

INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION BETWEEN POLAND AND JAPAN DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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ABSTRACT

Military cooperation between Poland and Japan, including cooperation of intelligence officers, began after the two countries established diplomatic relations in March 1919 when Japan recognized Poland as an independent state. This cooperation thrived during the 1930s. Tokyo decided that Warsaw can be a valuable strategic point and a Japanese intelligence coordination centre for Europe, which would be oriented towards the East and the West (the USSR and Germany). In exchange for information, the Japanese allocated Polish intelligence liaison officers in their diplomatic posts in Germany, the Baltic states and Scandinavia. The Japanese enabled them to send reports in the Japanese diplomatic mail and issued suitable forged documents. The centre for this cooperation was Riga and Kaunas, later Berlin, Prague, Königsberg and Stockholm.

Keywords: Japan, Poland, mutual relations, military cooperation, military intelligence services.

Słowa kluczowe: Japonia, Polska, stosunki dwustronne, współpraca wojskowa, wywiad wojskowy.

Cooperation between military intelligence services, especially when it is conducted in the difficult circumstances of war, is, without doubt, one of the most interesting subjects both for readers and researchers. However, for researchers it is a challenging field of study, as reaching reliable sources of information is not an easy task. Usually, the basis for such research are archives, nonetheless, for me, the accounts of “witnesses” of the events and those connected to them are a valuable source of information. It is important to note that memory, especially when many years have passed, can be fallible and the stories being recounted can be (either consciously or not) very subjective. Nevertheless, such accounts are enormously valuable, especially when there are not enough reliable documents, and documents a few and far between in the case of wartime intelligence activities, which by their nature are usually clandestine.

If such documents do exist, they often contain many inaccuracies, a fact I was able to confirm while working on this subject.

This is why witness accounts, whether told or written down, are so valuable and why they also became the main source of information for the last chapter of the book *Historia stosunków polsko-japońskich 1904–1945* (The history of Polish-Japanese relations 1904–1945), which I co-authored with Andrzej T. Romer and which was first published in 1996. Yamawaki Masataka, Eryk Budzyński, Ludwik Hryncewicz, Waclaw Jędrzejewicz, and Michał Rybikowski are among the people Andrzej T. Romer knew personally. I was lucky enough to have been able to listen to the eye-witness accounts of Sugihara Chiune's wife Yukiko, Onodera Makoto's wife Yuriko, and also many others in Japan. All these people have provided me with interesting materials. Before the release of the book, parts of that last chapter were published in three journals in Poland, Britain and Japan.¹

At the time, the subject of the history of Poland-Japan relations was one of my main research areas (and it has remained one to this day). This is why after first publishing the book, I still continued to search for information and for people who could share their knowledge about the past and also, as years passed, I have gained some distance from previous reflections. All this led to me preparing, with Andrzej T. Romer's permission, an amended edition of the book in 2009. For the same reasons in 2019 (unfortunately this time without the direct permission of Andrzej T. Romer, who passed in 2018) I published the book for the third time, and this version was both amended and extended.² Because the topic of the cooperation between Polish and Japanese intelligence is still widely popular not only in Poland (and the correspondence I have been receiving is, I believe, proof of that), I decided to collect the most important information on the topic and publish it in English, a language which is accessible to a wider audience. The only article that touches upon this subject has been thus far published almost 30 years ago in *Japan Forum* (a journal which is not easily accessible) and this article requires now editing and supplementing.

OFFICIAL MILITARY COOPERATION 1919–1941

Military cooperation between Poland and Japan, including cooperation of intelligence officers, began after the two countries established diplomatic relations in

¹ E. Pałasz-Rutkowska, A.T. Romer, "Współpraca polsko-japońska w czasie II wojny światowej. Kowno, Sztokholm, Królewiec, Berlin, 1939–1945," *Zeszyty Historyczne* 1994, no. 110, pp. 3–44; "Polish-Japanese Co-operation during World War II," *Japan Forum* 1995, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 285–317; "Dainiji sekai taisen to himitsu chōhō katsudō. Pōrando to Nihon kyōryoku kankei," transl. S. Yoshigami, A. Matsumoto, *Polonica* 1995, no. 5, pp. 12–60.

² E. Pałasz-Rutkowska, A.T. Romer, *Historia stosunków polsko-japońskich*, vol. I: 1904–1945, extended and revised 3rd edition, Warszawa 2019; translation in Japanese as *Nihon Pōrando kankeishi 1904–1945*, transl. R. Shiba, extended and revised 2nd edition, Tōkyō 2019 (first edition 2009).

March 1919 when Japan recognized Poland as an independent state.³ Before the official diplomatic missions and the offices of Military Attaché of Poland and Japan were established in both capitals (1920 and 1921), the representative of the General Staff of Land Forces and Head of the Japanese Military Mission, Captain Yamawaki Masataka (1886–1974) arrived in Warsaw in June 1919.⁴ Apart from his duties connected with the military mission, Yamawaki was tasked with informing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) about political and diplomatic events. Soon, he established contacts with both Polish military and civilian authorities. He became known throughout Warsaw, met with Polish Chief of State Józef Piłsudski (1867–1935) and in 1920 as an observer he was one of the eyewitnesses of the Battle of Warsaw (also known as the Miracle on the Vistula) during the Polish-Soviet War.⁵ On 16 May 1921 he became the official Military Attaché at the Japanese Mission in Poland. Already at that time, Yamawaki was working on establishing regular cooperation between Polish and Japanese General Staffs. This cooperation was to, above all, include the exchange of military personnel, chiefly experts on the Soviet Union and cryptography training for the Japanese. Yamawaki valued Poles' skills in this field:

During the Polish-Soviet War, the Polish side often shared information about breaking Soviet cyphers with me. Their decryption skills were so developed, that they were able to read an order from the Red Army High Command from the frontline before it went through the regiment to the battalions . . . The main person in charge of this was Jan Kowalewski. I have provided my successor, Captain Okabe Naosaburō with this information. After a joint discussion and listening to this expert's opinion, I have decided to present this matter in Japan.⁶

This idea was also approved by the Second Department of the General Staff. Major Waław Jędrzejewicz (1893–1993), who was the Head of the Bureau East, which was in charge of intelligence pertaining to the Soviet Union at the time, and who in 1925 would become Poland's Military Attaché in Tokyo,⁷ was also favourably disposed towards the idea. He wrote:

I had many contacts with military attachés who, while in Poland, were especially interested in Soviet Russia. They would often come to the Staff, to my office, where they would have conversations with me . . . Of course, we did receive some valuable information from them and that exchange was advantageous for us. The usual topic was the deployment of Soviet troops. I have to admit that in this area the work of my bureau has yielded positive results.⁸

³ For more details see: E. Pałasz-Rutkowska, "The Making of a European Friend: Japan's Recognition of Independent Poland" [in:] *The Decade of the Great War: Japan and the Wider World in the 1910s*, eds. T. Minohara, Tze-ki Hon, E. Dawley, Leiden–Boston 2014, pp. 231–256.

⁴ He came to Warsaw with the agreement of the Polish government, the MOFA "gave him its care and assistance," see: doc. no. 49, no. 66 and D. 7101/VII/19, the file "Komitet Narodowy Polski – Paryż," pp. 31–35, Archiwum Akt Nowych (abbr. AAN), Warszawa.

⁵ E. Pałasz-Rutkowska, A.T. Romer, *Historia*, pp. 114–115.

⁶ T. Ariga, *Nihon rikukaigun no jōhō kikō to sono katsudō*, Tōkyō 1994, p. 141.

⁷ The first attaché was Colonel Paweł Aleksandrowicz (1920–1921), his task was the evacuation of the 5th Polish Rifle Division from Manchuria, through Japan, after the Siberian intervention failed. After him, until 1925, there was no military attaché in Tokyo.

