
Research Note

Japanese Diplomacy in Soviet Ukraine: Challenges Faced by the Consulate in Odesa (1926–1937)

SVITLANA PAVLENKO

INTRODUCTION

The history of the Japanese consulate in Odesa dates back long before the establishment of the Soviet authority, with its inception driven by Japan's trade interests in the region. Odesa, located in southern Ukraine, became a powerful port in the nineteenth century and served as a hub for global commerce, with nearly 20 foreign consulates. The Japanese consulate opened in 1889 initially as an honorary one, and later transitioned to an ordinary consulate in 1902. During the first stage, the consulate primarily focused on monitoring Russian Navy activity in the Black Sea. However, this goal gradually diminished in importance for Tokyo after the Russo-Japanese War. Consequently, the consulate closed in 1909.

The Japanese government decided to reopen the consulate following the signing of the Soviet-Japanese Basic Convention in Beijing in 1925. During this new phase, Japan's focus shifted from monitoring the Black Sea Navy to socioeconomic changes in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The new task for the Japanese officials was to surveil the actions of the Bolshevik government.

The Soviet Union suspected all foreign residents of being potential spies. Moreover, Japan was considered an enemy state by the United Socialist Soviet Republics' (USSR) politicians and, therefore, believed that the Japanese consulate was primarily focused on espionage activities. In contrast to other consulates in the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, the Japanese presence in Odesa limited social and economic engagement because of minimal Japanese immigration to Soviet Ukraine and weak trade connections. These circumstances served as evidence to the Soviet authorities that Japan's espionage interests in Odesa were the consulate's main objective upon reopening. To gather evidence, counterintelligence services recruited secret agents who were close to the Japanese officials. These agents provided reports to the secret police detailing the lives and work of the Japanese consulate personnel. As a result of this surveillance effort, the Soviet police amassed documents, now totaling over 20 volumes preserved in the Ukrainian archives, which are available for research and are part of our source base.

The available sources concerning the Japanese consulate in Odesa are unique compared with the evidence available for other foreign consulates in Soviet Ukraine. Unlike the documentation on the Japanese consulate, similar broad documents created by the State Political Directorate (GPU)¹ regarding consular officials of Germany, Poland, Turkey, and Italy, which existed in Soviet Ukraine, is lacking. Considering other Japanese consulates in the USSR, highlighting that the evidence held in the Russian archives remains classified and inaccessible for research purposes is crucial. Consequently, the Japanese consulate in Odesa stands out in comparison to the others because of the depth of available documentation.

The study of the history of the Japanese Consulate in Odesa was initiated by G. A. Lensen in the 1960s. In his monograph, he indicated the locations of Japanese consulates, its employees, and their years of work. However, the book contains several mistakes, provides only a generalized overview, and does not delve into the specific activities of consular institutions.² In another work, Lensen extensively researched official negotiations between the two states. One area covered by scholars was the establishment of a consulate system in 1925–1926.³

Researchers of the next half-century had not paid much attention to the history of the Japanese consulate. The situation has changed since the 2010s, when several articles were published about the institution of Japan in Odesa. Ukrainian scholar, Irina Matyash, dedicated one chapter of her book to the history of the Japanese consulate in Odesa from 1926 to 1937.⁴ Another Ukrainian researcher, Ludmila Vovchuk, focused on the interaction between the GPU and consular employees.⁵ Both researchers drew from the same archived documents to support their findings (Case 418, SSA SSU).

A few articles have been published by Japanese scholars. In his article, Hiroshi Bando discusses Consul Shimada's anti-Semitic views based on his consular reports.⁶ However, it must be noted that our analysis of the material

1 The Joint State Political Directorate (in short OGPU or GPU according to the documents of SSA SSU) was the intelligence and state security service as well as secret police of the Soviet Union from 1923 to 1934.

2 George A. Lensen, *Japanese Diplomatic and Consular Officials in Russia* (Tokyo: Sophia University in cooperation with the Diplomatic Press, 1968).

3 George A. Lensen, *Japanese Recognition of the U.S.S.R. Soviet-Japanese Relations 1921–1930* (Tokyo: Sophia University in cooperation with the Diplomatic Press, 1970).

4 *Матяш І.М.* Іноземні представництва в радянській Україні (1919–1991): протистояння і співпраця. Київ, 2020; *Матяш І.М.* Український дипломатичний архів як джерело дослідження діяльності консульства Японії в Одесі в міжвоєнний період // Міжнародні зв'язки України: наукові пошуки і знахідки. 2022. № 31. С. 202–228.

5 *Вовчук Л.А.* Радянські спецслужби vs японської дипломатії (на матеріалах японського консульства в Одесі в міжвоєнний період) // Сходознавств. 2022. № 89. С. 3–24.

6 *Хироси Бандо* Политика Японии в отношении евреев с 1931 по 1945 гг. [переклад: Зинберга Я.Р.] // Заметки по еврейской истории. 2012. № 8(155) [<http://berkovich-zametki.com/2012/Zametki/Nomer8/Zinberg1.php>], accessed on July 16, 2022.

reveals a more complex worldview held by the consul regarding ethnic issues than what is presented in Bando's publication. Sumi Shigeki, the former ambassador of Japan to Ukraine, provided a concise history of the consulate for Japanese readers. This article primarily concentrates on the first period of the consulate's history (1889–1909) and briefly touches on the Soviet stage.⁷ In contrast to Ukrainian scholars, Japanese authors have primarily relied on Japanese documents for their research.

Kuromiya Hiroaki, an American historian of Japanese origin, explored the coverage of the Holodomor (the Ukrainian famine) in the reports of consulate employees in Odesa. He noted the difficulty of fully assessing Japan's interest in Ukraine because of the loss of archival documents during World War II. The consular reports studied by the author cover the period 1932–1933.⁸

To summarize, only a few scholars have addressed the issue of the Japanese consulate in Odesa during the Soviet era from 1926 to 1937, each focusing on different aspects of its history and limited to its sources. Consequently, existing articles offer only a partial view of the consulate's overall situation. This research note provides an analytical overview of the available sources concerning the primary responsibilities of the Japanese consulate in Odesa from 1926 to 1937. By examining the relationship between Japanese officials, the Soviet authority, and locals, it attempts to understand the impact of Soviet counterintelligence on the consulate's activities.

SOURCES

Both Ukrainian and Japanese archives understandably suffered significant document losses due to the destruction caused by World War II. However, several documents regarding the Japanese consulate in Odesa are still available for research. Key sources are preserved in the Sectoral State Archive of the Security Services of Ukraine (SSA SSU) and Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

The SSA SSU keeps two significant files on the Japanese consulate in Odesa. The first one is "Materials related to the Japanese consulate in Odesa from 1926 to 1932" (Collection 13, Description 1, File 418, 3 chapters titled "Матеріали щодо японського консульства в Одесі з 1926 по 1932 рр."). The second file is titled "Japanese consulate" (Collection P 91, Description 1, File 70, 17 volumes: "Японське консульство"). These files contain information on the activity of the Soviet secret police, specifically the Counterintelligence Department of the State Political Administration, towards the Japanese consulate from 1926 to 1935. The documents encompass reports from agents

7 角茂樹「オデッサ領事館異聞」『神戸学院経済論集』52巻3–4号、2021年 [Shigeki Sumi, "History of Japanese Consulate in Odessa," *Kōbegakuin Economic Papers* 52(3–4), 2021].

