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HEADQUARTERS
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(PACIFIC)
APO #234
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INTERROGATION NO. 480

PLACE
DATE

TOKYO, JAPAN
28 Nov. 1945.

DIVISION OF ORIGIN Morale

SUBJECT: Morale.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Mr. Sasaki, Yoshinoga, corporation lawyer.

WHERE INTERVIEWED: 28 Nov. 1945

INTERROGATOR: Capt. M. Kleinman.

INTERPRETER: Mr. Colton.

ALLIED OFFICERS PRESENT: none.

SUMMARY:

1. There must be radical changes made in Japanese law system to conform with ideas of Military Occupation.
2. Police control over people was too oppressive.
3. There should be a complete overhaul of the police system.
4. Former gendormerie may filter into the police system.
5. Does not expect any extreme movements in the country.
6. Sharp decline in livelihood of people during the war.
7. Translation difficulties caused most outstanding changes during the war.
8. Among the higher strata there was a lack of confidence in Japanese leadership during the war.

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Interview with SASAKI, Yoshinaga, Corporation Lawyer, Age 48. Graduated from Tokyo Central University in 1923. Has been practicing law since that time. He has been associated with Dr. Horiye, well known Japanese lawyer; is a leading lawyer; and is Secretary of the Lawyers' Association.

Present at Interview: Capt. Max Kleiman, Mr. Colton and Mr. Wickham.

Q. Are there any special legal changes that should come about in the New Japan during occupation?

A. There must be some radical changes that should come about in the New Japan to conform with the ideas of the Allied Occupational Government.

Q. What are some particular changes that you would recommend personally?

A. As one example, at the present time, when wealthy people get into litigation in court there is a tendency to lengthen out proceedings for a long time until final judgment is given in the court. When the poorer class of people likewise have a court action, naturally, with lawyers' fees and everything considered, they are unable to carry on litigation for any length of time. They either have to drop the case or come to some quick, minor settlement. In my opinion this should be changed.

Q. Do you think that police control over the people is too strong and too arbitrary?

A. Yes. Before and during the war police control over the public was a little bit too severe and too oppressive. But, at the present time the police haven't a great deal to say about the handling of the people. In other words, they have been cut down tremendously in their power, and not only that, many police officials have been removed from their positions. Previously the Japanese people were very much afraid of the police. They were something to be avoided at all costs. Now, there has been an actual change in administration, but the ordinary Japanese man-in-the-street is still very cognizant of the police. This is mostly because he doesn't know how, if he is apprehended for any minor offense, he will be treated in relation to police interpretation of AMG directives.

Q. Do you think that even though the Thought Police and Kempei have been broken up, there are still men who are acting on their own?

A. Although the Kempei and the Thought Police have been eliminated from the set-up, there were a lot of subordinates in the police system who received favors from them. Inasmuch as these subordinate worked with the police in the old days, it is, therefore my opinion, that it is not unlikely that such a secret system could be established, with a certain liaison with these ousted members of the Kempei and Thought Police. If you were to ask me if there is such an organization, or where it might be established, I couldn't say, but it is not unlikely that there is some form of subversive activity. (We are not interested in location or actual existence of such organizations. We are interested in your opinion of the possibilities for their existence-Capt Kleiman.) One of the essential things, in my opinion, is that the police system must be changed and a more educated type of person put in the job so that gradually a better class of men will have the authority, thereby eliminating any of the excesses that have occurred in the past. During TOJO'S premiership the secret police, thought police, and Kempei were at the peak of their arrogance and power, and naturally, they were working and using their men to ingratiate themselves with the government's idea of the trend of thought, rather than for the welfare and good of the general public. Now, of course, the heads of most of the secret police and Kempei have been eliminated, but a certain amount of control remains. The police are susceptible to present ideas to a great extent, but still retain a certain liaison with the old ideas. Therefore, there should be a complete change in the police system-eliminate the whole thing and make a fresh start.