⁸ W. Jędrzejewicz, *Wspomnienia*, Wrocław 1993, p. 113 (abbr. WJ).

The crucial reason for starting the decryption cooperation with Poland were the events connected to the talks between Japan and Soviet Russia about the establishment of diplomatic relation in Dairen (present-day Dalian) that took place from spring 1921 to autumn of 1922. It transpired that Japanese intelligence officers who were assigned there by the Staff were unable to decode intercepted cables from Moscow. The cables were sent to Warsaw to Yamawaki's successor Attaché Okabe Naosaburō (1887–1946), who handed them to the experts from the General Staff. The fact that Poles were able to decode the cables in just a week proved to the Japanese that the skills of Polish cryptographers were indeed on a very high level. Because of this, at the beginning of 1923, after being recommended by Yamawaki, Captain Jan Kowalewski (1892–1965) came to Tokyo for a three-month stay.⁹ His lectures in the Staff pertained mostly to various types of Soviet cyphers, general rules of deciphering and the structure of diplomatic and intelligence cyphers used in Europe at the time. Most of those participating in the lectures worked in the Second Department of the General Staff. Some participated in training in Poland, they gained information on the USSR and also familiarized themselves with the organization of the Polish Armed Forces. In this context, it is worth mentioning the almost year-long stay (1926) of Hyakutake Haruyoshi (1888–1947) in Poland. He participated in Kowalewski's course, and after returning to Japan, among others, served as the Head of the Cypher Bureau at the Staff and was in charge of the Japanese intelligence in Harbin.¹⁰ Cooperation in this area gradually intensified from the second half of the 1920s and there are documents in the Diplomatic Archives of the MOFA (Gaimushō Gaikō Shiryōkan; abbr. GGS) in Tokyo and the Record Office of Modern Documents (Archiwum Akt Nowych, abbr. AAN) in Warsaw that confirm this.¹¹ However, since some of the information is missing from these documents, other information in the documents is impossible to compare or is even contradictory, and sometimes there are even mistakes (e.g. in the transliteration of Japanese surnames in Polish registers), compiling a fully comprehensive list proved to be an impossible task. Despite this, I was able to determine that apart from trainees in the field of cryptography also officers arrived in Poland for short periods. Their goal was to exchange information on the USSR and acquaint themselves with the organization of Polish Armed Forces,¹² and during that time, what can be considered, the most important visit was the one of General Matsui Iwane (1878–1948), the Head of the Second Department of the Staff (1925–1928), who earlier, during the Siberian intervention, worked at the Japanese Army Staff in Vladivostok, and after that he headed the intelligence post in Harbin. He was, among others, accompanied by his younger brother, General Matsui Shichio (1880–1943) and also by Major Tominaga

⁹ For details see: S. Ōkubo, *Tairo angō kaidoku ni kansuru sōshi narabi ni senkun nado ni kansuru shiryō* [in:] *Manshū. Shūsenji nissosen*, vol. 28, Bōei Kenkyūjo Toshokan, Tokyo; cf. file “(Oddział II) Sztab Główny” (abbr. OII SzG), no. 616/57, AAN; see also: M. Wołos, “Misja kapitana Jana Kowalewskiego do Japonii w 1923 roku” [in:] *Wýwiad i kontrwýwiad wojskowy II RP*, vol. 1, ed. T. Dubiecki, Łomianki 2010, pp. 329–341.

¹⁰ OII SzG, doc. no. 616/48, 616/68, AAN.

¹¹ Files no. 6.1.6.1, 6.1.8.5-22, 6.2.1.5-4, GGS; OII SzG, 616, 617.

¹² File no. 6.1.6.1-1, GGS; OII SzG, doc. no. 617/10, 617/41, 617/80, AAN.

Kyōji (1892–1960). At that time Tominaga was the aide of the Japanese Military Attaché in Moscow, Captain Terada Seiichi (1895–1969), who from 1928 was participating in training in Poland (2nd Air Regiment). The main aim of their visit was probably to discuss the future cooperation with the Polish Second Department in the area of information exchange, and a cable from the aide of Poland's Military Attaché in Moscow, Captain Jan Grudzień (1894–1936) can be confirmation of that. In the cable, Grudzień stressed that as a result of this visit, Japanese military authorities have decided that Warsaw should be for them the focal point of gathering intel on the Red Army. Captain Grudzień also mentioned that he was told during a conversation with Tominaga that the Japanese General Staff is thinking about reducing the personnel of its Moscow Attaché Office and increasing the staff in Warsaw.

Yamawaki was very keen on strengthening the cooperation with the Second Department of Polish Staff; he took care of Jędrzejewicz when the latter arrived in Tokyo and brought him to the General Staff. Jędrzejewicz recollected that:

It was clear that what separates Poland from Japan in the territorial sense (Soviet Russia), is also what tightly connects the two countries. And thus, a detailed analysis of the Russian situation, as Russia constantly poses a threat to both Poland and Japan, will be the main element of the Polish mission's tasks. My work on Russia in the General Staff . . . enabled me to become an expert in all elements connected to the Russian army, its organization, deployment, mobilization, transport, communications, economic life, and also the political situation in Soviet Russia along with personal data. This was the material I was to use in Tokyo . . . Our relations with Japan were to be based on the fact that, as far as Russia is concerned, we do not have anything to hide from the Japanese side and we will gladly share all the information that is available to us. (WJ, p. 120)

One of the Jędrzejewicz's tasks was to survey the possibilities of cooperation in organizing an intelligence post in Siberia.¹³ He also took part in the annual grand military exercise (Sendai, Saga, Nagoya–Seto–Inuyama) and in the exercise of smaller troops. Jędrzejewicz's cooperation with the Staff was very satisfying. The reason behind it was most probably not only the fact that he and the Japanese shared views on the Soviet Union but also how Jędrzejewicz treated his colleagues, their country and its culture. After Jędrzejewicz left, Major Henryk Rajchman-Floyar (1893–1951) was assigned to the post. In 1931, he, in turn, was succeeded by Antoni Ślósarczyk (1899–1985) as the acting Attaché. In 1935 Major Antoni Przybylski (1889–?) started his tenure, and from 1938 to 1941 Lieutenant colonel Jerzy Levittoux (1897–1944) was assigned to the post. Meanwhile in Warsaw, after Okabe Naosaburō (1887–1946) left, Major Higuchi Kiichirō (1888–1970) was the Japanese Attaché from 1925 to 1928, he was succeeded by Major Yanagida Genzō (1893–1952), who served as Attaché until 1934, when Yamawaki Masataka, who by that time was promoted to the rank of colonel, arrived in Poland. After two years, in 1935, Yamawaki was succeeded by General Sawada Shigeru (1887–1980), and Lieutenant colonel Ueda Masao (1897–1993) assumed the post in 1938. Officially, he was the Military Attaché until

¹³ OII SzG, no. 616/68, AAN; cf. A. Pepłoński, "Nie publikowany dokument dotyczący współpracy między Oddziałem II Sztabu Generalnego WP a wywiadem japońskim," *Przegląd Policyjny* 1991, no. 1/23, pp. 104–107.

March 1940 but in reality, left Warsaw just after the start of the war, on 6 September 1939, together with Ambassador Sakō Shūichi (1887–1949) and other employees of the Japanese Embassy.¹⁴ I would like to add that all of the Japanese Military Attachés who served in Poland, were later promoted to the rank of general.