8 Hiroaki Kuromiya, "The Holodomor in the Light of Japanese Documents," *Ukraina Moderna* 30, 2021, pp. 120–130.

tasked with supervising the Japanese, quarterly reports compiled by the GPU as a result of observations, internal orders of the GPU, intercepted private letters and reports of the consulate employees, information about the agency network and collected intelligence, descriptions of events involving consular employees, and investigative documents on persons suspected of spying for Japan. File 418 abruptly ended in 1932, and its pages showed signs of smoldering, suggesting that some documents may have been lost. In contrast, File 70 contains detailed documentation up to 1935 and a few pieces of evidence from 1936 to 1937. Despite its higher source value, scholars do not refer to File 70 of the HDA SBU, with only a few documents published from it. Thus far, File 418 has become the primary source for Vovchuk and Matyash's papers. These files were disclosed only in the 2000s.

These documents indicate that some Soviet agents developed close relationships with consulate officials and collected valuable evidence about the Japanese perspective on Soviet society, the food crisis, and repression. Such testimonies were often omitted from official reports sent to Tokyo, making this source unique. Additionally, a few documents from these affairs allowed us to trace the measures taken by foreign residents to prevent important papers from falling into the hands of the GPU. A significant body of documents sheds light on the private lives of Japanese individuals, including the parties they organized for friends, regular meetings with the staff of the German consulate for tennis, and intimate relationships.

Another crucial source for our research was the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, which preserves the reports of consulate officials. These documents provide insight into the outcomes of the institution's work. However, due to the destruction of many archival documents, some evidence is no longer available for research. Nonetheless, we have access to several hundred reports created by Japanese officials in Odesa.

RESUMPTION OF THE JAPANESE CONSULATE'S WORK IN ODESA SASAKI SEIGO, 1926

In 1925, the Basic Convention was signed by the Soviet Union and Japan. The first article stipulated that the countries could establish a system of consulates and diplomatic missions in each other's territories. Subsequent negotiations were held to determine the list of cities in which the consulates would be opened. The USSR's final response to this list was documented in the Verbal Note on July 31, 1925.

According to the Verbal Note, the USSR requested the opening of consulates in Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe, Yokohama, Hakodate, Tsuruga, Nagasaki, Seoul, and Dairen. The Japanese government received the right to open institutions in Moscow, Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Aleksandrovsk, Okha, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Blagoveshchensk, Nikolayevsk-on-Amur, and Odesa. Japan

agreed to this proposal in the Verbal Note on August 4, 1925.⁹ The diplomatic missions were opened in Moscow and Tokyo. The system of consulates consisted of eight institutions in each country.¹⁰ During negotiations, the USSR constantly sought to reduce the number of Japanese consulates. However, in 1925, they failed to do so, and it took more than ten years to achieve this goal.

The reason for Japan's insistence on opening its consulate in Odesa included the need to monitor the social and economic changes in the USSR implemented by the Bolshevik party. The protection of compatriots was not as important because of their limited number and the trade situation was similar. Even observation under the Navy was not as critical as in the previous stage of the consulate's existence at the beginning of the twentieth century.

After the consular system was approved, the next step was to select employees for the new institutions. Sasaki Seigo (佐々木静吾) was offered a position as a consul in Odesa. He previously served as a secretary at the Odesa consulate from 1907 to 1909.¹¹ In 1925, he was appointed to the Japanese mission in Moscow and undertook several business trips to Ukraine, including Odesa.¹² Sasaki was appointed as the Japanese Consul in Odesa by order of Japanese Prime Minister Kato on December 10, 1925.¹³ The consulate in Odesa officially opened on January 4, 1926.¹⁴ Kamimura Shinichi became the vice-consul, and

9 「15. 露領亜細亜各地ニ領事館設置ニ関スル件ノ分割1」JACAR (アジア歴史資料センター) Ref.B15100914700、在外帝国公館設置雑件 第三卷 (6-1-2-72_003) (外務省外交史料館) ["15. Establishment of Consulates in Various Places of Russian Asia/Partition 1," Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), Ref.B15100914700, Miscellanea about Installation of Japanese Diplomatic Establishments Abroad, vol. 3 (6.1.2.72_003) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)].

10 Lensen, *Japanese Recognition of the U.S.S.R. Soviet-Japanese Relations 1921-1930*, p. 206.

11 「40. 佐々木領事 自大正十年四月」JACAR (アジア歴史資料センター) Ref.B16080473800、帝国官吏出張及巡廻雑件ノ本省之部ノ海外之部 第二卷 (6-1-6-2_1_1_002) (外務省外交史料館) ["40. Consul Sasaki from April, 1921," Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), Ref.B16080473800, Miscellanea about Trip and Circuit of Japanese Government Official/Head Office of the Ministry Part/Foreign Countries Part, vol. 2 (6.1.6.2-1-1_002) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)].

12 Приезд секретаря японского посольства // Известия. Вечерний выпуск. 18. 09. 1925. (№ 703). С. 1.

13 「3. 領事佐々木静吾 自大正十四年十二月」JACAR (アジア歴史資料センター) Ref. B16080097600、各国駐在帝国領事任免雑件ノ「オデッサ」之部 (6-1-5-6-43) (外務省外交史料館) ["3. Consul Sasaki Seigo: from December, 1925," Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), Ref.B16080097600, Miscellanea about Appointment and Dismissal of Japanese Consuls Stationed in Foreign Countries/Odesa (6.1.5.6-43) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)].

14 「25. 在「オデッサ」帝国領事館開館告示ニ関スル件」JACAR (アジア歴史資料センター) Ref.B15100916100、在外帝国公館設置雑件 第三卷 (6-1-2-72_003) (外務省外交史料館) ["25. Announcement about Japanese Consulate Establishment in Odesa," Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), Ref.B15100916100, Miscellanea about Installation of Japanese Diplomatic Establishments Abroad, vol. 3 (6.1.2.72_003) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)].

Goto Yasutsugu was appointed as a secretary. The consulate also employed locals as servants. Sasaki attempted to hire acquaintances for various roles in the consulate. In the spring of 1926, Livshits held a position as the consulate's technical secretary, responsible for gathering information. He had known Sasaki since 1907. The consul's old friend, Adolf Studnytskyi, recommended several people to the consul. For example, Studnytskyi's cousin, Olena Shetske, became the consulate's cook.¹⁵ A little later, Serhiy Feldman was hired as a technical secretary and typewriter. While the GPU attempted to recruit him as a secret agent, Feldman declined to work for the Soviet counterintelligence. Another employee of the consulate was a courier-guard named Mykhailo Tsibulko, who had worked at the Japanese consulate from 1902 to 1909.¹⁶

Sasaki's most important task was to find a building for the consulate. Initially, the institution was located in the hotel "Londonskiy" for the first few months. The GPU sought to provide a building for the consulate to facilitate the surveillance of the Japanese officials. Sasaki faced the challenge of finding a suitable option. The consulate received an offer to rent a building in the city center on Feldman Boulevard (now Primorsky Boulevard). This location was not ideal for the GPU's surveillance efforts, because the Odesa Department of the Surveillance and Communications Service of the Black Sea Naval Forces occupied the third floor of the building.¹⁷ However, the city did not have sufficient places for the Japanese to rent.

The GPU had suspected the Japanese of engaging in espionage activities. In reports, they characterized Sasaki Seigo as a "good scout" who could "easily evade the external observation set for him." Additionally, they noted that Sasaki was resourceful in espionage. Despite these suspicions, the GPU could not find any concrete evidence to substantiate its claims.

