheim Line, Finnish border fortifications on the isthmus, the lease of Hanko Peninsula from Finland and the stationing of 5,000 Soviet troops there.<sup>868</sup> As there the two countries' requests were far apart, bilateral negotiations had to be continued. Between October and early November, the Finns were willing to compromise slightly on the isthmus border and cede some, but not all, of the Gulf Islands. The stationing of Soviet troops in Hanko only about 100 km from Helsinki, was out of the question for them.<sup>869</sup> Miyama's activities in Finland took place around this most diplomatically sensitive period, and it was reasonable to believe that he was completely blocked by the Finnish counter-intelligence organs from gaining any detailed information on the bilateral territorial negotiations. The negotiations continued into November 1939, but neither country was willing to yield. Amidst the tension, on 26 November 1939 the infamous Shelling of Mainila occurred. Molotov criticised the Finns for firing shots at a Russian village and demanded that the Finnish government pull its troops back from the Soviet border by 20-25 km.<sup>870</sup> Then, on the 28 November the Soviet government declared the unilateral abnegation of the Finnish-Soviet non-aggression pact, concluded in 1932.<sup>871</sup>

On the first day of the war, 30 November 1939, Lieutenant Colonel Hiroshi Onouchi, Japanese military attaché to the Baltic States, arrived in Helsinki from Tallinn by the ferry 'Aegna' since all flights to Helsinki from Tallinn had been cancelled.<sup>872</sup> In summer 1939, Onouchi contacted his Finnish counterpart in Riga to inform him that a semi-official Japanese company had been ready to export some weapons, but no answer had come from the Finnish military attaché. When the Winter War broke out, the Finnish side asked Onouchi to sell it the same weapons

<sup>867</sup> Edwards, 2006, p.74.

<sup>868</sup> **Trotter, W., R.** *Frozen Hell: The Russo-Finnish Winter War of 1939-40.* Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, 1991, p.15.

<sup>869</sup> *Ibid.*, p.16.

<sup>870</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21.; Van Dyke, 1997, p.24.

<sup>871</sup> Van Dyke, 1997, p.24.

<sup>872</sup> Record of the phone call of Major Aksel Kristian from Helsinki. 30 November 1939. **Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)**. ERA495.11.43., p.14.

but, the Japanese General Staff refused.<sup>873</sup> In Helsinki, Lieutenant Colonel Yoshikiyo Ninomiya, an assistant military attaché to Finland who had just arrived in November 1939<sup>874</sup> was the only Japanese military officer in Finland. As the official superior of Ninomiya had moved to Stockholm, it was likely that the supervision of the Japanese Army's intelligence activities in the Baltic States and Finland were being handled by Onouchi, and the visit of Onouchi to Helsinki on the first day of the war may have been linked with the arms sale.

On 1 December 1939, the Soviet Air Force conducted an indiscriminate bombing of Helsinki with nine bombers.<sup>875</sup> The bombs caused fires at up to 30 places in the city and killed approximately 60 people.<sup>876</sup> On the following day, by order of the Police Commissioner of Uusimaa region, the evacuation of the Helsinki residents began and, when the plan was completed, the city's population had decreased from 250,000 to 65,000.<sup>877</sup> Foreigners and foreign diplomatic missions in Helsinki were no exceptions. On 3 December, the American Legation in Helsinki announced a group evacuation of American citizens residing in Finland to Sweden by a ferry from Turku.<sup>878</sup> The Japanese Legation followed, sometime between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, and Japanese citizens in Finland were evacuated to Sweden. Almost all the Japanese citizens were subject to the evacuation except the diplomats. After the completion of the group evacuation, the majority of the staff of the Japanese Legation in Helsinki including Minister Sugishita were moved to a house in Hyvinkää for their safety, on the 11<sup>th</sup>.<sup>879</sup> According to Sugishita's explanation to a Japanese newspaper, the reason for the evacuation of the Legation was the lack of an effective air-raid shelter in the Legation building in Puistokatu 11B.<sup>880</sup> Ironically, the telephone interview between Sugishita and the Japanese newspaper (Yomiuri Shimbun) was made on the same day as the Finnish Army defeated the Soviet counterpart in Tolvajärvi, Eastern Karelia, the first major Finnish victory in the war.<sup>881</sup>

It seems there was a difference in awareness between the Japanese Foreign Ministry and the Japanese Army regarding the national defence capability of Finland. Upon his return to Japan from Helsinki at the end of November 1939, Yozo Miyama told the reporters of two Japanese newspapers (Tokyo Asahi Shimbun and

<sup>873</sup> Momose, 1973, p.27.

<sup>874</sup> Report of the appointment of Lieutenant Colonel Yoshikiyo Ninomiya, 30 November 1939. (No.37) **Finnish Foreign Ministry Archive (Ulkomisteriön arkisto)**. 6.0 (Japanese).

<sup>875</sup> **Pesonen, A.** Helsinki at War (Helsinki Sodassa). Vaasa Oy, Vaasa, 1985, p.114.

<sup>876</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 8 December 1939, Morning edition, p.7.

<sup>877</sup> Pesonen, 1985, p.114.

<sup>878</sup> Helsingin Sanomat, 3 December 1939, p.1.

<sup>879</sup> Notification of the relocation of the staff of the Japanese Legation in Helsinki, 11 December 1939. **Finnish Foreign Ministry Archive (Ulkomisteriön arkisto)**. 6.0 (Japanese).

<sup>880</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 7 December 1939, Morning edition, p.7.

<sup>881</sup> Trotter, 1991, p.110.

Yomiuri Shimbun) that an easy victory for the Soviets against Finland was less likely. Miyama listed up two reasons for his assumption: 1) difficulties related to winter operations and 2) the existence of two well-organised militia organisations (National Guards and Lotta-Svärd).<sup>882</sup> The latter were also cited as symbols of Finnish military strength by Captain Akio Doi who had studied with the Häme Cavalry Regiment in Lappeenranta in winter 1933. While he was in Finland, Miyama praised the National Guards for organising weekly training, and Lotta-Svärd for its brisk efficiency in relief and material recovery operations.<sup>883</sup> Also, he believed the Finnish Army was well prepared for the winter operations in comparison to the Soviets and the Finnish qualities of honesty and hard work would also serve as a decisive factor for the Finnish national defence.<sup>884</sup> Miyama had previously been an assistant military attaché to the Soviet Union and had worked under Colonel Akio Doi, the then military attaché to the Soviet Union who openly had protested about the policies of the Kwuntang Army and had asked the General Staff to expand the battle against the Red Army during the Nomonhan incident in summer 1939.<sup>885</sup> Miyama was one of the best experts on Russian military affairs in the Japanese Army along with his superior Doi. By 1939, Doi had become known as one of the Army's best experts on Russian affairs.

Miyama's assumption was shared by his successor Ninomiya. After the retreat of the Japanese Legation to Hyvinkää, Lieutenant Colonel Ninomiya alone remained in the old Legation building in Puistokatu 11B.<sup>886</sup> Like Miyama, he would also have expected the Finnish defensive victory, thus Ninomiya remained in Helsinki alone. There is no documentary evidence for the (possible) opinion of Ninomiya, but there were many other cases in which Japanese military attaché offices overseas retreated from their original locations. The aforementioned Warsaw office was one example and also, in spring 1945, before the Soviet encirclement of Berlin, the Japanese military attaché in Germany left Berlin and relocated to Southern Germany. On 7 December, Ninomiya said in a telephone interview with Japanese newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun that, on the 6<sup>th</sup>, one of the military convoy trains heading to the border region (of Karelia) was attacked by Soviet aircraft, but escaped damage.<sup>887</sup>

<sup>882</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 1 December 1939, Morning edition, p.7.

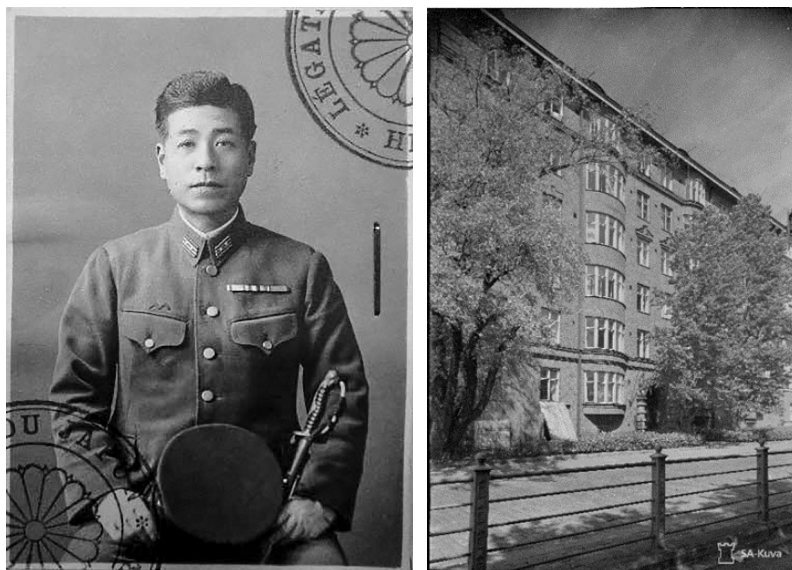
<sup>883</sup> Ibid.

<sup>884</sup> Tokyo Asahi Shimbun, 1 December 1939, Morning edition, p.11.

<sup>885</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 5 July 1974, Evening edition, p.7.

<sup>886</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 7 December 1939, Morning edition, p.7.

<sup>887</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 8 December 1939, Morning edition, p.7.



**Picture 13.** Lieutenant Colonel Yoshikiyo Ninomiya (11 December 1939, Courtesy of the Finnish Foreign Ministry Archives) and the Japanese Legation at Puistokatu 11B, Helsinki. (26 June 1941, Courtesy of the Archives of the Finnish Defence Forces – SA-Kuva) There were several entrances in front of the building and the balconies with glasses made the building extremely vulnerable to air raids. In fact, in 1944 the building was burnt down in a Soviet air raid.

On 16 December, the Red Army carried out a full-scale attack on the Mannerheim Line on the Karelian Isthmus. On the same day, the Japanese Legation relocated to a house in Kauniainen (Grankulla), despite a lack of documentary evidence of a reason for the relocation.<sup>888</sup> On the same day on the Tolvajärvi front, Finnish forces successfully pushed back the Soviet troops to beyond Metsänvaara.<sup>889</sup> In January 1940, Major Seiichi Niimi,<sup>890</sup> a researcher at the Technical Institute of the Japanese Army resident in Riga, visited Finland to research the Finnish Army.<sup>891</sup> In his report submitted to the Technical Institute in June 1940, Niimi emphasised the same points

<sup>888</sup> Notification of the relocation of the staff of the Japanese Legation in Helsinki, 16 December 1939. **Finnish Foreign Ministry Archive (Ulkominiisteriönarkisto)**. 6.O15.

<sup>889</sup> Trotter, 1991, p.118.

<sup>890</sup> Niimi was originally sent to Poland for the purpose of technical research but, due to the Polish defeat, he was ordered to move to Latvia on 27 September 1939 to continue his research. Reference: Regarding the transfer of the Japanese Army's technical officer stationed in Poland (Harankoku gijutsu chuzai kan no ichuu ni kansuru ken 波蘭国技術駐在官移駐に関する件) JACAR, C01004594600.

