BANDJERMASIN CASE

Ernst Braches

The Swiss Authorities and the Execution of Dr. C.M. Vischer and B. Vischer-Mylius in Borneo
20 December 1943

Visitor, report to the Spartans that we lie here, obedient their words.

Simonides XXII(b)
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Date codes between square brackets, such as [EPD/DPF 450116], refer to Borneo-Bronnen. Inventaris van de documentatie Nederlands-Indisch Borneo 1941-1945.
A Matter of Facts

Bern: Eidgenössische Politische Departement (EPD/DPF)

On the 12th April 1945, the first message about Borneo reaches Switzerland from besieged Berlin.¹

The Swiss ambassador writes to the Eidgenössische Politische Departement / Département Politique Fédérale (EPD/DPF) in Bern that Mr. Sakai, adjutant of the Japanese Military Attaché in Berlin, has provided written information about the situation of the Swiss in the Japanese occupied South Sea region.² The Japanese report mentions about the mission in Bandjermasin that the leaders of the eight missionaries had betrayed the Japanese friendliness by co-operating with an armed rebellious movement against Japan under the command of Governor Haga. ‘So far, two death sentences were pronounced and two people died of an illness.’³

As a result of the above, the Swiss ambassador in Tokyo asked the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs (Gaimusho) questions. The latter gave a provisional answer on 27 June 1945. This answer is not available. The definitive answer given by the Minister N. Togo is dated 14 August 1945.⁴ (For this Letter, please see page 15). The Japanese Minister expressed his great regret about the delay of the detailed answer. This was caused by reports not arriving as a result of accidents at sea.

The answer contained data on the Swiss employees who were still alive. The Japanese government took them into custody on 18 April 1944 in Bandjermasin to protect them against the fury of the people. The list contains the names of men, women and children. Two employees died of an illness.

The Swiss president of the Basle Mission on Borneo, the physician Dr. C.M. Vischer and his wife, Mrs. Betsy Vischer-Mylius, were executed on 20 December 1943.⁵ They were arrested on 13 May 1943, on suspicion of conspiracy and spying against the Imperial Japa-

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¹ [EPD/DPF 450116]. This was the result of diplomatic talks about the possibility of having Japanese diplomats from Berlin and Vienna taken to Switzerland. Immediately after the meeting, the Swiss indicate that — in spite of repeated requests — nothing is known yet about the fate of the Swiss in the Far East. There had not been any communication concerning the fellow citizens in the Basel Mission in Borneo. The Japanese Ambassy then says that it will call Tokyo.


³ [Berlijn 450412] ‘Bei den 8 Missionarissen in Java und Sumatra und zwar in Bandjirma und Sending wurde leider festge stellt, dass die führende Männer japanische Freundlichkeit verrieten und mit bewaffneter aufständischer Bewegung gegen Japan unter Leitung des Gouverneurs Haga arbeiteten.’ … ‘Bis jetzt wurden 2 Todesurteile ausgesprochen und 2 Menschen sind wegen Krankheit gestorben.’

⁴ [Gaimusho 450814e]

⁵ [Berlijn 450412] ‘Bei den 8 Missionarissen in Java und Sumatra und zwar in Bandjirma und Sending wurde leider festge stellt, dass die führende Männer japanische Freundlichkeit verrieten und mit bewaffneter aufständischer Bewegung gegen Japan unter Leitung des Gouverneurs Haga arbeiteten.’ … ‘Bis jetzt wurden 2 Todesurteile ausgesprochen und 2 Menschen sind wegen Krankheit gestorben.’
nese army. On 26 October 1943, they were brought before an official navy court martial, which sentenced them to death on 11 December 1943.

By way of explanation, Minister Togo reported that Dr. Vischer had entertained very close contacts with Dr. B.J. Haga, governor of Borneo; that Dr. Vischer set up, in direct co-operation with Dr. Haga, anti-Japanese movements in the camps, for example by collecting news about the allied forces; by spreading false rumours on the basis of these messages; by promoting economic disorder, jeopardising the public safety; by spying against the Japanese army and the activities of this army; all of which was done with the intention of preparing an armed rebellion from the inside, which was to coincide with the expected recapturing fights by the allied armies. Dr. Vischer also promoted anti-Japanese activities outside the camp. For example, he was in contact with a ‘direct action’ group, mainly consisting of Indonesians who had hidden a large amount of weapons in anticipation of the recapturing of Borneo by the allied armies. This group also collected data on vital constructions, landing spots, movements of ships, and in particular the size and arms of the Japanese detachment that defended Borneo. This information was not only conveyed to Haga but also transferred by radio to the enemy in French Indo-China, Australia, etc.; attempts were also made to convey this by direct contact with enemy submarines in nearby waters.

Lastly, Minister Togo wrote on 14 August 1945 that Mrs. Vischer always accompanied her husband at the collaboratory meetings; that she mainly collected and exchanged information and that she kept in touch with Governor Haga in the camp.

What happened to the Japanese information?

In this letter of 14 August 1945, Minister Togo of Foreign Affairs (Gaimusho) expressed to the Swiss Ambassador his particular regret for the very long delay in submitting a detailed answer, which was the result of non-arrival of reports because of accidents at sea.6

The questions asked by the Swiss ambassador in Tokyo were officially delegated until eventually they arrived at a point where further delegation was impossible, namely on Java, in Surabaya, at the office of the legal department of the staff of the second southern squadron of the Japanese fleet (Dai Ni Nanken Kan Tai Gunpo Kaigi). The General Central Archive of the navy court martial comes under this department. This Central Archive stored

5. On 16 December 1944, it was already known in Australia that Dr. Vischer was probably no longer alive. The message was entered in the report under the heading of rumours: 'Inf who knew Dr. Vischer (Mission Doctor), formerly at Koeala Kapoeas (South Borneo), states that the latter was beheaded by the Japanese at Bandjermasin (South Borneo) about Aug 43, together with the pensioned district head (Kiai) of Sampit (South Borneo) named Haoesmanbobo [Housman Babu] and a Hollander named Brahes (?) [Braches] who was a stranger to the district. The reason for their execution is unknown to inf. ' [Nefis 441216].

6. [Gaimusho 450814e] ‘The above is a report which has finally been obtained relative to Swiss nationals in Borneo, and whilst the Imperial Gaimusho extremely regret the delay in securing a detailed reply in this matter, it is requested to note that the same was due to non-arrival of reports on account of accidents of the sea.'
the full files of all Japanese court martial cases relating to navy of the former Dutch East Indies (including Borneo), including the original items of evidence.\(^7\)

In answer, the legal department of the staff of the second southern squadron sent (among others) a transcript of the ‘judgement sheets’ of the case concerned. At the office of this department — but not only there — such ‘judgement sheets’ constituted the key to all case files. Each ‘judgement sheets’ contained a copy of essential parts of the case files. These handy notes were much easier for daily use than the big bulky files of the full court martial dossiers. At the office of the legal staff, everyone always first consulted these ‘judgement sheets’. Transcripts of these were also made available to such parties as legal officials and the police.\(^8\)

The answer — including the ‘judgement sheets’ — travelled back from Surabaya to Tokyo. Upon arrival there, the legal department of the Ministry of the Navy (Kaigun) made a transcript of the ‘judgement sheets’, added an introductory note and presented everything to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Gaimusho). The latter used this transcript to draw up a letter containing a summary. This letter, dated 14 August 1945, was sent to the Swiss ambassador.

On 14 September 1945\(^9\), it appeared in Surabaya that the legal department of the navy had indeed sent information concerning the case in question to Tokyo. Lawyer Horoshi Sugiora wrote:\(^{10}\) ‘I believe that the navy has already sent the official report concerning this case to the government of Switzerland.’ He also confirmed that the navy’s Central Legal Archive was still in existence at that time: it has been transferred to the mountains for safety.\(^{11}\) The legal department of the navy headquarters apparently still had the ‘judgement sheets’ that was handed down: ‘Origineel en Ned. vertaling van de samenvatting van het vonnis van de Japanse krijgsraad tegen A.L. Gortmans en anderen in Makassar’.\(^{12}\)

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\(^7\) [Daigo Tadashige 470922]: ‘De stukken zijn naar het Hoofdkwartier opgestuurd. Of ze nu nog bestaan weet ik niet’. [Yamamoto Soichi 460202]: ‘… Dai Nanken Kan Tai Zuki Gunpo Kaigi te Soerabaya. Dit laatste kantoor was de centrale instantie, waarheen alle rapporten in extenso (origineele taal en Japanse vertaling, alsmede commentaren en andere bevindingen) werden gezonden.’ [Yamamoto Soichi 460204]: ‘all interrogation reports in the language in which they had been made out, together with the conclusion of the recorders were forwarded to the latter office.’ [Hayashi Shuichi 460316]: ‘Ja, al de processen-verbaal zijn door verdachten ondertekend en vervolgens naar Soerabaja gestuurd.’ [Sasuga Iwao]: ‘De beide brieven zijn door de handen van alle betrokken onderzoekingsambtenaren gegaan, en nadien met het andere bewijsmateriaal in de Hagazaak door kapitein Takata naar Soerabaja meegenomen. Dit bewijsmateriaal moet aanwezig zijn te Soerabaja op het kantoor van de Juridische afdeling van de Staf van het 2e Zuidelijk Eskader, waarvan Hoofd was de overste Kanae.’ [Report Anti-Japanese Rebellion 431200]: ‘Detailed documents should, according to a statement by Inspector Legal Takata Hideo, be in custody of the military disciplinary court to the second southern expeditionary fleet at Soerabaja.’ [Sasuga Iwao 480207]: ‘Ik weet wel dat Takata van tijd tot tijd contact onderhield met zijn chef, de majoer Kanae, die hoofd was van de juridische afdeling bij het 2e Zuidelijk Eskader, te Soerabaja.’

\(^8\) [Sugiura 450914a]: ‘I believe that the Navy already has sent the official report to the Government of Switzerland about this matter.’ Also: [Zwitsers Consulaat 450914]: ‘Die betreffende Urteile seien jedoch s. Zt. dem Marine Ministerium in Tokyo bekannt gegeben worden.’

\(^9\) [Swiss Consulate 450914]. The following data forms a section of a Memorandum that H.E. Heusser, then consular agent to Soerabaja, compiled on 14th September 1945 for his superior A.H. Ilg, acting Swiss consul to Batavia. Heusser made contact with the Japanese Marine office to Soerabaja in the Sumatra road. He had a meeting with the lawyer Hiroshi Sugiora of the Marine Court.

\(^10\) [Sugiura 450914a]: ‘I believe that the Navy already has sent the official report to the Government of Switzerland about this matter.’ Also: [Zwitsers Consulaat 450914]: ‘Die betreffende Urteile seien jedoch s. Zt. dem Marine Ministerium in Tokyo bekannt gegeben worden.’

\(^11\) [Zwitsers Consulaat 450914]: ‘Herr Sugiura teilte mit, dass es, speziell was den Fall Vischer betreffe, sehr schwierig sei genaue Information zu geben, da alle Akten, Dokumente etc. irgendwo in den Bergen aufbewahrt seien.’
sheets’, summaries of the full dossiers. Sugiora pointed out that at a local level, i.e. on Borneo, the ‘detailed information’ concerning the imprisonment and punishing of Dr. Vischer and his wife had been burned, for strategic reasons.

After all, a general order was received from Tokyo on 14 August 1945, in which the Japanese Ministry of War ordered the destruction of army dossiers and archives. This order was carried out thoroughly on Borneo. But an exception seems to have been made for the Central Legal Archives of the army headquarters in Java (Batavia) and Sumatra (Singapore), and for the navy headquarters (Surabaya). The latter worked for Japanese court martial for some weeks after the arrival of the allied powers.

Responses by EPD/DPF

The letter from Minister Togo to ambassador Camille Gorgé, dated 14 August 1945, was delivered with a delay. This is not surprising because on 15 August 1945, the Japanese emperor addressed the Japanese people via the radio, urging them to accept absolute surrender. The situation remained uncertain for days.

On 17 August 1945, Gorgé signalled to the EPD/DPF that there was still no message about Borneo. It was not until 25 August 1945 that the embassy in Tokyo was able to signal a summary telegram about Gaimusho’s answer.