According to the documents, Sasaki appeared to take the secret surveillance quite calmly. On one occasion, the consul spent time with Studnytsky until late at night. When Studnytsky asked if the consul was afraid of returning so late to the consulate, Sasaki responded that he was not afraid because he was constantly under surveillance.¹⁸ When interacting with local government officials or consuls of other countries, Sasaki aimed to establish friendly relations. However, his approach towards the consulate's employees was notably different. He was very demanding and strict, especially with Goto. The secret police even considered recruiting Goto as their agent because of his conflicts with Sasaki but ultimately abandoned the idea. The GPU

15 ГДА СБУ (Галузевий державний архів Служби безпеки України), фонд 13, опис 1, справа 418, том 1, частина 1, аркуш 89, 201.

16 Японское консульство. Октябрь 1927 г. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 240.

17 Японское генеральное консульство. 1926. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. I. Арк. 60.

18 Японське консульство. 1927. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 2. Арк. 32.

concluded: "These conflicts do not prevent Goto from being a patriot loyal to his state, aspiring to promotion and aiming to achieve leadership positions."¹⁹ Sasaki's main responsibility as consul was to study the region thoroughly. The consulate subscribed to almost all political and economic newspapers in the USSR and Ukrainian SSR. Additionally, Sasaki actively engaged with the local community by visiting bazaars (local outdoor markets) and walking around the city, to obtain valuable insights into the region's life. He had been writing his reports by gathering information and sending them to the Japanese embassy in Moscow and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo. Sasaki's time in Odesa was brief. After staying for only six months, he was transferred to Moscow in May 1926 to serve as a second secretary at the embassy.²⁰

Thus, during the first half of 1926, the GPU showed an active interest in the Japanese consulate but failed to effectively intervene in the institution's life. With no agents among the consular staff, the consulate's workers were able to perform their duties unhindered.

KAMIMURA SHINICHI, 1926–1927

After Sasaki's departure, Kamimura Shinichi (上村伸一), the vice-consul of the institution, assumed the role of acting consul. He led the institution from May 1926 to February 1927, while Goto Yasutsugu remained in his position as a secretary.

Kamimura Shinichi's primary responsibility was to gather information about the region by focusing on economic topics. His reports were predominantly based on materials extracted from newspapers and personal observations. Consulate employees frequently undertook business trips to study the region. During one of these trips, Goto found himself sharing a car with Yugov, an undercover agent of Soviet counterintelligence. Goto went as far as allowing Yugov to stay in the same hotel room. The secret police were concerned about whether this action was Goto's mistake, the result of Yugov's skillful manipulation, or simply a coincidence.²¹ Moreover, the fortuitous connection with Goto raised suspicions, particularly because of the GPU's lack of trust in its own agents. Yugov saw his connection with the secretary as an opportunity for personal prosperity. In 1927, he resigned from Crime's GPU and moved to Odesa. He offered his assistance to the local secret police regarding the Japanese consulate but his offer was declined.²² The unplanned

19 Японское консульство. 1927.04.01. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 88.

20 Японское генеральное консульство. 1926. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. I. Арк. 60.

21 Краткое содержание: по разработке Ясугугу Готто. 1926.10.22. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. I. Арк. 96.

22 Короткий звіт о "Югове". Март 1927 г. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 153.

nature of his activities raised suspicions for the GPU, ultimately leading them to reject Yugov. This incident did not have any significant impact on the consulate's operations. The Japanese perceived every worker or acquaintance as a potential spy for the Soviet secret police. Despite being unable to completely avoid such interactions, consulate employees made efforts to safeguard themselves against important information leaks.

At the time, the Japanese institution in Odesa faced another challenge linked to Kamimura's tumultuous personal life. He was involved with Iryna Zahorska, a Latvian citizen, who followed him to Odesa. Although they were not married, they had a child, with Zahorska living with Kamimura at the consulate. Her free-spirited lifestyle and cheating on Kamimura were frequently mentioned in GPU reports.²³ Shinichi was aware of the potentially negative impact of his affair with Zahorska on his career. First, they were unmarried and cohabited in the consulate. Second, Zahorska's lifestyle negatively affected the consulate's reputation. Third, other consulate employees held unfavorable views of their relationship. Later, Iryna informed the GPU that the Japanese embassy in Moscow had demanded that Kamimura end his relationship with Zahorska. The vice-consul faced a dilemma: love or career. The GPU had suspected Kamimura of using Zahorska solely to obtain secret information due to her extensive network of acquaintances. However, this was impossible. Zahorska's relationship with the vice-consul was too close, her behavior unpredictable, and she often caused trouble for Kamimura. Being a spy was too much for her. Nonetheless, the secret police saw an opportunity in the situation. First, they considered the possibility of recruiting Zahorska as a secret agent for the GPU. Second, GPU developed a bold plan of establishing direct contact with Kamimura, although its implementation was postponed. In the early summer of 1926, the GPU abandoned all plans of recruiting Zahorska because of her pregnancy.

During the summer and autumn of 1926, the couple quarreled numerous times regarding Iryna's lifestyle. Kamimura endeavored to convince her to leave Odesa and travel abroad. Taking advantage of their conflicts, the GPU returned to the idea of recruiting Zahorska. It is noteworthy that the secret police's actions were inconsistent, as they were still learning how to operate with the Japanese and were exploring the limits of their power. Their control over foreign consulates in the city was weak and was mainly limited to general outdoor observations and mail interception. While the secret police devised a plan to recruit Zahorska, they never intended to use her to provoke a social outcry. While Zahorska's case provided an opportunity for the Odesa Counterintelligence Department to showcase its usefulness to the Kharkiv and Moscow authorities, they refrained from crossing the line and causing significant trouble for Japanese officials in Odesa.

23 ГПУ України. Гор. Харьков. 1926.11.10. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 113.

By the end of 1926, Zahorska agreed to cooperate with Soviet intelligence while visiting Moscow. The GPU hoped that it would assist in obtaining consulate documents and key prints for the cash register. However, Zahorska claimed she would be unable to perform such tasks. Furthermore, after the first meeting with the GPU, she began avoiding further contact with them. The documents indicate that she did not wish to be an agent and merely sought a better opportunity to protect herself. The secret police sought an efficient method to induce her to perform the tasks. The vice-consul realized the GPU's significant interest in Zahorska. Finally, Shinichi decided to end their relationship. Unwilling to lose everything, Zahorska agreed to take the safest option, and leave the USSR. However, she encountered insurmountable difficulties as she was denied a visa. According to Soviet law, even foreigners required permission to travel abroad. This was because the GPU attempted to resume its cooperation with Zahorska. After meeting with a secret police employee, Zahorska severed contact with the GPU again. She remained inside the consulate to avoid leaving. Kamimura attempted in vain to intervene and lodged a complaint with the local authorities regarding the visa rejection. He received official confirmation explaining that Zahorska could not obtain the visa due to her false claim that she worked for the Japanese consulate. However, this claim is not supported by other official documents.

The situation became increasingly complicated. In late December 1926, Zahorska sold a typewriter, providing a document signed by Kamimura, affirming that it belonged to her.²⁴ However, Zahorska lacked any documents proving the typewriter's import into the USSR. Consequently, she was accused of smuggling it. Furthermore, she did not possess a license for the typewriter, making its sale illegal. Consequently, the machine was confiscated, and the vice-consul had to cover its cost, as Kamimura's signature was verified on the ownership documents. This incident might not only have resulted in a financial loss for Kamimura but also cast a shadow over his relationship with Zahorska and the wider reputation of the consulate.

The GPU attempted to recruit Kamimura as its agent. Understanding the complexity of the situation, the vice-consul rarely left the consulate building unless necessary. Eventually, the secret police agents succeeded in arranging a meeting with Kamimura at the "Londonsky" restaurant. During the three-hour conversation, the vice-consul admitted the complexity of the situation and its potential negative impact on his future career. However, he stressed that he had not committed any crimes and that the worst consequence would be dismissal from his position.²⁵ The conversation revealed Kamimura's desperation and willingness to exert passive pressure on the GPU through

24 Короткий зміст: О "Стреле". 1927.01.05. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 141 зв., 144.