<sup>891</sup> "Secret Episodes of War History, Episode 7" (Never-known Finnish-Japanese Military History). National Institute for Defence Studies (NIDS) of Japan, November 2020. pp.5-6. [http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/publication/secret\\_story/pdf/2020/secret\\_202011.pdf](http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/publication/secret_story/pdf/2020/secret_202011.pdf) (Access Date and Time: 6 November 2020, 07:36AM)

indicated by Akio Doi and Yozo Miyama as the key reasons for the Finnish victory against the Soviet troops.<sup>892</sup>

On 16 March 1940, a peace agreement between Finland and the Soviet Union was signed in Moscow. As a result, Finland was forced to cede 16,000 km<sup>2</sup> of territory to the Soviet Union.<sup>893</sup> The lessons of the Winter War caught the attention of the Japanese Army, especially the Kwantung Army, which was confronting the Red Army in Manchuria. On 10 December 1940, the Kwantung Army published a report on Soviet war tactics, known as the 'Material for Researching the Soviet War Tactics' (So-Gun Senpou Kenkyu Shiryou ソ軍戦法研究資料) No.17. The theme of the material was the use of Soviet chemical weapons on the frontline and protection from chemical weapons. It was based on materials provided by the Finnish General Staff to the then Japanese military attaché to Finland, Hiroshi Onouchi.<sup>894</sup> Anyhow, the Japanese Army invited two officers of the Finnish Army to Manchukuo to give lectures about war tactics against the Soviet Union in late 1940.

## 10.5 Japanese-Polish Intelligence Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region (1939–1940)

The defeat of Poland by Germany and the Soviet Union in September 1939 had serious effects on Japanese military intelligence activities in Europe. While the German and Soviet intelligence services began to hunt down the former Polish intelligence officers in the aftermath of their victory, the Japanese Army decided to offer protection to some of them since there was a demand for Polish intelligence officers in the intelligence sector of the Kwantung Army in Manchukuo.

Masao Ueda, the former Japanese military attaché to Poland, was given a special directive by the General Staff in Tokyo to find the former Polish officers and send them to Japan along with their families. The project of finding the Polish officers and their families lasted about five months and, as soon as he had seen off the Poles from Italy,<sup>895</sup> Ueda finally left Berlin for Japan on 20 February 1940.<sup>896</sup> The transfer of the former Polish intelligence officers to Asia was based on a secret agreement from October 1939 between Ueda and Colonel Stanisław Gano, then head of the Second Department (Intelligence) of the Polish General Staff.<sup>897</sup> Gano asked Ueda

<sup>892</sup> Ibid.

<sup>893</sup> Trotter, 1991, p.273.

<sup>894</sup> Regarding research material of the Soviet tactics (Sogun senpou kenkyu shiryō no ken ソ軍戦法研究資料の件) JACAR, C01003644400.

<sup>895</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 13 May 1983, Evening edition, p.2.

<sup>896</sup> Kawabe, 1971, p.110.

<sup>897</sup> Polish military intelligence service. This organisation is also known as 'Dwojka' in Polish, meaning 'the second'.

to make a requisition of his department by the Japanese Army. Tokyo officially rejected the offer of Gano, but unofficial cooperation between the former Polish intelligence officers and the Japanese Army in Europe remained.<sup>898</sup> Okabe surmised that Gano's offer was an act of friendship, which Japan had maintained with Poland ever since the latter's independence in 1918.<sup>899</sup> There was distrust of the Japanese Army among the German intelligence services for their use of the former Polish intelligence officers. For instance, the Gestapo, the infamous German secret police, which handled the prosecution of 'enemies of the state', found a link between the former Polish military intelligence service and the Japanese Army. Heinrich Himmler, head of the Gestapo, wrote in a report to von Ribbentrop dated 7 August 1941 that an arrested former Polish intelligence officer who worked for the Japanese military attaché office in Berlin had confessed to personal connections between Chiune Sugihara, the then Japanese Consul in Königsberg (Kaliningrad), and former Polish intelligence officers such as Stanisław Perz and Jerzy Kuncewicz.<sup>900</sup>



**Picture 14.** Foreign military attachés accredited to Latvia. (1938) Lieutenant Colonel Feliks Brzeskwinski (first from the left), Polish military attaché to Latvia, and Lieutenant Colonel Tamotsu Takatsuki (right of Brzeskwinski), Japanese military attaché to the Baltic States being confirmed. Courtesy of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia.

<sup>898</sup> Okabe, 2013, pp.161–162.

<sup>899</sup> Ibid., p.162.

<sup>900</sup> **Ishiguro, K.** *Passport of Mr. Sakiel: To Manchukuo, Place of Love and Illusion.* (Sakiel-shi no Passport: Ai to Maboroshi no Manshuukoku he) Kojinsha, Tokyo, 2001, p.121. The real name of Perz was Leszek Daszkiewicz, Lieutenant of the Polish intelligence service, and that of Kuncewicz was Captain Alfons Jakubianiec, aide to Daszkiewicz.

After the closure of the Warsaw office, the military intelligence activities of the Japanese Army in the Baltic Sea region were taken over by the branches in Finland, Sweden and Latvia. The new Japanese organisation was divided into two sections, Eastern and Western.<sup>901</sup> In August 1941, the Eastern Section targeting France and the Soviet Union was led by Colonel Makoto Onodera, the then Japanese military attaché to Sweden.<sup>902</sup> Before 1941, Colonel Toshio Nishimura, the predecessor of Onodera, had been in mutual contact with the 'North' (Północ) branch of the Polish military intelligence service located in Stockholm. Nishimura had constantly received information concerning marine traffic in the Northern Gulf of Bothnia from the 'North', mostly provided by a Polish mole(s) stationed in the ports of Haparanda and Boden.<sup>903</sup>

In contrast, ever since the stationing of the Soviet troops in the Baltic States in autumn 1939, the Japanese military attaché to the Baltic States had found it difficult to acquire certain information about the Soviet Union from the local military forces. Onouchi recollected that, ever since the arrival of the Soviet troops in the Baltic States, the local General Staffs kept their distance from him and provided less valuable information, a fact that was evident in newspapers.<sup>904</sup> As Soviet diplomatic pressure increased after the end of the Winter War, the Baltic General Staffs attempted to obtain information from Onouchi on the political intentions of Germany. Onouchi had a connection with the German military attaché in Riga and acted as a go-between for the Germans and Latvians.<sup>905</sup>

## 10.6 The Soviet Occupation of the Baltic States (June 1940)

At 3:00 AM on 15 June 1940, the Soviet border guard crossed several points of the Soviet-Latvian borders and attacked Latvia.<sup>906</sup> These incidents were concealed by

<sup>901</sup> Ishiguro, 2001, p.122.

<sup>902</sup> Ibid. It was likely the Stockholm office was in charge of all the Japanese military attaché offices in Baltic Sea region including Latvia. In the Gestapo document, which was used as the primary source by Ishiguro, the Riga office (closed in 1940) was described as a 'branch', which belongs to a higher commanding authority.

<sup>903</sup> **Peplowski, A.** Activities of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff in Scandinavia and the Baltic States during the World War II. (Działalność Oddziału II Sztabu Naczelnego Wodza na terenie Skandynawii i państw bałtyckich w czasie II wojny światowej) *Słupskie Studia Historyczne*, 2004, 11, p.122.

<sup>904</sup> *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 25 March 1974, Evening edition, p.3.

<sup>905</sup> *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 28 March 1974, Evening edition, p.3.

<sup>906</sup> **Grava-Kreituse, I, Feldmanis, I, Loeber, D., A., Goldmanis, J. & Stranga, A. (Eds.).** The Occupation and Annexation of Latvia: 1939–1940, Documents and Material. UDK, Riga, 1995, pp.193–194.

the Latvian government, and the news did not appear in any Latvian newspapers. On the following day, the 16<sup>th</sup>, the Soviet military forces began full-scale occupation of Estonia and Latvia. Only a few testimonies of the Japanese diplomats in Riga, including the military attaché who came across with the Soviet occupation of Latvia still exist. Of those the memoirs of Akira Shigemitsu, an overseas research student of the Japanese Foreign Ministry who resided in Riga, are the most detailed and trusted as they are based on his diary.

Shigemitsu heard about the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States at night of the 16<sup>th</sup>. When the occupation began, he was staying at the residence of Shigeru Shimada, representative of the Japanese diplomat office in Tallinn, Estonia. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, on his way back to Riga, Shigemitsu wrote about his impression of the Soviet occupation forces as follows: “I thought larger Soviet military units were deployed in Latvia compared to those in Estonia. Maybe because Latvia is bigger than Estonia or the country is geographically closer to Germany. Riga has been under martial law. Curfew after 10 PM introduced, all the restaurants were closed and no sales of alcohol (to foreigners). A passport was required to purchase certain products.”<sup>907</sup>

On the 20<sup>th</sup>, Shigemitsu was called by Hiroshi Onouchi, a Japanese military attaché to the Baltic States. Onouchi used Shigemitsu as an interpreter for the meeting with French military attaché Lieutenant Colonel Jacques Hoppenot. Hoppenot repeatedly asked Onouchi how long foreign diplomats could remain in Soviet-occupied Latvia. Hoppenot and Onouchi agreed that the Soviet occupation forces would not allow foreign diplomatic representatives to observe the whole process of the occupation.<sup>908</sup> After the seizure of Riga by the Soviet military forces, Nina Shvangiradze, Georgian Latvian secretary at the Japanese military attaché office in Riga, was in trouble. The Soviet secret police entered Riga together with the military forces, which began to search for potential candidates for moles. Nina was one such person. She was repeatedly summoned directly by Andrey Vyshinsky, Soviet state prosecutor who played a significant role in prosecutions during the Great Purge and was appointed as head of the Soviet political authority in occupied Latvia, to work for the Soviet Union. Nina had declined the offer several times and became a target of political arrests. According to Valerija Sieceniece, a Latvian scholar of physics who was one of the closest friends of Nina, Nina had a sham marriage with one of the American diplomats in Riga and fled to Cairo, Egypt.<sup>909</sup>

<sup>907</sup> Shigemitsu, 1988, p.57.

<sup>908</sup> Ibid., p.58.

<sup>909</sup> Diena, 15 May 1993.



According to a report by Orde, a British minister in Riga, Vyshinsky arrived in Riga on the night of the 18<sup>th</sup>.<sup>910</sup> Onouchi had visited Hoppenot with Shigemitsu on the 20<sup>th</sup>. This leads to the possibility that Nina resigned from the Japanese military attaché office and went into hiding from the Soviet secret police some time between the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup>. On the 25<sup>th</sup>, Onouchi visited Lieutenant Colonel Croxton Sillery Vale, British military attaché in Riga, together with Shigemitsu. Vale told Onouchi that there was a concentration of Soviet troops in occupied Lithuania, and the Germans were also concentrating their troops in neighbouring East Prussia. Vale left Riga for Kaunas (Kovno) the following day to observe the “main interests on the German frontier”.<sup>911</sup> In Kaunas, Vale discussed the situation with Huthsteiner, the American military attaché who was also on an observational trip to Lithuania from Riga. Before Vale arrived at Kaunas, Huthsteiner visited the local German Legation to acquire the information directly from the military attaché. Contrary to the expectations of Vale, the scale of the Soviet military forces in occupied Latvia was rather small, and the German Legation in Kaunas was ready for its closure, as the American military attaché had witnessed that “everything in the room of the German Councillor was packed”,<sup>912</sup> and there was no concentration of German troops in East Prussia either.<sup>913</sup> Onouchi previously had a good relationship with the German Legation and the military attaché office in Kaunas, whereas he disliked the Lithuanians.<sup>914</sup> Military attachés rarely leaked the aims of their trips to foreign counterparts, and there was always a danger of falling into a leap in logic, but Vale might have known about Onouchi’s good relations with the German diplomatic mission in Kaunas. Thus, he told Onouchi the real reason for his visit to Lithuania. Meanwhile, the use of an interpreter during the meetings between Onouchi and the British and French counterparts suggests the possibility that, before the arrival of Shigemitsu to Riga, the secretaries of the military attaché office had worked as his interpreters, participating in almost all Onouchi’s meetings. This possibility begs the question of why Nina Shvangiradze had to flee overseas since she had extensive knowledges of the Japanese intelligence activities in the Baltic States. Nina was used as a messenger to exchange information with informants of Japanese military attachés. Furthermore, she was the one who introduced Ezavitov, a member of the

<sup>910</sup> Report of the British minister Orde to Latvia, 19 June 1940. (No.290 Repeated) **British National Archive**. FO371.24761., p.39.