Military cooperation thrived during the 1930s. Tokyo decided that Warsaw can be a valuable strategic point and a Japanese intelligence coordination centre for Europe, which would be oriented not only towards the East but also the West. In relations to this, the number of personnel of the Military Attaché's Office was often increased to include Attaché's aides and military advisors. Also, more scholarship recipients were sent to Poland during that decade than in the 1920s; apart from studying about the military and learning the language, their role was to help at the Attaché's Office, also with collecting intel. Possibly, more than one hundred officers and non-commissioned officers came to Poland in the 1930s.¹⁵ Officially they were sent for scholarships, short training, or to visit certain units. Unfortunately, however, it is impossible to compile a full list of these visitors, as almost none of the Japanese document survived and Polish sources contain a lot of information that is often contradictory. According to what was agreed in the 1920s, it is certain that many officers who were sent to Poland by the Staff not only gathered information on the USSR but also developed their cryptographic skills. It is worth mentioning a two-day visit of Major Nishimura Toshio (1898–1956) to the Infantry Training Centre in Rembertów (now a district of the city of Warsaw). Nishimura was staying in the USSR at the time, and later, as an Attaché in Stockholm (1938–1941), cooperated with Major Michał Rybikowski (1900–1991). In 1937, the Japanese Attaché in Riga, Major Onodera Makoto (1897–1987) visited Wilno (present-day Vilnius). Later Onodera succeeded Nishimura in Sweden and continued to cooperate with Rybikowski.

Polish and Japanese Attachés emphasized good cooperation with military authorities both in Warsaw and in Tokyo, and many of them wrote in the reports to their supervisors about Yamawaki's crucial role in developing this cooperation. It was thanks to him that Poland had numerous supporters in Japanese land forces. Considered an expert on Polish affairs, Yamawaki participated, often operating behind the scenes, in official and unofficial meetings and talks on cooperation between Poland and Japan.¹⁶ When he was already the Vice-Minister of Land Forces, in 1939, he tried to mediate between Poland and Germany, whose relations at the time were very strained. Since 1936 and the signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact, Germany was Japan's ally. When Yamawaki thanked the Embassy of the Republic of Poland for recognition of his services for Poland, as evidenced by a sabre from President Ignacy Mościcki (1867–1946), he said:

¹⁴ Official decision [in:] M.2.1.0-13-15, GGS; interviews with Ueda son, Hiroaki and Mori Motojirō, then correspondent of Dōmei Press Agency, who left Warsaw with Sakō.

¹⁵ See: *Wykaz oficerów japońskich na stażach w Polsce*, doc. no. 56, 57, "Wydział ogólny" [in:] *Oddział II Sztabu Generalnego i Głównego Wojska Polskiego*, Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe, Warsaw; see also doc. no. 55, 58 and OII SzG, no. 617/13, AAN.

¹⁶ See doc. no. 249 [in:] "Referat Studiów Ogólnych Oddziału II," AAN.

I am a friend of Poland . . . When I talk with Germany, I constantly tell them to study Poland's history . . . It is not in Germany's interest to have Poland, which separates Germany from Russia, be Germany's enemy. Japan, in my opinion, could be a mediator and guarantor in Germany-Poland relations.¹⁷

The fact that Poland could not and did not want Japan to mediate in negotiations between Poland and Germany did not influence further bilateral relations.

COOPERATION DURING THE WAR OFFICIAL BILATERAL RELATIONS 1939–1941

At the beginning of September 1939, soon after the outbreak of the war, the Japanese government informed the heads of foreign missions in Tokyo that Japan will remain neutral and does not want to get involved in the war, as it needs to focus its forces on the “Chinese problem,” i.e. the second Sino-Japanese War, which started in 1937. At the end of September, the Foreign Affairs Minister Nomura Kichisaburō (1877–1964) assured the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland, Tadeusz Romer (1894–1978), that regardless of the Japanese government's policy of non-involvement in the European conflict, the genuine friendliness of the Japanese nation towards Poland remains unchanged. Japan will recognize the Polish government, which was now in exile, and will also recognize Ambassador Romer as the official representative of the Republic of Poland, however, it would prefer not to lend wide publicity to this fact (TRDAJ, I).¹⁸ The subsequent Ministers of Foreign Affairs Arita Hachirō (1884–1965) and Matsuoka Yōsuke (1880–1946) also assured Romer about the friendly disposition towards Poland. Despite the pressures from Germany, Japan did not shut down the Polish Embassy in Tokyo. One of the reasons for this was the loss of trust in Germany after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact on 23 August 1939 and another reason, a more prominent one, was the unchanging attitude of both states towards the Soviet Union and the possibility of gaining information about it. Ambassador Romer stressed this in the cables to August Zaleski (1883–1972) the Minister of Foreign Affairs. On 14 November 1939, he wrote:

The friendship between Poland and Japan stems from the awareness of the common Russian threat. The ever-present relevance of this assumption and lack of friction in other areas have consolidated this friendship . . . in the eyes of the Japanese, we remain to be . . . a very reliable

¹⁷ See doc. *Japan*, vol. I: 1937–1940 (abbr. TRDAJ, I); more documents concerning Japan in vol. II: 1940–1941 (abbr. TRDAJ, II) [in:] T. Romer, *Diplomatic Activities 1913–1975*, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa (unpublished).

¹⁸ More about Romer's activity in Japan see, e.g. E. Pałasz-Rutkowska, “Rescuer of refugees in Tokyo: Polish Ambassador Tadeusz Romer,” *Darbai in Dienos* 2017, no. 67, pp. 239–254; eadem, “Ambassador Tadeusz Romer: His Role in Polish-Japanese Relations (1937–1941),” *Silva Japonicarum* 2008, Fasc. XVIII, pp. 82–104; E. Pałasz-Rutkowska, A.T. Romer, *Historia*, pp. 214–218, and the following pages.

source of information on the USSR . . . I ceaselessly try to reinforce the conviction of the Japanese government in the value of our information on Russian topics. (TRDAJ, I)

Romer shared similar suggestions with Zaleski even later, when in September 1940 Japan signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy in which the three states mutually assured the fact that they recognize and respect each other's right to establish "a new order" in Europe and in Greater East Asia. In principle, Japan's attitude towards Poland did not alter. This changed in mid-1940, when Germany, after victories over the USSR, occupied the entire territory of Poland and decided to wipe it off the world map. As Japan was preparing for the Asia-Pacific War, it was forced to support the European policy of its ally and could not further ignore Germany's pressure to change the attitude towards Poland. On 4 October 1941, the Japanese government announced that it will be closing the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Tokyo.¹⁹ The Japanese Embassy in Warsaw was then also officially closed. On 26 October, together with his family and the majority of the Embassy's personnel, Ambassador Romer moved from Tokyo to Shanghai as Poland's special mission Ambassador to the Far East.

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION 1939–1945

The Japanese, who in August 1939 lost their trust in Germany, were not only keen on obtaining information about the Soviet Union but also about Germany. It was not easy to continue conducting intelligence assessment in Europe, so in exchange for information, the Japanese promised to covertly allocate Polish intelligence liaison officers in their diplomatic posts in Germany, the Baltic states and Scandinavia. The Japanese enabled them to send reports in the Japanese diplomatic mail and issued suitable forged documents. Initially, until August 1940 when the Baltic states lost their independence, the centre for this cooperation was Riga and Kaunas. Later it was Berlin, Prague, Königsberg and Stockholm. It is known that such operations were also undertaken in Bucharest, Sofia and Istanbul, in the Vatican and Rome, and in Manchuria, but since this cooperation is less relevant to the topic of this paper, I will not be dedicating more space to this matter.²⁰

From 1935 Polish and Japanese intelligence officers cooperated in Latvia. Until the autumn of 1939, Colonel Feliks Brzeskwiński (1896–1960) was the Polish Military Attaché in Riga. He maintained contact with successive Japanese Attachés

¹⁹ See doc. [in:] M.1.5.0.3-30 (VII), GGS; cf. TRDAJ, II.