Bitterness is expressed in Bern three days later (28 August 1945), in an internal memorandum of the EPD/DPF:

For eighteen months, the embassy in Tokyo tried in vain to obtain news about a group from the Basel Mission in Bandjermasin. And then this message arrived. There was absolutely no doubt for the writer of the memorandum, Ch. von/de Jenner, that the Japanese accusations were completely fabricated. We should have acted more firmly towards Japan. The opposite happened. Now, by setting up a totally useless consulate in Zurich, we have even given the Japanese government the opportunity to bring a number of their Berlin diplomats to safety.
On 29 August 1945, the EPD/DPF in Bern instructed the Swiss embassy in Tokyo to demand from the Japanese government the immediate release and decent treatment of the group from the Basel Mission. We need to keep insisting that the Vischer case be investigated further.\textsuperscript{19}

That same day, 29 August 1945, the EPD/DPF asked the Swiss ambassador in London to ask the English government for protection and assistance for the missionaries in Bandjermasin in the case of an occupation of Borneo by Great Britain. In addition, a request for British mediation was submitted in order to obtain reports from the staff of the mission in Bandjermasin on the circumstances that led to the execution of Mr. and Mrs. Vischer.

The request of a report reached the temporary president of the mission in Bandjermasin, J.W. Göttin, via Australia at the end of November 1945. Göttin drew up the desired report within a few days: \textit{Angaben betr. Affäre Dr. C.M. Vischer} (27 November 1945). The English translation: \textit{Particulars regarding the C.M. Vischer Affair}, goes to Australia. From there, the \textit{Particulars} reached the EPD/DPF on 9 February 1946, via the Swiss consulate in Sydney. On the same day, the EPD/DPF received the \textit{Particulars} and the \textit{Angaben} from Göttin from the Swiss consulate in Batavia. Via a longer diplomatic route, Göttin’s report was sent from London to Bern on 8 April 1946.

The insistence (29 August 1945) by the EPD/DPF of the Swiss embassy in Tokyo to have the Vischer case investigated further, remained unsuccessful.\textsuperscript{20} After the initial shock, attention focussed entirely on the interest of those still alive, in particular the next of kin. The arrival of the \textit{Particulars} and \textit{Angaben} from Göttin on 9 February 1945 did not change this.

On 15 March 1946 the EPD/DPF observed that the investigation of the Vischer case in Bandjermasin was facing great problems, because all incriminating documents had been destroyed.\textsuperscript{21} The EPD/DPF did not point out that the simultaneously received report from consular official E.H. Heusser in Surabaya (with the appendices from Horoshi Sugiora) showed that the Central Legal Archive of the navy headquarters were still in existence there in September 1945.\textsuperscript{22}

On 25 March 1946, the EPD/DPF received copies of all documents by Marcel Junod about the Vischer case (about which later) from the ICRC/CICR. But this did not lead to the re-opening of the investigations either.

The EPD/DPF left the initiative in this case completely to the Dutch legal investigation, although this forensic investigation (aimed at discovering and punishing war crimes) only

\textsuperscript{18} [EPD/DPF 450828]: ”Gegenteils hat man der japanischen Regierung durch ein ganz nutzlose Schaffung eines General- konsulates in Zürich noch Gelegenheit gegeben, eine Anzahl ihrer Berliner Diplomaten in Sicherheit zu bringen.”
\textsuperscript{19} [EPD/DPF 450829b].
\textsuperscript{20} [EPD/DPF 450829b]; [Schlager 451231].
\textsuperscript{21} [EPD/DPF 460315]: ”Den die Untersuchung führenden Organen erwachsen grosse Schwierigkeiten dadurch, dass die Ja- paner, bevor sie das Gebiet räumten, sozusagen alle belastende Dokumente vernichtet haben.”
\textsuperscript{22} [Zwitsers Consulaat 450914].
had this specific aim, and was not set up to investigate the circumstances that led to the execution of the Vischers.

Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC/CICR)

Three days after Hiroshima, on 9 August 1945, the day on which the Americans destroyed Nagasaki, a European ICRC/CICR delegation arrived in Tokyo, consisting of Dr. Marcel Junod and Mrs. M. Straehler, after a journey that had lasted weeks. On 15 August 1945, Dr. Junod heard the Emperor speaking on the radio. Since 25 August 1945, the members of the ICRC/CICR delegation in Tokyo had been preoccupied with the evacuation of the allied prisoners of war from Japan and Korea. On 3 September 1945, Dr. Junod visited Hiroshima.

On 21 August 1945 (four days before the death of Dr. Vischer was announced in Bern), the ICRC/CICR reported from Geneva that the Japanese government, after years of delays, acknowledges named delegates in the occupied territory. The names include that of Dr. Vischer. The head of the delegation in Tokyo, Dr. Marcel Junod, on the same day wired instructions to Dr. Vischer. The telegram started with the words: ‘Obtained Japanese governments agreement your nomination delegate ICRC.’

There was no answer.

On 19 February 1942, Dr. Vischer was appointed by the ICRC/CICR as a delegate for the whole of Borneo. The telegraphic confirmation never got through: Bandjermasin had already been occupied since 10 February 1942; the connections remained inoperable for months. On 4 March 1942, the ICRC/CICR wired to Dr. Vischer that the Dutch government in London agreed with his appointment. The message regarding his appointment as a delegate only reached Dr. Vischer in June 1942, via the Swiss consular official in Surabaya, M.E. Keller. But the local Japanese military commander in Bandjermasin did not acknowledge the appointment.

On 31 August (six days after the death of Dr. Vischer was reported in Bern), the director of the Basel Mission, A. Koechlin, brought the death to the attention of the management of the ICRC/CICR; this was done after an article in a Swiss newspaper which announced Dr. Vischer’s appointment as a delegate of the ICRC/CICR for Borneo.

On 10 September 1945, the director of the Far East department of the ICRC/CICR, D. de Traz, answered that they would immediately get into contact with the Japanese government. On 28 September 1945, Max Huber, president of the ICRC/CICR, appealed by letter and memorandum to the Japanese emissary in Bern. He requested an explanation about Dr. Vischer, delegate for Borneo of the ICRC/CICR. In the ‘Aide Mémoire’, he called to

23. [Junod 450821].
24. [IKRK/CICR 420219a].
25. [IKRK/CICR 420403a].
26. [IKRK/CICR 450831].
mind that the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs (Gaimusho), Suzuki, had agreed upon the appointment of the delegates in the Japanese occupied areas during a meeting on 18 or 21 August 1945 with the leader of the delegation of the ICRC/CICR in Japan, Dr. Marcel Junod. In doing so, the minister had urged for assistance with the repatriation of Japanese nationals to Japan.28

De Japanese emissary in Bern, N. Kase, answered on 2 October 1945. He wrote that he had immediately conveyed the contents of the letter to his government, with the request for special attention. He did not expect his government to tarry in contacting the delegate in Japan, Dr. Junod.29

This proved correct. The Japanese Minister of Foreign affairs (Gaimusho) wrote about the case to the delegate leader Junod on 6 October 1945, presenting the letter dated 14 August 1945 from minister Togo to the Swiss ambassador in Tokyo. Gaimusho expressed sincere regrets for the consent of the appointment of the already deceased Dr. Vischer and referred to this as a blunder resulting from the chaotic situation after the hostilities had been suspended 30

On 13 October 1945, the Japanese emissary in Bern wrote to Max Huber, president of the ICRC/CICR. He referred to the appendix: a French translation of the first part of the Clarification from the letter of 14 August 1945.31

On 12 November 1945, Dr. Junod wrote to the chairman of the Japanese Red Cross, Prince Kuniyuki Tokugawa. He asked for further information, presenting a Japanese copy of the Gaimusho letter of 6 October 1945, attaching the letter of 15 August 1945.32 Prince Kuniyuki answered on 5 December 1945. He was shocked. The Japanese Red Cross knew nothing of this. The case had already been brought to the attention of his Royal Highness Prince Takamatsu, honorary president of the Japanese Red Cross, who also received a copy of the Gaimusho letter with the attachment.33

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27. [IKRK/CICR 450928a].
28. [IKRK/CICR 450928b]: ‘Les réponses qu’il a reçues à ce propos n’étaient nullement de nature à l’inquiéter sur le sort du Dr Vischer, cela d’autant mieux que, en date du 18 août 1945, le Comité international de la Croix-Rouge a été informé par son délégué à Tokio que M. Vischer était agréé comme délégué par le Ministère des Affaires étrangères japonais.’ In het Aide Mémoire: Ce n’est que le 21 août 1945, à l’occasion d’une conversation entre S.E. le Ministre des Affaires étrangères, M. Suzuki, et le Dr Junod, que le chef de notre délégation en Extrême-Orient fut informé que le Gouvernement japonais donnait son agrément à la nomination des délégués désignés par le Comité international pour les Indes Néerlandaises, et notamment du Dr Vischer pour Bornéo.’
29. [Kase 451002]: ‘... j’ai immédiatement transmis le contenu de votre missive à mon Gouvernement, en lui demandant de vouer une attention particulière à votre requête; je pense, dans ces conditions, que le Gouvernement du Japon ne tardera pas à se mettre en contact avec M. le Dr Junod à ce sujet.’
30. [Gaimusho 451006]: ‘As regards the approval of this Foreign Office of the appointment of Dr. Vischer to an I.R.C. representative in August of this year long after his death, the Foreign Office expresses its sincere regret as it was a blunder caused by the confusion which prevailed immediately after the termination of hostilities.’
31. [Kase 451013]: ‘Je me permets par ailleurs de faire tenir, sous ce pli, à Votre Excellence, un résumé du rapport écrit remis alors à M. le Dr Junod, rapport concernant les circonstances qui ont amené le Dr Vischer à sa triste fin.’
32. [Junod 451112]: ‘Je vous remets ci-joint, la copie de la lettre du Gaimusho qu’accompagne un mémorandum en langue japonaise dont j’ai fait faire la traduction.’
Six days later, on 11 December 1945, Junod was invited to a meeting about the Vischer case at the Ministry of the Navy (Kaigun). A report of this meeting was drawn up, dated 13 December 1945.\footnote{Junod 451213a} (For the report of this meeting, please see page 17) During this meeting, information was provided by Takata Hideo, who was public prosecutor (Kensatsukan) in the Bandjermasin case in 1943. At the end of the meeting, Marcel Junod received the promise that he would be given a copy of the information that Takata Hideo used during the discussion. A possible follow-up of the meeting would depend on the contents of the information.

On 7 January 1946, Dr. Junod gave his personal impression of the meeting at the ministry in a quarterly overview. This showed that the meeting lasted one and a half hours. The ‘new report’ that was promised was at that time still being translated. Junod hoped to be able to send the translation to Geneva shortly. He wrote that the prosecutor was a man with a very young appearance, about thirty years old, who answered the questions that were asked calmly but often hesitantly, especially when the names of Dr. Vischer’s ‘executioners’ were asked: ‘At no moment did I had the impression that his mind was affected by doubt. I did not hide my opinion from him that the whole trial (all things considered nothing more than reading out the bill of indictment) was nothing other than murder under a terrible appearance. But nothing can unnerve the Japanese, especially not in the navy.’\footnote{IKRK/CICR 46 0107: ‘Extrait du Rapport No.8, daté du 7 janvier 1946 de la Délégation du CICR à Tokio.’ ‘Le procureur en question est un homme d’aspect très jeune, environ trente ans, portant lunettes, l’air assez fin mais la figure fermée comme une coffre-fort, répondant à mes questions posément mais souvait avec hésitation surtout quand je lui demandai les noms des juges-bourreaux de notre délégué. A aucun moment je n’ai eu l’impression que le doule effleurait son esprit. Je ne lui ai pourtant pas caché mon opinion soit que tout ce jugement, qui n’a été en somme que la lecture d’une acte d’accusations, ne cachait qu’un assassinat sous une horrible mise en scène. Mais rien ne peut démonter un Japonais, surtout dans la marine. J’ai dû, comme je vous le dis plus haut, faire un violent effort sur moi-même pour adoucir mon language et m’en tenir à un interrogatoire détaillé.’}

The English translation of the ‘new report’ (\textit{Report relative to anti-Japanese Rebellion Conspiracy in South-Borneo}) was apparently never used. (For the Report on the anti-Japanese Rebellion, please see page 18). I suspect that its contents disappointed Dr. Junod. Reading the first page alone, riddled with meaningless and above all garbled names and places, must have convinced Dr. Junod that he would get no further with this. On the basis of the letter from Gaimusho, dated 14 August 1945, he was still able to have his discussion on 11 December 1945 with the Ministry of the Navy (Kaigun). But the document that he now saw, offered him nothing to go on for further discussions. Marcel Junod, having returned some weeks later from Tokyo — via the United States — to Europe, had probably lost all interest in the document before he left.\footnote{Marcel Junod: \textit{Warrior without Weapons} (1951): ‘Four days later I had the original text of the indictment in my hands.’ ‘There was no need for me to read the record of the trial.’} He never understood that the ‘new report’
A MATTER OF FACTS  GENEVA: INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC/CICR)

was nothing other than the ‘judgement sheets’ that had so long been lacking ‘due to non-
arrival of reports on account of accidents at sea’.