25 Короткий зміст: О "Стреле". 1927.01.05. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 144 зв.

threats of suicide and the possibility of a social outcry. These documents indicate that the Odesa Counterintelligence Department did not increase the pressure on Kamimura. His connection with Zahorska never appeared in the local newspapers. This story occurred just before the USSR tightened its strict totalitarian system. Within a few years, the scandal involving Koyanagi would have more significant consequences.

The problem concluded in 1927 with the arrival of a new consul in Odesa, Shimada Shigeru (島田滋). Kamimura finally ended his relationship with Zahorska, and left Odesa in February 1927 without any protection from counterintelligence. For the first time, there were discussions about arresting Zahorska, but ultimately, she was utilized as an agent. In March 1927, she moved to Rostov-on-Don, where her connection with the GPU continued. The documents suggest that she left the country by 1934.²⁶ For Kamimura Shinichi, this situation did not mark the end of his career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Many years later, in the 1950s, he served as an ambassador in Turkey and Israel.

SHIMADA SHIGERU, 1927–1930

On February 22, 1927, the Soviet government approved the exequatur for Shimada Shigeru, the new Japanese consul in Odesa.²⁷ The consulate staff at that time included vice-consul Kamimura, secretary Goto, Tsybulko as a courier-watchman, Feldman handling translation and printing, Shetske serving as a cook, and Odenchuk as a cleaner.²⁸ It is noteworthy that none of them collaborated with the GPU at the beginning of 1927.

The new consul faced two significant challenges. First, a new wave of internal conflicts arose among consulate employees. Second, the GPU escalated efforts to recruit agents from among the consulate servants. Counterintelligence once again directed their attention towards Feldman. He was dismissed from the consulate on April 27, 1927. Nonetheless, his continuing visits to the institution raised the secret police's suspicion. Consequently, Feldman was arrested on July 14, 1927. The consulate employees believed that he had been exiled to Solovki. However, his fate took a different turn. After his expulsion from Odesa, Feldman moved to Dnipropetrovsk, where he was repressed as a Japanese spy and shot in 1937.²⁹

26 Начальну ОО Облотнодела ДПУ. Гор. Одесса. О работе по японцам. 1934.03.22. ГДА СБУ. Ф. Р 91. Оп. 1. Спр. 70. Т. 3. Арк. 204.

27 Именем Союза Советских Социалистических Республик. 1927.02.22. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 152.

28 Японское консульство. Мая 1927 г. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 201.

29 Одесское консульство. Июнь 1927 г. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 211; Начальнику Управления КГБ УССР по Донецкой области генерал-майору тов. Тарасову И. В. г. Донецк. 1989.06.27. Державний архів Дніпропетровської області. Ф. 6478. Оп. 2. Спр. 2360. Т. 1. Арк. 100.

The situation with the courier Tsibulko differed from that with Feldman. In May 1927, Tsibulko became an agent of the GPU.³⁰ However, his career as a secret agent almost ended due to an unfortunate incident. Tsibulko lived in the consulate with his 14-year-old son and wife. The boy stole 20 rubles from the consulate office by using the key to another table with identical locks, achieving what the GPU had failed to do for years. Shimada quickly discovered the theft and suspected the boy. Eventually, the teenager confessed his wrongdoing. Despite the consul's suspicions that Tsibulko might steal consulate documents for the GPU, lacking evidence, Tsibulko continued his work at the institution.

The consulate's cook was enlisted as a secret police agent, earning the nickname Old Lady because of her age of 60. She provided the GPU with updates on the private affairs of consulate visitors and officials.³¹ Occasionally, Old Lady picked up discarded notes from Noguchi (a new secretary) and Shimada, but they did not contain any significant information.³²



Photo card with Shimada Shigeru and his wife (right), 1928

30 Одесское консульство. Июнь 1927 г. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 199, 201, 211.

31 Одесское консульство. Июнь 1927 г. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 206–207.

32 Японське консульство. 1927. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 2. Арк. 34.

One of the most efficient agents was Tokiets, whose real name was Fomenko Volodymyr. Nearly two decades earlier, Fomenko had served as a teacher at the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages, where he first crossed paths with Shimada.³³ They met again in Odesa in the summer of 1927. From that moment, their connection grew stronger over time, and Tokiets frequently visited the consul. Soon after, Tokiets established a friendly relationship with this Japanese official, the secret police recruited him. Although Shimada never shared classified information with Tokiets, they openly discussed Soviet socioeconomic and political affairs.³⁴ In March 1928, the consul offered Tokiets a position as a Ukrainian language consultant, a proposition that the agent enthusiastically embraced.³⁵ By the end of 1928, however, the GPU concluded that surveillance conducted towards the consulate had not produced any notable results, as the agents' efforts primarily focused on gathering general information.³⁶

The secret police's intervention in the consulate's operations compelled Japanese employees to modify their work procedures. In contrast to the practices during Sasaki's tenure, official papers were no longer left on desks. Instead, documents were stored securely in a fireproof cabinet with a special lock. Furthermore, any used papers were promptly incinerated and never disposed of in the trash. Additionally, servants were not permitted to remain in the office unaccompanied by Japanese personnel.³⁷

The consul's relationships with other employees were far from harmonious, while conflicts between Shimada and Kamimura surfaced almost immediately. The tension ended when Kamimura left Odesa in February 1927. Goto was subsequently promoted to vice-consul, with Noguchi joining the consulate as a secretary. However, continuous conflicts between Goto and Shimada led to a complete breakdown of communication by the autumn of 1927. Eventually, Goto was reassigned and left Odesa. In November 1927, the consulate staff comprised only Shimada and Noguchi.³⁸ The consulate faced a persistent challenge due to the shortage of Ukrainian-speaking employees within the consulate staff. Shimada addressed the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan for a solution, requesting the dispatch of a student to Ukraine to learn Ukrainian. In 1928, Sizeo came to Kyiv for that purpose. Upon successfully

33 Агентура особого отдела Одесского оперсектора ГПУ УССР по Японскому консульству. 1931. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 242.

34 Японское консульство. Апрель 1926 г. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 202–204.

35 Сообщается по Японск. консул. 1928.03.26. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 2. Арк. 96–96 зв.

36 Японское консульство. 1929.02.01. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 54.

37 Японское консульство. Июнь 1927 г. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 210.