<sup>911</sup> Report of Orde (Forwarding the report of the British military attaché), 26 June 1940. (No.322) **British National Archive**. FO371.24761, p.79.

<sup>912</sup> Report of Orde (Forwarding the report of the British military attaché), 26 June 1940. (No.320) **British National Archive**. FO371.24761, p.80.

<sup>913</sup> Report of the British minister Preston to Lithuania (forwarding the report of the British military attaché), 29 June 1940. (No.162) **British National Archive**. FO371.24761, p.89.

<sup>914</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun, 26 March 1974, Evening edition, p.7.

Belarussian independence movement in Riga, to Makoto Onodera. There is even a possibility that, from the facts indicated, she knew of all the Japanese activities. Thus, Nina was a person whom Onouchi wanted to safely deport from Latvia under Soviet occupation.

In reality, the analysis of Vale was wrong. On 26 June, the German General Staff (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht or OKW) ordered the 18<sup>th</sup> Army to establish a new Army group in East Prussia. The objective of the new Army group, which was issued as an official order three days later, was to deter the Soviet military units in Lithuania and defend East Prussia.<sup>915</sup> Thus, none of the military attachés in Riga including the Japanese were aware of German intentions regarding the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States.

## 10.7 In the Aftermath: Reorganisation of Japanese Intelligence Network (June – September 1940)

The Soviet occupation of Latvia put an end to the intelligence activities of the Japanese Legation and the military attaché office in Riga. Ever since 1929, Riga had always been the essential hub for Japanese military intelligence in the Baltic States and, on a wider scale, in the Baltic Sea region, until the establishment of the military attaché office in Helsinki in 1934.

During the upheavals in the Baltic States, Lieutenant Colonel Yoshikiyo Ninomiya, Japanese assistant military attaché to Finland, was occupied with work related to the detachments of two Finnish officers to the Kwantung Army. Upon the arrival of Hiroshi Onouchi, a new Japanese military attaché to Finland in September,<sup>916</sup> Ninomiya was ordered to return to Japan. He arrived in Vladivostok from Helsinki on 27 September 1940, where he heard the news of the Tripartite Pact, the formal military alliance between Germany, Italy and Japan.<sup>917</sup>

In East Asia, the Estonian Consul in Harbin visited the local Japanese counterpart on 27 July 1940. Kubota, Japanese Consul in Harbin, presumed that the Estonian intention was to use the Estonians in Manchukuo in Japanese intelligence activities against the Soviet Union. Kubota indicated the Executive Office for Émigré Russians

<sup>915</sup> **Oki, T.** *The German-Soviet War: Tragedy of War of Extinction.* (Dokuso-sen: Zetsumenstu Sensou no Sanka) Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, 2019, p.17.

<sup>916</sup> Request for issuing diplomat's cards for Mr. Hideo Ota, Ms. Teiko Ota, and military attaché Hiroshi Onouchi, 23 September 1940. (No.12) **Finnish Foreign Ministry Archive.** (**Ulkoministeriön arkisto**) 6.0 (Japani).

<sup>917</sup> **Ninomiya, Y.** *Record of My Half Life, Colonel Yoshikiyo Ninomiya, Volume 1.* (Ninomiya Yoshikiyo Taisa, Hansei no Ki, Sono-Ichi) National Institute for Defence Studies of Japan (NIDS). Reference Number:Chuo-Sensou Shidou Jyuyou Kokusaku Bunsho-809.

(BREM) as a potential collaborator with the Estonians<sup>918</sup> (for the details of the BREM, see **Chapter 9.5**). Ever since the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States, the ethnic Baltic minorities in East Asia, mostly resident in Manchukuo, were forced to give up their original nationalities and adopt Soviet citizenship.<sup>919</sup> The Harbin Special Intelligence Agency (Harubin Tokumu Kikan) of the Kwantung Army asked the Baltic minorities in Manchukuo not to acquire a Soviet passport.<sup>920</sup> According to Kubota, the number of Baltic minorities in Manchukuo were as follows<sup>921</sup>:

Estonians: 130 (78 in Harbin)  
 Latvians: 250 (194 in Harbin)  
 Lithuanians: 520 (224 in Harbin)

It is unclear whether the Baltic minorities participated in the Japanese intelligence activities against the Soviet Union or not. Earlier, on 16 February 1940 the Harbin Special Intelligence Agency formulated a new stratagem against the Soviet Union. In the new plan, the émigré Russians who had been directed by or worked under the initiative of the Kwantung Army, were to be given more authority and freedom inside Manchukuo, being more independent from the Kwantung Army, in preparation for the establishment of a puppet state in the event of war against the Soviet Union. However, the autonomy of the émigré Russians or BREM was not allowed.<sup>922</sup> From the perspective of the Baltic minorities, the establishment of a Japanese puppet state in Siberia was not in their interests. They just wanted their home countries in Europe to regain independence. Thus, it is likely that the Baltic minorities did not cooperate with the BREM. Indeed, there are no testimonies of former BREM members arrested by the Soviet secret police after the Soviet invasion of Manchukuo in August 1945 that mentioned the involvement of the Baltic minorities in the organisation. After all, all the Estonian diplomatic missions in Manchukuo were forced to close by 16 November 1940.<sup>923</sup>

<sup>918</sup> Attribution of the Balkan Three Countries to the Soviet Union (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) (Balkan Sangoku Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania Soren heno kizokukankei バルカン三国 エストニア・ラトビア・リトアニア ソ連への帰属関係), JACAR, B02031157400.

<sup>919</sup> Report of Sir R. Craigie, British Ambassador to Japan, 27 August 1940. (No.1695) **British National Archive**. FO371.24761., p.365.

<sup>920</sup> JACAR, B02031157400.

<sup>921</sup> Ibid.

<sup>922</sup> GHQ/SCAP Records, International Prosecution Section. Affidavit No.736A. Entry No.327 Court Exhibits in English and Japanese, IPS, 1945-47. <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/10274824> (Access Date and Time: 9 August 2019, 03:15AM)

<sup>923</sup> **Toom (Selart), E.** The Fate of the Estonian Honourary Consulate in Dairen. Balto-Scandinavia, 2001, 18, p.76.

# 11 Conclusion of the Japanese Military Intelligence Activities in the Baltic Sea Region between 1918 and 1940

In conclusion, the interwar Japanese military intelligence activities against the Soviet Union in the Baltic Sea region can be divided into three periods:



In the first period between 1919 and 1931, the priority objective for the Japanese Army in terms of its intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea region was to observe and provide analyses of the newly born Soviet Union. Ever since the closure of the Japanese diplomatic missions and the military attaché offices in the Soviet Union upon Japan's Siberian Intervention starting in 1918, the Japanese Army had been forced to conduct observational missions outside the country, and the military attachés to Russia were relocated to Stockholm, Sweden. From Stockholm, Colonel Kiyoshi Furuya and Captain Michitaro Komatsubara frequently visited Estonia during the country's war of independence (1918-1920). When the second offensive of Nikolai Yudenich against Petrograd was launched, Komatsubara began his residence in Tallinn and provided detailed reports of the military situations until the dissolution of the Yudenich's Northwestern Army at the end of 1919. The critical mistake of Komatsubara was a miscalculation of the Northwestern Army's capability. The Yudenich's army reached the outskirts of Petrograd in the autumn, but was pushed back to the Estonian border and consequently forced to dissolve. Immaturity in terms of the analyses of the information was confirmed at the very first stage of the Japanese activities in the Baltic Sea region.

After the conclusion of the Estonian War of Independence in 1920, the roles expected for Komatsubara and his successors (Major Toshiro Obata and Captain Rinzo Ando) changed to economic and political observations of the Soviet Union with the secret cooperation of Estonian Customs. The majority of the reports issued by Obata and Ando contained specific economic data about the Soviet Union and were not taken up in the details of this thesis due to the requirement of basic knowledge of economics. Meanwhile, during the Siberian Intervention, which lasted until 1922, both the Soviet Union and the emerging Communist movement in Japan were seen as threats to Japan's capitalist and colonial pursuits within the imperial system. Therefore, Obata secretly censored Japan-related letters delivered to the Soviet Union via Estonia and, in September 1921, he reported to Tokyo the correspondence between three Japanese Communists and Unzo Taguchi, a member of the American Communist Party who was on a visit to Moscow. Obata himself, however, noted in the telegram to Tokyo that the information provided by the Estonian General Staff was exaggerated and less trustworthy. The Japanese military agent office in Tallinn was closed due to the army's fiscal problems in late 1922, and its observation of the Soviet Union in Estonia was terminated. The communication between the Japanese Army and the Estonian General Staff was restored in late 1929. The entire process of restoration of the relationship could not be clarified due to a lack of sources. However, during the conference of Japanese military attachés in Berlin (April 1929), Michitaro Komatsubara, the then military attaché to the Soviet Union who had previously resided in Estonia, cited the Polish and Estonian military attachés in Moscow as the best examples of espionage inside the Soviet Union. In the same context, Shigeyasu Suzuki, military attaché to Poland, highlighted the geopolitical importance of Riga and recommended that the Japanese Army also station a military attaché there. In the Plan of 1932, the Japanese Army's first strategic plan to organise espionage and subversive activities against the other Great Powers such as the United States and the Soviet Union, the stationing of new military attachés in the four Baltic Sea region countries (Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania) was indicated. Moreover, the Plan of 1932 noted the importance of those countries to be used as bridgeheads for the Japanese intelligence activities against the Soviet Union.

Between 1933 and 1934, several Japanese Army officers were sent to the Baltic Sea countries as students. Estonia, Finland, and Latvia were countries that accepted the student officers. All of them fulfilled the duties to promote bilateral friendships with the local military forces. Taking the advantage of the success, the Japanese Army attempted to mobilize the Finnish secret police for their activities in January 1937. However, the offer was rejected by the Finns and the Japanese plan had to be altered. In the Summer of 1937, the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War exposed the fragility of Japanese wartime propaganda. As a result, the Japanese

Army had to alter its original plan to organize intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea countries. Especially in Finland, they decided to use Kurt Martti Wallenius, former Finnish Chief of the General Staff, as a tool to promote Japanese propaganda on the war with China. Wallenius was chosen for such purpose by Yoshihide Kato, a Japanese military attache to Finland and Sweden who took the initiative of the negotiation with the Finnish secret police VALPO. Although the trips of Wallenius to China and Japan between the end of 1937 and early 1938, also the following publication of the book 'Japan Forward', had succeeded to promote the Japanese thought in Finland at some account, the Japanese propaganda did not gain supports in major Western powers and did not change the tide of the war. On the other hand, in Estonia, the Japanese Army launched a secret operation to organize disruptive operations inside the Soviet Union in cooperation with the Estonian General Staff and the Abwehr, German military intelligence service. This ambitious operation also failed and within 48 hours from the detachment, all the three agents returned to Estonia for personal reasons. Overreliance of the Japanese Army on stratagems and propaganda were confirmed through the intelligence activities in the late 1930s, especially after the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War. The Japanese espionage offensive in Estonia was recognized as a menace to the Soviet authority. There was at least one attempt of the Soviet secret police, yet the details unconfirmed, to retaliate with an assassination of a Japanese officer who played a key role in the operation (Lieutenant Colonel Tamotsu Takatsuki) in late 1940.

