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USSBS
Morale

Interview with HAYASHI, Yaei, former head of the Police Affairs Section, Military Police Headquarters.

SUBJECT: Morale
TIME: 9:30 - 11:30, December 18th
PLACE: Meiji Building
INTERVIEWER: Capt. Wm. Magistretti
ALSO PRESENT: Lt. Soden

BACKGROUND:

Mr. Hayashi (a Lt. Col. in the Military Police until demobilized) became an Infantry 2nd Lt. in 1927, and a first Lt. in 1933, subsequently serving in Yokohama, Ichikawa and Tateyama. In 1938 as an MP Captain he served in the Police Affairs Section, Military Police Headquarters. In 1940 he was sent to Toyohashi and subsequently Kyoto. In 1942 he returned to the Military Police Headquarters and the Police Affairs Section. He was born in Shiga Prefecture. His home is now in Kyoto, where he plans to go into business selling presents to the American troops.

INTERVIEW: M - Magistretti, H - Hayashi

M - What are the duties of the Military Police?

H - They consist of guarding the Emperor and the members of the Imperial Family; policing of the Army and Navy and control or arrest of civilians when deemed necessary for the prosecution of the war. In addition, a public opinion survey was conducted from a peace preservation basis. Investigations were made for anti-war thoughts. This was not deemed the most important work. The most important work consisted of control of military personnel. The Home Ministry reports were late, so during the war the Military Police had to do a public opinion survey. For instance, after the air raids the Military Police would telephone in reports on the effect or extent of the damage.

M - How was this public opinion survey conducted?

H - For example, when Japanese-American relations were getting worse and worse, there was the desire to know what the people were thinking, for instance, the political world, the farmers, etc., so the Military Police would go out to his relatives or other contacts and ask what they were thinking and make reports on the basis thereof. This public opinion survey existed from times past in the Military Police but it reached its height during the Tojo Cabinet, because that Cabinet was a military one. They wanted to know facts of the situation as quickly as possible, and the Military Police are much quicker than the Home Ministry, because they act immediately on orders received, whereas the Home Ministry is slow in making reports. What they cannot do today they put off until tomorrow. Tojo was both the War Minister and the Prime Minister, so he used the Military Police.

M - What were the reports like?

- H - Well, somebody in the financial world might make a statement to such-and-such an effect. The headquarters would gather together these various particulars into a composite report and make a report to the War Minister to the effect that the financial world or the political world held such opinions. I do not believe that much action was taken on the basis of these reports, but they probably had some effect on Cabinet discussions and eventual policy. Public opinion reports from both the Home Ministry and the Military Police went in to the government.
- M - How accurate were these reports?
- H - Some reports were mistaken, but the average was fairly good. We did not check the reports afterwards, but the natural developments and the facts of the situation would confirm or deny them. Reports were considered to be like news or an amplification of the news.
- M - What would happen in the event of a person expressing anti-war sentiments?
- H - If we were in receipt of such a report they would then have to get more evidence. The MP on the spot would watch the individual and obtain more evidence. For instance, they would go to an acquaintance who had heard the lecture by the individual and then they would take the evidence to the prosecutor (civilian) and talk the case over with him. If his consent was obtained then they would arrest the individual, but they must get the prosecutor's consent. If the person was arrested he would be put in the MP stockade. In the event that they could not obtain this consent, they would call the individual in and tell him to stop these activities.
- M - Did the MP always have to get the consent of the prosecutor?
- H - In actuality, some MP may have put unimportant people in jail over night, but higher quarters actually prohibited such treatment. I know that the MP are spoken of very badly, and believe that the following are the reasons for it: By and large the local police could not handle the outstanding or prominent individuals because these individuals controlled the money for the local police so they only handled the small people. However, the MP could come in from the side so prominent members of the political and economic world were afraid of them. Prince Konoye was very much afraid of them. If the MP have their orders in hand they can go out and get big shots too. But this fear is not because the MP did extreme things. By and large the ordinary police have long experience in police matters, whereas the MP are ordinary soldiers who are given MP duties. Some of them were just in from combat and they would treat the people rougher and hit them on occasion. The higher authorities tried to stop this but they could not always do it. Another reason was that the police were open to bribery and frequently would take bribes. The MP could not be bribed. Still another reason was the race or fight between the Home Ministry and the Military Police over big cases. This race even existed down to lower level cases.
- M - What were the various changes in public opinion in Japan prior to and during the war?
- H - Prior to the Manchurian Incident the Japanese population was so large and her economic resources so small that she had to have some sort of an emigration policy. This thought was widespread throughout Japan and as a result we had the Manchurian Incident. People thought that if they were to stay in Japan the country would only collapse. This feeling was even stronger among people residing in Manchuria, but the government and the financial world were very slow to take action and the so-called 5/15 Incident arose as a result. This was a natural current or trend of events and would have happened no matter

