

EXHIBIT NO. 3141

(10)



Def. Doc. #2141

Delegatio Apostolica  
in Japonia

Tokyo 7 August 1947

MEMORANDUM

Under the instructions of the Holy See, this delegation occupied itself during the war in assuaging the lot of prisoners of war and civil internees in Japan as well as of Japanese civil internees abroad.

To this end an information service was organized; the lists sent by the Japanese General Staff to the International Red Cross served as a card index. As requests for information arrived by mail or by special broadcasts over the Vatican radio these indexes served to identify the person more accurately and to find his internment camp as well. Requests for family correspondence were then routed through the Foreign Ministry and the Japanese military mail service. There even went out sums of money destined for prisoner of war camps outside Japan, in accordance with the instructions of the Holy See.

Overtures were made to obtain for the Apostolic Delegate authorization to visit prisoner of war camps and to bring to all, irrespective of their religion, the consolation within his power. International agreements did not recognize this right except on the part of the International Red Cross and representatives of the protecting powers, but permission was nevertheless given. This was a simple favor which did not give me as a matter of course either the right or the duty to see to the observation of international conventions or to protest in the event of their contravention. The object was purely humanitarian: to console the prisoners.

During the years 1943 and 1944 I visited in this manner some thirty camps in the interior of Japan between Fukuoka and Sendai, accompanied each time by a functionary of the Foreign Ministry to help me on the trip and in my relations with the police and the military authorities. Almost everywhere I was cordially received by the camp authorities who regulated the programme of visits to the best of their instructions. Usually this commenced with the reading of a report on the general situation of the camp, the number of inhabitants, and health, sanitation, food and clothing conditions. There then followed a quick inspection of the surroundings and an interview in the presence of the officers and an interpreter, of someone or other representing the camps. The other prisoners were then usually at work.

Naturally the prisoners could hardly speak openly under these conditions. Nevertheless, there were cases when prisoners praised the efforts made by their overseers to render their



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life less hard.

In addition to these visits it would have been nice to distribute provisions and clothing as is done in other countries by the representatives of the Holy See, but everything was severely rationed and it was impossible to obtain anything of this sort. As the most frequently expressed desire of the prisoners was to obtain something to read, a certain number of works, particularly in English were purchased on the Tokyo market, but only a small number reached the prisoners as far as I can make out. This was not because of the authorities desire to cause suffering but the consequence of an exaggerated sense of responsibility. No book could be sent to the prisoners without being examined line by line by censors who knew little English, and who were few in number and very busy and who about all could not arrive at an opinion as to whether to pass a book or not.

Another desire of the prisoners was to get news of their families. They were permitted to write three or four times a year but many letters were lost and replies came rarely. I strongly demanded that they be as generous as possible in the matter of correspondence.

I lived a long time in Japan before the war and more or less shared the fate of the Japanese people in the course of the hostilities. By making use of this experience I should like like, without seeking to excuse or justify anything, to explain the mentality of the country insofar as it concerns as it concerns prisoners of war. Apart from every atrocity and abuse, the condition of the prisoners in respect of quarters and clothing was entirely that of the common people. The discipline was that of the Japanese army which in certain respects is extremely hard.

In Japan the standard of living was always much lower than usual, but during the war it dropped extremely still and the people had almost nothing to eat and could buy clothing only with the few clothing coupons allotted to them for one year. They were housed one on top of another and the government provided space of only two yards square per person for Japanese workers in war factories. Such conditions naturally became insupportable and cruel for members of the allied armies without affecting the Japanese to the same extent.

In order to arrive at an impartial judgment it is necessary to add that the Japanese do not have the idea of a prisoner that a long Christian culture has given us. They naturally despised this class of person and no Japanese soldier was permitted under any circumstance to allow himself to be captured. Officers, by the way, used to state that what they were doing in favor of allied prisoners was absolutely one-sided, for they themselves would never have any prisoners.



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The fact of being entirely assimilated by the Japanese and submitted to their customs, often contrary to our own, led to the belief in deliberate humiliations when such was not at all the idea: communal Japanese bath, the practice of working almost naked etc.

The wide difference in religion, furthermore, led to the fact that through simple ignorance the special spiritual needs of the prisoner were not taken into account and this was one of the points upon which this Delegation had to insist most in order to persuade the camp authorities that such needs were real and supreme. Certain results were obtained but circumstances ~~often~~ prevented much from being done. As far as Catholic priests were concerned, for example, they were not permitted access to the camps except in the case of those who were Japanese alone and they were very few, overladen with work and few among them knew English sufficiently well. Nevertheless they did their best to answer the calls of the camp commanders, but in accordance with the Japanese mentality they were called more ~~often~~ to preside at funerals than to assist the dying.

To sum up! The general impression is that apart from the atrocities and abuses of certain individuals, the great and real suffering of the prisoners was largely the result of a fate which allowed them to fall into the hands of a people so different in manners and mentality rather than being ~~subjected~~ ~~to~~ a premeditated plan of humiliated plan of humiliation and torture.

At Tokyo this 7th day of August 1947,

Archbishop

SEAL



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Exh. No.

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al.

-vs-

ARAKI Sadao, et al.

- Defendants -

Sworn Deposition

A F F I D A V I M E N T :-

I, Archbishop Paolo Marella, being duly sworn, hereby depose and say:

That I am the duly accredited apostolic delegate in Japan and reside at Tokyo.

I hereby declare that the attached document entitled "Memorandum", written in French, and dated at Tokyo 7 August 1947, consisting of five pages, was written by me and is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

/S/ Paolo Marella

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 21st. day of August 1947, at Tokyo.

/S/ David W. Parsons,  
Capt. Inf. Investigating  
Officer