Due to the German-Polish War in September and the Winter War in November 1939, the Japanese Army's intelligence network in Central and Northern Europe had been disrupted by the closure of the Japanese military attache office in Warsaw, hub for the intelligence activities, and relocation of the military attache office in Helsinki to Stockholm. In Helsinki, Lieutenant Colonel Yoshikiyo Ninomiya, Japanese assistant military attache, remained in the Legation building according to the advice of his predecessor Yozo Miyama and spontaneously conducted the analyses of the Winter War. The reports of the two Japanese assistant military attaches and their superior, Colonel Toshio Nishimura, on the Finnish success of the Winter War led to the cooperation with the Finnish Army in terms of winter warfare. In 1940, two Finnish Army officers were sent to Japan and later to Manchuria for the education of winter warfare to the Kwantung Army. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union occupied the Baltic States in June 1940. Although the cooperation between the Japanese Army and the local military forces, secret police, had been minimal after the stationing of the Soviet military units in the Baltic States during Autumn 1939, the closure of the Japanese military attache office in Riga resulted in further loss of the operational hub in Europe for the Japanese Army. Also, Nina Shvangiradze, an assistant of the military attache office who had familiarized herself with the Japanese Army's intelligence network in Europe, was forced to defect to a third country due to the

Soviet occupation. Due to the rapidly changing political situation, the former Baltic States citizens in Manchuria either volunteered or recruited by the Kwantung Army as candidates for the intelligence operations against the Soviet Union. The results of the recruitment were unknown.

To conclude the thesis, the Japanese intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea countries (Estonia, Finland, and Latvia) did not affect the tides of the diplomatic and political situations of the region. The overreliance of the Japanese Army on stratagems and propaganda were confirmed. The purposes of the three agents could not be clarified due to a lack of sources, however, all the agents had returned to Estonia without achieving their objective(s). The Estonian-German-Japanese operation was conducted during the most sensitive period of the year 1938 when the Great Purge reached its height and German territorial expansionism caused confrontation with many of its Eastern and Western neighbours. The impacts of the never happened event cannot be calculated, yet it had a risk on the security of the entire Europe. However, taking the Japanese intelligence operational plan of 1932 into account, the use of stratagems against the Soviet Union was indicated and inherited by the plan of 1938. In that sense, the interwar Japanese military intelligence activities in the Baltic Sea countries were destined to prioritize the stratagems and propaganda. Yet, all of the Japanese attempts had failed, and no cases succeeded.

# Abbreviations

BREM	Executive Office for Émigré Russians (Byuropodelam Rossiyskik hemigrantovv Man'chzhurskoy Imperii)
BSS	Blue Shirts Society, Chinese Secret Organisation
CER	China Eastern Railway
E.K. (EK)	State Police (Etsivä keskuspoliisi), Finnish Secret Police
EFA	Estonian Film Archive (Eesti filmiarhiiv)
ERA	Estonian National Archives (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv)
JACAR	Japan Centre for Asian Historical Records (Ajia Rekishi Shiryo Sentaa)
LVVA	Latvian State Historical Archive (Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs)
NIDS	National Institute for Defence Studies (Bouei Kenkyusho)
NKVD	People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (Narodnyi komissariat vnutrennikh del), Soviet Secret Police
OGPU	The State Political Directorate (Gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie), Soviet Secret Police
VALPO	State Police (Valtiollinen Poliisi), Finnish Secret Police



# Glossary

Akira Shigemitsu	重光	晶
Chiune Sugihara	杉原	千畝
Daisaku Koumoto	河本	大作
Eikitsu Ishii	石井	英橘
Etsuo Kotani	甲谷	悦雄
Fu Zuoyi	傅作義	
Genzo Yanagida	柳田	元三
Hikosaburo Hata	秦	彦三郎
Hiroshi Onouchi	小野打	寛
Hiroshi Oshima	大島	浩
Hisaichi Terauchi	寺内	寿一
Hisao Watari	渡	久雄
Ichiji Sugita	杉田	一次
Jinzaburo Mazaki	真崎	甚三郎
Kazuo Tanigawa	谷川	一男
Kazushige Ugaki	宇垣	一成
Kenichi Ikenaka	池中	健一
Kenji Doihara	土肥原	賢二
Kiichiro Higuchi	樋口	季一郎
Koki Hirota	広田	弘毅
Kouhei Kashii	香椎	浩平
Kyoji Tominaga	富永	恭次
Makoto Onodera	小野寺	信
Masaharu Homma	本間	雅晴
Masamoto Kitada	北田	正元
Michitaro Komatsubara	小松原	道太郎
Mitsuji Sannomiya	三宮	満治
Mitsunobu Suzuki	鈴木	光信
Noritsune Shimizu	清水	規矩
Okikatsu Arai	荒尾	興功
Rinzo Ando	安藤	麟三

Ryukichi Tanaka	田中	隆吉
Saburo Hayashi	林	三郎
Sachiko Sugihara	杉原	幸子
Sadao Araki	荒木	貞夫
Seiichi Terada	寺田	濟一
Seishiro Itagaki	板垣	征四郎
Seizo Arisue	有末	精三
Sen Katayama	片山	潜
Senjuro Hayashi	林	銚十郎
Shigeki Usui	臼井	茂樹
Shigeyasu Suzuki	鈴木	重康
Shin Sakuma	佐久間	信
Shinichi Tanaka	田中	新一
Shuichi Sako	酒匂	秀一
Tadamasa Shimanuki	島貫	忠正
Tadao Matsui	松井	忠雄
Takanobu Manaki	馬奈木	敬信
Takeharu Shimanuki	島貫	武治
Taketo (Osato) Kawamata	川俣	雄人
Takushiro Hattori	服部	卓四郎
Tetsuzan Nagata	永田	鉄山
Torashiro Kawabe	河辺	虎四郎
Toshikatsu Matsumura	松村	知勝
Toshio Nishimura	西村	敏雄
Toshiro Obata	小畑	敏四郎
Tsutomu Ouchi	大内	孜
Unzo Taguchi	田口	運藏
Yasuji Okamura	岡村	寧次
Yorimichi Suzuki	鈴木	率道
Yoshihide Kato	加藤	義秀
Yoshikazu Miyazaki	宮崎	義一
Yoshikiyo Ninomiya	二宮	義清
Yozo Miyama	美山	要藏
Yuitsu Dobashi (Tsuchihashi)	土橋	勇逸
Yujiro Sugishita	杉下	裕次郎
Yukio Kasahara	笠原	幸雄
Yuriko Onodera	小野寺	百合子
Zhang Xueliang	張学良	
Zhang Zuolin	張作霖	
Zhou Enlai	周恩来	

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25. Attribution of the Balkan Three Countries to the Soviet Union (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) (Balkan Sangoku Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania Soren heno kizokukankei バルカン三国 エストニア・ラトビア・リトアニア ソ連への帰属関係), B02031157400
18. Recent Soviet internal affairs: Consideration of the Tukhachevsky incident (Captain Etsuo Kotani) (Saikin no Soren naijyou: Tukhachevsky jiken no kentou Rikugun hohei taii Kotani Etsuo 最近のソ連内情：トハチェフスキー事件の検討 陸軍歩兵大尉甲谷悦雄), B02030915600
5. Regarding the independence of the Baltic States, starting June 1919 (Baruto Sanshu dokuritsu no ken, ji Taisho 8-nen 6-gatsu 5. 波羅的三州独立ノ件 自大正八年六月), B03041297000
1. From 23 May 1919 to 28 June 1919 (1. Taisho 8-nen 5-gatsu 23-nichi kara Taisho 8-nen 6-gatsu 28-nichi 1. 大正8年5月23日から大正8年6月28日) B03051147800

2. From 16 June 1919 to 14 July 1919 (2. Taisho 8-nen 6-gatsu 16-nichi kara Taisho 8-nen 7-gatsu 14-nichi 2. 大正 8 年 6 月 16 日から大正 8 年 7 月 14 日), B03051147900
  1. From 27 August 1919 to 24 October 1919 (1. Taisho 8-nen 8-gatsu 27-nichi kara Taisho 8-nen 10-gatsu 24-nichi 1. 大正 8 年 8 月 27 日から大正 8 年 10 月 24 日), B03051148700
  2. From 17 October 1919 to 14 November 1919 (2. Taisho 8-nen 10-gatsu 17-nichi kara Taisho 8-nen 11-gatsu 14-nichi 大正 8 年 10 月 17 日から大正 8 年 11 月 14 日), B03051148800
  3. From 12 November 1919 to 7 January 1920 (3. Taisho 8-nen 11-gatsu 12-nichi kara Taisho 9-nen 1-gatsu 7-nichi 3. 大正 8 年 11 月 12 日から大正 9 年 1 月 7 日), B03051148900
  6. From 25 February 1921 to 14 March 1921 (6. Taisho 10-nen 2-gatsu 25-nichi kara Taisho 10-nen 3-gatsu 14-nichi 6. 大正 10 年 2 月 25 日から大正 10 年 3 月 21 日), B03051151400
  8. From 20 August 1921 to 29 August 1921 (8. Taisho 10-nen 8-gatsu 20-nichi kara Taisho 10-nen 8-gatsu 29-nichi 8. 大正 10 年 8 月 20 日から大正 10 年 8 月 29 日), B03051152600
  3. From 10 June 1921 to 10 October 1921 (3. Taisho 10-nen 6-gatsu 10-nichi kara Taisho 10-nen 10-gatsu 10-nichi 3. 大正 10 年 6 月 10 日から大正 10 年 10 月 10 日), B03051153100
  8. From 14 December 1921 to 30 December 1921 (8. Taisho 10-nen 12-gatsu 14-nichi kara Taisho 10-nen 12-gatsu 30-nichi 8. 大正 10 年 12 月 14 日から大正 10 年 12 月 30 日), B03051153600
  4. From 20 December 1921 to 8 February 1922 (4. Taisho 10-nen 12-gatsu 20-nichi kara Taisho 11-nen 2-gatsu 8-nichi 4. 大正 10 年 12 月 20 日から大正 11 年 2 月 8 日), B03051154200
  1. General and miscellaneous matters (including the matter for more than two missions) (1. Ippan oyobi zatsu: nikan ijyou ni watarumono wo fukumu 1. 一般及び雑 二館以上に亘るものを含む), B14090832100
  12. Poland (12. Harankoku 12. 波蘭国), B14090833200
  3. Finland (3. Finlandkoku 3. 芬蘭国), B14090834900
  7. Latvia (7. Latviakoku 7. ラトヴィア国), B14090835300
  23. Latvia (23. Latviakoku 23. ラトヴィア国), B14090839400
  1. Regarding the joint administration of Estonia by the Envoy to Latvia (1. Zai Latvia koushi wo shite Estoniakoku wo kenkatsu seshimuru ken 1. 在ラトヴィア公使をしてエストニア国を兼轄せしむる件), B14090891200
  2. Europe/ 13 Japanese Legation in Latvia and Japanese diplomat office in Tallinn (2. Ou/13 Zai Latvia koushikan, Zai Tallinn gaikoukan jimusho 2. 欧/13 在ラトヴィア公使館、在ターリン外交官事務所), B14091194800
  1. Europe/15 Japanese diplomat office in Riga (1. Ou/15 Zai Riga shuchojo 1. 欧/15 在リガ出張所), B15100944400
  38. Artillery Captain Rinzo Ando, July 1921 (38. Rikugun houhei taii Ando Rinzo, Taisho 10-nen 7-gatsu 38. 陸軍砲兵大尉安藤麟三 大正 10 年 7 月), B16080219700
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# Appendices

**Evidence 1.** Report (Ro-Ko-Den No.290) by Lieutenant Colonel Furuya to the General Staff in Tokyo, sent on 16 December 1918.

Reference: JACAR (Japan Centre for Asian Historical Records), B03051142600.