On 14 February 1946, five days after the EPD/DPF, the ICRC/CICR also received a trans-
script of the report by Göttin, Particulars regarding the C.M. Vischer Affair as attachment

to a letter by W. Weidmann, delegate for the ICRC/CICR in Batavia since 1942. Weidmann
received Göttin’s report from the temporary Swiss consul official A.H. Ilg. Weidmann sus-
pected a connection between the date of the arrest of Dr. Vischer (13 May 1943) and the
date (11 May 1943) upon which he himself had to appear before the Kempeitai in Batavia
in order to be told that he was to cease with the ICRC/CICR activities.37

On 6 May 1946, Weidmann repeated his suspicions when he arrived in Geneva.38  But
the Vischer case was no longer of topical interest there. The ICRC/CICR decided on 11
March 1946 to delegate the settlement of claims on Japan on behalf of the heirs of the
Vischers to EPD/DPF and therefore handed over Junod’s information on 25 March 1946.

The Japanese Report Anti-Japanese Rebellion thus remained among the other docu-
ments. No-one in Geneva took any initiative to investigate the life and death of the only del-
egate of the ICRC/CICR who was executed. In this atmosphere, the myth was allowed
grow.

In 1948, the Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross on its activities du-
ring the Second World War was published. Delegate Dr. Vischer and his wife were por-
trayed as martyrs for their persistence to support the internees.39  The Report tells: ‘His
devotion to the cause of humanity cost him his life.’ And: ‘Although lack of documents
made it impossible to estimate accurately the extent of Dr. Vischer’s help to those interned,
we must realise that his interest in their well-being was one of the main accusations made
by the court martial who sentenced him to death.’40

In 1951, it was Marcel Junod, who, in Warrior without Weapons added to this picture of
a martyr dimensions that would befit a hagiography. He did not need to read the Japanese

37.  [Weidmann 460214]: ‘My suspicion that the information service via Tokyo I had established in 1943 was prohibited the
same year owing to the events in Borneo, is now corroborated by the fact that Mr. & Mrs. Vischer were arrested on May
13, 1943, while – according to my diary – I was questioned for the first time on May 11th of the same year by the Japanese
State Police, concerning my activities on behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the nature of my
relations with the Red Cross in Soerabaya.’
38.  [De Weck 460306]: ‘En mai 1943, M. Weidmann fut convoqué par les autorités japonaises. Il lui fut explicitement signifié
qu’il devait arrêter toute activité s’il ne voulait pas s’attirer de graves ennuis. Apprenant après la capitulation les détails
sur la mort du Dr Vischer, M. Weidmann a remarqué alors que ce fait coïncidait avec l’arrestation du Dr Vischer.’
39.  ‘Mattheaus Vischer: Delegate in Borneo, and his wife. Suspected of espionage by the Japanese owing to their insistence
on conveying relief to PW. Both were condemned by court-martial and shot.’ [p.70].
40.  ‘borneo. – As already recorded, the devotion of the Committee’s representative to the humanitarian cause cost him his
life. His activities were held by the occupying authorities to be criminal and he fell victim to the suspicious hostility of
the military authorities, who were quite incapable of grasping the reasons for his efforts. It is difficult, in the absence of
any records, to give a correct account of the extent of Dr. Vischer’s help to PW and internees before his execution by order
of the naval authorities, in December 1943 (for «plotting against the Japanese Army»), but it may be recalled that his in-
terest in their welfare was one of the principal charges against him by the court-martial which sentenced him to death.’
[p.503]
report. He saw the torture, the cruel captivity, the injustice, the sacrifice on behalf of others, the devotion to duty, the attempts to remember the names of the prisoners of war right up to the end, the attempts to inform those interned that their cases were being pleaded for with the Japanese authorities, the attempts to help bring them news, or at least hope, the attempts to convey their fate to the outside world, to Geneva: ‘I knew that Vischer and his wife were guilty of a plot – not an anti-Japanese plot, but a world-wide plot – to bring aid to suffering humanity under a white flag bearing a red cross. And I knew that Vischer would have seen that flag flying in his mind’s eye even when the sabre whistled through the air to end his life.’

This is how the memory of Dr. Vischer froze into a golden icon for the ideal of the International Red Cross. Of course this has little to do with the reality of life and death of Dr. Vischer and his wife.41

Missed opportunities

With reference to his letter of 27 July 1945, which was no longer available, the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Gaimusho) wrote to the Swiss ambassador in Tokyo on 14 August 1945 that his report on the fate of the group of Swiss missionaries in Bandjermasin ‘is based on more detailed information recently received from the authorities’.42 Ambassador Camille Gorgé to my knowledge never requested ‘more detailed information’; not even when EPD/DPF, on 28 August 1945, urged for further investigations into the case of Mr. & Mrs. Vischer.43 In that case, the embassy could have had the Report anti-Japanese Rebellion, from the start, a copy of which was at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Gaimusho). But would the embassy in that case have been sufficiently orientated to recognise the ‘judgement sheets’ in the set-up of the Report anti-Japanese Rebellion?

A second possibility to acquire the ‘judgement sheets’ was missed by the consular official E.H. Heusser on 14 September 1945 in Surabaya. Lawyer Hiroshi Sugiora had told him that he could still submit a request for the ‘judgement sheets’ at the legal department of the navy headquarters.44 Heusser probably did not understand what it was all about.

Finally – more by luck than by wisdom – the ‘judgement sheets’ came to light as the Report anti-Japanese Rebellion after the Junod’s meeting on 11 December 1945 at the Ministry of the Navy (Kaigun). Junod had prepared himself badly for this meeting. Although he

42. [Gaimusho 450814]: ‘a report which is based on additional more detailed information recently received from the competent authorities.’
43. [EPD/DPF 450829b]
44. [Sugiura 450914]: ‘If you need the judgement sheets, it is in the custody of the Navy Judicial Affairs. Please request them.’
had known for two months that ‘a Japanese navy court martial authority’ had tried Dr. Vischer and his wife, he apparently had no notion of the set-up and procedures of such a court martial during the meeting. It is all too understandable that Dr. Junod, having received the translation of the Report anti-Japanese Rebellion, was unable to do anything with the document and that he did not recognise the piece as an elaborate version of the ‘judgement sheets’.

The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Gaimusho) and the Ministry of the Navy (Kai-gun) must have expected the Swiss not to settle for just an excerpt in the letter of 14 August 1945 by Minister Togo. But the Swiss did not ask any further questions. The Ministry of the Navy (Kai-gun) had apparently prepared for the fact that even the Report would not suffice; that the Swiss legation would demand to inspect the whole dossier of the trial. In the first paragraph of the Report Anti-Japanese Rebellion, this was anticipated with a reference to Surabaya.46

The Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs (Gaimusho) wrote to the Swiss embassy that the ‘detailed information’ had to come from far. Why from far away? Could that information not be found in Japan? Why would the Ministry of the Navy (Kaigun) not have a library of ‘judgement sheets’ for the benefit of their own service? Did they not want to answer the question? Is the long route perhaps the result of strictly administrative hierarchical proceedings?

In the meeting of 11 December 1945, legal officer Takata Hideo said that the special court martial sent the original reports directly to Tokyo but that they never arrived there. The papers were only received much later. Takata believed that this explained the long wait for an answer. At the Ministry of the Navy (Kaigun), someone had taken minutes of an oral report, but nobody sent these to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Gaimusho), because they wanted to draw up a complete report when they had received all documentation.47

When were the original reports actually sent to Tokyo by the special court martial? Did the parcel get lost immediately after the Bandjermasin trial, at the end of 1943 or the beginning of 1944? And why was that not noticed and rectified sooner? On the side of the Swiss, an increasing amount of diplomatic pressure was already being exerted for information on their fellow countrymen in Bandjermasin!

Above, there is mention of ‘all documentation’ from Surabaya. Did the Ministry of the Navy (Kaigun) perhaps receive more than the ‘judgement sheets’ from Surabaya? Does it

45. [Gaimusho 450814]: ‘before the competent navy court martial.’
46. [Report 460107]: ‘Detailed documents should, according to a statement by Inspector Legal Lt. Commander Takata, be in the custody of the military disciplinary court to the second southern expeditionary fleet at Soerabaia.’
47. [Junod 451213]: ‘The original documentary reports were sent directly from the Special Court Martial but never arrived in Tokyo. Copies were received much later which accounts for the delay. The verbal report was not communicated to the Gaimusho as it had been the intention to make a full report after the reception of all documentation.’
not go without saying that the ‘detailed information’ from Surabaya would also include a copy of the complete court martial dossier? This would explain the slowness of the answer.

The Swiss authorities of EPD/DPF and ICRC/CICR did not utilise the possibilities that were offered to them by the Japanese.

We must at last start taking Japan serious. In the first place, by carefully studying the available information in the light of real knowledge of the background.
Appendices

The following texts have been copied literally from their originals. The texts and footnotes between square brackets [ ] are from the editor.

Gaimusho Letter [Gaimusho 450814]

Gaimusho to the Swiss Ambassador in Tokyo – 14th August 1945

Gaimusho

Sei 4, Fu-Tsu No.210

With reference to the information provisionally submitted to you by Note No. Sei 4, Fu-Tsu No.154 of June 27, on Dr. Fischer, Chief of the Basle Mission at Banjermassin and other members of the Basle Mission at Banjermassin and other members of the mission, I now have the honour to convey to you the following report which is based on additional more detailed information recently received from the competent authorities.

I. Swiss nationals currently resident at Banjermassin are the following 18 persons:48

- Mateus Fischer [Mattheus] and his wife Bessi Fischer [Betsy Vischer-Mylius] suffered execution of death sentence on December 20, 1943, as mentioned hereafter, whilst Hans Barth (?) [Bart], Chief Accountant of the Mission, and his wife Julie Magdalena died from disease, the husband on July 11, 1943 and the wife on September 2, 1943, as per separate death diagnosis.

- Following the conclusion of court proceedings for anti-Japanese conspiracy outlined in III, the above-mentioned Swiss nationals suffered the hate of the aborigines on account of the fact that Dr. Fischer [Vischer] and the remainder of the leaders of the Mission had been involved in the case, some of the aborigines going to the extent of refusing to sell them food for their daily subsistence and so forth, and there being the possibility of their lives and property to be endangered, the authorities on the spot loaned to the above Swiss nationals on April 18, 1944, free of charge a house at Bandjermassin city which was in the custody of the military authorities, following which, 16 persons, excluding Goetschendanner and Bernard Fischer, dwelt in said house, received protection from the Imperial Army Authorities, and in addition are receiving supplies of daily necessities as well as all other kinds of facilities.

- Goetschendanner [Giezendanner] received the loan of a house distinct from the above and is working as a nurse in the hospital of the Civil Administration. There being no next-of-kin responsible for the sustenance of Bernhard Fischer [Vischer], he is being educated by the Dutch national Foot (?) [Hoedt].