²⁰ H. Kuromiya, A. Pepłoński, *Między Warszawą a Tokio. Polsko-japońska współpraca wywiadowcza 1904–1944*, Toruń 2009; A. Pepłoński, *Wywiad Polskich Sił Zbrojnych na Zachodzie (1939–1945)*, Warszawa 1995; J.W.M. Chapman, "Japan in Poland's Secret Neighbourhood War," *Japan Forum* 1995, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 252–256; J.W.M. Chapman, "The Polish Connection: Japan, Poland and the Axis Alliance," *Proceedings of the British Association for Japanese Studies* 1977, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 57–78.

(they were usually also responsible for Lithuania and Estonia). Between 1935 and 1938 the aforementioned Major Onodera Makoto was the Japanese Attaché and later Lieutenant colonel Onouchi Hiroshi (1899–1984) assumed this post. After the diplomatic post there was closed, he became the official Military Attaché in Stockholm. He was supposed to replace Attaché Nishimura Toshio but ultimately, he was sent to Helsinki. Norbert Żaba (1907–1994), who was the Press Attaché at the time, mentioned the cooperation between Polish and Japanese officers in Helsinki to me. He did not cooperate with them directly but allowed the use of his flat. Nishimura stayed in Sweden and thanks to him, in January 1940 the intelligence branch “North” of the Second Department, which headed by Waław Gilewicz (1903–1998) started operating in Stockholm.

KAUNAS

Another important figure in intelligence cooperation during the war is Sugihara Chiune (1900–1986), who as Vice-Consul opened in November 1939 a new Japanese diplomatic post in Kaunas.²¹ As there were no Japanese citizens in Lithuania, there was no need for consular protection there and the Japanese Diplomatic Mission in Latvia was in charge of Lithuania’s issues, it was obvious that the Japanese government chose this location only because it could be a vantage point for this part of Europe and the USSR in particular. The reason for the opening of the consulate in Kaunas was explained by Sugihara himself in a unique document, a report in Russian, he most probably wrote at the request of Michał Rybikowski (1900–1991) in 1969. Ludwik Hryniewicz (1904–1993) gave the copy of the typescript of this document with his translation and commentary to Andrzej T. Romer when we were working on our book.²² Sugihara wrote:

It became obvious why the General Staff of the Japanese Army insisted that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs open a consulate in Kaunas. As a consul in Kaunas, where there were no Japanese, I understood that my main task was to inform the General Staff and the MOFA . . . about the concentration of German troops near the border. (SCh, p. 132)

Before arriving in Kaunas, Sugihara had worked as a translator in the Japanese Mission in Helsinki from 1937, where Sakō Shūichi was the Ambassador at the time. From October Sakō started working as an Ambassador in Warsaw. Sugihara had an excellent command of Russian, which he learnt in Harbin in Manchuria, and this is why he was hired there at the General Consulate of Japan. After the creation of Manchukuo in 1932, he was the Head of the Russian Affairs Office in the Foreign Affairs Department, the equivalent of the Foreign Ministry of the puppet government there.

²¹ On Sugihara appointment see documents [in:] M.2.1.0.10-92, GGS.

²² “Raport konsula Sugihary Chiune,” re-translation, introduction and edition by E. Pałasz-Rutkowska, *Japonica* 1997, no. 7, pp. 131–140 (abbr. SCh).

After Sugihara arrived in Lithuania, he quickly established contact with Poles. He reached Tadeusz Kognowicki (1922–1941), who was a member of the local intelligence network, which from 1940 was known as ZWZ (Union of Armed Struggle – Polish underground army) Kowno Subdistrict.²³ Among the people working there was Eryk Budzyński (1917–2005), who was later responsible for preparing the operation of delivering mail from ZWZ to the Polish Government-in-Exile via Japanese diplomatic couriers. Also, Ludwik Hryniewicz, the leader of the “Wierzba” (lit. Willow) Group, operating on Second Department of the General Staff’s orders, also began cooperating with Sugihara.²⁴ He recommended that Sugihara hired Bolesław Różycki as his butler, and Różycki was to keep “Wierzba” informed of the happenings at the consulate. It soon became clear “that the opening of the consulate was the legal location of a Japanese intelligence outpost” (LH, pp. 16–17).

From autumn 1939, one of the main tasks of “Wierzba” was to help with the extraction of servicemen out of internment camps in Lithuanian territory (e.g. Kulautuva, Birštonas, Palanga), and help them flee to the West. After 17 September, when the Soviet army started the occupation of the eastern parts of Poland, thousands of civilian and military fugitives, fled to neutral Lithuania in fear of persecution, imprisonment, exile deep into Russian territory, or even death. The situation became more complicated after 10 October, when the USSR handed over a part of the Polish territory, including Wilno, to Lithuania. In protest, the staff of the Diplomatic Mission of the Republic of Poland left Kaunas, and the affairs of the Polish refugees were taken over by the British Mission, which would also represent the Polish Government-in-Exile. The British Mission hired Leszek Daszkiewicz, who was able to leave the camp in Kulautuva.²⁵ He was an officer of the Information Desk at the Command of Corps District Command number III in Grodno at the time and soon began cooperating with the Japanese. He worked on orders from “Kuba,” which was *nom de guerre* of Captain Alfons Jakubianiec (1905–1945), an officer of the Branch of the Second Department of General Staff in Grodno, and he was responsible for, among others, collecting information, keeping files, tracking suspects, issuing documents for fugitives who fled German or Soviet occupation or internment camps, issuing certificates and identification cards, and conducting special military intelligence, e.g. collecting data on the movement of Soviet and German armies and on Soviet help for Germany (LD, pp. 9–11). Daszkiewicz also maintained contact with Wilno where he delivered blank certificates and identification cards that the fugitives needed. Jakubianiec and Daszkiewicz’s supervisor was Michał Rybikowski, who from 1936 headed an office in the Bureau of German Studies in the Second Department of the General Staff, and from 1939 he worked at the headquarters of intelligence directed at Germany. After the outbreak of the war, he reached Paris through Romania and then through

²³ J. Kozakiewicz, R. Mackiewicz, “Podokrąg ZWZ-AK Kowno, Inspektorat E,” *Wiano*, no. 8, pp. 2–3.

²⁴ L. Hryniewicz, *Grupa pod kryptonimem „Wierzba” na Litwie Kowieńskiej działająca w okresie II wojny światowej*, Warszawa 1988 (typescript; abbr. LH).

²⁵ L. Daszkiewicz, *Placówka wywiadowcza „G”*. *Sprawozdania i dokumenta*, Anglia 1948 (typescript; abbr. LD).