Attn.: Chief of Staff  
From Lieutenant Colonel Furuya

Sent on: 16 December 1918 08:15AM

Received: 18 December 1918 24:35PM

1. The invasion by the Bolsheviks of the Baltic region, begun at the end of November, has been showing rapid progress due to the neutrality of the German forces (in some cases, the Germans would have been friendly with the Bolsheviks) and weakness of the defenders. With the collaboration of the Army and Navy, the Bolsheviks advanced along the Baltic railway and, by early this month, they had already reached the line between Sonda train station and Assetan. In the South, (three words missing here) the Bolsheviks captured Pskov and are advancing toward Walk (Valga) and Yuriev (Tartu). On the Walk railway, the Bolsheviks reached Antzen railway station at the same time. According to today's newspaper, an advance guard of Bolsheviks is in the surrounding area of Borwa village. Furthermore, there is a rumour that the Bolsheviks are moving in the direction of Riga in order to isolate the Baltic region...

On the other hand, in the North the British fleet consists of three cruisers, two destroyers and six submarines that arrived in Tallinn last Thursday [12 December 1919 was Friday – S.M.]. Ever since the arrival of the British fleet, the morale of the Estonians has been rising. The British fleet bombarded the Bolshevik position on the Wesenberg heights on the 15th and, according to intelligence, they stopped the Bolshevik advancement in the direction of Aserin. To sum up, as the Baltic States begged for the support of the Entente powers (Allies), they do not possess effective military strength nor the capabilities to form their own military forces, thus they intend to invite foreign troops instead of military aid to fight the Bolsheviks. If this is not achieved, all the Baltic States will fall into the hands of the Bolsheviks, it will be a base for the victor's propaganda and they will control the Baltic sea lane. If the Allies send only a few warships and their support is limited to arms and munition supplies, their plans will end up in a big failure.

Shingo Masunaga

**Evidence 2.** Original Text of the San-Mitsu No.908-1 (6 October 1927).

Reference:

- 1) Affidavit No.2436 (in Japanese), GHQ/SCAP Records, International Prosecution Section, Entry No.327 Court Exhibits in English and Japanese, IPS, 1945-47.  
<http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/10279005> (Access Date and Time: 28 February 2019, 23:38PM)
- 2) Affidavit No.2436 (in English), GHQ/SCAP Records, International Prosecution Section, Entry No.327 Court Exhibits in English and Japanese, IPS, 1945-47.  
<http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/10271949> (Access Date and Time: 28 February 2019, 23:18PM)

Top Secret

General Staff

Confidential #2081

**“Instruction on investigation of special organisations, associations and important individuals who may be used for the gathering of information for propaganda and subversive activities”**

**(Senji Chohou, Senden, oyobi Bouryaku tou no tame riyou siheki Tokushu dantai, Kessha, Youjin tou chousa no shiji 「戦時諜報、宣伝及び謀略等のため利用し得き特殊団体、結社、要人等調査の指示」)**

6 October 1927

To: Michitaro Komatsubara, Military Attaché to the Soviet Union

From: Jiro Minami, Vice Chief of the General Staff

I request the gathering of the most detailed information on special organisations, associations, important individuals, etc. that may be used for collecting intelligence information, for propaganda and subversive activities in concert with various military operations in each informant's areas, and the continual sending of this information as soon as it is received, according to the following points:

1. Information concerning organisations (associations)

- The name of the organisation (association)
- Its establishment (objectives)
- Its programme
- Organisational basis



- Main leaders and their brief biographies
- Number of members
- The whereabouts of the central body and the branches
- Source of financial funds, present activities, publications, etc.
- Present influence and means of spreading it
- Methods of using the means of spreading influence
- The extent of direct contact with us (the Japanese Army) at present; methods of employment of those organisations; preparation for it in time of peace; and all other necessary information

## 2. Information concerning individuals

- Name, Surname
- Nationality
- Sex
- Date of Birth (Day, Month, Year)
- Occupation
- Brief biography and educational background
- Personal qualities
- Home conditions
- Circle of acquaintances
- Special abilities
- Has he continued or is he continuing the work of gathering intelligence information or some other work of special character? If the answer is affirmative, then what is the work and its results?
- Knowledges of languages
- How he may be used in future, his intentions for the future
- Other important information

**Evidence 3.** Minutes of the Conference of Japanese Army Attachés in Europe, in Berlin (April 1929)

Reference:

- 1) Affidavit No.732A (in Japanese), GHQ/SCAP Records, International Prosecution Section, Entry No.327 Court Exhibits in English and Japanese, IPS, 1945-47  
<http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/10274812> (Access Date and Time: 28 February 2019, 12:41AM)
- 2) Affidavit No.732A (in English), GHQ/SCAP Records, International Prosecution Section, Entry No.327 Court Exhibits in English and Japanese, IPS, 1945-47.  
<http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/10274811> (Access Date and Time: 28 February 2019, 13:58PM)

Participants of the conference were as follows:

**Moderator: Iwane Matsui**, Lieutenant General  
(Head of the Second Department of the General Staff)

<b>Arichika Omura</b> , Major General	(Germany)
<b>Shigeyasu Suzuki</b> , Colonel	(Poland)
<b>Toshinari Maeda</b> , Colonel	(Britain)
<b>Tomoyuki Yamashita</b> , Lieutenant Colonel	(Austria)
<b>Kingoro Hashimoto</b> , Major	(Turkey)
<b>Michitaro Komatsubara</b> , Lieutenant Colonel	(Soviet Union)

**“Russia-related Issues submitted at the Conference for Military Attachés stationed in Europe”**

(Zai-Ou Bukan Kaigi Teishutsu Rokoku Kankei Jikou 「在欧武官會議提出 露国關係事項」)

1. Regarding Assessment of the Situation

- 1.1. Prediction of future of Russia as a result of comparison between analyses of Russia from the perspective of the Great Powers and analyses from within Russia.
- 1.2. Possible national policies Japan should pursue if a significant change [political change? – S.M.] occurs in Russia
- 1.3. Research on espionage methods from European countries in case of war with Russia
- 1.4. Observation of status and future activities of émigré Russians in the Great Powers
- 1.5. Effects on European-Russian relations in case of Japan’s break-up of diplomatic relations with Russia in future

2. Miscellaneous Issues

1. Opinion on joint administration of the Baltic States by the military attaché to Poland based on previous experiences
2. Opinion on espionage against Russia organised by military attachés stationed other than Russia (all the military attachés agreed on the fact that America and Britain are spending large sums of money on espionage against Russia)
3. Opinion on continuity of the military attaché conference

1. Suzuki: The other Great Powers station military attachés in Riga, Finland [sic] (France had ceased the stationing of a military attaché in Finland). It is also possible for us to send a military attaché to Riga.

2. Among military attachés in the Soviet Union specialised in espionage, the Estonian military attaché has been the most successful. His success is based on the support of America and Britain.

3. Hashimoto: The Polish military attaché in Istanbul concentrated on espionage against the Soviet Union and was forced to return to Poland due to a protest by the Soviet Union. Suzuki - In Poland, it was reported that the Polish military attaché to Turkey (omitted)

4. Hashimoto: White Russian newspapers are the most useful in terms of espionage against the Soviet Union.

5. Maeda: I, being in Britain, enjoy the great benefit of acquiring Russian information [from the British intelligence service? – S.M.] . However, it is more beneficial to organise it by exchange (of information). I wish to receive (more) Russian information from Japan.

6. Suzuki: The situation is the same in Poland.

7. Yamashita: There have been several approaches from (the directions of) Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, but it is difficult to organise espionage if not by exchange of information. Also, I request an increase in staff (at the military attaché office) for the translation (of documents) to enable the exchange of information.

8. Yamashita: The headquarters of the Russian intelligence service in Europe left Vienna and is now in (has relocated to) Berlin and Paris. Since Russian ‘couriers’ [diplomatic couriers? – S.M.] in Eastern Europe purchase goods and returns (to Berlin and Paris),

9. ...Military attachés of [unreadable – S.M.] in Eastern Europe are not directly organising espionage on their own, but by indirect methods. The headquarters of the Communist Party is now in Istanbul and Odessa.

#### Continuation of opinions on espionage against Russia

10. Suzuki: Gathering information on Russian affairs through newspapers, especially those of émigré Russians, should require great care since the newspapers (of the émigré Russians) contain much false information and their propaganda. The most reliable source is the Soviet newspapers published inside the country, according to the Polish General Staff.

11. Suzuki: Information from Constantinople is mostly British propaganda.
12. Komatsubara: Latvian policy is always directed by Britain and Poland, and is subject to change from time to time, but it is worth utilising for our (Japanese) strategem.
13. Komatsubara: The liaison of intelligence from various attachés in Eastern Europe is important to verify each intelligence report. I hope the Central Department [Japanese Second Department in Tokyo – S.M.] will watch it more carefully.
14. Hashimoto: Trotsky has now arrived in Turkey, and 60 of his subordinates are to be driven out of the country, it is reported. They may be used for our (Japanese) espionage.
15. Hashimoto: Whenever a good spy is found in a country, would it not be profitable for us to buy reports from him by collecting money from all attachés?
16. Suzuki: Questions of sharing important points of espionage intelligence on Russia from Turkey, Poland and Vienna among the respective (attachés) is now being studied, it seems.
17. Komatsubara: Among foreign military attachés stationed in the Soviet Union, the Polish military attaché has been the most successful, the German second best, and then various countries like the military attaché of the Czech Republic. The Czech counterpart has been quite successful. Regarding military intelligence (inside the Soviet Union), the Polish military attaché is the best, together with the Estonian counterpart.
18. Komatsubara: Much of the espionage intelligence on Russia from Austria is unreliable. It should be treated with caution.
19. There shall at least be one conference of attachés of the respective countries in each calendar year, and it is also important that an influential man be sent from the Central Department [the Second Department in Tokyo – S.M.], and it is preferable that it takes place in May or June and be pre-arranged (all attachés agreed on this opinion).

**Evidence 4. Original Texts of the Plan of 1932 (October 1932)**

## Reference:

- 1) Affidavit No.2409 (in Japanese), GHQ/SCAP Records, International Prosecution Section, Entry No. 327 Court Exhibits in English and Japanese, IPS, 1945-47.  
<http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/10278948> (Access Date and Time: 28 February 2019, 13:35PM)
- 2) Affidavit No.2409 (in English), GHQ/SCAP Records, International Prosecution Section, Entry No.327 Court Exhibits in English and Japanese, IPS, 1945-47.  
<http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/10271922> (Access Date and Time: 28 February 2019, 14:49PM)

N.B. (Masunaga): The original affidavit of Torashiro Kawabe was in Japanese, likely translated into English by the International Prosecution Section. Some phrases in the English version were very old-fashioned, which might cause confusion for readers today, and be less inconsistent with the Japanese version. Thus, the author combined both versions and revised some phrases which were inconsistent, but prioritised the Japanese version since the original text of the 1932 Plan was in Japanese.

**“Instruction regarding Stratagem Plans”**

**(Bouryaku-Keikaku ni Kansuru Shiji 「謀略計画に関する指示」)**

From: Jinzaburo Masaki - Vice Chief of Staff  
Attn.: Torashiro Kawabe – Military Attaché to the Soviet Union

5 October 1932

1. You will receive delegated orders from the Japanese military attaché in France and take charge of the execution of the stratagem.
2. You will read the instructions for the stratagem given to Lieutenant Colonel Dobashi [Yuitsu Dobashi – S.M.], Japanese military attaché to France.
3. Contact Lieutenant Colonel Dobashi in order to enable Major Kawamata [Taketo Kawamata, military attaché to Latvia – S.M.] to review the instruction in Warsaw and let Dobashi know the date when Kawamata comes to Warsaw.

**“Instruction regarding Stratagem Plans for the Military Attaché to France”**

**(Bouryaku-Keikaku ni Kanshi Futsu-Koku Zaikin Teikoku Taishikan-tsuki Bukan ni Ataetaru Shiji 「謀略計画に関し、仏国在勤帝国大使館附武官に与える指示」)**

From: Prince Kan'in Kotohito (Kotohito-Shinou) – Chief of Staff  
Attn.: Heijyuro Kasai – Military Attaché to France

8 October 1932

1. Regarding the stratagem, the Japanese military attaché in France will be given delegated command of the organs (agencies) in Europe and Turkey.
2. The military attaché to France will formulate the necessary plans and report them by 10 April 1933 based on the attached ‘Policy for planning Stratagem’.