- Dr. Fischer [Vischer] and his wife were arrested on May 13, 1943, under suspicion of conspiracy and espionage against the Imperial Japanese Army, and, their crime having been established by subsequent investigations, they were placed before the competent

48. [Names: Bigler, Andrees (child); Bigler, Werner (father); Bigler-Jordi, Lina; Eggenberger, Agathe; Flach, Daniel (child); Flach, Elisabeth (child); Flach, Johann (child); Flach, Johann Gustav (father); Flach-Wittwer, Martha Elisabeth; Giezendanner, Elsine; Göttn, Gerhard (child); Göttn, Johann Wilhelm (father); Göttn-Fazis, Frieda; Rihs, Anne Rose (child); Rihs, Arnold (father); Rihs, Hellmut Theodor (child); Rihs, Suzanna (child); Rihs-Ortlieb, Anna Maria; Vischer, Bernhard (child).]
navy court martial on October 26, received the death sentence on December 11 and were executed in accordance with the said sentence on the 20th of the same month. The facts of the crime perpetrated by Dr. and Mrs. Fischer are in outline, as follows:

1. Following the general capitulation, in Spring 1942, of the DEI troops the Governor General of Borneo, Haga (?) and the other chief officials of the government general were detained in internment camps by the Imperial Military authorities, but they organised a plan for anti-Japanese activity in the camp, which included the acquisition of enemy information, dissemination of false rumours, based on such information, disturbance of public security in the occupied areas by creating economic disorder, espionage regarding the Japanese armed forces and conditions of occupation by the Japanese armed forces, whilst the ultimate purpose was the creation of an armed revolt from within, in concurrence with the anticipated battles for retrieval of the DEI by the Allied Forces. To this end they not only made efforts to organize partisans within the camp but also attempted contacts outside the camp and the creation there of an organization similar to that within the camp.

Whilst Dr. Fischer [Vischer] in the past entertained extremely close connections with Haga, when Haga was taken into custody, he was entrusted by the said person with the organization of an anti-Japanese action outside the camp with the same objects as those mentioned above. He readily accepted this proposition and received funds for this purpose, following which he planned and effected anti-Japanese actions outside the camps whilst entertaining close contact with Haga within the camp. In fact, Dr. Fischer [Vischer] along with several other Dutch and Javanese leaders met on repeated occasions in their various residences during the time from the end of April 1942 until the arrest, and exchanged all kind of intelligence; in addition to which they discussed means of relief to Dutch internees, organization of a mutual assistance society, acquisition of funds and provision and armed rebellion. They commenced with forming the Mutual Assistance Society, which is a secret organisation for Indonesians, into a nucleus for their conspiracy around which were organized other secret societies according to races, such as the Society of Ambonese, the Committee of Unemployed Menadoans etc. Toward the middle of January 1943, organization of a direct action group consisting chiefly of Indonesians had been completed and a great quantity of arms were concealed, with the purpose of awaiting the Allied Forces’ campaign for recovery of Borneo. The funds required for these actions were secured, in addition to those obtained by Dr. Fischer from Haga, mainly by making use of funds of the ‘Seleding’ (?) [Zending = Mission] religious group or by soliciting donations from Chinese nationals who were sympathetic to the movement.

The intelligence gathered by the said organization comprised, in addition to general information on the situation in the territories occupied by the Imperial Forces, such military information as:

(1) The number of troops, armament, particulars of defense of the Japanese Defense Detachment in Borneo.
(2) Particulars on vital structures (buildings etc.)
(3) Particulars on places for landing in face of enemy
(4) Particulars on places for landing by para-troops
(5) Particulars on movements of ships, ports and rivers.

This intelligence was not only transferred to Haga but also by radio to enemy persons in French Indo China, Australia etc., and direct contact with enemy submarines in near waters was also attempted.

2. Betty Vischer always accompanied her husband in the conspiracy discussions and chiefly attended to collection and exchange of intelligence as well as contact with Governor Haga in the camp.

The above is a report which has finally been obtained relative to Swiss nationals in Borneo, and whilst the Imperial Gaimusho extremely regret the delay in securing a detailed reply in this matter, it is requested to note that the same was due to non-arrival of reports on account of accidents of the sea.

The undersigned Minister has the honour to reply as above and to present his compliments to his Excellency.

August 14, 1945
N. Togo
Foreign Minister
Interview at Navy Ministry, Tokyo [Junod 451213]

Report of the interview at the Navy Ministry (Kaigun) on 11 December 1945.

Copie
Annexe au Rapport No.8 de la Délégation du CICR à Tokio.

Tokio, 13 décembre 1945

Interview at Navy Ministry
Concerning the case of Dr. Vischer, IRCC delegate

Présent: – Captain Arima, General Affairs Board,
– Navy Ministry Legal Lieut. Commander Takata Hideo,
Kensatsukan Prosecutor for Dr. Vischer’s trial in Borneo
– Mr. Takahashi, representative of Gaimusho
– Dr. Marcel Junod, IRCC
– Miss Margherita Straehler, IRCC
– Mr. O. Nohara, IRCC Interpreter

Dr. Junod opened the meeting by asking for information concerning the arrest, trial and execution of Dr. Vischer and his wife in Borneo and commenting the report pertaining thereto which had been received from the Gaimusho. Captain Arima stated that Lieut. Commander Takata, in charge of the persecution during the trial, was prepared to answer any questions raised and the following conversation took place with Commander Takata giving the explanations:

Q. How long did the court proceedings take?
A. The public hearing lasted from 8 A.M. to 3 P.M.

Q. How many witnesses were heard?
A. Five

Q. What are their names?
A. Preparatory investigations lasted from May to December during which time examination was made of the case by the civil police and the naval gendarmerie. It was only the final hearing to which reference is made above and at which reports submitted by the civil police and the naval gendarmerie were read. The 5 witnesses referred to were not witnesses interrogated at the final trial but persons whose statements were embodied in the reports read during the final proceedings. It was a principle of the naval forces to prepare evidence prior to the final court hearing and then to pronounce immediate judgement.

Q. Was Dr. Vischer interrogated during the final trial?
A. Yes, of course

Q. Did he have a lawyer?
A. Regulations of the Special Court Martial do not permit the defendant to have a lawyer but questions were put to him in a gentlemanly manner [note:] ‘There were two kinds of courts functioning in Borneo (a) Gunpokaigi, Court martial for Japanese and (b) Gunritsukaigi, Special Court martial for natives and non-Japanese.’

Q. May we have a list of the Questions put to Dr. Vischer?
A. All documents pertaining thereto are in Borneo
Q. In whose hands are these documents?
A. The documents are in the hands of the Special Court Martial
Q. How many judges were there?
A. Three judges. Legal Captain Yamaji Ikko, Chief Judge Legal Commander Kanai Shigeo, Legal Lieutenant Hashimoto, first name unknown. All three are at present in Japan.

Q. At what time did they return to Japan?
A. About the end of 1944.

Q. When did Lieut. Commander Takata, himself, return?
A. 21st July 1944

B. Was communication made to the Imperial Government by the Special Court Martial with respect to the Vischer case?
A. Full report was made to the Chief of the Legal Section of the Navy Ministry.

Q. Who was the Chief of this Section?
A. Vice-Admiral Shimada who is at present in Tokio

Q. On whom did the civil police force in Borneo depend?
A. There were two police forces (a) gendarmerie and (b) civil police. Both were under naval jurisdiction. The chief of the gendarmerie in Borneo was Lieut. Suzuki Otsujiro at Bandjermassin, now in Japan, having returned August / September 1944. The Chief of the civil police in the sector was Sasaki Iwao, still in Bandjermassin. Initial investigations were made by both the gendarmerie and the civil police and the findings thereof passed on to the Special Court Martial who took up the case and continued investigations.

Q. What did Dr. Vischer say in his own defence?
A. He repeatedly asserted that outside circumstances led him into taking false steps and that his personal friendship with Governor Haga of Borneo influenced his actions.
Q. Did Dr. Vischer make a confession?
A. Yes, as his crimes had been proved.
Q. By what facts?
A. By the great quantity of weapons found and from statements of natives who had been given anti-Japanese propaganda.
Q. Were these natives executed?
A. No.
Q. Does Lieut. Commander Takata remember the names of these natives?
A. No. But this information should be available on the spot. The two police chiefs should be in possession of all details.
Q. According to the Gaimusho report Dr. Vischer and his wife were supposed to have communicated with the outside by radio. Where was this radio and to whom did it belong?
A. It was concealed in the roof of the home of a native named A. Roman.
Q. Where were the weapons found?
A. In various places, mostly concealed by the leaders.
Q. Were any weapons found in possession of Dr. Vischer himself, or in the house where he was living?
A. He probably had a pistol.

At this point, Lieut. Takata reverted to his previous statement concerning the report he had submitted to Vice-Admiral Shimada on the Vischer case. He wished it to be clearly understood that this was only a verbal report made upon his return to Yokosuka from Borneo. The original documentary reports were sent directly from the Special Court Martial but never arrived in Tokio. Copies were received much later which accounts for the delay. The verbal report was not communicated to the Gaimusho as it had been the intention to make a full report after the reception of all documentation.
Q. Dr. Vischer was accused of having used the funds of his mission to help the natives. Was not this, however, the very aim of the mission and had he distributed more than the usual assistance after outbreak of hostilities?
A. No such distribution had been observed but Dr. Vischer had kept large funds on hand for use at the necessary moment.
Q. The fact that funds were available appears normal. Were the mission accounts examined to ascertain whether more than the usual sums had been received?
A. There appears to have been funds remitted from Tokio.
Q. By whom?
A. Funds were remitted from the Swiss consul in Tokio which were presumably for relief but which Dr. Vischer did not use as they were being kept for the crisis referred to above.
Q. What are the contents of the documents pertaining to the case which Lieut. Col. Takata has consulted during the interview?
A. These documents constitute the original of the Gaimusho report.
Q. They can hardly correspond to the Gaimusho report as they are visibly much longer.

Captain Arima says that he is willing to furnish a complete copy of the entire documentation to the Delegation.

Lieut. Commander Takata suggested that investigations regarding the case should be best made on the spot as Mr. Sasuga, chief of the civil police who is still in Bandjermassin was in attendance there from the beginning. The permanent seat of the Special Court Martial was at Balikpapan and its officials proceeded to Bandjermassin when required by the necessities of investigation.
Captain Arima enquired whether there were any special points which Dr. Junod would like to have clarified. Reply was made that after receipt and study of full documentation Dr. Junod would avail himself of the offer to submit further question.
Asia War, and it was entrusted to the Foreign Ministry, for official Notification, only in this year.

2. Detailed documents should, according to a statement by Inspector Legal Lt. Commander Takata, be in the custody of the military disciplinary court to the second southern expeditionary fleet at Soerabaja.

Appendix

Anti-Japanese Rebellion Conspiracy in South Borneo

I. Persons connected with Crime

1. Address: Banjermassin confinement station for male nationals of enemy-like countries.
   - Nationality or tribe: Dutch
   - Profession: ex Governor of Borneo, Dr. Juris (Leader) Bebeie Haga, aged 53
   - Address: Banjermassin confinement station for male nationals of enemy-like countries.