who the leaders of Japan had been. Next in order came the China Incident. In regard to Japanese-American relations, the people felt that Japan would again be on the verge of self-destruction. She would have to lose Manchuria and China. The Japanese government wanted to make some sort of solution of the situation but public opinion was that the conditions were too severe. There was strong opposition and the Rightists were particularly outspoken against the dilatory policy of the government. This caused the change from the Koneye to Tojo Cabinet. The people were very happy over this. Tojo would take a strong hand in matters, they thought. Tojo was very popular among the people, although they say just the opposite now. The people gave him a reception such as is rarely seen among Japanese public figures. However, as war conditions got worse Tojo wouldn't listen to the people. He didn't listen to the elders and had a falling out with them. He worked night and day and got angry at the slightest provocation with the people in his office, so people were driven away from him. Public opinion now is reflected in the newspapers. The people by and large are simple individuals, no depth of thought. They believe things that are written in the newspapers, although some of them are lies. I am surprised how they have changed in attitude.

M - What about anti-war feelings?

H - There was some at the time of the Seigo Nakano Incident. Nakano opposed Tojo over the special Wartime Speech Control Law. Anti-war feeling also came as a result of difficulties in daily livelihood. The people wanted more rice, etc. However, very few of them were against the war. In spite of the fact that they had no homes, they merely expressed their discontent with conditions. The loyal people, such as the Osaka financiers, and some of the big people in the government, such as the Koneye faction, opposed it, but this was not the general public opinion. Military officers at the time of the end of the war thought that the Emperor, in making his speech over the radio, would ask them to follow him in a final fight, and were very surprised at the Imperial Rescript announcing the end of the war. One group in Osaka thought that it was a false broadcast and wanted to fight on. All of them asked "Why didn't he ask us to fight?" Some said this can not be the real Emperor, the real descendent of the Sun Goddess. So we can see that the upper elements in the government and the lower people had directly opposite opinions. Suzuki stated that his policy was for the decisive battle of the homeland, but actually he did the opposite thing. People by and large had various complaints on their food and housing, but they had no thought of giving in to the U.S. There were very few of these.

M - What about Midway or Guadalcanal?

H - The people believed that the Navy spokesman, Captain Hiraide, when he explained that there were naval victories. The Captain was very popular and had a good deal of personal charm. I personally knew some of the facts and thought that the Navy should give more of them to the people, fearing the consequences. The Army and Navy had friction between their public relations offices.

M - What about the effect of the bombing on public opinion?