- Q. Do you think that the Banbatsu can, through the use of these police and others, in some way worm their way back into power?
- A. The Kempei were taken out of power by Headquarters Detective. There are not molested any further if they go into civilian life, but there are a lot of them who were working as Kempei, and were not well-known. Having resumed a civilian status, they could be re-employed in the police system and thereby infiltrate the ranks. I was travelling from down south in 1938 and was approached by one of these Thought Control Police and he got rather tough. When I came to Tokyo, I took up the matter through the Home Office and reported the incident. I insisted that this type of intimidation was to be stopped. In view of my associations with the Lawyers' Association and other things, they took up the matter vigorously and the Kempei was taken out of circulation. I went to all that trouble, not because of the fact that this man approached me and was persecuting me, but for the benefit of those who did not have any authority and were afraid of the police. Of course it was very prevalent in this country during that time. The Thought Police were very active, especially in the Fukui District and around Nagasaki and Shinonoseki. This is merely one example of my own experience with the police.
- Q. What aspirations do you feel people in your class and other classes have in connection with the future?
- A. It is a very difficult question to answer. My associations have been as a corporation lawyer with large companies like Nippon Steel and others, and in talking with my associates in these larger Japanese companies, their fundamental idea at the present time, is "How are we going to go about carrying on our business?" And, each one of these companies naturally control of have under them innumerable employees. Whereas the principle thought at the present time is how are we going to survive and come into the picture again, until such time as the Allied authorities give us some indication of how and what is going to be done, we must reserve an opinion until later.
- Q. Politically, what do you think will happen?
- A. I myself, and a lot of other people, are inclined to be on the liberal side and would indicate the "Left" to some extent.
- Q. Do you think the masses will go extremely left?
- A. In my opinion there never will be a very sharp Leftist movement. Before, the natural tendency of the general populace was to go to the Right, which followed government ideas. Now, I think they will take a somewhat straight path. In other words, the middle path rather than to the right or the Left. At the present time, I think it is the general policy of the Allied authorities to follow a fairly middle course, without going or deviating either to the right or left.
- Q. Do you think the Communists have a chance to capture the government in view of the critical food situation and other situations?
- A. It is extremely improbable for the reason that perhaps some extremists have that idea, but I doubt that the ordinary person who calls himself a Communist (that abides by the fundamental ideas) would go to that extreme and would follow any drastic reasoning of that description. The communist Party is not predominantly strong. It has its following, but most of its followers are young students in middle school, around 17. They get radical ideas and their instructors praise them, but they are hot-headed ideas. If they get by the Thought Control and the police and go to a University, they begin to doubt whether those radical ideas are the true solution to the problem, and these people are never what you might call enthusiastic members of the Communist Party, whereas the youth who is subjected to police regulations and Thought Control is likely to become a "hot-head". Over all, I would say that the Communists are not so important or so strong that they would ever be able to control or over-throw the government.

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Q. What was the influence of the war on the livelihood of the people with regard to clothing, food, shelter, health, working conditions, etc.?

A. There was a sharp decline in all standards. With regard to sickness, there was development of certain diseases which could more or less, be attributed to malnutrition. The average person sacrificed buying clothes so that he could buy food with the extra money. The question of food, after 1943, was the predominant factor for everybody. That, naturally, affected the workmen. They did not have the stamina they had previously and were not able to carry on their work efficiently. Soon after the start of the war there was a very sharp decline, and from 43 on, it was somewhat critical. In my personal observation of the decline in the way of living, from 37-41 there was a slight incline. From 1941 onward the decline was very steep and went down in a very sharp angle until 1943, when it hit bottom. In 1944 it couldn't go any further. In other words, from 1943 on, we were down to the lowest point of existence for a long time past.

Q. Has it come down further since the end of the war?

A. Life hasn't been harder, naturally, because when the war ended so did the bombing. Whereas conditions haven't improved any, the general feeling of relief is great, and the thought that something may be done toward bettering the situation, getting more food, etc., gives a slight boost to morale.

Q. What caused the most outstanding change during the war?

A. It largely depends on the individual, which was worse. In my particular case it was necessary to do a lot of travelling, and because of the war and conditions I was not able to travel with any degree of facility. Likewise, the thing that affected most of the populace was transportation difficulties and shipping. Bombing made it difficult to get food. Shipping from the continent was cut off, and consequently food was cut. When the bombing became severe it affected everybody. Those who had their houses burned did not think about work, but went about tending to their own affairs first. It is difficult to say that any one was a predominant cause.

Q. During the war, was there confidence in winning?

A. During the war of course those who believed implicitly in the reports given out by the government regarding the progress of the war were numerous. They believed that the government was giving them absolutely truthful reports. Then again, there were others that reasoned that in the early part of the war there were reports that the Prince of Wales and the Repulse were sunk and that Japanese troops were progressing on all fronts. This was true. But then, later on, when reports kept coming out of large losses, in American troops and shipping and no losses to the Japanese, men of my calibre realized that the government was not giving a truthful picture. There were a great number who never felt that Japan would actually win, but at the same time, they did not think that Japan would lose. They believed that there would be a negotiated peace. There was no doubt that we would be the losers, but at the same time, not be utterly defeated.