3. The military attaché to France must report [the amount and details of – S.M.] the necessary expenses together with the aforementioned plans.

**“Confidential: Policy for Planning Stratagems”**  
**(Gunki: Bouryaku-Keikaku Yoryo 「軍機：謀略計画要領」)**

Copy for Torashiro Kawabe

(No.1. War against the Soviet Union)

1. Advertise the facts regarding the spread of Communism by the Soviet Union and the Third Inter (N.B.: ‘Third International’, to be precise) in the Far East starting from peace time and the Japanese political stance [resistance? – S.M.] on their attempts.

2. In order to destroy the Soviet ability to continue war as soon as possible, implement the objectives below:

2-1. Support the independence movements of Ukraine, Georgia and Azerbaijan and disturb these areas

2-2. Establish contacts with comrades inside the Soviet Union through émigré Russian organisations to organise riots and promote pacifism [defeatism?] as well as attempting to topple the Soviet regimes.

3. If friendly relations with France, Poland, the Little Entente countries [Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia], the Baltic States, and Turkey are strengthened, these countries will enforce the measures in the aforementioned article, and will inevitably accord facilities in the enforcement of our stratagem.

(No.2. War against China)

4. Spread propaganda about traditional Chinese brutality and the secret activities of the Chinese Communist Party in order to justify the protection of (Japanese) vested interests (in China) by force.

5. If necessary, implement Provision 2 to prevent Soviet military intervention.

(No.3. War against the United States)

6. Apply Provision 5 correspondently.

(No.4. Supplementary Clauses)

7. When a strong possibility of war is confirmed, expand the intelligence organs in Europe and Turkey according to the attached list.

8. Implementation and preparations for this plan, except for Provisions 1 and 4, will not be stopped unless otherwise instructed.

**Distribution Plan for Intelligence Organs (to be enforced in case of war)**

Middle Management	Military Attache to France (Paris)			
	Locations	War against the Soviet Union	War against China	War against the United States
Britain	London	1 (British)		1 (American)
France	Paris	1 (Russian), 2 (French)	1 (Chinese)	1 (American)
Italy	Rome			
Germany	Berlin	1 (Russian)		
Czechoslovakia		1 (German)		
Austria	Vienna	1 (German)		
Finland	Helsinki	1 (German)		
Estonia	Tallinn	1 (Russian)		
Latvia	Riga			
Lithuania	Kaunas	1 (Russian)		
Poland	Warsaw	1 (Russian), 1 (German or French)		
Romania	Bucharest	1 (French)		
Soviet Union	Moscow			
Turkey	Istanbul or Ankara	1 (Russian)		
Iran Organ	Tehran	1 (Russian)		
Afghanistan	Kabul	1 (British)		

Note: Brackets indicates each person's specialities on foreign affairs

Shingo Masunaga

**Written Oath by Torashiro Kawabe**

I hereby admit that this is a photocopy of the original manuscript of the plan for stratagems. This stratagem plan was issued by Prince Kan'in Kotohito (Kotohito-Shinnou), Chief of Staff, on 8 October 1932.

The copy was created in Moscow [Japanese military attaché office in Moscow – S.M.] by my assistant officer Yamaoka. On the first page is my signature from 1932.

4 September 1946

Torashiro Kawabe



**Evidence 5.** Request of Major Akio Doi regarding joint administration of Estonia by the Japanese Army's military attaché to Latvia (8 April 1936) and Minutes of Meeting at the Japanese Foreign Ministry concerning the joint administration of Estonia and Lithuania by and stationing of either independent Envoy or Charge d'affaires to Latvia (21 November 1934)

Reference:

JACAR, B14090839400.

[https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp/aj/meta/image\\_B14090839400?IS\\_KEY\\_S1=B14090839400&IS\\_KIND=SimpleSummary&IS\\_STYLE=default&IS\\_TAG\\_S1=InD&](https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp/aj/meta/image_B14090839400?IS_KEY_S1=B14090839400&IS_KIND=SimpleSummary&IS_STYLE=default&IS_TAG_S1=InD&) (Access Date and Time: 21 June 2019, 22:38PM)

### **Request to enable rapid joint administration of Estonia by the military attaché to Latvia**

Submitted by Major Akio Doi

There is no need for extra words on the joint administration of Estonia by the military attaché to Latvia, but it should be implemented as soon as possible for the following reasons:

1. The Soviet information on the Estonian General Staff is mostly accurate and none of the Soviet information from its neighbours would be comparable (in terms of the accuracy). Also, the Estonian military forces show pro-Japanese tendencies and there have been exchanges of information based on their hospitality. However, recently, they (Estonians) have been hesitating to exchange Soviet information because: 1) there is no Japanese military attaché stationed in Estonia and they (Estonians) are losing face in the bilateral diplomatic relations. Thus, we should jointly administer Estonia with the military attaché to Latvia as soon as possible and make communication (with the Estonians) tight. In general, collection of the Soviet information (by the Japanese Army) is getting difficult and the joint administration will benefit (Japanese Army).
2. The joint administration of Estonia will only be nominal, hence there is no need for an extra budget, which can be easily resolved through office procedures.

### **Minutes of Meeting at the Japanese Foreign Ministry concerning the joint administration of Estonia and Lithuania by and the stationing of either an independent Envoy or Chargé d'affaires to Latvia (21 November 1934)**

1. This issue had been conventional and the Foreign Ministry decided to station an independent envoy (in Latvia) and the joint administration (of Estonia and Lithuania by the envoy) as the first priority solution, and requested the budgets concerned to be included in next year's fiscal plan to the Finance Ministry. This was, however, rejected.
2. Regarding the issue, according to the reports of Chargé d'affaires Sakuma to Latvia (20 November 1934) and military attaché Ouchi to Latvia to the General Staff, it was found that, ever since the stationing of our (Japanese) military attaché in Finland this spring, the attitude of the Estonian military forces toward our (Japanese) officers stationed in Estonia (N.b. probably the student officers of the Japanese Army detached to Estonia, to be precise Captain Toshio Nishimura) began to change.

The Estonians refused to provide conveniences for foreign military officers stationed in Estonia whose countries do not station either an envoy or military attaché in Estonia. For Captain Nishimura, our current military officer stationed in Estonia, the Estonians refused to allow him to study with the local military unit and, this spring, military attaché Ouchi was promised to be invited for autumn manoeuvres (of the Estonian military forces), but never received an invitation. In comparison with the facts, Aviation Captain Shimanuki (of the Japanese Army) who studied with the Estonian Air Force was well accommodated and even received a decoration, and Ouchi received an invitation from the Estonian President for Estonian Independence Day celebrations. There has been a significant change (in the attitude of the Estonians).

3. The change of Estonian attitude was, according to the report of Ouchi, caused by a ‘face-saving compromise’ by the Estonians [Estonian policy which refuses to provide conveniences for foreign diplomats or military attachés/officers who are not officially accredited to Estonia – S.M.]. Meanwhile, according to a report by Sakuma, it is not only by compromise, but also either by Soviet (diplomatic) pressure or Estonian appeasement toward the Soviet Union. If the change in Estonian attitude was caused by its (Estonian) relations with the Soviet Union, (it shall be considerable to) jointly administer Estonia by either envoy or chargé d'affaires to Latvia and station a military attaché in Estonia. However, in case of a study programme for Japanese military officers in Estonia [‘Taitzuki’ 隊附 in Japanese – S.M.], the negotiations (with the Estonians) will not go smoothly, but if the Army definitely needs to send officers to the programme, they (the Japanese Army) should acquire permission and a guarantee (from the Estonians) in advance.

4. As far as referring to the report of Ouchi, the change of Estonian attitude was doubtlessly caused by the Estonian face-saving compromise. For that reason, it goes without saying that Ouchi (or his successor) should be accredited as a military attaché to Estonia to enable Estonia to be used for propaganda, intelligence and stratagem. Also, from the perspective of the Foreign Ministry (Japanese Foreign Ministry), Japan has concluded a trade agreement with Estonia this year and, regarding Lithuania, the (territorial) problems of Memel and Wilno both directly and indirectly concern Japan. Thus, it is beneficial (for Japan) to enter negotiations for accrediting envoys to the two countries (Estonia and Lithuania) soon.

5. In order to...as soon as possible...among two plans....

Plan No.1 – Independent envoy to Estonia or the joint administration of Estonia.

The budgets required will be disbursed by extraordinary disbursement from the (Foreign) Ministerial budget based on the cases of establishment of Legations in America and Portugal.

Plan No.2 – (omitted)

On the other hand, the change in Estonian attitude may be linked to the demotion of General Jonson [Gustav Jonson – S.M.], Commander of the Tallinn Garrison who had been showing a friendly attitude toward the Japanese Army and is known as an anti-Soviet person. Also, the upheaval of the political movement caused by the Independence War veterans [Vaps Movement – S.M.] and the following demotions of high-ranking Estonian officials may be linked to the change in Estonian attitude...

**Evidence 6.** Telegram from the Japanese military attaché in Latvia (Major Makoto Onodera) to the General Staff in Tokyo. (20 June 1936)

Reference: JACAR, B14090839400.

Confidential

20 June 1936

Attn.: Vice Chief of Staff

From: Military Attaché of the Legation (Japanese Legation) in Latvia

The information about the visit of the Chiefs of the Baltic General Staffs to the Soviet Union on May Day was already reported in a handwritten report, but recently I have heard of the report of Reek (N.B.: Nikolai Reek) to the Estonian government.

Information from Reek

At the meeting with high-ranking officials of the Soviet military in Moscow, I (Reek) was asked for my opinion of the Eastern Pact (Reek answered). Since Estonia is a small but sovereign state, I strongly believe that no matter how the reactions of Latvia and Lithuania are, Estonia should find the best way for itself.

I am merely a military officer, thus should not intervene in politics. However, there is no conflict between Estonia and the Soviet Union and the bilateral non-aggression pact is valid. Thus, I answered that there is also no need for the Ostpakt ['Eastern Pact' in German – S.M.] for Estonia. With regard to the military conditions of the Soviet Union, their efforts are enormous, yet it is merely a deception. For example, at least four bombers, two of which were the latest model, crashed during the May Day parade.

And, the majority of important parts for cars and aircraft (of the Soviet military) are imported from overseas, and (the Soviet) cadres do not trust domestically made parts. To sum up, the reality of the Soviet military forces is pitiful and, along with the fact the Soviet Union has an exceptionally long borders, I assume that the Soviet Union is 'no threat' to Estonia.

**Evidence 7.** Report of E.K. officer J.S. regarding his meeting with Major Yoshide Kato, Japanese military attaché to Finland. (15 January 1937)

Reference: Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto), M36. 3134.

**(Page 1)**

Major Kato arrived at the office at 15:00. He thanked staff for a private message about the Russian émigrés. Kato stated that he is of the same opinion that the émigrés are not trustworthy, according to his own previous experience in Manchukuo. There are about 4,000-5,000 émigrés in that region and, because so many are unemployed, it is easy for Bolshevik agents to lure them into their service.

**(Page 2)**

In the region of Hailar, there are about 5,000 Bolshevik agents among the émigrés. Kato asked if, in case of war between Finland and Russia, the émigrés would move to the (Bolshevik) side? I answered that it is possible. Among the émigrés, there are trustworthy people, but in general, all the émigré organisations are infested with Bolshevik agents. I asked if there was anything in the PM which required further explanations or was there anything about which he had a different opinion. Kato asked about the meaning of "Trust" mentioned in the PM.