2. Address: c/o Sending, Tokiwa-dori 19, Bandjermassin
   - Nationality: Swiss
   - Profession: Physician (Director Sending Banjermassin Hospital and president Borneo Sending Society) (Leader) Matheus Fischer, aged 47

3. Address: Tsukuji-dori, Banjermassin
   - Nationality: Dutch
   - Profession: none
   - Leader: L.G. Brandon, aged 50

4. Address: Wakatake-koji, Banjermassin
   - Nationality: Dutch
   - Race: Dutch-East Indian
   - Profession: Government Official (Chief inspector, taxation office, civil administration) (Leader) Antonio Sante Aho Pef [Antonio Santeago (Santi) Pereira]

5. Address: Tachibana-dori, Banjermassin
   - Nationality: Dutch
   - Race: Javan
   - Profession: Government official (inspector, health department, civil administration) (Leader) Raden Soeshiro, aged 50

6. Address: Bandjermassin Penitentiary
   - Nationality or race: Dutch
   - Profession: none (female)
   - Address: Bandjermassin confinement station for male nationals of enemy-like countries

7. Address: Cornelia Johanna Maria Leechert, aged 40 [C.J.M. Reichert]
   - Nationality or race: Dutch
   - Profession: ex Assistant Director Kofas Harid [Kapoeas-Barito]
   - Address: Bandjermassin confinement station for male nationals of enemy-like countries

8. Address: A.C.W. Wardneer, aged 45 [A.C.W. Wardenier]
   - Nationality or race: Dutch
   - Profession: Government General (Attended conspiracy meetings)
   - Address: as above

   - Nationality or race: Dutch
   - Profession: ex Chief of secretariat, Borneo Government General (Attended conspiracy meetings)
   - Address: as above

10. Address: Jakob de Vries, aged 33 [J. de Vries]
    - Nationality or race: Dutch
    - Profession: ex Superintendent of Kuaf Kafas [Koeala Kapoeas] (Attended conspiracy meetings)
    - Address: as above

11. Address: Jan Wellem Adrian Verbaren, aged 36 [J.W.A. Verpalen]
    - Nationality or race: Dutch
    - Profession: ex Superintendent of Borthoulu Tanabobu [Poeleoh Laoet / Tanahboemboe] (Attended conspiracy meetings)
    - Address: as above

12. Address: M.C. Heis, aged 34 [M.C. Buis]
    - Nationality or race: Dutch
    - Profession: ex Superintendent for Kuaf Colon [Kuala Kurun] (Attended conspiracy meetings)
    - Address: as above
APPENDICES  REPORT ANTI-JAPANESE REBELLION [REPORT 460107]

13. Address: as above
   Nationality or race: Dutch
   Profession: ex Superintendent for Tarta Fuf [Martapura]
   (Attended conspiracy meetings)
   C.H.C.M. Buurkels, aged 39 [G. Th.J.M. Beukers]

14. Address: as above
   Nationality or race: Dutch
   Profession: ex Superintendent for Muala Teue [Muara Teweh]
   (Attended conspiracy meetings)
   L.W.J. Honnus, aged 33 [L.W.J. Bouhuys]

15. Address: as above
   Nationality or race: Dutch
   Profession: ex Superintendent for Banca Lanpun [Pankalanbun]
   (Attended conspiracy meetings)
   Van der Coy, aged 33 [G.J. van der Kooi]

16. Address: as above
   Nationality or race: Dutch
   Profession: ex Superintendent for Fuluku Chau [Puruk Tjahu ]
   (Attended conspiracy meetings)
   Van der Linden [A.L.V.L. van der Kooi]

   Nationality or race: Dutch, Dutch-East Indian
   Profession: Government official (School inspector of civil administration)
   (Attended conspiracy meetings)
   Gotfried Daniel Ernst Brohes, aged 40 [G.D.E. Braches]

18. Address: as above
   Nationality

19. Address: Banjermassin confinement station for female nationals of enemy-like countries
   Nationality or race: Dutch
   Profession: none, wife of Brohes
   (Attended conspiracy meetings)
   Zeni Brohes, aged 32 [Zeni Braches]

20. Address: 19, Tokiwa-dori, Banjermassin
   Nationality or race: Dutch
   Profession: none, wife of Haga
   (Attended conspiracy meetings)
   N.G. Haga, aged 45 [N.G. Haga]

21. Address: Banjermassin confinement station for female nationals of enemy-like countries
   Nationality or race: Dutch
   Profession: none, wife of Fischer
   (Attended conspiracy meetings)
   Betty Fischer, aged 43 [Betsy Vischer-Mylius]

22. Address: Yamato-dori, Banjermassin
   Nationality or race: Swiss
   Profession: none, wife of Verboren
   (Attended conspiracy meetings)
   Elma Verbaren, aged 34 [Nelina Verpalen]

   Nationality or race: Menadoan
   Profession: Government official (Chief of Agriculture and Forestry Section, Civil Administration)
   (Espionage actions)
   Alexis Alexieff Hari S. Pelenkamalivi, aged 38 [A.G.P.A. Makaliwi]

24. Address: Shiomi-dori, Banjermassin
   Nationality
   Profession: none
   (Attended conspiracy meetings)
   Housman Babu, aged 53 [Housman Babu]

6/2/01 ernst braches
APPENDICES

REPORT ANTI-JAPANESE REBELLION [REPORT 460107]

and race: Chinese
Profession: Government official (chief of information section, political department, civil administration) (Espionage actions)
Wu Lei Kooi, aged 37 [Oey Ley Koey]
25. Address: Shiomi-dori, Banjermassin
Nationality and race: Chinese
Profession: none (Espionage assistance)
Poa Hok Chou, aged 49 [Phoa Hok Tjwan]

26. Address: as above
Nationality and race: Indonesian
Profession: Mechanic Japan Cinema Allotment Co., Ltd., Banjermassin Branch (Espionage assistance)
A. Roman, aged 26 [A. Roman]

II. Outline of Criminal Facts.

1) Environments of Criminal Discussions.

1. When the atmosphere of war against Japan grew denser in the Dutch-East Indian Government in August 1941 the incumbent governor of Borneo, Haga, in compliance with secret directives received from Backer, commanding officer of the war mobilization ministry at Bandoeng, Java, took in hand all war preparations such as transfer to Pulukchon [Poeroekjaoe], of the Borneo governmental office upon commencement of hostilities, plans for internment of Japanese nationals etc., in particular ordered to health inspector Soesiro [Soesilo], the organization and formation of BMO in all Borneo, and, by plenipotentiary, invited and installed as government official, the Swiss national Fischer [Vischer], who was at that time director of the Sending Hospital [Zendingshospitaal] at Kuala Cafas [Koealakapoeas], selecting him as Director of the BMO special hospital at Banjermassin with a view to making him attend partially to treatment of only Dutch troops in time of anti-Japanese hostilities (the organization of the BMO was completed by Soesiro [Soesilo] and Fischer [Vischer] by December of the same year, but it ended without taking action). When, on February 8, 1942, the Japanese army was reported approaching the upper reaches of this district, Haga, in accordance with the mentioned plan for transfer to Pulukchon [Poeroekjaoe], of the ad-
iministrative central organs, proceeded via Kuala Cafas [Koealakapoeas] to Pulukchon [Poeroekjaoe], accompanied by his intimates, Assistant Director Lanterey [Lanting], Assistant Director Waldnier [Wardenier], chief of Secretariat Den Hartoch [Den Hartog], Superintendent of Muala Teue [Moearatwe], Philipsen, but complete capitulation to the Japanese forces coming to pass in accordance with orders issued by the governor general at Batavia, he was sent to this locality under guard of the Japanese army along with POW of the Dutch forces on March 29 of the same year, since when he has been detained with other Dutch administrative officials in an internment camp.

2. Haga underestimated the war and national potentiality of Japan, believing the current defeat of Holland to be a temporary scheduled withdrawal in accordance with strategical plans and being convinced of a resurrection in near future, he, already during the Bulukchon [Poeroektjaoe] period encouraged the Menadoan Rensun [Linson], chief of said district, and the Indonesian Abdul Gani49, assistant chief, by stating: ‘We are pretending temporarily to surrender to the Japanese forces and shall be interned, but this is an action already premeditated in the plan of the Dutch army, and as we shall certainly recover (the territory) after obtaining aid from the American forces in August of this year, you shall preserve until then, remain in this place and contribute to the resurrection of Holland by maintaining contact for informations.’

In addition to which, before and thereafter, he made similar statements to Leeert [Reichert], Mr. and Mrs. Brahés [Braches], Fischer [Vischer] etc., by which means he wished for the solidarity and resolution of his comrades. However, such thought was not only Haga’s, but that entertained by all internees equally, in addition to which, presentation by comrades outside the internment place of enemy false rumor news obtained by secret listening in to radio, and all manner of other information, increasingly abetted this idea, with the result that the hopes for the future developed finally into a firm conviction.

3. On the other hand, the eurasians, Aboniaons, Menadoans etc. who were at liberty outside of the confinement places had been mislead by the manipulative policy of the Dutch era into a radically Dutch character and conception of absolute supremacy in

49. Abdul Gani: unkown.
their status of Dutch nationals, and in contrast with the Indonesians, they being placed in higher social positions of government officials, military etc., they were enjoying easy lives through obtaining higher incomes, but they fell from these positions on account of the hostilities, for which some of them felt deep grievance, in addition to which they were lead to hope for and firmly believed in Japan’s defeat and Holland’s resurrection by their abovementioned Dutch ideology.

4. Nearly all the resident third-country nationals being connected with the Sending christian Mission which had Fischer [Vischer] as its chief, they followed in the footsteps of the said mission’s great achievements in South Borneo during the long period of 140 years, and placing the object of their medical and religious education in the people of Dayak, they had divided South Borneo into 25 religious zones, established churches and schools there, and exerted themselves in disseminating enlightening propaganda among the people of the Dayak. These schools attached to churches reached the large number of 144; there was not the most remote area but was provided with a branch of their organization and their influence on the people of Dayak was extremely strong. Realization of the historical fact that the Dutch government, at one time, deemed this organization to be an espionage network and attempted its suppression but was overwhelmed by its power and thus failed to succeed, subsequent to which it applied appeasement policy and similar means evidences the extent of the organization’s energy. Whilst outwardly, this mission appeared to be operated by a committee of three executives, namely its director Fischer [Vischer] (Swiss), the chief of the education section Brahes [Braches] (Dutch), and the chief accountant Barth [Bart] (Swiss), in actual practice all matters were in the hands of the director, and Fischer [Vischer], in name and in fact was convinced of his dictatorial powers as director of this mission, operating freely the great cellular organization of the mission which controlled all the activities of the society’s affairs, and thereby acquiring an extremely favourable position for connections and collecting all manner of information.

5. Haga placed great credit in Fischer [Vischer], and conversely Fischer [Vischer] placed absolute trust in Haga. Prior to the war the government office of Borneo not only donated to the mission a yearly subsidy of from 35.000 to 40.000 guilders, but Haga handed directly to Fischer [Vischer] a secret fund of 10.000 guilders at year’s end in addition to which Haga esteemed most highly the personality and efficiency of Fischer [Vischer] to such extent that, on occasion of the organization of the abovementioned BMO, he invested Fischer [Vischer] as a government official and delegated to him his powers etc. Whilst escaping to Pulukchon [Poeroekjaoe], Haga met Fischer [Vischer] at Kuala Cagas [Koealaka-poes] and, being at that time convinced of the re-capture of that district by the American and Dutch forces, he with a view to preparing for a later day when actions would occur consequent to the advance of the friendly army, not only requested Fischer [Vischer] to conceal and keep in custody the fixtures of the BMO, but also handed him a campaign fund of about 45.000 guilders and earnestly entrusted him with the subsequent care. In response Fischer [Vischer] who, already ordinarily felt deep emotion on account of the friendship and sympathy was further impressed with the same erroneous conception against Japan as that of Haga, readily accepted the proposal and, after the internment of Haga, he strived to fulfill the promise.

Thereafter, he beleived in the enemy’s faulse news and felt recurrent dissatisfaction with the decrease of the subsidy granted to the said mission by the civil administration of Borneo and the discontinuation of the secret funds etc., and grew increasingly to hope for the resurrection of Holland.

6. The economical crisis caused by the war in this district overthrew in an instant the leading position which had hitherto been built up and held in the commercial circles of this district by Chinese, Arabs etc. and these, deeming its cause to lie in the occupation by the Japanese forces, did not welcome the control. In particular, among the Zaibatsu50, who suffered a heavy economical blow, and a part of the stratum of Chinese youths who had joined the volunteers corps during the Dutch era and had offered resistance to the Japanese forces, the anti-Japanese and pro-Dutch sentiments were strong.

7. In short, even though the former Dutch executive officials, with Haga as the central figure, and other influential persons were confined in this area, they showed themselves to the population as actually living, whilst outside the confinement camps, Fischer [Vischer] surrounded by persons connected with the Sending mission, eurasians, Menadoans, Ambonians, a part of the Chinese etc., although each differing in his racial attitude, were solidarity in their anti-

50. Zaibatsu. Jap. word: merchants (?)
Japanese attitude and were radically pro-Dutch and anti-Japanese. In such atmosphere, they were united by the various leaders and proceeded with the realization in extreme secrecy of the following conspiracy plan.


