

Ex 1758

[AFFIDAVIT

Appeared before me Lt. Col. Dr. B. Damen in Changi Jail, Singapore this 29th day of May 1946, the person of

YAMAMOTO Moichiro

Who after having taken the oath to tell the entire truth and nothing but the truth, answered to the questions put to him as follows:

Q. State your name, birth, education and career.

A. I was born from an humble peasant family, living in the village of Ito near Osaka in Prefecture of Wakajama on the island of Honchu on the 8th of October 1898.

My religion is Buddhism and I am a Major General of the Imperial Japanese Army. When I was eight years old, I went to the elementary school in my village Ito and there I stayed till my 14th year. Then I went to the middle school in the Prefecture of Hara and after having completed my 18th year I became a Cadet of the Military Training School in Kyoto where I was attached as a Cadet to a Regiment being garrisoned there. I was in training here for a year in order to become an Officer and was enlisted in the Military Academy in December 1915. In December 1919 I had finished my Military Studies and got an appointment as a 2nd Lieutenant of the 38th Infantry Regiment, in garrison at Kyoto. I served in this Regiment till I was placed in 1923 in the Staff College at Tokyo. I left this school in November 1926 as a 1st Lieutenant. Then I was ordered to be an acting Commanding Officer of a Company. In this quality I served for 6 years. In 1928 I was transferred as a member of Staff in the Ministry of War. The Section Chief of the Department for Preparations was the then Colonel TOJO Hideki, and I was under his command for 1 year. He was a man who was not exactly harsh, but also not so mild, he was an ardent man who was very able and tactful to realise the plans he was bearing in mind in a proper way. I did not perceive any sign then of his political aspirations as he was always busy with his military professional work. In August 1928 I was promoted to be a Captain and remained in my new rank in the aforesaid Department of Preparations till October 1930. Then I was ordered to sail for Great-Britain in order to complete my military education there. I arrived in England in February 1931 and I was attached to several various Regiments. I was in England for 2 years. This is the reason I can understand the English language rather sufficiently. I do not speak it in a good way. Other languages beside my own Japanese language I do not understand. Now this is more than 10 years ago and I cannot say that I master the English language in a sufficient way now. In March 1933 I was ordered to be a Member of the Japanese Delegation for the Disarmament Conference at Geneva. I was a Member of Staff under the command of Admiral HASEGAWA. I had several chiefs there, but Admiral HASEGAWA was always in command. The Leader of our Delegation was SAITO, then Ambassador of Japan in Paris. I was standing under direct command of Col. SHIMOMURA who was a member of the Committee of Effectives. I did not take any part in the negotiations and the talks as such things were done by my Superiors.

Q. Do you know anything about the famous Crucifixion Speech delivered by MATSUOKA?

A. Yes, I know that he has made this speech before I had arrived in Geneva. I saw him several times in the League of Nations.

Q. You remember that in 1931 the Japanese Armies overran and seized Manchuria? What was the general feeling in your circles there about this matter?

A. We had the conviction that Japan had been compelled to do so in order to get some more living space, that this step had been taken, because it was necessary and we always hoped that a satisfactory settlement of this affair should be reached. We had many talks about it and we agreed all in this point that Japan must act in this way and that everything should be tried to get out of this impasse.

I stayed in Geneva till November 1933 and returned to Japan via America and I arrived in Japan in February 1934, when I was placed again in my former job in the Department of Preparations.

Q. What was the scope of this Department and what was its significance? What did you do there exactly? Were you making there some campaign schemes or other war plans?

A. No, that we did not do. The real job we performed was the preparation of armament, fouraging of the Army and that always in connexion with a possible mobilisation.

Q. Was this a preparation for the forthcoming campaign in China?

A. I did not know that. The only thing I knew was that the Staff Officers formed the plans and we the younger ones had to obey their orders.

Q. Do you know the famous Captain DOIHARA who was working in China before the war started?

A. Yes, I knew him by face only. When I returned from England he was a Major General already. He was a grand man. I never had a talk with him.

Q. Do you know anything about the Doihara-incident in China?

A. I do not know.

Q. When did they make you a Major?

A. I became a Major in 1934 and remained in my old job at the Department of Preparations. In August 1935 I was transferred to the Secretariat of the Ministry of War. In December 1937 I got the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In August 1938 I was transferred to the Bureau for Military Affairs in Tokyo. In 1939 I became a Colonel and received the command of the 228th Infantry Regiment in Nagoya. I went then to China and acted there in Canton and Sam-Sui as commander of Occupation troops. I did not take any part in the real warfare. In October 1940 I was appointed to be a Staff Officer attached to the Forth-China Commander at Peiping. There I was partaking in the actual war operations.