38 Одесское консульство. Июнь 1927 г. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 199; ГПУ Украины–гор. Харьков. 1927.12.01. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 274.

completing his education in December 1930, he assumed the position of secretary at the consulate in Odesa.³⁹

The consulate continued its primary focus of researching the region. Over the course of his diplomatic career, spanning 1909 to 1940, Shigeru Shimada authored more than 400 reports. Notably, nearly 200 of these reports were written during his tenure in Odesa from 1927 to 1930. Shimada's reports stood out for their distinct individuality. Rather than simply gathering information for Tokyo, the consul took the extra step by analyzing the data, offering his own insights, and occasionally providing his recommendations. From time to time, Shimada enjoyed visiting shops, not necessarily to make purchases, but rather to observe their customers. He would periodically visit local markets to assess the products being sold, monitor the public sentiment, and, in other words, "be closer to the masses."⁴⁰ The information collected through various channels served as the foundation for the consular reports. Shimada's reports covered an extensive range of topics, spanning from the region's climate, flora, and fauna to navigation routes. The consul was engaged in analyzing the indigenization policy (Ukrainization), providing descriptions of the ethnic and religious composition in the USSR, documenting Japanese cultural projects, conducting economic surveys, assessing prospects for Soviet-Japanese trade, observing other foreign consuls' activities, and reporting on repressive actions of the Soviet authority. Soviet intelligence officers intercepted many consular reports sent through open channels, such as post and telegraph. The Counterintelligence Department of the GPU noted in its reports that consulate employees did not overlook any notable event in Odesa when writing their reports.⁴¹

To explore the region, the Japanese consular staff continued to embark on various business trips. In September 1928, the consul embarked on a significant journey around Ukraine. He visited Kherson and travelled along the Dnipro River to Zaporizhzhya. During the trip, Shimada had lively conversations with Soviet officials and often expressed his fondness for the USSR. Upon returning to Odesa, the consul shared critical remarks with Tokyits about what he had observed. He believed that the resources spent on Dniprobud, a hydroelectric dam, could not be justified, and believed the project was unprofitable. According to Shimada, the USSR lacked sufficient electricity consumers to justify the output of the hydroelectric power plant, and constructing new factories would require even more wasteful resource allocation.

39 По делу японского консульства. 1931.07.07. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 255.

40 По делу "Японское консульство". 1930. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 112, 119; Японское консульство. Октябрь 1927 г. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 244.

41 ГПУ Украины – гор. Харьков. 1927.12.01. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 1. Арк. 272, 273.

Another topic that consular officials began to clearly document from 1928 was the food and commodity crisis. Shimada observed the gradual disappearance of various products from the market,⁴² and predicted a nationwide tragedy that, in his opinion, could still be averted.⁴³ However, the situation regarding the provision of products to the population was deteriorating, leading to a panicked mood in society. Meanwhile, one of Shimada's primary duties was to establish a direct sea connection between Odesa and Japan. In 1930, there were prospects for resolving this issue. The consul even suggested the possibility of upgrading the consulate from an ordinary consulate to a general consulate.⁴⁴ However, this task remained unfulfilled: "What trade can be conducted with a government that does not have enough resources to meet the urgent needs of the population..."⁴⁵

Shimada believed that by the end of the 1920s, the Soviet government would revert to using administrative methods similar to those used by the Russian Empire. The consul identified only two positive features of the Soviet government's policy: 1) refusal of foreign capital, and 2) discipline.⁴⁶ The consul observed several waves of repression during the late 1920s. In 1930, he reported to Japan that unprecedented mass searches were conducted throughout the USSR, including Odesa. These searches involved cases of brutality towards officials, party figures, employees, and others. Additionally, instances of bribery and misconduct by the police were reported alongside these events.⁴⁷ Shimada personally attended some court hearings and remarked, "Unfortunately, the fate of defense lawyers in court is dire." He noted that judges often did not listen to the defense lawyers and even prohibited them from speaking altogether, threatening reprisals if the defense lawyer said anything deemed unacceptable to the court.⁴⁸

42 Спецсводка с пребыванием японского консула в Запорожье. 1928.09.25. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 208; Японское консульство. 1928.10.01. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 221.

43 *Матяш*. Іноземні представництва в радянській Україні (1919–1991): протистояння і співпраця. С. 258.

44 По делу "Яп. кон." 1929. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 10.

45 По делу "Японское консульство". Февраль 1929 г. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 7 зв.–8.

46 По делу "Я. К". Октябрь 1929 г. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 64 зв.–65 зв.

47 「4昭和5年1月14日から昭和5年5月15日」JACAR（アジア歴史資料センター）Ref. B02032123800、蘇連邦内政関係雑纂 第一巻（A-6-5-0-1_001）（外務省外交史料館）[「4. From January 14, 1930 to May 15, 1930,」Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), Ref.B02032123800, Compilation of Miscellaneous Documents Relating to Domestic Politics in Soviet Union, vol. 1 (A.6.5.0.1_001) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)].

48 По делу "Японское консульство". 1930.04.01. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 110.

As was often the case with Japanese consular officers, Shimada's stay in Odesa did not last long. In February 1930, the consul's family left Odesa. Before departing, Shimada dismissed the cook, known as Old Lady.⁴⁹ During Shimada's time, the GPU recruited several agents from among the employees of the consulate. The Japanese were well aware of this, which forced them to make changes to the organization of their work. In turn, Soviet counterintelligence agents failed to uncover any truly sensitive information or evidence regarding espionage activities by the Japanese consulate workers, which was their main goal.

NOGUCHI YOSHIO, 1930

When Shimada left Odesa, Noguchi Yoshio (野口芳雄) took over the management of the institution's affairs. During his tenure as an acting consul, no significant changes occurred in Soviet-Japanese relations or the conditions of the consulate's activity. However, on May 22, 1930, Noguchi witnessed a local riot in Odesa triggered by the food crisis. The riot began with a crowd waiting in queue at a local store. Around a thousand people, mostly women, caused significant damage to cooperative shops and canteens. Large detachments of mounted police were deployed to suppress the riot.⁵⁰ Noguchi promptly reported the event to Tokyo. At the time, he was the only employee of the consulate and could not go on business trips. Consequently, Noguchi was severely limited in the performance of his duties. The situation changed with the arrival of a new consul in Odesa.

TANAKA BUN'ICHIRO, 1930–1934

Tanaka Bun'ichiro (田中文一郎) assumed the role of consul in Odesa, commencing his duties upon arrival in the city on June 29, 1930.⁵¹ Shortly thereafter, Noguchi was assigned to a new position, which led to his departure from Odesa. Subsequently, Mitani Shizuo was appointed as the secretary of the consulate.⁵² In 1931, the staff of the consulate included eight individuals:

- Consul Tanaka Bun'ichiro
- Secretary Mitani Shizuo
- Courier Mykhailo Tsibulko
- Driver Volodymyr Kryzhanivskyi
- Cleaner Klein Veronika

49 По делу "Я. К". 1930.02.14. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 79.

50 Выписка из донесения с/с "Косоглазова." 1930.06.02. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 102.

51 Назначение нового японского консула // Вечерние известия. 26. 06. 1930 (№ 2291). С. 1.

52 Докладная записка по делу "Я. К." 1930.12.20. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 174–175.

- Tanaka's cook Yevdokimova Yevheniya
- Nanny for Mitani's child, Genzle Louise
- Mitani's cook Pisarevska Maria.⁵³

The driver's position was a new addition to the consulate staff. In 1931, the consulate bought its own car, prompting the hiring of a chauffeur. The first driver was Volodymyr Kryzhanivskiy, who also served as a secret agent for the GPU.⁵⁴ He resigned in February 1932. Throughout 1932, three additional individuals consecutively worked as drivers for the consulate, indicating a high turnover rate. This turnover ceased at the end of the year when Dubrovin Tit was hired as the new driver. Notably, he established a positive rapport with the Japanese people. Before long, he was recruited as an agent of the GPU, operating under the code name Krymskii.⁵⁵

Changes within the USSR also affected foreigners' access to the locals. Due to his suspicion of their complicity with the secret police, Tanaka minimized his conversations with citizens. Instead, he preferred communicating with other consulate officials. At the time, the consulate of Germany and vice-consulates of Italy and Turkey operated in Odesa.⁵⁶ The Japanese also maintained connections with Polish diplomats in Kyiv and Kharkiv, engaging in both formal and informal communication, and supported each other during business trips.⁵⁷ The Japanese consulate officials developed close ties with their colleagues from the German consulate. They would play tennis together a few times a week, attend the theater, celebrate holidays, and spend weekdays together.⁵⁸ Occasionally, they exchanged general information, such as details regarding navigation on the Black Sea. The documents do not indicate that they shared strategically important information.