1. Conspiracy discussions and planning of action outside the confinement camps.

a) Residence of Leehert [Reichert]
Time:
Frequently convened from end of April 1942, after Mr. and Mrs. Brandon had joined the household, until arrest of Leehert [Reichert] on December 4 of the same year.
Purpose:
- Listening in to Radio (owned by Leehert [Reichert]).
- Exchange of all kind of information.
- Plan for relief of Dutch internees.
- Formation of relief body for comrades.
- Method of securing funds & foodstuffs.
- Restraint on taking employment other than in necessary sections (other than taking information)
- Plan for armed rebellion.
Persons assembled:
- Mr. Mrs. Fischer [Vischer] (Swiss)
- Soeshiro [Soesilo] (Javan with Dutch nationality)
- Mr. & Mrs. Brahes [Braches] (Indo-european with Dutch nationality)
- Mrs. Barth [Bart] (Swiss)
- Rintefrera [Santi Pereira] (Dutch-East Indian with Dutch nationality)
- Brandon (Dutch-East Indian with Dutch nationality)
- Mahaliwi [Makaliwi] (Menadoan)
- Wu Lei Cooy [Oey Ley Koey] (Chinese)
- Housman Babu [Housman Babu] (Dayakan)
- Leehert [Reichert] (Dutch)
Resolutions:
- Formation of Society for relief of Dutch Confin-ees
  Organisation to be completed about June
  Chief of society: Leehert [Reichert]
  Advisor: Fischer [Vischer]
  After arrestation of Leehert [Reichert], Brandon became chief of society.
- Contact with confinement camps
  Leehert [Reichert] to be in charge for the time being.
  Changed to Mrs. Brandon after arrestation of Leehert [Reichert].
- Organization of separate groups for each race.

b) Shanghai Bar
Time:
From about May of last year until May of this year (nearly daily).
Purpose:
- Exchange of and enlightenment of Radio news (war situation).
- Exchange of all kind of information.
- Scrutiny of situation of Japanese control.
- Securing comrades.
- Conference on measures for the time of advance by American and Dutch forces.
Persons assembled:
- Brandon, Santeplera [Santi Pereira], Wu Lei Cooy [Oey Ley Koey].
Initially it was merely a meeting place for unemployed Chinese to air their grievances but with the advent of Brandon and Santeplera [Santi Pereira] the character of the Assembly changed into a place for Chinese to confer on conspiracy.

c) Residence of Santeplera [Santi Pereira]
Time:
Several times in May of last year.
Purpose:
- Relief of comrades, and means of controlling solidarity.
Persons assembled:
- Santeplera [Santi Pereira], Makalini [Makaliwi]
Resolution adopted:
- Establishment of a committee for relief of eurasians

b. Time:
  September, last year.
Purpose:
- Means for acquisition of comrades, their relief and expansion of solidarity in view of development of war situation.
Persons assembled: Santeplera [Santi Pereira], Brandon, Makalni [Makaliwi]
Resolution adopted:
- Establishment of society for relief of comrades (continued from September until May of this year).
This society is an expansion and solidification of the committee for relief of eurasians and it, taking advantage of a considerably fervent anti-Japanese feeling arising at that time among Chinese and Arabsians, and intending to make use of this trend, whilst believing firmly in the advance of the
American and Dutch forces in the near future, aspired to securing comrades and obtaining funds by calling to these anti-Japanese Chinese and Arabs, as well as to make itself a nucleus for action in the event of a crisis by consolidating the solidarity among the comrades.

c. Time: December of last year.
Purpose: Conspiratory discussion of plans of action.
Persons assembled:
Santeplera [Santi Pereira], Brandon, Makalini [Makaliwi].
Resolutions adopted:
Preparation of Dutch national flags (for actions)
Funds: Chinese Zaibatsu
Arms: Among Chinese

d) Brandon Residence
Time: From December last year until May of this year.
Purpose: a. Exchange of Information
c. Measures to be taken at the time of attack by American and Dutch forces.
Persons assembled: Same as at Lechert [Reichert] residence.
Resolutions adopted:
a. Dissemination of false rumours.
b. Economic plotting.

e) Plotting of 2 Leaders Santeplera [Santi Pereira] and Brandon
Time: From about September of last year until middle decade of January this year.
Place: Residence of both persons.
Purpose: Formation of acting corps.
Plan decided upon about middle decade of January this year.

f) Fischer [Vischer] Residence
Time: From about July of last year to January of this year.
Purpose: Beginning with problem of establishing red cross, switched to establishment of BMO.
Persons assembled:
Mr. & Mrs. Fischer [Vischer], Soeshiro [Soesilo],
Mr. & Mrs. Brandon, Leehert [Reichert], Mr. & Mrs. Brahes [Braches], Mr. & Mrs. Barth [Bart].
Resolutions adopted: Resolved to establish BMO Organization completed middle decade of January this year.

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was planted the seedling for the fundamental principles of the various plans plotted or already being put into effect by them. In regard to the comrade’s highest objects, namely the plan for armed rebellion and, in preparation thereof the assurance of relief of, communications between, solidarity among comrades as well as measures for securing funds and foodstuffs through this organization, it was intended to utilize the control of this organisation, immediately to commence direct action in case of crises.

That is to say, under guidance of Santeplera [Santi Pereira] and Brandon, Mahalini [Makaliwi] attended the conspiratory conference of September of last year, and a secret society as well as a relief association for comrades were established in connection with eurasians, which were intended as the central organ for exterior conspiratory action. Along with this, secret meetings under mutual contact were held within each of the various races, by efforts exerted by Makalivi [Makaliwi], to act as advanced groups of the said relief association for comrades, and the secret societies ‘Association of Ambonese Comrades’ and ‘Committee of Unemployed Menadoans’ were established.

Being the most radical anti-Japanese pro-Dutch elements, Santeplera [Santi Pereira] and Brandon attended all the various conspiratory conferences and were always leading the discussions under guidance of Fischer [Vischer], in addition to which, being compelled by the developments of warfare to assure urgent obtention of comrades and funds, they sought their object in the strata of Chinese and, whilst Santeplera [Santi Pereira] used his position as Chief of investigation section of the taxation office (competent for assessments), Brandon exerted his strong fighting spirit and enthusiasm for approaching anti-Japanese Chinese, dissemination of false rumours and all kind of other acts in the Shanghai Bar and other meeting places, as well as by means of private interviews, thereby endeavoring to lead them into his own party, simultaneously they retained contact with the confinement camp through Fischer [Vischer] and Leehert [Reichert], collected information from the various organizations and meetings, and sounded the comrade’s intentions. From September of last year the two persons engaged in conspiratory conferences in strict secrecy and commenced working out the plan for rising in rebellion, this being their supreme object in result of which they succeeded, among themselves, toward the middle decade of January this year, in completing the formation of a direct action corps centering on eurasians.

The time for the advance of the American and Dutch forces, as reported by the enemy radio news, was gradually postponed from August of last year to December, March of this year and to May, but no modifications whatever were effected since then in the said direct action program, all being in readiness immediately to be put into effect as soon as the fit moment should arise.

However, fearing leakage of the implications of the program, explanations were given to and agreement obtained from down to chief-of-squad ranks of each corps, but to others, a policy of strict secrecy was maintained, and the (ordinary) members of the corps were trained, by means of enlightening instructions, as to be able to rise immediately, once the order would be issued by the executives.

As regards the arms for the rebellion, 200 rifles and pistols were concealed among Chinese, in addition to Housman Babu [Housman Babu], the tribal chief of the Daya of Kuala Kapuas, taking advantage of the confusion prevailing at the time of occupation by the Japanese forces, pretended to have been appointed group leader by the Japanese government and issued a proclamation demanding from the populace surrender of rifles. He secretly concealed in the public office of the group, 800 rifles and pistols collected on that occasion, took contact with Brahes [Braches] and proposed to use these in the event of an uprising. Furthermore, as regards dynamite for demolishing, comrade Oostarman [Austerman] taking advantage of his position of engineer of the public works section of the civil administration stole from government supplies and concealed 2 cases of dynamite, 800 percussion caps and 1.800 meters fuse.

Funds for uprising: In addition to about 20,000 Guilders, representing the balance of the funds received by Fischer [Vischer] from Haga, and intended to be used immediately upon uprising, it was decided to make use of the specie of the Sending mission, the reserves of the Mutual Relief Association etc., after which it was planned to secure funds from Lee Sen Teck [Lie Seng Tek], Chinese Zaibatsu in this district (Manager of Fukuto Company, operated by the son-in-law of Tan Kats Lee51, the chief of the Anti-Japanese Zaibatsu at Shanghai), C. Nasar [Sech Nasar bin Awat bin Abdat], village chief of Talip Bagoon52 and prominent person among the arabs, and others, with whom Fischer [Vischer] and Santeplera [Santi Pereira] had maintained contact, either direct or through their intimates.

52. Talip Bagoon: unknown.
Organization of Independent Action Group Kuala Kapuas

Following directives received from Fischer [Vischer], Brahes [Braches] took in hand, in October of last year, organization of an independent action group to comply with the program for action in this district and, inviting his wife Zeni Brahes [Braches], Gutten [Göttin] and Hessberg [Hessberg] and assuming himself the leadership, they continued in conspiratory conferences. In respect to the direct action group it was decided to take advantage of the fact that the above mentioned chief of the Daya tribe Housman Babu [Housman Babu] was an anti-Japanese pro-Dutch element and moreover on friendly terms with the Sending mission as well as himself, for selecting him as chief of direct action. This program was completed during the last decade of January of this year under leadership of Fischer [Vischer] on occasion of his visit to Capuas [Koealakapeas].

2. Conspiracy and Program of Uprising within Confinement Camp.

a. Owing to his social position as former governor general, his educational standing as Dr. juris and his radical anti-Japanese sentiments Haga assumed general direction of this affair and he organized, in June of last year, within the confinement camp, a brain trust under the directorship of vice commissioner Lanting, consisting of Der Hartoff [Den Hartog], Van der Linden, Philipsen [Philipsen], Hoet [Hoedt] and Holsteeg [Holstege], through which organization he maintained contact with the exterior and collected information. He further utilized the cell-system, with such former administration officials as Waldnie [Wardenier], Verbaren [Verpalen], Van der Coy [Van der Kooij], Verkers [Beukers], Bouhuys, Boas [Buis], Devries [De Vries], as cell-leaders, by which means he strengthened the solidarity within the confinement camp, whilst for the exterior he secured comrades through his intimates Fischer [Vischer], Soeshiro [Soesilo], Leehert [Reichert] and the radical Brandon. He cleverly manipulated their anti-Japanese pro-Dutch ideology and planned for a combined uprising within and outside the camp to occur at the time of the advance of the Dutch and American forces.

Shortly after the group of Haga was taken into custody in April of last year an anti-Japanese action had been discussed among the male confinrees, but the time had not yet been ripe and the matter did not attain importance. However, being fully informed at that time, from the exterior through direct contact with Leehert [Reichert], Mr. and Mrs. Fischer [Vischer], Soeshiro [Soesilo], Brandon etc., on the state of war, situation of the Japanese administration according to enemy false news, the conspiracy and situation of action outside the camp, Haga and other confinrees on basis of this information arrived at an estimate of August for the time of the advance of the American and Dutch forces, and under the leadership of Haga entered into conspiratory conferences with the aforementioned brain trust as well as all the administration officials who acted as chiefs of cells, with a view to establishing a program for uprising at that moment. Haga, personally edited this program which was completed in October.

Haga circularized this program among all male confinrees indicating to each his duty as well as position after the war, and all agreed to act according to same.

In planning the foregoing, Haga also maintained close contact with Captain Walsam [Van Walsem], a high ranking officer in the nearby POW camp, and presented the program, upon completion, to said captain on which occasion complete accord of opinion between both was established and cooperative action by all POW in case of crisis sworn to.

When, on June 15 of last year the male and female confinrees were separated, the wife of Haga, in compliance with instructions from Haga, conspired with the wife of Verbaren [Verpalen] and, the wife of Haga personally assuming leadership, undertook contact with and exchange of information with the exterior as well as the male confinement camp. But when subsequently information was received in August on the near approach of the American forces, it was decided to establish a system of groups for each dormitory and orders were issued for disciplined action under a chief of group. In addition each one prepared food sufficient for 2 to 3 days (including stores for male confinrees) and, having received instructions to bear in mind, they were made to keep in readiness.

Subsequent to later radio news from the outside the following two food reserves were made but they were consumed as the advance of the American forces did not occur.