Q. Had you to do also with the civilian population?

A. No, my work was merely of a military nature. In March 1942 I returned from China on my way to Tokyo where I was Section chief of the Military Bureau for Training and Education. In August 1945 I became a Major General. In this year, in the month of March, I was sent to Java as Leader of the Civil Affairs of the Military Administration at Batavia. (Oranjeboulevard in the house of a former Dutch Medical Officer). I was acting in this quality till November 1944 when I became Chief of Staff of the Army and as such I was the Gunseikan, the Governor-General of Java, residing in Batavia. The Army Commander was then Lt. Gen. HARADA. I do not know where he is at the present.

Q. Who was the man who appointed you to be the Governor-General?

A. I was appointed by an Imperial Decree and such was told me by the Minister of War TOJO as far as I can remember. I do not know it for certain. I resided in the house of ISHIZAWA at Batavia. General HARADA was residing in the palace of the Dutch Governor General, Koningsplein.

Q. How was the command instituted?

A. The Supreme Commander of the Southern Areas was count Field-marshal TERAUCHI, who was residing in Saigon. General ITAGAKI Commander in Chief of the 7th Area of Command was functioning in Singapore. Till June 1945 Java was divided in two parts: East and West Java. The Army Commander of East-Java was General IWABE.

The Commander of West-Java was General MOBUCHI who was under direct command of HARADA. Then in June 1945 Middle-Java was created and the Army Commander was General NAKAMURA, headquarters at Magelang. After the Japanese Surrender West-Java was divided in two parts: The Cheribon, Priangan areas with General KABOUCI as Commander and the Batavia, Buitenzorg and Bantam areas under General NISHIDA.

Q. When you were functioning as Governor-General, did you carry out the orders given to you by FARADA or did you have a free hand?

A. The general leading rules were laid down in regulations and so I had to obey. But in smaller matters I had a complete free hand and I could act on my own authority. On any important matters not specified in the rules and regulations I always obtained the Army Commander's sanction. The important political lines were totally prescribed by TERAUCHI. I was responsible to Gen. FARADA, who could make a proposal to Tokyo for my dismissal. He also was able to suspend me temporarily. I could only be dismissed by the Tenno Peika, who had appointed me. When in March 1945 the Lines of communication with Tokyo were cut off and it was very difficult to get into touch with Tokyo, it was agreed that Gen. FARADA should be empowered to dismiss on his own authority practically all officials serving under him. I do not know if this measure was issued by the Emperor. I believe that this had been ordered by Gen. ITAGAKI who issued always all important decisions. Exceptions were to be referred to TERAUCHI and/or ITAGAKI.

Q. Had you any responsibility in matter of death sentences or did you act with absolute freedom?

A. I had nothing to do with death sentences given by Courts Martial. The death sentences given by a Civil Court were to be carried out according to the rules laid down by the Army Commander. These sentences had to be examined by the Chief of Preservation of Peace and Order, who was working under me and so normally I did not receive these sentences for examination.

Q. Were you empowered to stop an execution?

A. I think I was, but I never received a petition for mercy from Europeans, and this is the reason I do not know it for certain.

Q. After the Japanese surrender you sent a letter to Rear-Admiral Patterson aboard of the Cruiser Curberland, admitting that you had given your "fiat execution" for the killing of a number of Dutch subjects /and such after the surrender. /at Soerabaya.

A. Yes, but I did not write that letter myself, it was written by one of my subordinate officers. I have signed it. In fact the Chief of the Preservation of Peace and Order gave this "fiat" for the execution concerning a number of people in East Java, whose execution, when I remember exactly, had been delayed. They had been sentenced by a Civil Court in January 1945.

Q. So you were Lord of life and death in Java?

A. I cannot say that.

Q. Do you admit that you are responsible for all executions carried out during your Governor-Generalship?

A. Yes, I do. As Gunseikan I was responsible for all these executions not only for my own doings, but also for the activities of the Chief of the Preservation of Peace and Order, when I was aware of that. In so far I was responsible. If executions of death sentences were carried out without my knowledge then I do not hold myself responsible.