Denmark, Sweden, Finland, probably in March 1940, reached Kaunas and established contact with Wilno.²⁶ His task was to create an intelligence network in western Poland, in the Vilnius Region and in the Baltic States. Rybikowski discussed this matter with Jakubianiec, whom he had known before the war, as “Kuba” was his student at the Cadet Infantry School in Ostrów Mazowiecka.²⁷ The intelligence work required Rybikowski to travel around Europe, which was very dangerous during the war. Already at that time, the Japanese were helping him. In Stockholm, thanks to the help of Attaché Nishimura he met with Onouchi, who helped him get to Riga. Most probably he also visited Berlin and at the time he changed his forged identity from Ian Jakobsen, a Latvian merchant, to Manchuria-born Russian Peter Ivanov. He received the Manchukuo passport in this state’s legation thanks to Sugihara and Onouchi. As it was then impossible to re-enter Wilno, Rybikowski returned to Stockholm to continue his “work against Germans.”²⁸

In the spring of 1940 Jakubianiec as “Jerzy Kuncewicz” and Daszkiewicz as “Jan Perz” start their cooperation with Sugihara. Daszkiewicz contacted him especially often and “gave him [Sugihara] information concerning Russian affairs only” (LD, pp. 21–24). In exchange for information on Germany and the USSR, Sugihara aided the Polish Underground and Intelligence in sending mail from Lithuania to the West, to the Polish Government-in-Exile, and from the West to Lithuania, or even further to Warsaw via Japanese diplomatic mail. They used Japanese couriers who often travelled through Lithuania on the Berlin–Moscow–Tokyo route.²⁹ He also facilitated the work of Poles in the Underground by issuing forged documents and help to allocate Poles in Japanese or Manchukuo diplomatic posts. The cooperation of Polish intelligence with Sugihara in Kaunas was also connected with a very humanitarian and extremely important action of the Consul issuing transit visas through Japan for thousands of Poles, mainly Polish Jews.³⁰ At the beginning of the war, the neutral Lithuania seemed to be a safe haven for those fleeing racist German policies and Russian pogroms. Until the end of spring 1940, it was still possible to get from Lithuania through Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and France, then across the Mediterranean mostly to Palestine, where, however, Great Britain enforced very low entry limits. Further German victories in Europe closed off all routes to the West. It was possible to go to the east by Trans-Siberian Railway to Vladivostok. The situation further deteriorated after the USSR annexed Lithuania in August 1940. To leave Lithuania, one had to possess necessary passports and visas which enabled entry to suitable states. Thankfully there were many diplomatic posts and consulates in

²⁶ See: Rybikowski’s untitled notes (no date), p. 2, in the unpublished file “Michał Rybikowski,” Archiwum Muzeum Wojska Polskiego, Warszawa; the date was confirmed by his wife in correspondence with me; in another document “Major Alfons Jakubianiec” (1965, p. 2) he stated that it was October 1939.

²⁷ M. Rybikowski, “Major Alfons Jakubianiec,” pp. 1–5.

²⁸ M. Rybikowski, untitled notes, p. 4.

²⁹ More [in:] E. Budzyński, “Poczta japońska,” *Zeszyty Historyczne* 1992, no. 102, pp. 203–213.

³⁰ The subject is relatively known, especially in Japan, see, e.g. *Jiyū e no tōsō. Sugihara biza to Yudayajin*, Tōkyō 1995; K. Watanabe, *Shinshō. Inochi biza*, Tōkyō 2000; Shiraishi M. *Chōhō no tensai. Sugihara Chiune*, Tōkyō 2011; A. Kitade, *Inochi no biza. Haruka naru tabiji*, Tōkyō 2012; A. Takahashi, *Taiheiō o watatta Sugihara biza*, Gifu 2020, etc.

Kaunas. Those who did not own passports received special citizenship certificates. Poles could obtain them in the British Mission, where, as mentioned above, Daszkiewicz worked, however, after the USSR annexed Lithuania, the Soviet authorities ordered all foreign diplomatic missions to be closed until 25 August (extended to 4 September).

First to try and aid the refugees was the Dutch Consul Jan Zwartendijk (1896–1976). With permission of his superior, L.P.J. de Decker (1884–1948) the Dutch Ambassador to Latvia, Zwartendijk started to include an annotation in the documents which stated, “for the admission of aliens to Surinam, Curaçao, and other Dutch possessions in the Americas, an entry visa is not required.”³¹ He intentionally omitted the second part of the legal formula the clause that the entry to the Dutch West Indies required permission of local colonial governors, which was granted only on rare occasions. His annotation was a regulation infringement and thus the Dutch Consul risked his life. Zwartendijk knew that these visas will not be usable but he did not omit any one of those who came to him. He worked like this from 22 July to 2 August, when he closed the Consulate and left Kaunas. The exact number of the annotations he issued is not known. His son, Jan Zwartendijk Jr., told me in Tokyo (1995) that as an eleven-year-old boy he helped his father in Kaunas burn all the documents. He claimed that his father managed to issue 1,200 to 1,400 “Curaçao visas,” but in fact, 2,400 “visas” have been identified.³² Refugees with Dutch annotations started to look for a way to Curaçao, despite knowing that they cannot go there – the only route that remained was through the USSR and Japan.

Transit visas or permission to leave Russia’s territory and transit visas through Japan were needed. At the end of July, the first group of refugees went to the Japanese Consulate in Kaunas, and more of them were arriving each day (SCh, pp. 137–138). During our meeting at her home in Kamakura in 1993, Sugihara’s wife Yukiko (1913–2008) told me that the refugee matter began on 27 July. She helped her husband in his work in the Consulate and, among others, copied cables to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the Japanese Ambassador in Germany, and to the envoy in Latvia. She was aware of the fact that Chiune was cooperating with intelligence officers because his task was to collect information. She knew Jan Perz well, and she remembered him as “a kind of family man, who was dearly loved by children,” she also knew that he was Polish. She also told me about the tense atmosphere when they were waiting for a reply to her husband’s cable from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the permission to issue many transit visas through Japan for refugees. As a Consul, Sugihara could issue only a small number of visas. The answer from the Ministry was negative:

Those who do not hold permission to enter the country of destination are not allowed to receive Japanese visas . . . The reply stated that the country’s internal services objected to the idea,

³¹ See: I. Lewin, *Remember the Days of Old: Historical Essays*, New York 1994, pp. 171–176; cf. J. Zwartendyk, Jr., “Curaçao: Lifeline to Holocaust Survival,” *Jewish Studies*, Spring 1996, pp. 2–9; also in my correspondence with E. Heppner.

³² *Flight and Rescue*, Washington DC 2001, p. 63.

because such a large group poses a threat to public peace, and carriers whose ships operated between Tsuruga and Vladivostok objected to the idea, because of the safety of the passengers.³³

Sugihara however decided to issue the visas. Yukiko told me:

We were of course well aware of the fact that he can get fired from work. It was very dangerous. The Germans must have known about this. If we had been caught then . . . He did not heed any subsequent cables from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and for 20 days from 9 in the morning until the evening, without taking breaks for meals, he would be issuing visas. He was in a hurry, as he knew that sooner or later, he will be forced to close the Consulate and he might not make it in time to save all these people.

It is worth mentioning that Poles cooperating with Sugihara were also interested in visas for those who could join the Polish army in the West. Daszkiewicz wrote:

Apart from providing the Japanese Consul with the information from the USSR territory, I was supposed to receive from him a reply concerning transit visas through Japan . . . When the Japanese Consulate began to issue visas, Jews began to apply *en masse*, while there were only a few Poles who were interested. There were only a dozen or so who applied, and I helped them receive priority in all matters relating to the journey. Some of them (there were a few officers among them) left quickly and after a while joined the Independent Carpathian Rifle Brigade. (LD, pp. 22–23)

The exact number of those saved by Sugihara remains unknown. According to the so-called Sugihara's list, he saved 2,139 refugees (more than 2,000 Polish Jews and Poles).³⁴ The actual numbers are certainly much higher, as children often exited the country on their parents' visas. Furthermore, with the end of August approaching, Sugihara was pressed for time and he issued some documents without assigning them successive numbers. There were also forged visas, issued after he had left Kaunas. Daszkiewicz wrote:

One day Consul Sugihara told me he is experiencing difficulties in writing the approved formula in Japanese in passports and this is hindering the speed with which the applicants are processed. I asked him whether it was possible to make a rubber stamp with the text and then all he would need to do was to fill in the rest and put his signature. He agreed to my idea and gave me the pattern, which in turn I gave to Captain Jakubianiec, who order the stamp be made. However, we ordered two stamps, and one of them was sent to Wilno, where later Japanese transit visas were issued with an earlier date, after the Japanese Consul had left Kaunas. (LD, p. 23)

Refugees who received transit visas from Sugihara travelled across the USSR via the Trans-Siberian Railway, reaching Vladivostok, from which they took ships to the port of Tsuruga, where the representatives of the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Tokyo, Tadeusz Romer, awaited them.³⁵ He established the Polish Committee to Aid War Victims under the aegis of the Embassy of Poland in Tokyo. In connection with the liquidation of the Embassy in Tokyo in October 1941, the Japanese authorities sent all the refugees from Poland remaining in Japan to Shanghai – about a 1,000

³³ Sugihara Y., *Rokusenjin no inochi no biza*, Tōkyō 1990, p. 30 (abbr. SY).