2nd preparation December of last year
3rd preparation March, April this year

However the above group-leader system was retained unchanged and the said program was to be immediately put into effect after taking contact with the male confinement camp upon approach of the Dutch and American forces. In addition the situation of food reserve was much as to permit immediate collection by nearly daily contact with exterior.

The Problem of Establishment of Red Cross Chapter and BMO

In June of last year Haga ordered Fischer [Vischer] to
establish a red cross chapter in this locality and to assume the post of its director. The latter accepted Haga’s desire and, with the understanding of the Swiss consul in Soerabaia, filed application for establishment, with the occupation force of this locality, which was refused. The plan, at that time, of Haga was: He intended to take advantage of the internationally acknowledged legality enjoyed by the red cross for maintaining secret contact and exchanging information among the comrades inside and outside the camp, but when this plan was frustrated, he changed his plan in September of last year and attempted a revival of the prewar BMO. The BMO is a medical organization comprising Soesilo, Fischer [Vischer] and their subordinates as central figures, and anti-Japanese civilians as members, which was formed by order of the government shortly before the occupation by Japanese forces. Fischer [Vischer], taking advantage of his status of ‘third country national’ (neutral nationality) plotted with Soesilo in keeping secret this organization in anticipation of later days, and concealed supplies, the revival being hurried with a view to acting as a powerful contributor to the armed uprising at the time of the advance of the American forces which was expected in the near future, and being completed by January of this year.

In addition, the independent action group of Kuala Capuas was also formed under these principles. It is of importance particularly to note the following points in which this organization differs from the red cross and is of truly enemy character.

1. Its being composed exclusively of anti-Japanese pro-Dutch elements of the Dutch rule era.
2. Medical treatment was to be restricted exclusively to casualties among the anti-Japanese uprising groups.
3. The complete use of the concealed supplies of the BMO having been attempted.
4. Its possession of the character of a powerful wing of the armed uprising groups.

3) Espionage Activities

All suspects involved in this case, without exception, actively made use of every opportunity, position or environment, for collecting and exchanging all manner of information, as well as for mutual enlightenment, besides using concealed radio apparatus, contacting enemy submarines, envoying comrades, using sailing vessels of natives etc. for the purpose of maintaining contact and exchanging information with comrades outside Borneo island.

Scrutiny of the traces of these activities reveals that their espionage actions followed the following three lines:

1. Activities of the remainder of the secret espionage net possessed by Haga before the war.
2. Activities of the espionage organization of the Sending mission operated by Fischer [Vischer].
3. Activities by each comrade individually.

The particulars are as follows.

1. Prior to the war, Haga disposed of a secret espionage organization which had captain Walsam [Van Walsem] and Soesilo as its chiefs and Makaliwi [Makaliwi], Wu Lei Kooi [Oey Ley Koey] etc. as executive officers, but following the confinement of Haga and Walsam due to the present war, Soesilo assumed the position as chief, by secret order, whilst Makaliwi and Wu Lei Kooi [Oey Ley Koey], under control of Soesilo, assisted in mobilizing the said remainder of the espionage system.

In addition:

Soesilo with the sanitation section of the civil administration,
Makaliwi [Makaliwi] with the economic section of the civil administration,
Wu Lei Kooi [Oey Ley Koey] with the political section of the civil administration,
each utilized his position and most aggressively secured all kind of information, reporting such information to Haga and Walsam [Van Walsem] by contacting them, besides which Makaliwi, on occasion of his visit to Pontianak of official business in February of this year, not only assembled and adjusted all information collected in the past and offered these to Britain and America through comrades at that place and friends in French Indo-China, but their group also perpetrated extremely efficient espionage by maintaining secret information contact with comrades in French Indo-China, Australia and Java by means of radio connection with submarines and so on.

a. Contact with abroad by radio.
A. Wu Lei Kooi [Oey Ley Koey] and Makaliwi [Makaliwi] concealed in their residence a complete radio sending and receiving set which A. Roman, employee of the radio store ‘Eureka’, formerly under Dutch management, had received by request of the Dutch national Van Herder [Van der Heyden], manager of the Borumini [Borsumij] branch, a pro-Dutch anti-Japanese individual who had secured
control of the said company prior to occupation by the Japanese forces, and learning that secret communication had been maintained with the Dutch National Venringer53 (formerly radio engineer of the ‘Eureka’ company), at Malang, Java, since about April last year, they plotted with Soeshiro [Soesilo] and, under his instructions, they attempted to place said radio set in the service of contact with comrades outside Borneo. Obtaining active expert collaboration from A. Roman, who was of one mind with them, they used it on more than 10 occasions from about the first decade of October of last year.

B. Furthermore, Wu Lei Kooi [Oey Ley Koey], taking advantage of the recent confusion of war activities and anticipating its use in the future, had personally taken a radio apparatus from the aforementioned ‘Eureka’ company, concealing same in his residence. After consulting Soeshiro [Soesilo] and Makaliwi [Makaliwi] in this connection he compelled one of their comrades, Mashinambou [Masinambow] (Menadoan, chief of post office of civil administration) to install same in the ceiling of his house and used this radio apparatus on a number of occasions from October of last year to about the middle decade of February of this year.

By this means not only did Wu Lei Kooi [Oey Ley Koey] by use of station calls, wave numbers, code words prearranged before the war, exchange all manner of information by morse code in English with the British national Ernest Anderson54 of Saigon, French Indo-China, and the British national Thomas Aitken55 of Springfield, Melbourne, Australia, manager of the Manila Sauce Company, whilst Makaliwi [Makaliwi] did the same by morse code in French with Hue Nuen Dugue, french agricultural expert Of Saigon, French Indo-China, but Wu Lei Kooi [Oey Ley Koey] and Makaliwi [Makaliwi], in company with A. Roman, also effected by the same means exchange of information in Malaian language with Feringer56 and Beloo57 (Ambonian, formerly orderly of Banjermassín Military Hospital), of Malang, Java.

The chief information communicated among them was as follows:

Military information.
1. Condition of occupation units of this district (number of personnel, armament, details of guarding).
2. Condition of vital constructions.
3. Designation of sites for landing in the face of enemy.
4. Designation of sites for descent of parachute troops.
5. Movement of ships, conditions of port facilities and rivers.
6. Details on defense measures at Balik Papan.
7. Plan of insurrection.

General information.
1. Organization of civil administration and principles of government.
2. Trend of feeling of general public.
3. Number of Japanese, their physical strength, livelihood, and condition of health and sanitation.

Economic information.
1. Current condition of development of natural resources.
2. Plan for transports.
3. Food measures.
Etc.

The scope of information was extremely extended.

The affair of the sinking by enemy submarine attack of the S/S ‘Kinzan’ off Matasiri in the Java Sea on January 3 of this year, represents a victim of the above mentioned radio communications, and this occurrence is a striking evidence for the resolute and radical character of their group’s espionage activity by radio.

b. Communications with Submarines.

Whilst Soeshiro [Soesilo], Wu Lei Kooi [Oey Ley Koey] and Makaliwi [Makaliwi] were plotting to establish direct contact with enemy submarines, they considered the appearance, in about February of this year, of an enemy submarine in the mouth of the Balito [Barito] River of this district, an excellent opportunity and Wu Lei Kooi [Oey Ley Koey], acting under orders from Soeshiro [Soesilo], bribed his intimate, the Chinese national Poa Hok Chou [Phoa Hok Tjwan], to whom he entrusted a communication in English for contact with the submarine and delegated him in the mouth of the Balito [Barito] River in a sailing boat on two occasions during the first and second decades in February. Poa Hok Chou [Phoa Hok Tjwan], on the first trip, dropped two message cartridges of bamboo entrusted to him as directed by Wu Lei Kooi [Oey Ley Koey], with the intention of having them picked up by the submarine, at a spot about two nautical miles off the coast.

53. Venringer: unknown
54. Ernest Anderson: unknown.
55. Thomas Aitken: unknown.
56. Feringer: unknown. Same as ‘Venringer’?
57. Beloo: unknown.
in the month of the Balito [Barito] River, whilst on the second trip, he drifted for two days and nights near a spot several nautical miles off Tanjong Soerantan. At about o200 hours, after having continued in executing the signal for contacting submarines as pre-arranged between Wu Lei Kooi [Oey Ley Koey] and his comrades in French Indo-China, by flashing on and off the red light of an electric flashlight, the submarine rose to the surface, 4 military persons believed to be British troops boarded a small noiseless powered craft and approached, the while issuing reply signals with red, blue and white light. In this way Poa Hok Chou [Phoa Hok Tjwan] succeeded in handing them the message cased in thick cardboard which had been entrusted to him.

In the contact messages of the above mentioned two occasions were exhibited most clearly reports on military and civilian administration affairs of this district.

In connection with the foregoing communications by radio and with submarines, Soeshiro [Soesilo] acted as direct head, giving orders to Wu Lei Kooi [Oey Ley Koey] and Makalivi [Makaliwi] as well as supplying the necessary secret funds to both and, through them, to A. Roman and Poa Hok Chou [Phoa Hok Tjwan], whilst the results of connecting were exclusively reported to Haga through captain Walsam [Van Walsem].

2. Fischer [Vischer] utilized the vast cellular organization of the Sending mission for collecting detailed information on all kind of matters and reported these to Haga. The chief reports collected and presented to him are:

- Situation of supplies and stocks of commodities in various districts.
- Condition of sources of products of ores.
- Situation of agricultural production.
- Situation of distribution of firearms and ammunition against obnoxious beasts of prey.
- Reaction of the populace to the measures of the civil administration; number of all POW and confinees their names, ages, races, positions, living conditions, health conditions.
- Treatment of (ot by?) Japanese forces.
- Etc.

3. Haga, Lanting, Den Hartoch [Den Hartog], and other leaders within the confinement camp adjusted and unified the above mentioned reports presented from the outside, put them into writing, entrusted these to comrades on each occasion of the latter trips to Java, and so maintained information contact with the Swiss priest Monsinur (?) [Monseigneur Kusters] at Soerabaja (formerly priest of the catholic church in this district), who is deemed to be an important person in the espionage net in Java, and with the Swiss national Dengering [Dengerink] (woman) (formerly teacher at school attached to Sending mission in this district).

Contact letters with Java, both there and return, were all collected by Leehert [Reichert] or Brandon and entrusted to comrades destined for Java, the number of trips to and from Java by their comrades, from Haga’s confinement in last year until May of this year, being 4 times, viz.:

- August of last year – Patenaia [Tuapatinaja]
- December of last year – Ponkei [Pangkei]
- January of this year – Soeshiro [Soesilo]
- March of this year – Lenten [Reinten]

On each occasion contact was made and information exchanged with comrades in that area.

4) Dissemination of false Rumours.

All suspects involved in activities outside (the camps) directly or by urging comrades, disseminated all manner of false rumours, thereby attempting to alienate the populace’s feelings from the Japanese government by creating confusion in popular sentiments and economic circles. That is to say:

1. Mr. and Mrs. Fische [Vischer] and Mr. and Mrs. Brahés [Braches], at a conspiratory conference in about October of last year, decided, as a means to alienate from the Japanese government the sympathies of the Dayak tribe, to disseminate false rumours whenever opportunity offered, and proceeded with its execution thereafter. In particular, the aforementioned two couples, in the presence of Ranron [Blantan], representative of the Taminrayan [Tamianglajang] parish and more than 10 other persons attending the conference of representatives of mohamedan believers in all districts convened in February of this year in the Sending mission of this district,58

a. shifted the operation difficulty of the Daya church to non-payment of subsidies by the civil administration (actually already issued by civil administration)

b. falsified the war situation, implying Japan’s defeat and the recovery of Holland.

Thereby they caused agitation in the listener’s con-

APPENDICES

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2. Mr. and Mrs. Brahes [Braches], at their residence, about April of this year, in the presence of Shima [Sima], a Daya teacher, mentioned among other things:
   a. a distorted comparison of Japanese-American war and national potentials (implying the defeat of Japan)
   b. the absence of a fixed aim in the government policy by Japan, exaggerating the shortage of commodities and the increase of prices.
   c. the appearance, in near waters, of American submarines. They thereby caused agitation in his feelings.