**(Page 3)**

I explained the origin and history of the "Trust" and its activities and mentioned that the Bolsheviks themselves had eventually disclosed the organization and told how they had misled the world (to be precise, "led the world by the nose"). Kato asked what the E.K. thought about the Ukrainian freedom movement. I answered that they are so few in Finland that there is no danger from their side, but that the Bolsheviks naturally have also infiltrated their organisations. I also mentioned that the money distributed to them by certain German organisations will be of no use. Kato also asked about our impression of the Prometheus Movement. I answered that, according to E.K., the importance of this movement in the active struggle against the Bolsheviks was small. A few years ago, there was more talk about this organisation, but now it is of no importance.

**(Page 4)**

I asked if the Major had succeeded in establishing good connections to this organisation or what might be the reason for his interest - Kato only smiled and did not pursue this matter further or explain the reason for his interest.

Further, Kato asked about the purpose of the recent visit of (Finnish) Minister Holsti [Rudolf Hoslti – S.M.] to Moscow. I answered that E.K. does not indulge in politics, nor makes any guesses. Some think that the timing of the visit was ill-chosen, so close to the famous speech of Zhdanov. But, generally, there is a feeling in the country that the visit as such was useful because we also like to be in a good neighbourly relationship with Russia, and the chiefs of staff of the Baltic countries have also visited Moscow.

**(Page 5)**

We also gave air to the recent happenings in China. From this subject we moved to General Araki [Sadao Araki – S.M.] - I mentioned that he has a close friend in Finland from the latest war - General Dobrowolsky [Severin Dobrovolski – S.M.], a Fascist and the editor of the strongly anti-Bolshevist paper 'Klitsch'. Kato seemed to know the paper and supposed that nowadays it is published in Berlin, and he asked where Dobrowolsky lives - I corrected Berlin to Brussels. I told him that the paper, due to its excessively radical standpoint was forbidden to continue being published in Finland but, as we had nothing against the man himself, he continues to live in Viipuri (Vyborg). Kato said that he had sent a question to Colonel Terada [Seiichi Terada – S.M.] about Consul 'Drek' [Drak? – S.M.].

**(Page 6)**

The answer has not yet arrived. He hoped at the same time to receive a review of the Communist movement in Japan, which he will deliver to E.K. I told him that E.K. could reciprocally make a similar 1936 study about the Communist movement in Finland available to Major Kato. The trip by the new Minister of Japan from Germany to Finland has been delayed. He will probably arrive only in the next month. No new location for the Legation has so far been found.

Kato left around 15:45.

15 January 1937, written by J.S.

**Evidence 8.** Report of the visit of the American diplomats to VALPO headquarters in Helsinki. (29 January 1937)

Reference: Finish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto), M36.3134.

29 January 1937 – American Consul Higgs and Vice-Consul Gray visited me. They had no particular issues. They asked who might be the next President (of Finland). I told him that, as it now looks, Svinhufvud will probably win. Higgs, who had previously been stationed in Japan, then asked if the Japanese have been active in Finland.

He told about a Japanese officer who was very clumsy in organising an espionage operation in ??? [the letters were unclear and could not be identified – S.M.]. The Japanese officer had hidden miniature cameras in his prism binoculars and photographed ships and fortifications along the coastline of Anchorage, etc. The police arrested him, took the binocular away and he was deported. Higgs and Gray said that the Japanese are rather childish but are good at imitating. They are undeservedly held in high regard in Europe. I told him that the opinion of them [Japanese intelligence capability – S.M.] is not high.

Written by Auli.

**Evidence 9.** Telegram from Lieutenant Colonel Makoto Onodera, reporting the Purge of ethnic Latvian officers among the Red Army. (12<sup>th</sup> December 1937)

Reference: JACAR, C01004397400.

Confidential

13 December 1937

Telegram No.141

Attn.: Vice Chief of Staff

From: Military Attaché of the Legation (Japanese Legation) in Latvia

1. According to an informant, General Aratonis [Yakov Alksnis – S.M.], Chief of Staff of the Soviet Air Force, and Lieutenant General Bokis [Jukums Vācietis – S.M.], commander of the Soviet armoured unit, became subject to the Purge, ‘Chistka’ [‘Чистка’ – meaning ‘Purge’ in Russian – S.M.], and were also retrieved from their positions. Both Soviet Generals were ethnic Latvians, and A [Alksnis] was nominated by Cangirijos and B [Vācietis] was by Hinsk as candidates for the Supreme Soviet, but the (accused) Generals were eliminated from the list of candidates.

2. Ethnic Latvians among the Soviet nationals have continuously been victims of the Purge. ‘Sojiumeisink’ brothers, Peters (former Military Attaché to China), Liepin (Liepins in Latvian) were such cases. Link, current Soviet Military Attaché to Japan, and his wife are thought to be ethnic Latvians, yet I have no confidence about it.

**Evidence 10.** Letter from Vasil Petrovich Balykov to Kurt Martti Wallenius. (26 January 1938)

Reference: Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto), C10.6K.

**(Page 1)**

Tokyo, 26 January 1938.

Your Excellency,

It is my honour to direct to you a letter from Mr Sugihara [Chiune Sugihara in Helsinki – S.M.], whom we discussed in a private meeting. In this letter, I am introducing you to my friend. I assume that getting to know him will not only be pleasant for you, but also highly beneficial, as a great source of materials, which can turn out to be very important for your book.

I would be delighted, if the information material enclosed (with this letter), very important for Russian emigrants in Europe who are often deceived by such articles as the one placed today in “the Advertiser”, having a highly perverse opinion on Russian brothers in the Far East, will be useful to you for publishing in the Russian newspapers of Riga, as well as every press establishment under your representation, if, of course, it is of interest to them.

Vasil Petrovich Balykov (signature)



**Evidence 11.** Organisations of the Baltic and Finnish Intelligence Services, summed up by the Soviet NKVD branch in Latvia. (February 1938)

Reference: Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv), ERAF138sm.1.56.

N.B.: ‘The Second and Fourth Departments of the Finnish General Staff’ probably meant the Foreign Section and the Statistics Section. ‘Reconnaissance Points’ were likely hubs for secret activities such as infiltration of agents into the Soviet Union. – S.M.

**Finland**

Second and Fourth Departments of the General Staff

Intelligence Divisions: 1 and 2 (located in Vyborg and Helsinki)

Reconnaissance Points: Kuhmoniemi, Lieksa, Suojärvi, Serdopol, Salmi, Rautu, Yalkolovo

And, a whole network of Finnish nationalist societies:

“Academic Karelian Society” (K.A.O.)

“Ingermanland Union” (Helsinki)

“Ingermanland Refugee Committee” (Vyborg)

**Latvia**

Second Department of the General Staff

Reconnaissance Points: Ritupe, Zilupe, Pokrovsky, Polshchina

Along the Soviet-Latvian border

**Estonia**

Second Department of the General Staff

Intelligence Divisions: 1 and 2 (located in Tallinn, Rakvere, Tartu)

Reconnaissance Points: Narva-Jõesuu, Narva, Mustvee, Irboska (Izborsk)

**Evidence 12.** Outlines of Intelligence Activities against the Soviet Union, written by the Japanese Second Department (21 June 1938)

Reference: JACAR, B02030538400

[https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp/aj/meta/image\\_B02030538400?IS\\_KEY\\_S1=%E5%AF%BE%E3%82%BD%E5%B7%A5%E4%BD%9C&IS\\_KIND=SimpleSummary&IS\\_STYLE=default&IS\\_TAG\\_S1=InD&](https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp/aj/meta/image_B02030538400?IS_KEY_S1=%E5%AF%BE%E3%82%BD%E5%B7%A5%E4%BD%9C&IS_KIND=SimpleSummary&IS_STYLE=default&IS_TAG_S1=InD&) (Access Date and Time: 13 May 2020, 21:02PM)

Top Secret

**Outline of Intelligence Activities against the Soviet Union (Draft)**

Written by the 5th Section [Russia Section of the Second Department of the Japanese General Staff – S.M.]

21 June 1938

**1. Objective**

We will implement the following activities in order to prevent the intervention of the Soviet Union in the ongoing conflict [The Second Sino-Japanese War – S.M.].

**2. Outline**

2.1. Maintain or strengthen (Japanese) military strength against the Soviet Union and promote a hard-line policy against the Soviet Union among the Japanese populace.

2.2. Through the methods of the stratagem, disturb the Soviet military forces from inside.

2.3. Promote unlawful acts and the vulnerabilities of the Soviet Union to Britain, France and the United States in order to ruin international trust in the Soviet union.

2.4. Implement the international encirclement of the Soviet Union by strengthening the Anti-Comintern Pact (between Germany, Italy and Japan) and the involvements of Britain, France and the United States.

2.5. For direct diplomatic negotiations with the Soviet Union, terminate the possibility of Soviet military intervention [with the Second Sino-Japanese War] and the Soviet plan to support China by showing a determined attitude [of the Japanese].

Top Secret

**Stratagem against the Soviet Union**

[the author and the written date were missing on this document. Likely the 5<sup>th</sup> Section. – S.M.]

**Objective**

The following stratagem will be implemented to deter aggressive Soviet actions against Japan.

**Outline**

1. Force the Soviet Union to lose confidence in aggressive actions against Japan by disturbing the country [Soviet Union – S.M.] from inside.
2. Make it difficult for the Soviet Union to cooperate with the other Great Powers by causing a loss of international confidence in it.

Shingo Masunaga

**Evidence 13.** Letter of Heinrich Himmler (31 January 1939)

Reference: 1) Office of United States Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality. Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Volume IV. United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1946, p.852.

**File Memorandum**

Today I visited General Oshima (Hiroshi Oshima). The conversation encompassed the following subjects:

1. The Führer's speech, which pleased him very much, especially because it had been spiritually warranted in all its features.
2. We discussed the conclusion of a treaty to consolidate the triangle Germany/Italy/Japan into an even firmer mould. He (Oshima) also told me that, together with German counter-espionage (Abwehr), he was undertaking long-range projects aimed at the disintegration of Russia and emanating from the Caucasus and Ukraine. However, this organisation was to become effective only in case of war.
3. Furthermore he had succeeded up to now in sending 10 Russians with bombs across the Caucasian frontier. These Russians had the mission to kill Stalin. A number of additional Russians, whom he had also sent across, were shot at the frontier.
4. We then discussed the Mohammedan movement. He told me that a Japanese officer had worked in Afghanistan, but had been expelled later because of suspicion that he was attempting to overthrow the Afghan government. I told him that I had a police officer there and that the two could very well collaborate once he again had someone there.
5. He told me confidentially that he had bought a piece of real estate in Falkensee under the name of a middleman. Six Russians were employed there, writing and printing leaflets, which were flown into Russia from Poland in small balloons, when the wind was favourable. He had reports and proof from Russia that they had arrived in good condition and that they were obviously being passed around the people very diligently.
6. He had also bought a motor boat in order to bring leaflets from Roumania (Romania) to the Crimea over the Black Sea. This, however, failed in the autumn, but he would repeat it once more in summer.

Berlin, 31 January 1939

The Reichsfuehrer – SS: (signed) H. Himmler

**Suspicious Document 1.** VALPO report about the Japanese Intelligence (28 February 1939)

Reference: Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto), 3292.148.

Intelligence of the Japanese.

‘Sven Johansson’ wrote in a letter of 6 February 1939 among other things: My informants are very unproductive. So far no positive results. Now, Sugihara (Chiune Sugihara) demands that they [Sven Jansson’s informants – S.M.] inform the names of those who are arriving from Russia. He has a Finnish person with a press card whom he should send, so to speak, to interview them (the people arriving from the Soviet Union). I do not yet know the name of the person.