Tanaka's limited communication with locals forced the GPU to recruit only a few individuals as new agents who collected information directly through the consul. In 1930, Berezhna Halyna became Tanaka's Russian language teacher (an agent with the codename Aza).⁵⁹ In 1932, the consul changed teachers; the new

53 Японское консульство. 1931.12.02. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 271.

54 Японское консульство. 1931.12.02. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 272.

55 Сов. Секретно. Серия "К". Зам пред ГПУ УССР – т. Кацнельсону... г. Харьков. О работе по Японскому консульству. 1934.04.16. ГДА СБУ. Ф. Р 91. Оп. 1. Спр. 70. Т. 8. Арк. 43.

56 "Вся Одеса" на 1930 рік: провідник у місті й на курортах та медичний показчик. Одеса, 1929. С. 48.

57 По д. "Японского Консула". 1929.08.12. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 23.

58 Японское к-во. Сводка. 1930.09.23. ГДА СБУ. Ф. Р 91. Оп. 1 Спр. 70. Т. 4. Арк. 363; Одесский Областной Отдел Г. П. У. Особый отдел. Агентурная сводка. Агент: "Молодо". 1933. ГДА СБУ. Ф. Р 91. Оп. 1 Спр. 70. Т. 11. Арк. 60–60 зв.; О Сизео Митани. 1928.12.26. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 2. Арк. 250.

59 Агентурная заметка. 1934. ГДА СБУ. Ф. Р 91. Оп. 1 Спр. 70. Т. 13. Арк. 386.

one was Malyarov Volodymyr (an agent of the GPU with the codename Pavel).⁶⁰ Both of them had formal relationships with the consul. Pavel informed the secret police of the list of topics which he discussed with Tanaka and, in a few cases, the consul's opinion about social issues. The GPU's new source of information was a maid named Arkhangel'ska, whose real name was Marquardt-Klein Veronica.⁶¹ Additionally, the consulate drivers provided information about the travel routes of Japanese officials. As mentioned previously, this position had a high turnover rate. This stopped at the end of 1932, when Dubrovin Tit, also known as Krymskii, was hired.

Several old agents continued to collect information, such as Vasiliev (Mykhailo Tsibulko) and Decorator (Oleksii Pavlechenko). Tokiets failed to establish a relationship with the new consul and had only limited communication with the secretaries of the consulate. The GPU believed that he had been leaking information to the Japanese. Tokiets was executed by the Soviet repression organs in 1932.⁶² The following year, Decorator was also repressed and received a 5-year sentence.⁶³ Another group of agents consisted of Mitani's friends. Unlike Tanaka, Mitani was gregarious and outgoing, often inviting friends to dinner or spending evenings together. He had particularly good relationships with women, even having affairs with some. Most of those friends were agents of the secret police. In February 1932, the secretary rented a room to meet Verochka (this is a nickname; her real name remains unknown), whose main task as an agent was to persuade the official to spend as much money as possible.⁶⁴ In 1933, the GPU decided to use this connection to provoke a conflict that could lead to Mitani's dismissal.⁶⁵ However, by that time, the relationship between Mitani and Verochka had already ended and the plan did not materialize.

As before, the Japanese consulate primarily focused on researching the region and preparing reports. Tanaka's reports comprised several thematic

60 Совершенно секретно. Одесский областной отдел ГПУ. Оперсводка за время с 15 по 30.IV-32 г. Особый отдел. Японский шпионаж. ГДА СБУ. Ф. Р 91. Оп. 1 Спр. 70. Т. 5. Арк. 85–86.

61 Совершенно секретно. Серия "К". Заместителю наркомвнудела УССР. тов. Кацнельсону... гор. Киев. О состоянии работы по линии японского шпионажа и агент. Обслуживании японского консульства. 1934. ГДА СБУ. Ф. Р 91. Оп. 1 Спр. 70. Т. 8. Арк. 325.

62 Нач ОО УВО и ГПУ УССР. г. Харьков. По делу "Токиец". Апрель 1933 г. ГДА СБУ. Ф. Р 91. Оп. 1 Спр. 70. Т. 11. Арк. 201.

63 Выписка из протокола. Заседания Судебной Тройки Коллегии ГПУ УССР от 7/II-34 г. ГДА СБУ. Ф. Р 91. Оп. 1. Спр. 70. Т. 12. Арк. 55.

64 Совершенно секретно. Оперсводка № 9 за время с 1/II по 10/III – 1932 года. Особый отдел. Японский шпионаж. ГДА СБУ. Ф. Р 91. Оп. 1 Спр. 70. Т. 5. Арк. 36.

65 Совершенно секретно. Серия "К". Начальнику особого отдела УГБ НКВД УССР и УВО. тов. Александровский. гор. Киев. По делу "Контора". 1935.02.21. ГДА СБУ. Ф. Р 91. Оп. 1. Спр. 70. Т. 8. Арк. 29.

groups. The first and largest group was financial reviews. Within this group, the initial segment of reports was dedicated to the agricultural sector, addressing topics such as collectivization and the establishment of machine-tractor stations. The consul also provided information about industry, transport, and the material and living conditions of the population. The concluding section of the reports centered on humanitarian aspects, including the development of education. Tanaka's research was so extensive that he sent his reports to Tokyo four to five times a year. The second group of the consul's reports concerns the organization of the consulate's operations, such as details regarding business trips and the procurement of food supplies for the institution. The third group of reports dealt with narrow thematic reviews of various economic issues. Within this category, the consul provided detailed descriptions of specific industries such as the tea industry, metallurgy, and silk production. The fourth group contained reports on international trade, whereas the fifth group focused on maritime navigation. Finally, reports on strategic importance were sent to the Ministry of the Navy of Japan. These reports primarily encompassed information on the Soviet civilian and military fleet, the deployment of military units, and other strategic matters.

During Tanaka's tenure, reports addressing the Soviet collectivization policy also held strategic significance. We should remind ourselves of what occurred in the USSR at the time. Since 1928, the government had been focused on industrialization, which required an enormous amount of resources. Consequently, agricultural goods were exported in large quantities, exacerbating domestic food shortages. This dire situation reached a critical point with the 1932–1933 famine, which affected millions of people. Tanaka Bun'ichiro held a negative perception of the Soviet system. He candidly criticized this in private conversations, even though he publicly adhered to the official government position without any negative comments. The consul diligently reported on the dire situation, highlighting the extensive queues for food products: "...almost every day there are cases of unconsciousness due to hunger of the people standing in the queues. Prices are constantly rising..." Tanaka promptly informed Tokyo of a significant event on July 24, 1930, where 3,000 workers boycotted their labor at one factory, which triggered the spread of unrest to other factories. The GPU documented the Japanese consul's observation: "Tanaka believed that such excesses will be repeated more and more often from now on, but still, they are unlikely to lead to anything serious. Summing up, he noted that the situation on the market this year is so acute that it can be compared with the famine year of 1921. In this regard, the mood among the population is extremely depressed."⁶⁶

66 Польща та Україна у тридцятих – сорокових роках ХХ століття. Невідомі документи з архівів спеціальних служб. Т. 7. Варшава – Київ, 2008. С. 58.