Q. Did people of your calibre have confidence in the leaders during the war?

A. People who were able to think fairly clear did not have much confidence in the leaders. For example, the changes of the Diet and changes in the High Command (Naval and Army) were such to make people believe that the war was not going as satisfactorily as reported. The farmers had no way of getting any idea what was going, except through the local authorities, and, therefore, were influenced wholly by the government. They were given a very rosy picture, and were satisfied to carry on as before. To the average person, however, it was fairly obvious that the trouble in securing cabinets, consular changes, High Command changes, all

things were not going too well. In my contacts I found companies who were doing business with both the Army and Navy. The Navy would come to the company officials and say: "To help with the Army. Give us our orders first." Any the Army would do the same thing. There was not the whole-hearted cooperation you would expect in all-out war. Naturally, those businessmen and others who were able to think would conclude that things were not going well, and lost some confidence in the leaders.

- Q. What was the relationship between the military and civilians?
- A. There wasn't any particular good feeling between the military and civilians. This was mostly on the part of the civilians, who blamed their particular circumstances and plight on the fact that the military started the war. They also blamed the war profiteers who made tremendous fortunes and played up to the military. The average person felt that the Army started the war for its own glorification and to promote a few to positions of notoriety and rank.
- Q. Did all the classes suffer alike, or did some have it easier?
- A. The poor and the rich suffered alike. Of course, the few (war profiteers) probably had it much easier, but the rich man and the poor man also suffered equally in the war.
- Q. How about the people who were bombed out? Did they resent the people who were not?
- A. There was a certain amount of jealousy and resentment between the people that were bombed out. The people who were bombed out forced themselves into the areas that were not, which created resentment by the people who were fortunate, and likewise the people that were bombed out were naturally resentful against the ones who were not.
- Q. Did Allied propaganda have any influence on morale here?
- A. I personally thought that American propaganda, especially leaflets from the Marianas, was very effective, and that the majority of people came to believe what was said. The mere fact that the Japanese police and others tried to suppress the leaflets and the people to read them, gave the people all the most incentive and made them realize that the government was afraid of the truth and, therefore, it was the truth. The Marianas Shinbunsha showed pictures of a city before, during and after a raid and followed that propaganda line. It also showed pictures of RW's and how they were treated. I myself came to believe that we had nothing to gain by lies.
- Q. What do you think should be the future position of the Emperor?
- A. I think that any drastic and sudden change over the present situation would be a mistake. In other words, a change from a sovereignty to a democracy is hardly feasible at the present time. It would be better to allow the Emperor to retain a position similar to the King of England and see how that operates for a period of time, with modifications here and there, and finally come to a position that is satisfactory to everyone.
- Q. Were you able to continue your law business all during the war without any trouble?
- A. I worked all the way through. My work fell off to a certain extent because the government set up all sorts of controls. The government was very much against any lawsuits during the war, and discouraged court action. Although my cases dropped off a lot, I was extremely busy because the companies I worked for called me in to interpret all the new laws and regulations and get the true meanings of them.

- q. For future business, do you think there should be free trade and get rid of the trade control associations the Kumiai?
- A. The greater majority of the people thought that the Kumiai should be abolished, but there were a number who wanted these associations. The construction of the Kumiai precisely was such that fundamentally they were all right, but there were so many deviations from the honest principle of the set-up that it made things difficult all round. As such, more than half of the people wanted to abolish them and try free trade, but I think it still has its merits if properly applied.

Comments in conversation after formal interview.

I think there is a very serious deficiency in the ethics of big business. For instance, orders for the Army and Navy when filled out, rarely meet the original specifications due to poor workmanship substitution of materials, grafts, etc., and the Army and Navy had no recourse but to accept the goods. This unethical procedure extends into private and peace time business. Therefore from an ethical standpoint, business procedure should be changed.

I noticed that Army and Navy, and civilians of the U. S. are working together and cooperating to the fullest extent, and all branches of the services are working for a common cause and for the benefit of the U. S. whereas in Japan the set-up, the Army considered themselves far superior to any civilian. No matter how brilliant, there would be no opportunity for a civilian to join in the general picture of an operation.

It follows, then, that there is a definite lack of opportunity to use initiative in Japan. If a talented man has some ideas, there is no opportunity for him to express himself, either in private business or in government. For instance, if a worker in a factory had some suggestions to make for the increase of production, he would probably be discharged immediately, or at least put in his place, and of course, this retards progress.