Q. Do you admit now your responsibility for your subordinates because you were their controlling chief?

A. Yes, I do now. I could stop an execution and I was empowered also to commute a sentence. All was done under the Army Commander's sanction and in his name I think. The legal rule was this that every death sentence when a petition for mercy had been sent in must be examined by the Chief of Preservation of Peace and order. That was a civilian LIYANO Shozo, now in Galang.

Q. Can you remember what these people were charged with?
A. I do not remember exactly and the only thing I can mention in connection with this case is that I think that the proposed execution has not been carried out.

Q. When you came to Java you were provided with special instructions concerning the government?
A. I had not received special instructions from Minister TOJO Hideki. I had no personal interview with him before I left for Java. I was instructed to obey and to carry out the orders of General FARADA who had outlined the principal rules of Government. I was responsible to him for the carrying out and realization of these rules. The practical application was for me and for that I had a free hand.

Q. Were you especially instructed to promote the Indonesian Independence Movement?
A. As far as I know, FARADA did not stimulate the Indonesian Independence Movement, headed by SOEKARNO. I do not know of any special anti-Dutch measure taken by him or me. We had in mind to treat the population of Java as one body, although it consisted of various elements like Arabs, Javanese, Chinese and Dutch indo and totok. It was a very complicated problem.

Q. Was it your purpose to make Java a free selfsupporting country or a slave colony for Japan with no hope of freedom?
A. We had the outlined plan to liberate the Asiatic peoples from Western oppression and to bring them to freedom under the Japanese leadership. Japan was destined to play the leading role. In 1944 Sept. 19 Minister General KOISYA made a statement in Tokyo saying that no sharp measures were to be taken against the populations of the occupied areas. Nippon intended to give independence to Indonesia in future.

Q. And how did you do in Java, especially against the Dutch? Do you remember the internce camps, the POW camps, the expropriations of Dutch property, the confiscations and so on. Can you fit this in with a policy of appeasement?
A. Any confiscation of Dutch property that might have happened, was done prior to this declaration of KOISYA.

Q. Who was responsible for the looting of Java, for the shipping to Japan of products, industrial outillage and all things that could be of any use to Japan?
A. I do not know that such things have happened and I do not know who should be responsible for that. It happened perhaps especially in the former days of the occupation of Java. I know also the slogan: Asia for the Asiatics. I am fully aware of the Nanyo idea and I know that the principal plan was that Japan should lead Asia giving freedom to all populations.

Q. What was the role played by SOLKARNO?
A. SOLKARNO was used by us and paid by us f. 750 (seven hundred fifty guilders) per month for his activities as an adviser to the General Advice Department in Batavia.

Q. Was he a puppet or a real freespoken Javanese leader?

A. SOEKARNO had little influence, because he was under a strict censorship of which he had complained several times in a bitter way. All his speeches were examined before and he did not like this. We kept him under control but as time went on, the censorship slackened and about the Japanese surrender there was no more censorship at all. SOEKARNO had no political power at all. He was allowed to deliver speeches and to hold meetings with his fellow-countrymen, but he had no power to issue rules and to take measures. He felt his uneasy position very clearly and complained about that. But we did not give in, although censorship was softened.

Q. Did you know, as we know all that SOEKARNO abused and assaulted the Dutch and uttered threats against us by radio and press?

A. That must have happened in the last days of the censorship when we did not keep an eye on all these things in a sharp way.

Q. Do you know that SOEKARNO paid a visit to General ITAGAKI at Singapore accompanied by FATTA and RADJIMAN?

A. Yes, I know that these three men were ordered by Count TERAUCHI to be transferred to his HQ at Saigon for a conference. They left for Saigon by plane on 9 August 1945. They returned to Java on August 14. I presume that they paid this visit to General ITAGAKI returning from Saigon.

Q. Do you know the proceedings during the conference with TERAUCHI?

A. Yes, I know.

On the 15th of August I heard by radio that Japan had surrendered to the conditions of Potsdam. We kept it secret in behalf of law and order.

In the night between 16 and 17 August SOEKARNO and FATTA had a conference with Admiral MAEDA as I heard afterwards.