H - The government and the Army said that there would be no bombing, but the planes came over anyway so the people's faith in both of these dropped a great deal. People asked: "Why can't the Army do more for us?"

propaganda

- M - What was the effect of the propaganda posters?
- H - There was no great effect of them on public opinion. People's reaction was: "Well, this is what they write!" Sometimes rumors spread on the basis of them, but the people did not believe them. Now they are beginning to say: "Well, they were true". The MP and the Home Ministry wanted the leaflets to be brought in.
- M - Tell me more about the Seigo Nakano Incident.
- M - Mr. Nakano was taken in by the MP at Tojo's order in April 1942. It merely said in the papers that Nakano had opposed the special Wartime Speech Control Law and so had been arrested and had committed suicide at his home. There were quite a few people who opposed Tojo, but they didn't say anything about it.
- M - Were there any other incidents of this nature?
- H - There was one concerning Foreign Minister Yoshida, which happened this year. The charge was that he was working with a member of a peace movement in conjunction with Prince Koneye and was arrested and bound over to a special military court under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Army. This was very unusual procedure and the legal basis occurs in the military court law, 6th clause, where it says that those committing crimes against military personnel, even though they themselves are not military personnel, can be tried in a military court. This law was not used very much - just when ordinary courts would be too slow. When the war condition got critical, a military court would be much faster. There was also the incident of a representative Yoshida in Kyushu, who was tried by military court under the jurisdiction of the Western Army. In the case of Foreign Minister Yoshida, the case was never presented to court as the prosecutors said that there was no case. I heard that Koneye asked the Army Minister to set Yoshida free. Lower level military personnel were surprised that the case did not go to court.
- M - Were any special controls established as a result of the bombing?
- H $\frac{1}{2}$ We had no particularly big problems arising from the bombing, although people were saying a lot of things in an under-handed manner, such as, why don't our planes go out, and they were also uneasy about the Navy and why it did not go out. There were more attacks on the government because of its inability to help people.
- M - What about the effect of American short-wave broadcasts?
- H - There was no problem about the American broadcasts as the Communications Ministry and the Home Ministry confiscated sets. The upper level politicians probably heard the broadcasts and some of them were spread by rumors, although in very changed form. Whenever we heard a very strange rumor we thought it probably had its basis in some American broadcasts. There were probably many listeners among the higher class people so the upper level people were for peace while the lower classes were for war.
- M - What things do you think will come about in the near future in Japan?

- H - I am particularly concerned about the young officers who have been educated in military thoughts. These felt that the Emperor would fight to the finish and they now have a feeling of unrest toward the Emperor. All of them felt that Japan should not be beaten and that the Emperor, as a descendant of the Sun Goddess, should not bow down, so he cannot be a real god. They have lost their faith in the Emperor. The general public feel that the Emperor did it for the country. Most of the military officers put up with the Emperor's decision, although one small group went in and occupied the palace. Their attitudes may be divided into three types at present: first, those of Communist or Red tendencies; second, those who are nihilists and have no spirit whatsoever and; third, those who are just neutral. I believe there will be quite a few having Red thoughts. By and large they are young men having good heads on them, and they will probably be the leaders in revolts, etc., since they have no way to gain a livelihood.
- M - What about the Emperor system?
- H - I believe that it should continue as the Emperor is the center of the Japanese state.
- M - What was Japan's greatest strength during the war?
- H - That the people would give up their lives for the Emperor.
- M - What was Japan's greatest weakness during the war?
- H - It was a highly materialistic weakness. The government was not in true wartime form. The Diet held meetings which were ineffectual and did not move fast enough. That is probably why we lost -- we were too slow.
- M - What things would you like to see in the future of Japan?
- H - We must have food or revolts will occur. It would be a very unhappy condition if the Japanese fought each other. The Japanese should obey American policy and build a peaceful Japan. I have no political desires, but it seems to me the people are confusing Communism and Democracy. Japan may turn toward communism.
- M - What about rumors?
- H - There are quite a large number of cases involving rumor control.
- M - Can you give me some examples?
- H - There were rumors to the effect that Midway was a great defeat, or to the effect that "What is the Japanese Navy doing", etc.
- M - Did the MP control newspapers?
- H - No, they did not. The Army Press Relations Section did that. However, the MP did control editors or editorial policies and writers because of what they said or anti-war feelings, etc.
- Hayashi
Mr. ~~XXXXXXXX~~ was asked to bring in more samples of rumors at the next meeting.