Tanaka dedicated several reports to the Holodomor. They depicted this artificial famine (1932–1933) as a part of the broader food crisis that began in 1928. In 1932, Tanaka embarked on a journey through Ukraine and Crimea, visiting the largest cities in the region. During his travels, he was horrified by the plight of the population: "...Ukrainian peasants make a more pitiful impression than the peasants of other republics due to their ragged clothes, emaciated bodies, and requests for alms: even at large stations, peasants, their wives, and children stretch out their hands for alms and ask for bread... On the way back from Kyiv to Odesa, a person traveling with the consul in the train told him about the horrors of famine in Ukraine, especially in the Kyiv province, where there were many suicides among peasants due to hunger. These stories, coupled with continuous rains all the way to Odesa, left a heavy impression on the consul."⁶⁷ The consulate officials' reports also indicate that the main cause of the Holodomor was the government's inability to effectively manage and distribute resources. The consul meticulously crafted reports about this tragedy, while endeavoring to minimize conflict with the Soviet side, as they knew that their reports were being intercepted by the GPU.

By November 1932, the consulate workers were fully aware of the dire situation of starvation. Tanaka reported that people were unable to afford to buy meat freely, thereby underscoring the severity of the food shortage.⁶⁸ The subsequent messages became even more distressing. On December 1, 1932, Tanaka wrote to Tokyo, reporting that the food supply in Odesa had deteriorated to the extent that it had become worse than during the "great famine" of 1921–1922.⁶⁹ In the report dated February 10, 1933, the consul informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the requisition of food products from the village and the trials of those who were unable to meet the required crop quotas.⁷⁰ In the summer of 1933, an official reported that the harvest for the current year was better than that of the previous year, which "gave great hopes." However, in the cities, there was a shortage of types of food,

67 Ibid., C. 166.

68 「9.「コルホーズ」関係」JACAR（アジア歴史資料センター）Ref.B09040786600、外国産業政策関係雑件／蘇連邦ノ部 第二巻（E-4-1-0-1-1_002）（外務省外交史料館）["9. Kolkhoz," Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), Ref.B09040786600, Miscellanea about Industrial Policy in Foreign Countries/Soviet Union, vol. 2 (E.4.1.0.1-1_002) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)].

69 Kuromiya, "The Holodomor in the Light of Japanese Documents," p. 123.

70 「昭和八年／分割1」JACAR（アジア歴史資料センター）Ref.B08060688600、各国財政、経済及金融関係雑纂／蘇連邦ノ部 第六巻（E-1-2-0-X1_R1_006）（外務省外交史料館）["1933 / Partition 1," Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), Ref.B08060688600, Miscellanea about Financial Administration, Economy and Money and Banking of Foreign Countries/Soviet Union, vol. 6 (E.1.2.0.X1-R1_006) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)].

particularly meat.⁷¹ Additionally, deaths from typhus and “malnutrition” persisted. The consul noted that the secret police confiscated valuables such as gold, silver, and ancient coins from people. Trade in the Port of Odesa sharply declined in both exports and imports. In a report dated September 1, 1933, Tanaka provided one of the most chilling testimonies about the Holodomor, reporting cases of cannibalism.⁷² In the final report for 1933, the consul detailed a significant food crisis in the countryside, which led to local riots that required army intervention to quell. In fact, he only briefly mentioned these issues in his reports; the topic of the Holodomor was frequently referenced briefly in the context of other issues.⁷³

The Holodomor directly affected the consulate’s operation. Providing the institution with essential products, such as fish, potatoes, vegetables, onions, butter, and cigarettes, posed a significant challenge. The consulate was preoccupied with securing the most essential items, to such an extent that it interfered with the performance of direct duties.⁷⁴

At the beginning of 1934, Tanaka Bun’ichiro wrote his last reports as consul in Odesa. He received his next assignment in Manchuria and left the city in February.⁷⁵

HIRATA MINORU, 1934–1937

The last Japanese consul in Odesa was Hirata Minoru (平田稔). He arrived in the city in February 1934. The consulate staff comprised two additional positions. Mitani Shizuo had already been serving as secretary since 1930.

71 「欧1機密合第2182号8.6.22「オッデサ」市状況に関する件」JACAR（アジア歴史資料センター）Ref.C05022791000、公文備考D巻11外事海軍大臣官房記録昭和8（防衛省防衛研究所）[“No. 2182 June 22, 1933 Odessa City Situation,” Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), Ref.C05022791000, Official Letter Notes 1933 D Foreign Affairs, vol. 11 (National Institute for Defense Studies)].

72 Kuromiya, “The Holodomor in the Light of Japanese Documents,” pp. 123–124.

73 「昭和八年／分割5」JACAR（アジア歴史資料センター）Ref.B08060689000、各国財政、経済及金融関係雑纂／蘇連邦ノ部第六巻（E-1-2-0-X1_R1_006）（外務省外交史料館）[“1933/Partition 5,” Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), Ref.B08060689000, Miscellanea about Financial Administration, Economy and Money and Banking of Foreign Countries/Soviet Union, vol. 6 (E.1.2.0.X1-R1_006) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)].

74 Спецсводка по японскому консульству. 1931.07.20. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Оп. 1. Спр. 418. Т. 1. Ч. 3. Арк. 236.

75 「栄養研究及療養施設関係雑件 17. 医療機関並ニ保健衛生施設報告関係」JACAR（アジア歴史資料センター）Ref.B04012588700、栄養研究及療養施設関係雑件（I-3-1-0-3）（外務省外交史料館）[“Miscellaneous Documents Relating to Nutrition Research and Medical Treatment Facilities, 17. Documents Relating to Report of Medical Institutions and Health and Sanitation Facilities,” Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), Ref. B04012588700, Miscellaneous Documents Relating to Nutrition Research and Medical Treatment Facilities (I.3.1.0.3) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)].

In 1935, Kikuma Shizuka also joined as a secretary of the institution.⁷⁶ The consulate's primary function remained consistent: researching the region's life. Hirata's reports were primarily concise informational messages and seldom expressed personal views. These reports were relayed to the embassy in Moscow, where officials appended brief annotations of 3–4 lines before dispatching them to Tokyo. Despite their brevity, Hirata's numerous messages compensated for their size by covering topics similar to those addressed by other consuls.

Hirata was distinct from previous consuls in his respectful treatment of subordinates and establishment of friendly relations, particularly with Mitani. Being a polyglot fluent in over five languages, including Russian, Hirata employed Pavlo as a Ukrainian language teacher upon his arrival in Odesa.⁷⁷ Pavlo, who continued working as a secret police agent, observed Hirata's remarkable aptitude for language acquisition. Their conversations extended beyond language lessons, covering various local lifestyle matters. In one report to the secret police, Pavlo admitted that the consul used their interactions to gather information.⁷⁸

Normally, the secret police did not place much trust in their own agents. In October 1934, Pavlo informed Hirata of his intention to resign due to securing a full-time position as an official.⁷⁹ In 1938, he was arrested and subsequently executed.⁸⁰ In 1936, another agent, Arkhangel'ska, was arrested.⁸¹ Most employees were executed after the consulate closed. One of the most reliable agents in the mid-1930s was driver Krymskii, who established friendly relations with the Japanese staff. In 1934, the secret police assigned him a special task: to instigate the dismissal of Vasiliev, a consulate servant.⁸² As per the plan, he confessed to Mitani, stating that the secret police sought to recruit him as an agent and sought advice. Surprised that the driver had not been approached thus far, Mitani reassured him that he should accept the proposal without hesitation. Furthermore, Mitani suggested that Krymskii seek guidance from the consulate courier. Mitani emphasized that the driver should have informed

76 Lensen, *Japanese Diplomatic and Consular Officials in Russia*, pp. 148–149.

77 Особый. Павел. 1934.02.25. ГДА СБУ. Ф. Р 91. Оп. 1. Спр. 70. Т. 12. Арк. 98.