In the morning of 17 August they set up and proclaimed their Republic. The proclamation was done by pamphlets distributed to the people from lorries. This proceeded in such a quick way that we were unable to prevent it. I heard that TERAUCHI granted them the following things:

1. They were permitted to form an Independent State and to set up the Government of it as soon as preparations should have been accomplished.
 2. The territory of this State should include the former Dutch East Indies.
- We kept the surrender secret till the morning of August 19th. Then I, not ordered by any Superior, ordered SOEKARNO and FATTA, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Indonesian Preparation Committee, to see me and between 9 and 10 o'clock I told them the following points:
1. Japan has surrendered to the Potsdam conditions.
 2. The Japanese authorities remain in command in Indonesia till they can hand over the powers and all weapons to the Allies.
 3. Severe punishment for all persons who should attempt to disturb law and order.
 4. From now the Japanese do not back any longer the Indonesian Independence Movement.
 5. The Indonesian Leaders are requested to help in keeping quiet the population because we were afraid of losses of innocent lives.

One of the reasons of the Emperor's surrender was to save mankind from the havoc of atomic bombing.

Q. Who was responsible for the extradition of Japanese armament?

A. I think the Indonesians themselves, because they took them by force. The Japanese had stored away all heavy armament in order to hand it over to the Allies and their troops were armed with rifles only. So they could not prevent the Indonesians from capturing the arms.

Q. Was the capturing of the arms ordered or permitted by TERAUCHI on that conference?

A. I do not know that.

The interrogation was resumed on this 30th day of March 1946 by the same Interrogator Lt. Col. Dr. B. Damen.

Q. How was the Romusha organization working?

A. The deportation of labourers outside of Java was always ordered by the Commander in Chief of the 7th Area of Command General ITAGAKI, residing in Singapore. I had nothing to do with that. But inside of Java the situation was another one. According to the needs of industry, irrigation, etc., the Japanese Government had started before my arrival a service known as the Romushas (romu-labour and sha-man). This organization was working already when I entered Java, although on a smaller scale. I was the Chief of it and under me was working the Romu Kyoku in Home Affairs at Batavia with TAKAHASHI, a civilian official, as leader. He is in Galang now. In my name he issued orders to obtain a sufficient number of labourers for the purposes mentioned. This labour was voluntary and was paid. TAKAHASHI gave his orders to the civilian authorities who gave them through to the Wedenas and loerabs and they were obliged to collect as much manpower as was requested for certain industries. Work was done in factories, on railways, textiles, etc.

Q. Was this a labour to be performed by all classes and races of the population?

A. Everybody could get work, it was no forced labour. They were also working on defence works for the Japanese Army. But the system did not operate in a satisfactory way because the number of labourers was not sufficient and especially during the last months before our surrender things became rather confused and labourers were no longer engaged. I persist in asserting, that this labour was voluntary. The population was kindly asked to plant djerek keliki everywhere along the roads in order to get greasing oil for our planes. This planting was paid also. All orders issued by me were pointing out that this labour was a free one. There existed also a Labour Association which paid fees for excellent work.

Q. But we know that the population was forced to work and so I doubt if this labour was free indeed.

A. My orders were regarding a free labour, but I do not know if and it can have happened that my subordinates exceeded their faculties, but I do not know that.

Q. Were you content of that Romushas organization?

A. No. I think that better work should have been done. There were two things annoying me:

1. The labourers were short of food, clothing and housing was insufficient.
2. The special abilities of the labourers for certain jobs were not enough scrutinized.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

The undersigned CHARLES JONGENEEL, first Lieutenant R.N.I.A., head of the War Crimes Section of NETHERLANDS FORCES INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (NEFIS) being first duly sworn on oath deposes and states that the annexed document, entitled:

"Statement of Dr. Ch.O. van der Plas, Batavia, Political Adviser to the Netherlands Indies Government, dated 22 June 1946",

has been taken from the official records of the NEFIS.

/s/ Charles Jongeneel

SEAL

June 25th. 1946

Subscribed and sworn to before me K. A. de WEERD, LL.D. First Lieutenant R.N.I.A., Senior official attached to the Office of the Attorney-General N.I.I.

/s/ K. A. de Weerd

No. 1759

An officer detailed to examine the above by the
Commander-in-Chief, Allied Land Forces, South East Asia
(Authy ALFSEA War Crimes Instruction No. 1 2nd Edition,
para 19 (a))

Certificate of Interpreter

I Kim Ilsun make oath and say that I truly and correctly translated to the witness Yamamoto Moichiro the words of the above caution and that he thereupon elected to make a sworn statement, that he was duly sworn, and that he then made a statement which I truly and correctly translated in English and saw taken down by Miss E. M. Schwab I read over the whole of the above statement to the witness in the Japanese language and he acknowledged it as correct and has now duly signed it in my presence and in the presence of Lt. Col. Dr. E. Damen.

/s/ Kim Ilsun