

The Fate of the Japanese Embassy Library, Berlin immediately after World War II

第二次世界大戦直後のベルリン日本大使館図書館の命運

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Today, I would like to talk about the collection of books and documents which has been called “The Library of the Japanese Embassy in Berlin”. The library consisted of about 25,000 volumes. I have used the term “library”, but I am not sure whether or not there had been a room or building for library services at the Japanese Embassy in Berlin either during or before World War II. The books which had been seized after the defeat of Germany were called the “Library of the Japanese Embassy in Berlin”. This Library also contained a fair amount of personal property which had belonged to Japanese nationals.

### **Prof. Haloun’s Letter**

At first, I would like to introduce a letter from Professor Gustav Haloun, Professor of Chinese Studies at the University of Cambridge. The copy of the letter has been kept at Cambridge University Library. The date of the letter was 8th February 1946. Professor Haloun sent a letter to Dr. C. H. Noton.

Dr. C. H. Noton was the Chair of EPCOM (Enemy Wartime Publications Requirements Committee). EPCOM was established in August 1945. Dr. Noton was the Chair of the “Group 7” of the CIOS (Combined Intelligence Objective Sub-Committee) which operated under the SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces). SHAEF was dissolved when Germany was defeated and the work of the CIOS was taken over by FIAT (Field Intelligence Agency, Technical) on the U.S. side and BIOS (British Intelligence Objectives Sub-Committee) on the British side. BIOS was set up in July 1945 and Dr. Noton became the Chair of the Group 7 of BIOS and he became the Chair of EPCOM in August 1945. So, EPCOM was a part of BIOS and BIOS was operated under the Foreign Office of the British Government.

Gustav Haloun became Professor of Chinese Studies at Cambridge in 1938. He was very keen to develop the Japanese Collection at Cambridge University Library as well as the Chinese Collection. His letter for Dr. Noton says as follows:

I am encouraged by Dr. McCombie to ask your advice on the following matter.

The other day only, I was told by the Ta-kuang-pao representative, Mr. Hsiao Ch'iea, that the magnificent library of the Japanese Embassy was still intact when he visited Berlin recently. The embassy building is located in the British sector.

I wonder whether it be possible to acquire the books for Cambridge University? The Faculty Board of Oriental Languages recommended the establishment of a Japanese School in Cambridge two years ago, and we hope to be able to proceed to the appointment of a Lecturer in the near future.

The University Library possesses the probably largest collection of Japanese books in this country. Owing, however, to special circumstances it has been not kept up to date and modern editions are almost entirely lacking. To buy them from Japan directly seems, on the other hand, to become practically impossible.

Obviously, the library of the Berlin Japanese Embassy would just meet our needs and could, at the same time, be put to good use. Should a transfer be feasible at all, would you be good enough to let me know what steps Cambridge University ought to take this end.

Yours very faithfully

This is Professor Haloun's letter for Dr. Noton of EPCOM. I would now like to add some information about these people. Dr. Hamilton McCombie was a reader of Chemistry at the University of Cambridge and a fellow of King's College. He took his Ph. D at the University of Strasburg and he was fluent in German too. Both Haloun and McCombie were fellows of King's College, so they knew each other. Obviously McCombie knew Dr. Noton of EPCOM.

In 1939, Mr. Hsiao Ch'iea was invited to Britain to give lectures at SOAS, the School of Oriental and African Studies. As you may know, SOAS was evacuated to Cambridge at the beginning of World War II. Later Hsiao Ch'iea joined King's College and he became a friend of E. M. Foster, the famous English novelist. Gustav Haloun became Professor of Chinese at Cambridge in 1938. He and Hsiao Ch'iea knew each other very well. Hsiao Ch'iea went to Berlin as a correspondent of the Ta-kuang-pao, a well-known Chinese newspaper, probably in August 1945.

Now, I can summarise Professor Haloun's letter as follows. The Library of the Japanese Embassy Berlin was located in the British Sector of Berlin and it was still intact. The University of Cambridge was going to establish Japanese Studies as an academic discipline at the university. Cambridge University Library had held the largest Japanese Collection in Britain, but it lacked modern works. The books of the Japanese Embassy Berlin suited Cambridge's situation and it was seen as a good use of the books.