25 February 1939 – ‘Sven Johansson’ who, now for some reason, would like to change his codename to ‘Vermala’ – at least in telephone conversations, met with me to discuss the matter. I informed him that, because the Japanese issues of Vermala had not been of any use to the VP [Valtiollinen Poliisi, VALPO – S.M.], but it seems obvious that, in the longer run, they may create a small scandal, it is best for him to leave them. V (Vermala) said that he himself had come to the same conclusion. He received from Sugihara altogether 600 Markka, 200 of which has been paid to Mrs ‘Abielikärinen’ in the Grand Hotel, 200 to Abantynoff at the Hotel Seurahuone and another 200 he kept for himself. He said that he would like to give his part to somebody else, but the intended helpers at the Hotel Kämp and the Hotel Tornio have not been able to accomplish anything. Vermala had told Sugihara that he wondered what the point was, and said that, in his opinion, it should be maintained so that in case of war there would be lines ready. Sugihara had only laughed.

According to Vermala, if he himself quit, the Japanese would continue anyway with their intelligence activities and then with somebody the VP would not know. He said that he had come to the conclusion that Japanese are, in general, quite stupid people. Vermala may be right in this insofar as there seems to be no reason in the VP to act like children in a nursery. They can use the Schichmans instead. Saburo Ura has now got official duty at the Japanese Embassy.

**Evidence 14.** VALPO report on communication with Chiune Sugihara regarding the outlook of Hjalmar Front. (24 May 1939)

Reference: Finnish National Archive (Kansallisarkisto), M36.3134.

24 May 1939 –

With regard to our question concerning Hjalmar Front, (Japanese) Attaché Sugihara reported that he had got the answer from the place in question that Front has a scar on his face and on the back of his head, meaning that the identification is right.

At this moment, he does not know anything about his brother [Brother of Hjalmar Front – S.M.] because they have not been in letter contact for many years. At this moment, Front himself is in Manchukuo. There is no mention about his return to Finland.

**Evidence 15.** Interrogation record of Rudolf Velling, former deputy head of the Section C of the Estonian Second Department. (16 September 1940)

Reference: Estonian National Archive (Eesti Rahvusarhiiv), ERAF138sm.1.12.

**Interrogation Protocol**

Accused Person: Velling Rudolf Augustinovich

Date: 16 September 1940

**Q: Tell us about the intelligence operations of Japanese intelligence services against the USSR.**

A: At the beginning of 1938, Japanese military attaché Onodera started visiting the office of Major Kristian [Major Aksel Kristian – S.M.] – the head of Section C of the Second Department of Estonian General Staff, and they were having a chat. I am not familiar with the contents of the conversations between Kristian and Onodera as I was not present during them.

**Q: Are you acquainted with Onodera?**

A: Yes, I know Onodera from the end of 1937. I first met Japanese military attaché Onodera at the office of Kurgvel [Captain Aleks Kurgvel – S.M.] – who was in charge of Section A of the Second Department of the Estonian General Staff. I remember that once, when I entered Kurgvel's office, I saw a Japanese man, to whom I was introduced, then as a Japanese military attaché. It was at the end of 1937 when I became acquainted with Onodera.

**Q: How did your relations with Onodera develop further?**

A: At the beginning of 1938, when Japanese attaché Onodera was leaving Estonia, he organised a banquet at the hotel "Kuld Lovi" – Golden Lion. I was also one of those invited.

**Q: What conversations did you have at that banquet?**

A: I don't remember the contents of the conversations that we had back then at the banquet.

**Q: Who attended the banquet?**

A: There were: General Reek [Estonian Chief of the General Staff – S.M.], General Brede, Colonel Maasing [Head of the Estonian Second department – S.M.], Colonel Saarsen [Estonian military attaché to Latvia – S.M.], Major Kristian, Captain Kurgvel, Major Brede, Onodera and me.

**Q: What did you do back then at the Second Department of the Estonian General Staff?**

A: I was serving as a trainee in Section C of the Second Department of the Estonian General Staff. [Rudolf Velling was actually Deputy Head of Section C – S.M.]

**Q: How would you then explain that, while (only) a trainee, you were still invited to the banquet organised by Japanese military attaché Onodera?**

A: To this day, I do not know why, from amongst all the great commanders, I was the one invited.

**Q: What intelligence on the Soviet military forces were you collecting for Onodera?**

A: I did not give any information on the Soviet military forces to Onodera.

**Q: Have you received any gifts from Onodera?**

A: Yes, I received a piece of silk fabric to make a dress for my wife, and it was at the beginning of 1938. I received no other gifts from Onodera.

**Q: What did you receive this gift from Japanese military attaché Onodera for?**

A: I cannot answer this question as I do not myself know why Onodera gave me this piece of silk fabric.

**Q: Have you received any other gifts from Japanese military attachés?**

A: Yes, I have. At the beginning and end of 1938 I received the following presents from the aide to Japanese military attaché Shimanuki [Major Takeharu Shimanuki – Japanese assistance military attaché to Latvia residing in Tallinn]: a wooden racket for a game with two balls, a wooden toy depicting a Japanese woman inside.

Shimanuki made these presents for me when he was leaving Estonia for Japan and closing up [Liquidated - S.M.] his apartment. In addition to these, in 1938 I received the following from military attaché Takatsuki: one pearl, a vase made in Japan, and a piece of silk fabric to make a shirt for my uniform. In 1939, new Japanese attaché Onouchi gave me one lighter and a piece of silk fabric for a shirt. I would also add that such presents, but significantly more valuable ones, were received by: Captain Kristian and Major Brede. What were they receiving these gifts for is beyond my knowledge.

**Q: What intelligence on the Red Army did you share with Japanese spies?**

A: At the beginning of 1939 in the office of Major Kristian and under his orders, Japanese military attaché Onouchi and I were matching locations of WRPA[sic] military units and formations in the Far East. Onouchi shared intelligence on the Red Army in the Far East, and I, in turn, shared some information on WRPA[sic], which was available in the locations of WRPA[sic], compiled by Section C of the Second Department of the Estonian General Staff.

**Q: How and with what else did you help Japanese intelligence?**

A: At the end of May 1938, Major Kristian summoned me to his office, and told me to head immediately towards the central station in Tallinn, and to hand a bag to Gavrilov. Kristian then told me that Gavrilov was at the station, dressed in a light coloured raincoat, wearing a blue cap and was waiting for the package. From this conversation with Major Kristian, I got to know that Gavrilov was in charge of a diversion group preparing to move into USSR territory. At the end of July 1938, Japanese military attaché Takatsuki visited me during my service and asked why Kristian had not yet deployed the Gavrilov diversion group to the USSR. I answered that I would pass this information to Major Kristian. Then, Takatsuki told me that the Gavrilov group had to be immediately deployed to the USSR to conduct a special mission and that was the end of the conversation with Takatsuki. After this conversation, I understood that Japanese intelligence was controlling the diversion group of Gavrilov to deploy it to the USSR.



**Q: Did you complete the task given by Takatsuki?**

A: Yes, I passed Major Kristian the request Takatsuki had given me. Moreover, I made fake Soviet passports for the agents of the Gavrilov group, and then Kristian made arrangements with Puusepp for the deployment of the group into the USSR, then this was done...

**Q: Therefore you were acting against the USSR, taking directions from Japanese intelligence officers. Do you agree with this statement?**

A: Yes, I was obeying orders given by intelligence officer Takatsuki, but Major Kristian was helping Japanese intelligence services to a much greater degree, and he was the one who deployed the Gavrilov diversion group across the border to the USSR.

Interrogation completed.

Interrogation /over/ lasted from 10.30 to 15.00.

I acknowledge that I have read the testimony, and it has been compiled correctly from my words.

R. Velling.

Interrogator: SUHANOV (Lieutenant of the Home Security Office)

**Evidence 16.** Interrogation Record of Hiroshi Oshima (5 March 1946)

Reference: 1) Affidavit No.488, GHQ/SCAP Records, International Prosecution Section, Entry No.327  
Court Exhibits in English and Japanese, IPS, 1945-47. <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/10274286>  
(Access Date and Time: 28 February 2019, 15:38PM)

Question: “Can you talk about how this agreement [either the Canaris-Oshima Agreement of 1937 or the Oshima-Keitel Agreement of 1938 – S.M.] was concluded? Who made the proposal? Who were in charge of the negotiation?”

Answer: “Even before, the Japanese Army had been collecting Soviet information through émigré Russians in Warsaw. Then, after the conclusion of the Anti-Comintern Pact (of 1936), the Russian Section of (the Second Department of) the Japanese General Staff thought it necessary to promote the exchange of Soviet information (with Germany). I (Oshima) was ordered by the General Staff to negotiate with the Germans and obeyed the order. The actual exchange of information was carried out by my subordinate, Lieutenant Colonel Usui (Shigeki Usui).”

Question: “Whom did you approach regarding the implementation of the order?”

Answer: “I made a proposal to Keitel (Wilhelm Keitel), who was then a Lieutenant General.”

Question: “After the negotiation (with Keitel) was successful and the agreement was concluded, what kind of organisation did you create to implement the plans?”

Answer: “Back then, there were a number of émigré Russians in Berlin who were eager to sell information. Therefore, I easily made the decision to buy their information. Among them, an émigré Russian from the Caucasus called ‘Bammard’ (Haider Bammat) was our priority source of the information.”

Question: “If that is so, all the (espionage) activities were directed by your military attaché office in Berlin. Is that right?”

Answer: “Yes. Except for the activities of Usui, however. He was my subordinate, but he was organising similar activities more independently.”

Question: “Wasn’t Usui under your command?”

Answer: “Yes. But, his job was to collect the (Soviet) information and report it to the Russian Section of the General Staff.”

Question: “This information and notifications (Usui collected) must have been sent by you, the military attaché (to Germany).”

Answer: “They were sent via my office.”

Question: “Did you own any assets in Germany back then?”

Answer: “No.”

Question: “Have you ever owned either a land or a house in Falkensee?”

Answer: “Now I understand what you are asking me. I was in charge of the negotiation to purchase somewhere to be used for anti-Soviet propaganda. I remember it (the purchase) was not made in my name, but we did use to own it.”

Question: “That asset did not belong to you officially, but did you use it without acknowledgement (of the actual owner)?”

Answer: “As I previously mentioned, the asset was not purchased in my name. The money (to purchase the asset) was given by my military attaché office.”

Question: “What kind of work did you organise there (in Falkensee)?”

Answer: “In the asset, we printed propaganda documents.”

Question: “But we know that you had hired a number of émigré Russians to print the propaganda leaflets there (in Falkensee). Please tell us how you used the leaflets.”

Answer: “The leaflets were provided to Bammard (Bammat). He smuggled the leaflets into the Soviet Union by various ways.”

Question: “General, do you know anything about a Japanese military officer who worked in Afghanistan?”

Answer: “Yes, I do.”

Question: “Was that military officer declared ‘persona non grata’ (by the Afghanistan government) for attempting to topple the government of Afghanistan?”

Answer: “I believe that the Japanese military officer was a close friend of the Afghan guards’ [Border guards? – S.M.] commander. He may have attempted to use the commander to organise anti-Soviet activities. That commander informed the Afghan government (about the plot) before the guards began conducting an investigation, and he advised (the Afghan government) to deport the Japanese military officer.”

Question: “Didn’t the military officer work under your orders or was he detached (to Afghanistan) from your military attaché office?”

Answer: “No. I did not have any connection with the military officer.”

Question: “But, after the military officer was deported (from Afghanistan), you planned to send a successor for him.”

Answer: “No.”

Shingo Masunaga

**Evidence 17.** Official Letter from the Archives of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB) to Shingo Masunaga, denying the existence of documents concerning the Gavrilov group. (15 October 2019)

Экз. № 1

ФЕДЕРАЛЬНАЯ  
СЛУЖБА БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ  
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ  
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15.10.2019 № 10/А/ 4439

Ваше обращение от 13 сентября 2019 года рассмотрено.

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Заместитель начальника архива



Н.А. Иванов