78 Особый. Павел. 1934.02.15. ГДА СБУ. Ф. Р 91. Оп. 1. Спр. 70. Т. 12. Арк. 128.

79 Совершенно Секретно. Серия "К". Начальнику особого отдела УПР. Госбезопасности НКВД УССР и УВО. г. Киев. По делу Контора. 1934.11.02. ГДА СБУ. Ф. Р 91. Оп. 1. Спр. 70. Т. 8. Арк. 255–256.

80 Жертвы политического террора в СССР [<https://lists.memo.ru/index13.htm>], accessed on January 16, 2024.

81 Ibid.

82 Совершенно секретно. Серия "К". Заместителю наркомвнудела УССР. тов. Кацнельсону... ор. Киев. О состоянии работы по линии японского шпионажа и агент. Обслуживании японского консульства. 1934. ГДА СБУ. Ф. Р 91. Оп. 1. Спр. 70 Александровскому. Т. 8. Арк. 321–322.

the secret police of his observations, as they were already aware of them from other sources. Mitani's only cautionary advice to Krymskii was not to steal any consulate documents.⁸³ This conversation revealed the Japanese consulate's awareness of their employees operating as secret police agents, which they did not view as a significant concern. The plan ultimately proved unsuccessful, as the Japanese officials did not dismiss Vasiliev. Krymskii's dedicated work as an agent did not save him, and he was executed in 1937.⁸⁴

In 1937, the Soviet Union began to close foreign consulates within its territory. In the spring, the Japanese sought to change the consul in Odesa. Saito Kiuro (齋藤輝宇) was designated as the new consul. However, he was denied a visa, and thus was unable to assume the position in the city.⁸⁵ The Moscow government openly suspected that espionage was the primary function of the Japanese consulate in Odesa. The formal rationale behind the closure of the consulate was an imbalance in the number of consulates between the two nations, with only six Soviet ones in Japan and eight Japanese ones in the USSR. Additionally, Odesa lacked a significant Japanese population, with trade and economic relations remaining minimal. The Soviet government also sought to close the Japanese consulate in Novosibirsk. From the spring to summer of 1937, a diplomatic struggle emerged between the Japanese and USSR governments. Consequently, in a note dated August 19, 1937, the Soviet government announced that it would no longer recognize the consular functions of the Japanese consulates in Odesa and Novosibirsk, which became effective on September 15, 1937.⁸⁶ The pressure on the consulate was not only diplomatic. On September 15, the Soviet side stopped delivering correspondence for Hirata and his wife, and the telephone connection between the embassy and consulate was cut off. The consulate driver and maid were arrested, and essential services such as water, gas, and electricity were cut off. Thus, the living conditions in the consulate became unbearable.⁸⁷

All protests from the Japanese government were unsuccessful. On September 4, 1937, the Japanese Foreign Minister Hirota Koki sent a telegram to the heads of the consulates in Odesa and Novosibirsk, announcing the closure

83 Особый. Крымский. 1934.02.27. ГДА СБУ. Ф. Р 91. Оп. 1. Спр. 70. Т. 12. Арк. 109 зв.

84 Жертвы политического террора в СССР [https://lists.memo.ru/index5.htm], accessed on January 16, 2024.

85 Запись беседы Заместителя Народного Комиссара Иностранных Дел СССР с Послом Японии в СССР Сигемицу. 1937.06.21. Исторические материалы [http://istmat.info/node/37846], accessed on July 16, 2022.

86 「分割 2」JACAR(アジア歴史資料センター)Ref.B14090271400、在外帝国公館関係雑件(在満、支公館ヲ除ク)(旧華族会館樓門在米大使館へ移築ニ関スル件ヲ含ム)ノ閉鎖関係ノ在蘇帝國領事館閉鎖交渉関係 第一卷(M-1-3-0-1_4_2_001)(外務省外交史料館) [“Part 2,” Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), Ref.B14090271400, Miscellanea Related to Japanese Diplomatic Establishments Abroad (Japanese Diplomatic Mission in Manchuria) (M.1.3.0.1-4-2_001) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)].

87 角「オデッサ領事館異聞」57頁 [Sumi, “History of Japanese Consulate in Odessa,” p. 57].

of these institutions due to pressure from the Soviet government. The minister emphasized that the USSR's actions violated agreements and that the Soviet authorities' constant persecution made Japanese officials' operations extremely difficult. Therefore, the Japanese officials decided to close the consulates in Odesa and Novosibirsk. Hirota urged the consular employees to be very vigilant when completing all the cases and leaving, due to fear of possible provocations.⁸⁸ The consulates in Odesa and Novosibirsk were shut down on September 15, 1937. On September 17, employees of the Japanese consulate in Odesa left the city, ending the institution's history.⁸⁹

CONCLUSION

The historical narrative surrounding the Japanese consulate in Odesa is deeply intertwined with various issues in the history of Ukraine, Japan, and the USSR. Despite notable losses of documentation within both the Ukrainian and Japanese archives, the available sources allowed us to reconstruct detailed insights into the consulate's activities. The Sectoral State Archive of the Security Services of Ukraine and the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are home to rich materials, including records produced by the Soviet secret police, which shed light on not only Soviet counterintelligence activities but also on the Japanese consulate's daily operations, the personal lives of its officials, their interactions with local authorities, and inter-consulate relations within Soviet Ukraine. This comprehensive documentation allows us to explore not only the consulate's overarching operations but also the intricacies of its institutional existence at the micro level.

The institution was established in 1889 under the management of honorary consuls. In 1902, it transitioned to an ordinary consulate, with a primary focus on monitoring the Russian Black Sea Navy activities. The subsequent phase of the Japanese consulate's history began after the signing of the Soviet-Japan convention in 1925, which completely differed from the previous one because of many factors. Similar to their counterparts from other foreign consulates in the USSR, Japanese officials were subject to constant surveillance by the GPU. However, even after infiltrating the consulate, the GPU still could not procure valuable information. Their observations mostly provide us with general insights into the consulate's activities. Meanwhile, the Japanese consulate in Odesa maintained a close relationship with officials from other consulates, particularly the German consulate. Foreign diplomats frequently socialized together, engaging in activities such as playing tennis, attending theaters and

88 外務省『日本外交文書(昭和期 III 第3巻)』2014年、228–229頁 [Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy, Showa Era, Series III, vol.3, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014. pp. 228-229] [https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/annai/honsho/shiryō/archives/pdfs/showa1_05.pdf], accessed on July 16, 2022.

89 *Ibid*, pp. 233–234.

cinemas, and exchanging invitations to official banquets, informal dinners, and parties. The GPU documents suggest that foreigners exchanged information about work-related issues, although the extent of this exchange remains difficult to ascertain because of the limited sources available.

The consulate's main task was to conduct comprehensive research on the region, involving consular officials undertaking business trips, thoroughly examining Soviet newspapers, and meticulously compiling reports. In contrast to other foreign consulates in the USSR, the Japanese consulate had limited social and economic obligations, given its small number of compatriots and minimal trade activities. This allowed its officials to devote more attention to gathering information. Reports from the consulate during the Soviet era predominantly highlighted the challenging economic conditions, shortages of food and goods, and repressive actions transpiring in the region. Unlike before the revolution, questions about the Black Sea Navy were not paramount. In fact, the consulate employees themselves also faced an economic crisis. They had to spend much time finding necessary food and goods for themselves. The information provided by the consuls from Odesa was crucial for the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to understand Ukraine, the Ukrainian language, and the distinctions between the local population and Russians. Despite the closure of the Japanese consulate in Odesa in 1937, Japan's interest in Ukraine persisted, prompting Tokyo to seek alternative means of monitoring the situation in the USSR.