³⁴ File no. J.2.3.0 J/X2-6, GGS.

³⁵ More about this Romer's activity [in:] E. Pałasz-Rutkowska, *Rescuer of refugees in Tokyo*, pp. 246–251; E. Pałasz-Rutkowska, A.T. Romer, *Historia*, pp. 324–337.

people, nearly all of whom were Jewish. Romer, as “ambassador on special mission,” continued to take care of them (till August 1942).

There were also others who helped refugees. Nei Saburō, the Japanese Consul in Vladivostok, who against the MOFA allowed the refugees to sail from Vladivostok to Tsuruga. Refugees also received the help of Osako Tatsuo from the Japan Tourist Bureau, which was responsible for the transit on this route. Also, Kotsuji Setsuzō and many others in Japan helped refugees. However, this dangerous humanitarian effort began with Zwartendijk and Sugihara in Kaunas. As both consuls rescued thousands of Jews from the hands of Nazi Germans, both were honoured by Yad Vashem, Sugihara in 1985 and Zwartendijk in 1997.

BERLIN–PRAGUE–KÖNIGSBERG

In the summer of 1940, after Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were annexed by the USSR, the Japanese closed down all their posts in these territories. On 24 August Consul Sugihara sent Jakubianiec and Daszkiewicz from Kaunas to Berlin with official Japanese service passports, and he himself with his family left Kaunas on 1 September. Soon after that, both Polish intelligence officers went to Stockholm to agree with Rybikowski on the principles of further cooperation. Daszkiewicz recalled:

We agreed that the Berlin will be the residence of Captain Jakubianiec, and I will stay with Sugihara, with whom I was to go to Prague. My intelligence post was called the “G” Post and I was to use the code name “Herman Gering.” We were to be responsible to gather any and all information . . . This information was then supposed to be sent to Captain Jakubianiec, and he would send them, if the situation allowed it, from Berlin to Stockholm. Here I need to stress, that it wasn’t always possible to send the messages in time, as we were dependent on the schedule of the Japanese and their messengers. (LD, p. 30–31)

Eventually, both of them return to Berlin. Thanks to Sugihara, Jakubianiec was fictitiously employed as a translator in the Japanese Military Attaché’s office but in fact, he became the commander of a new intelligence post of the Second Department of Commander in Chief’s Staff. Daszkiewicz accompanied Sugihara and thanks to him, got acquainted with a few Japanese from the Embassy, who helped him send mail to Stockholm, and one from the diplomatic post in Manchukuo, who “perhaps helped him the most in Berlin” (LD, p. 33). In Berlin there were two centres of cooperation between the Polish and the Japanese; one was the Military Attaché’s Office at the Japanese Embassy, where Jakubieniec was hired, and the other was the Manchukuo Legation, where Sabina Łapińska, Jakubieniec’s closest collaborator was working as a housekeeper almost from the start of the war. Łapińska was probably hired earlier in the Japanese Attaché’s Office in Warsaw. The Berlin Attaché’s Office was also a centre for the Japanese intelligence and because of this, every few months the meetings of Japanese military representatives in Europe took place there. Serviceman used the help of diplomatic staff (mail) and they, in turn, conducted civilian intelligence, using other

sources of information. Germans knew about these two Berlin centres of cooperation between Poles and the Japanese. This is reflected in the memoirs of Walter Schellenberg (1910–1952), who was the head of counterintelligence at the Gestapo,³⁶ and, also above all, the report of Reinhard Heydrich (1904–1942), chief of the Reich Main Security Office.³⁷ Germans knew that Sugihara was cooperating with Jan Perz and Jerzy Kuncewicz, whom he helped obtain Japanese citizenship, and he also knew that Onodera was cooperating with Rybikowski. Heydrich also writes about the organization of the Japanese intelligence in Berlin, which was headed by the Japanese Military Attaché. The East Section operated against Russia and it was headed by the Attaché in Stockholm (Nishimura, Onodera), and the branches in Helsinki (Onouchi), in Königsberg (Sugihara) and until 1940 in Riga operated under him. The West Section's scope was Germany and it operated through the Manchukuo Legation, where, among others, Colonel Hoshino (Ichirō) worked as a Counsellor. His real name was Akikusa Shun (1894–1949) and he was one of the most experienced members of the Japanese military intelligence. Interestingly, at the same time, he was appointed Consul General of Manchukuo in Warsaw (1940–1942). Heydrich also mentioned Kasai, the Commercial Attaché in that mission who “delivered to Kuncewicz a letter and money for the proxy of the resistance movement in Warsaw” (p. 10). Kasai Tadakazu did not confirm this information in his correspondence with me (1996) but did admit that he worked at the Post between 1938 and 1945, and on several occasions, he passed to Kuncewicz parcels from Stockholm, and these parcels were later sent to the Polish government in London. He also claimed that at Onodera's Stockholm office he had the opportunity to meet “the most important informant of the network at the time,” Ivanov, i.e. Rybikowski. He knew that the exchange of information was the purpose of this collaboration.

At the beginning of October 1940 Sugihara together with Daszkiewicz left for Berlin and went to Prague, where he became Deputy Consul General. They stayed there for about six weeks and returned to Berlin, where Daszkiewicz meets with Rybikowski. It was then that Rybikowski took the two Polish regimental banners brought by Sugihara from Kaunas. One belonged to the King Stephen Báthory 81st Grodno Rifle Regiment and the other was embroidered in conspiracy in Vilnius for Polish airmen in the West.³⁸

After their return, Sugihara officially hired Daszkiewicz at the Consulate. At that time, Daszkiewicz was still gathering information and through Sugihara passed them on to Jakubianiec. In March 1941 both of them relocate to Königsberg in East Prussia, where, as Deputy Consul General, Sugihara opened a new post, which also was tasked with collecting information, but mainly on German troop movements on the border with the USSR. Two Japanese Ambassadors in Berlin, Kurusu Saburō (1886–1954) and Ōshima Hiroshi (1886–1975) insisted that this post was created. Daszkiewicz claimed that this location was already suggested by the Japanese in Kaunas because of the possibility of working in Lithuania, but mainly because of various

³⁶ W. Schellenberg, *The Schellenberg Memoirs*, transl. L. Hagen, London 1975, pp. 144–154.

³⁷ Heydrich to Ribbentrop, “Japanische Spionage im Reich,” no. IV E 5-K.52g.Ra. (7 August 1941), Onodera's archive.

³⁸ See e.g. LD, p. 25; Sch, pp. 136–137; M. Rybikowski, untitled notes, pp. 11–12.

information concerning the possibility of war between Germany and the USSR (LD, p. 36). Stanisław Kossko (1901–1942), who previously cooperated with “Wierzba,” was hired as a footman in the Königsberg Consulate. He was Daszkiewicz’s most trusted informant and he was also aided by his wife Maria (née O’Rourke), who had contacts with the wives of influential Germans (LD, p. 47; SCh, pp. 135–136).