3. Soesiro [Soesilo], on occasion of his official trip to Eastern [Western] Borneo in June of last year, a. gave distorted explanations on the war situation
   b. criticized Japanese administration in the presence of physicians at the various localities visited by him, thereby urging their return to their native places, shaking their feelings and in each case, making them decide to resign their position.

4. Santeplers [Santi Pereira], Brandon, Makalivi [Makaliwi] and Wu Lei Kooi [Oey Ley Koey], commencing from about September of last year, approached Chinese nationals and, besides propagating a distorted version of the war situation as well as an exaggerated account of the defects of Japanese administration, but also made him commune with other Chinese comrades and disseminate similar false rumours, thereby endeavouring to create popular unrest and intending to acquire additional comrades. In particular, Brandon, in December last year, in the presence of Chinese nationals and natives disseminated the following false rumours, viz: As the war is approaching, and preparatory to the event of occupation of this district by American and Dutch forces it was urged that military scrip [?] be converted to metal currency. Furthermore the above four persons, on an extensive scale, each and separately, taking advantage of the transfer of imperial troops in February of this year from Guadalcanar, and the airraids of Ambon as reported in the newspapers, stated that American submarines had appeared in proximate waters and the American and Dutch forces would finally advance to this district in the very near future, thereby causing confusion and uneasiness among a large number of the populace. As a result buying up and concealment of such daily necessities as rice, sugar, salt etc. continuously occurred at that time and the economic world was let into confusion. The false rumours disseminated by their group must be termed as being of the most malevolent nature as, they being, thanks to their ceaseless collection and exchange of information, cognizant of all manner of secret matters on an extremely extensive scale, able to grasp the weak points in the Japanese administration, they directed their server criticism and what superficially might appear to be appropriate but actually were false statements against it, thereby creating false disturbance behind the from [front] lines.

III. Course of Investigation into Crime.

As explained in detail in the foregoing chapter ‘Environments of criminal discussions’, the military administration in South Borneo, whilst showing a tranquil exterior, was proceeding with a number of dangerous germs concealed in its interior. Consequently the special naval police of this sector continued unofficial investigation into the activities of these persons requiring attention, in result of which, the certainty was arrived at that, in so far as concerns activities outside the confinement camps, endeavours were being made to obtain information and establish secret contact among eurasians, Menadoans, Ambonians, pro-Dutch Chinese, a part of the natives, and Indians, with Fischer [Vischer] as the central figure. However, in consideration of the serious nature of this matter it was deemed necessary to exercise further care in effecting arrests, in line with which, investigations were continued and the appropriate moment awaited.

When this time ripened, the first arrests were finally made on May 10 of this year at 0600 hrs. on which occasion all chief personages directly appearing on the surface were arrested, and rigorous domiciliary searches were made resulting in the seizure of an enormous quantity of evidence permitting the immediate initiation of interrogations. As the interrogations progressed, the affair acquired increasing extension, and the second arrests were made from dawn of May 13, on which occasion the leader of the outside conspiracy Fischer [Vischer], and others, mainly third country nationals, were arrested. Subsequently, in the third arrests which were effected on August 19, Governor General and Mrs. Haga as central figures, and other influential members within the male and female confinement camps were taken into custody.

The general head quarters of the second Southern expeditionary fleet awaited the conclusion of interrogations of the special naval police on the spot and dis-
patched to the spot toward the last decade of the said month as prosecuting officer, Legal Lieutenant Taka-
ta, with orders to effect investigation. After these had
continued for two month, the full circumstances of the
crime were made manifest toward the middle dacade
of October, and the said lieutenant finally transmitted
the case to the military disciplinary tribunal of the
second Southern expeditionary fleet.

IV. The Public Trial

December 6, 1943, 0930 hrs.

Sitting:
Chief Judge: Captain Yamaji
Judge: Legal Commander Kanei
do.: Lieutenant Hashimoto
Prosecuting officer: Legal Lieutenant Takata.

The hearing was held, with the attendance of an inter-
preter for Malaiian, in the assembly hall of the navy
occupation force at Banjermassin. After presentation
of the public indictment by the prosecuting officer,
the trial of all defendants was commenced and, in re-
sult of all defendants having each acknowledged their
guilt during the course of several days, conclusion of
trial was pronounced by the chief judge at 1500 hrs.
on the 11th of the same month. At 1500 hrs. of the
same day the prosecuting officer opened his argument
on the case and his demand for punishment, after con-
clusion of which, no particular objection being forth-
coming when the chief judge enquired into the state of
mind of each defendant, the court went into recess. It
was re-opened at 1730 hrs. of the same day, and chief
judge Yamaji pronounced sentence of death in ac-
cordance with the military discipline of the Fleet in
South-Western Areas (Appendix) on each of the de-
fendants involved in the case, the court being closed
at 1740 hrs.

V. Execution of Sentence

In accordance with sentence pronounced on December
11, 1943 all defendants (Haga and others) were
executed by shooting at 1030 hrs. on December 20, of
the same year.

VI. Repercussion of this Case on the Public

During the more or less one half year after the case
was taken in hand, witnessing arrests on three occa-
sions, the public, whilst being taken aback grasped
the nature of this case, but apparently by reason of the
arrested persons being for the most part Dutch, third
country nationals, Eurasians etc. who had held higher
positions than the natives and had held them in con-
tempt, whereas there were hardly any persons in-
volved from the strata of natives, there was less agita-
tion in the public’s feeling than expected, and
tranquility was restored shortly thereafter.

However, the fact that this case was a matter of ut-
most interest to the natives can be gathered from the
circumstance that when on December 21, the day fol-
lowing execution of the defendants, the facts of the
case were published, the newspaper of that day (Ma-
layan edition) was entirely sold out 30 minutes from
commencement of the sale.

Once however the truth of this case was known, the
public was aghast at its magnitude, complicatedness
and gravity and it seems that their feeling of respect
toward the impartiality and energetic attitude of the
Japanese forces was deepened there, being thereafter
among the whole population no sign of agitation but
increasing collaboration with the Japanese forces.

Appendix

Military Disciplinary Code of the Fleet in
South-Western Areas

Article 1
This military disciplinary code shall be applicable to
persons in areas under occupation by the fleet in
South-Western Areas. However, in the case of sub-
jects of the Empire, this military disciplinary code
shall be aplicable only in the event of impossibility
of enforcing punishment under the laws of the Em-
pire.

Article 2
Persons who have perpetrated actions listed hereunder
shall receive military punishment.
1. Actions hostile to Imperial forces.
2. Espionage.
3. In addition to the foregoing two paragraphs, ac-
tions injuring the safety of the Imperial forces or
obstructing military operations.
4. Actions violating prohibitive orders issued by
the Commanding officer of the fleet in South-
Western areas, commanding officers of fleets un-
der his command, or commanding officers of na-
val bases.
5. In addition to the foregoing four paragraphs, ac-
tions disturbing the peace in the occupied areas, or
injuring the interests of the Imperial troops.

Persons who have taken in hand perpetuation of ac-
tions enumerated in the foregoing article but did not
put them into effect, or persons who have prepared
plotted or conspired, with the intention of perpetuat-
ing to actions enumerated in the preceeding para-
graph(s?) shall be also be subject to the preceeding
paragraph(s?).

Article 2A
Persons who have enlightened or assisted third persons in perpetuating actions enumerated in the first paragraph of the foregoing article shall be placed under military punishment irrespective of whether or not the person instigated or assisted has taken into hand actual perpetuation of same.

The same applies to persons who have instigated third persons with the object of infringement of the actions enumerated in the first paragraph of the preceding article.

Article 2B
Persons who have infringed by error on the actions enumerated in the first paragraph of article 2 shall be placed under military punishment.

Article 2C
Persons who have concealed criminals under the preceding three articles, or have destroyed such criminal evidence, or have partaken in the disposal of objects acquired in result of such crime, shall be placed under military punishment.

Article 3
Persons who, having perpetuated any of the actions enumerated in the preceding four articles, but have given themselves up before discovery or when there are circumstances in the crime particularly calling for leniency, exemption from military punishment may be granted.

Article 4
Military punishment shall be divides into: death, confinement, fine and confiscation. Death, confinement or fine shall be the chief punishment, the degrees being in the order as enumerated in the preceding paragraph, whilst confiscation shall be an auxiliary punishment.

Fines may be imposed in addition to confinement. In case of 2 or more crimes, 2 military punishments may be imposed simultaneously, or one heavy military punishment.

Article 5
Execution of death penalty shall be by shooting; however other methods may be employed in case of need.

Article 6
Confinement shall be for 1 month or more and (confinees) shall be detained at places stipulated by the commanders of fleets under his his command, at which places they shall be put to labour; however exemption from labour may be made, subject to circumstances.

Article 7
Erased

Article 8
Fines shall be of ¥ 1.— or more, and shall be paid by other currency in accordance with sentence pronounced. Persons who are unable fully to pay fines shall be kept under arrest at designated places for periods from one day or more to five years or less and shall be forced to labour.

When pronouncing sentence for fine, the period of arrest according to the preceding paragraph shall be fixed and pronounced simultaneously.

Article 9
Objects forming part of and having been employed in the crime, or having been acquired in result of the crime, or objects having any other connection with the crime may be confiscated.

Article 10
Objects mentioned in the proceeding article, excepting those confiscated by judgement pronounced, may irrespective their ownership, be confiscated by disposition of the prosecuting officer.

Article 11
Military punishment may be mitigated or exemption from enforcement granted by order of the commanding officer of the fleet in the South-Western area, or by commanding officers of fleets under his command.

Article 12
In the event of infringement of this military disciplinary code by representatives of juridical persons (including associations and other bodies, hereafter also), or by agents of juridical persons or (private) persons, their employees or other members of the staff, in connection with the business of the juridical person or (private) person, not only the perpetuating persons shall be punished, but the said juridical persons or (private) person may also be placed under military punishment; in the case of juridical persons, fines shall be imposed. In the case mentioned in the preceding paragraph, if the juridical person cannot make full payment of the fine, the juridical person’s business may be stopped until full payment.

Appendix
This military disciplinary code shall be enforced on March 1, 1943.

*Regulations on Military Disciplinary Court of*
the Fleet in South-Western Areas.

Article 1
Commanders of each fleet under the command of the fleet in the South-Western areas may, when necessary, establish a military disciplinary court at a suitable place.

Article 2
The military disciplinary court shall enforce trial of crimes perpetuated by persons residing in territories guarded by the said competent fleet or sectors under its military administration, or crimes perpetuated in said areas in infringement of the military discipline code of the fleet in the South-Western Areas.

Article 3
The commander of that fleet which was established the military disciplinary court shall be the commanding officer of the said court.
The said commanding officer may, in the event of the military disciplinary court being situated in a remote place or for any other necessary reason, delegate enforcement of designated official powers to a naval commanding officer administrating the territory in which the military disciplinary court is situated.

Article 4
The military disciplinary court shall be composed of judge, prosecuting officer, recorder, guards and interpreter.
— Judges shall be officers or officials of ranks equivalent to officers.
— Prosecuting officers shall be officers of the legal section.
— Recorders shall be naval recorders, guards shall be naval guards.
Judges, prosecuting officers, guards and interpreters shall be appointed by order of the commanding officer.

Article 5
The commanding officer may enforce execution of relative duties by substituting officers, officials in ranks equivalent to officers, or higher civil officials for the officer of the legal section, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers or ‘hannin’ rank civil officials for the recorder, and non-commissioned officers or privates for guards.

Article 6
Trial shall be made by a court consisting of 3 officers, or officials of ranks equivalent to officers. However, the chief judge shall be an officer, and the two others should customarily be an officer of the legal section.

Article 7
Execution of military punishment shall be under orders of the prosecuting officer; persons for execution of military punishment shall be appointed by the commanding officer.
However, there is no objection to delegating for a reasonable period, enforcement of confinement sentence.

Article 8
All matters for which no special provision is made in these regulations shall, so far as possible, follow the stipulations relative to special court martials of the law on naval court martials.
(Remark: In line with the stipulation relative to special court martials, no defendant’s advocate is admitted to the military disciplinary court.)

Translator’s note:
All names, personal or geographical, are transcribed from Japanese Kata-Kana, and correct spellings therefore cannot be vouched for.