In order to confirm the information about war preparations, Daszkiewicz suggested Sugihara went on cart trips in the direction of Klaipėda and returning to Königsberg along the border strip (LD, pp. 55–57). The heavy military traffic in East Prussia was an indication that some military preparations were underway. Sugihara later sent cypher messages to Tokyo, Berlin, Stockholm, Moscow, Helsinki and Rome. He claimed that Onodera would certainly pass them on to Rybikowski, but just in case, Daszkiewicz also sent reports to Jakubianiec.

This activity of Sugihara’s worried the Germans. Alarming reports about him from Kaunas, Prague and also from Königsberg reached Berlin.³⁹ Sugihara was forced to leave Königsberg. The Consulate was officially shut down in November 1941 and in December Sugihara started working in the Japanese Embassy in Bucharest as a translator. He remained there until the end of the war. He continued his intelligence activities but did not have any direct contact with the Poles. He returned to Japan with his family in 1947. In June of that year, he was dismissed from the MOFA. This was explained by a general reduction of staff. After this Sugihara took up various jobs, making use of his knowledge of the Russian language.

Daszkiewicz believed that the main reason for the closure of the Consulate was the arrests of Jakubianiec, Łapińska and others conducted on the night of 6–7 July 1941 by Schellenberg’s men in Berlin (LD, p. 67). Sugihara was immediately summoned to Berlin, and after returning to Königsberg, he realized that there was no possibility to help “Kuba” out of prison, as things had gone too far and Ambassador Ōshima insisted on ending the cooperation with the Poles. Sugihara still managed to help Daszkiewicz leave Königsberg (LD, p. 75); together with Secretary Satō he went via Berlin to Sofia in mid-August and then to Istanbul. Here he returned his Japanese passport and, with a new Polish passport, sets off for Palestine, where until 1945 he worked for the Second Department of the Commander in Chief’s Staff. After that, he left for England. Before leaving Königsberg Daszkiewicz handed all matters, important contacts and the remaining mail to Kossko. Unfortunately, soon afterwards the Kosskos were arrested by the Germans. Stanisław was executed at the end of 1942, his wife survived until the end of the war. Jakubianiec died in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in 1945.

Cooperation between Polish and Japanese intelligence in Königsberg and Berlin came to an end in 1941. The Japanese did not want their relations with Germans to deteriorate any further, as they needed an ally in creating the “new order” in the Far East, especially that they were preparing for war with the United States and Great Britain. The war started on 7 (8) December and, although Poland declared a state of

³⁹ SCh, p. 133; Heydrich, p. 1.

war with Japan on 11 December, the cooperation of Polish and Japanese intelligence continued almost until the end of the war, and Stockholm became its centre.

STOCKHOLM

As the authorities of Sweden, which officially remained neutral, recognised the Polish Government-in-Exile, there was a Polish Legation in Stockholm throughout the war, with a Military Attaché's Office headed by the aforementioned Colonel Feliks Brzeskwiński. He cooperated with Nishimura, thanks to whom in January 1940 the "North" Branch of the Second Department began operations. It was headed by Rittmeister Waclaw Gilewicz, officially the Second Secretary at the Polish Legation.⁴⁰ He collected information on Germany and as a liaison officer, passed on instructions from the headquarters to Polish officers in Japanese diplomatic missions, who in turn sent him intelligence reports via Japanese diplomatic mail. Gilewicz was authorised to share selected messages with the Japanese. So he forwarded to Nishimura information concerning, among other things, the progressing concentration of German forces in the General Government and the development of the war industry in Germany. In exchange for that, Nishimura, independently from the help with the mail, informed Gilewicz about, e.g. the movement of German troops through Sweden and about the transports of iron ore from Sweden to Germany. Also, the "Anna" Base operated in Stockholm. It was a post of the Sixth Department which facilitated communications between the Commander in Chief's Staff and the country.⁴¹ Theoretically, Major Michał Rybikowski served under the heads of both these branches. Rybikowski, as Peter Ivanov, was hired in the Japanese Attaché's Office. However, he tried to avoid using them as a go-between and sent the materials he collected to London through Brzeskwiński. Rybikowski created the "L" Branch, which also focused on working against Germans. In the Attaché's Office, he cooperated first with Nishimura, and then, from January 1941 with General Onodera Makoto, whose most trusted collaborator was his wife Yuriko (1906–1998). She coded all cables to the General Staff in Tokyo, and therefore she knew many details of her husband's work, which she described in her works.⁴² She also talked about her husband's cooperation with Rybikowski during my conversations with her (1993, 1996), she also shared with me copies of the letters written by Rybikowski to Onodera after the war and other

⁴⁰ See e.g. doc. [in:] "Kolekcje prywatne," no. 206: "W. Gilewicz," Instytut Polski i Muzeum Gen. Sikorskiego, Londyn; cf. A. Pełoński, *Wywiad...*, pp. 234–236.

⁴¹ L.A.B. Kliszewicz, "Baza w Sztokholmie," *Zeszyty Historyczne* 1981, no. 58, pp. 44–175.

⁴² Y. Onodera, *Barutokai no hotori ni te*, Tōkyō 1985 (abbr. OY); idem, "Onodera bukan no 'tatakai.' Hokuō no chi no jōhōsen to Ribikofusuki no koto," *Seiron* 1993, no. 5, pp. 186–221 (abbr. OYS). Some parts of the article in Polish as: "'Walka' attaché Onodery," introduction and translation E. Pałasz-Rutkowska, *Japonica* 1994, no. 2, pp. 97–113 (abbr. OYJ); see also N. Okabe, *Kieta Yaruta mitsuyaku kinkyūden*, Tōkyō 2012.

documents from the family archives. I was also provided with a lot of information by the Onodera's daughter, Ōtaka Setsuko.

Onodera Yuriko stressed how important the cooperation with Rybikowski was for her husband, and how he valued Rybikowski's knowledge and experience. She also provided an interesting background for this cooperation:

As Japan was then bound by a pact with Germany and Italy, Onodera officially had to maintain friendly relations with the German mission in Stockholm. On the other hand, he unofficially maintained contact with Rybikowski, who as Peter Ivanov first had a Manchukuo passport and then a Japanese one. His country, Poland, was at the time occupied by the Germans and the Soviets. Sikorski's Government-in-Exile operated in London. Germany and England were on the opposite sides in this conflict, and since England soon declared a state of war with Japan, the situation these two men were in became very challenging. For Ivanov both Germany and the USSR were enemies, for Onodera England was the enemy. They, however, shared interest – the information on the USSR. Both of them promised, and my husband informed me about this, “not to do anything that could be a betrayal of their allies” and also to exchange and cooperate only in providing such information that could be useful to their homelands . . . The extraordinary liking and respect of Poles and Polish authorities shown towards Japan should also be mentioned here. Although Poland and Japan were officially enemies during World War II, both the Polish authorities . . . and the Japanese authorities . . . ordered these two men to work together, and base that cooperation on complete trust. The Swedish authorities were also aware of this situation. (OYS, pp. 192–193; OYJ, pp. 100–102)

One of the topics Onodera was ordered to deal with was the future direction of German activities after the occupation of France. Basing on, among other things, information from Rybikowski Nishimura already believed that the Germans will start a war with the USSR rather than with England. The General Staff, relying on the information from Berlin did not believe him. Mrs Onodera wrote:

The fact that Onodera claimed in the presence of all the Berlin officers, that Germany will attack the USSR was thanks to Ivanov. He found evidence of that thanks to the intelligence network in Germany and on the occupied territories of Poland. Onodera continually received from him information on the deployment of German troops on the border with the USSR, their composition and the stage of the preparations.

Onodera was lucky because soon after he arrived in Stockholm, he managed to find one more source of information. That source was the former Chief of the Section II of Estonian General Staff, Major general Richard Maasing, who fled to Stockholm. Onodera befriended him when he served as the Attaché in Riga between 1936 and 1938. Probably with the permission of Swedish authorities Maasing was creating here the Estonian underground organization and became its head. He also provided his old friend Onodera with information on the subject of the USSR and Germany . . . Thus, Onodera had two sources of information. He sent the information from Maasing as “M Information” and the ones from Ivanov as “B Information.” As a rule, information from both these sources had to be consistent . . . There was a reason why he called the information from Ivanov “B Information;” at this time Onodera's dear friend from Riga, a Pole Colonel Brzeskwiński served as the Attaché in Stockholm . . . However, for obvious reasons, they could not meet officially. And so, Ivanov, Brzeskwiński's unofficial subordinate, was therefore the intermediary. (OYS, pp. 194–196; OYJ, pp. 103–105)

As Rybikowski predicted, Germany began the war against the USSR in June 1941. Also in line with what he anticipated, the German forces started to lose their

advantage and began to suffer losses. Onodera wrote about this to his superiors in Tokyo but this information was not appreciated. Still, news from Berlin was considered to be more trustworthy, so his protests against the plans to enter the war were also ignored.

Practically in desperation, Onodera sent telegrams to Tokyo to explain why Japan cannot join the war. He sent at least thirty such messages . . . “As I am here, I cannot say that I know what the situation in Asia is in detail, however, what I know about the situation in Europe is sufficient for me to claim that we cannot join the war while treating Germany as our main partner” – and later, yet again, he wrote about the fact that Germans started to lose . . . Ivanov would still bring information about the worsening situation of Germans on the Eastern Front especially due to winter. (OYS, p. 199; OYJ, p. 106)

The Germans knew about the collaboration of the officer of Polish intelligence with the Japanese in Sweden.⁴³ They urged Onodera to get rid of Ivanov, but not only did he not respond to German demands but also guarded Rybikowski even more. At his request, the Japanese *chargé d'affaires*, Kōda Jōtarō issued a new passport for Rybikowski, and this time it was a Japanese passport, as Onodera feared that the previous document might not suffice, because Sweden did not recognise Manchukuo. Mrs. Onodera also added in a conversation with me that Kōda issued a service passport rather than a regular one, which was more practical. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor

Onodera and Ivanov found themselves in a very difficult situation. However, both the Polish government in London and the Japanese General Staff decided that the contact should be maintained in its form . . . Both Onodera and Ivanov behaved as if nothing happened but probably promised each other, they will still cooperate under the condition that this collaboration would not involve betraying their homelands or their nations' allays. Onodera told me “Ivanov works with me and he does not want Japan to make a mistake in its relations with Germany. However, he does not tell me everything about his activities. His primary task as a Polish officer responsible for providing information on Germany is to pass this information on to England.” So, clearly separating their main duties from their collaboration, they would, for example, sit next to each other at the Royal Opera House for a performance of *Boris Godunov* without restraints or go skiing together. (OYS, pp. 199–200; OYJ, pp. 106–107)

The cooperation between Onodera and Rybikowski lasted until 1944. Ivanov provided his Japanese superior with information about the situation on the front in Europe and in the USSR, about the positions of German and Soviet troops, and in return, Onodera helped him send mail to the West and gave him some news about the Japanese situation, but above all, he guarded him. Thanks to him Ivanov could operate without being caught by the Germans. He thanked Onodera for this in the letters he wrote to him after the war. However, in spring 1944, due to the pressure of the Swedish authorities, Ivanov had to leave. He promised that he would continue passing information through Brzeskwiński. Two or three months after his departure, he sent Onodera a message that he would like to meet him in neutral Portugal. Onodera, however, could not go to Lisbon, although he certainly received news from there as well. Perhaps this meeting that never happened had something to do with another

⁴³ J.W.M. Chapman, *Japan*, p. 243; W. Schellenberg, pp.152–153.

officer of Polish intelligence, the aforementioned Jan Kowalewski, who have been active there, and after all, was the first Pole to teach cryptography to Japanese officers in Tokyo in the early 1920s.⁴⁴

From Stockholm, Rybikowski went to London and from there left for Italy, where he became the commander of the 5th Battalion of the 2nd Carpathian Rifle Brigade in the 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division. Before he left, he handed all his contacts in Warsaw, Berlin and the Baltic states to Brzeskwiński. Onodera sent “B Information” to the Staff almost until the end of the war. He received it in the form of letters and the sender was “Stefan Kadonowski (or Kadowski),” and at that time it was really Brzeskwiński, who would provide the information (OYS, pp. 201–204; OYJ, pp. 108–110). This cooperation lasted until the end of the war, which for Japan ended on 15 August 1945. Onodera returned to the country where he was arrested by the occupation forces. He could not continue his military career as the Japanese Armed Forces were disbanded. After the occupation ended in 1952 Onodera began working in a Japanese-Swedish trading company. Rybikowski settled after the war in Canada, where he worked in an aeroplane factory. I need to add that Onodera and Rybikowski met after the war. In 1970, together with his wife, Rybikowski came to Japan for Osaka World Expo and they spent a few days in Tokyo with the Onoderas. And the Onoderas in turn came to Montreal in 1974. This friendship, which was forged during the dangerous wartime cooperation, lasted many years, and the number of letters – 100 letters from Rybikowski are stored in the Onodera archive – is a testament to that. The oldest letter from Rybikowski in the archive is from 1961 and the last one is from 1990.

All the letters from Michał have survived. Half of them in Russian, which is incomprehensible to me. Makoto wrote only in Russian. He never wrote drafts, so there were no copies of his correspondence left with us. Later, the letters started arriving in English and I had to translate them for him. (OYS, pp. 191–192; OYJ, p. 100)

CONCLUSION

Stockholm was one of the most important places of intelligence cooperation between Poland and Japan during the Second World War and it was also the last place of this cooperation. Earlier, such centres were located in Kaunas, Berlin and Königsberg. Poles also cooperated with the Japanese in Rome and the Vatican, in the Balkans, and in Manchuria. Although the cooperation between the Polish and the Japanese was usually good, historically our countries had friendly relations and we also shared the same enemy, thanks to that mutual confidence and trust in the information provided

⁴⁴ See: J.S. Ciechanowski, “Bohaterowie polskiego wywiadu w II wojnie światowej. Ppłk. dypl. Jan Kowalewski (1892–1965)” [in:] *Wywiad i kontrwywiad wojskowy II RP. Z działalności Oddziału II SG WP*, vol. V, ed. T. Dubiecki, Łomianki 2015, pp. 165–187.

by each side, it is important to remember that each of the sides operated according to its country's policy and on instructions from those countries authorities. Contacts with allies during the war were most important. Surely Poles and the Japanese were not always loyal to each other and the contacts were not always only cordial. Certainly, much of the information gained in the course of this bilateral cooperation was passed on by the Poles to the Allies and by the Japanese to the Germans. Let us also remember that false information could have been shared with the aim of misleading the enemy... Some of the materials could also have been passed to third parties in exchange for other information, and e.g. Schellenberg wrote about it.⁴⁵ Rybikowski claimed that the Swedish intelligence was not able to read the Japanese cyphers and sent copies of most of Onodera's cables to Americans, in exchange for general information on the content of these messages.⁴⁶

But regardless of this (this is, after all, how intelligence services function all over the world), the work of the Japanese for Poland during the war was appreciated. In 1996, the President of the Republic of Poland posthumously awarded General Onodera Makoto and Sugihara Chiune the Commander's Crosses of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland, and in 2007 Sugihara was awarded the Commander's Cross with the Star of the Order of Polonia Restituta for rescuing Jews at the time of the extermination.

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⁴⁵ W. Schellenberg, p. 153.

⁴⁶ A.T. Romer conversation with Rybikowski.

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