When Professor Haloun's letter reached EPCOM, Dr. Noton was absent. He had gone to Germany, so his secretary replied to Professor Haloun. According to her reply, the books were transferred to Bad Oeynhausen and they would be delivered through EPCOM after being examined by the British intelligence services and Cambridge's request would be considered. The Control Commission for Germany-British Element, CCG/BE, the Headquarters of the British Army of the Rhine, BAOR and probably the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee in Germany were located in Bad Oeynhausen.

### **Another Enquiry from Cambridge**

In February or March 1946, another letter was sent to the Foreign Office about the library of the Japanese Embassy in Berlin from Cambridge. Professor Ellis Minns asked the Foreign Office to follow up about the library of the Japanese Embassy in Berlin too. Professor Ellis Minns was a member of the Library Syndicate at the University of Cambridge and he was interested in Japanese or Oriental matters.

As concerns the enquiry from Professor Ellis Minns, Linton Harry Foulds of the Foreign Office sent a letter to Richard Wilberforce of the Control Office for Germany and Austria. Foulds was a student interpreter of Japanese and he had learned Japanese. Foulds' letter, dated 13th March 1946, says as follows.

Professor Ellis Minns of Cambridge has asked us whether the Library of the Japanese Embassy in Berlin could be secured for the Cambridge University Library. According to the Periodic Report No.1 of the Enemy Documents Unit dated the 20th September last, the Library is no longer in Berlin, but was evacuated at the end of August and is now held by the G.S.I. Library, British Army of the Rhine.

Foulds' letter describes the situation about the library clearly. Foulds' letter refers to G.S.I. Library which means General Staff Intelligence Library.

Edward Wilder Playfair of the Control Commission for Germany and Austria replied to Linton Harry Foulds of the Foreign Office on behalf of Richard Wilberforce about the Japanese Embassy Library. His letter of 29th March 1946 is as follows:

"The library raises a rather different question. As I understand it, this must be a case of Japanese reparations. Therefore, what I have said above applies very definitely. We could not officially allow property of this kind to be removed except as a matter of agreed policy, and it would obviously be very unfortunate if our representative were to take any action in quadripartite committee which led to a dispute on Japanese reparation policy".

"Whether anything can be done more unofficially – e. g. having this stuff removed sub rosa as intelligence material – I do not know. On that perhaps the Treasury and yourselves may have views. Wilberforce, who has seen the library in Berlin, tells me that it is not very valuable property and that some of more useful books have already been removed by causal looting".

These letters between the Foreign Office and the Control Commission for Germany and Austria refer to the situation and the problem of the Japanese Embassy Library.

### **Packman's Report**

Probably in November 1945, J. Packman of the London School of Economics inspected economic libraries in Hamburg, Kiel, Ratzeburg and Bad Oeynhausen in Germany. Packman reported about the Library of the Japanese Embassy in Berlin as follows.

(A). The Library has been moved complete, but very much in disorder, from Berlin to GSI Documents Centre, Bad Oeynhausen.

(B). GSI Documents Centre has been instructed to dispatch it, complete and intact, to PID Foreign Office

(C). On examination, the collection appears useful, interesting, but not of high academic value. There is a large Japanese section, nature and quality unknown; much German political and historical literature, and some Italian; what appears to be useful Russian section, and also a collection of Polish literature. The latter is often well bound; it shows no signs of having been looted from Polish sources (e. g. no library stamps or bookplates) and is probably the result of some individual collector's interest.

Packman's report refers to the PID Foreign Office, which means the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office.

### **Move of the Library and Lt. Co. John Marsden**

Actually, the move of the Japanese Embassy Library was initiated by the joint US-British Control Council/Control Commission Documents Centre at Frankfurt. It was moved from Berlin to Bad Oeynhausen in August/September 1945.

The joint US-British Control Council/Control Commission Documents Centre was the successor of the SHAEF Documents Centre. The Legal Division of the CCG/BE (the Control Commission for Germany - British Element) in Berlin sanctioned the move of the Library.

As for the Library itself, it contained about 25,000 volumes. Among the 25,000 volumes, 5,000 volumes were donated to the School of Oriental and African Studies and the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London. These were 2,500 volumes each so all together, those 5,000 volumes shared 20% of the total 25,000. Now 20,000 volumes remained at the Intelligence Bureau Document Centre in Bad Oeynhausen. These 20,000 made up 80 % of the original collection.

The donation of 5,000 volumes of books for the two schools of the University of London was ordered by Lt. Co. John Marsden. Arthur John Marsden was the Head of the German Documents Office at U.K.'s Joint Intelligence Committee in Germany. He had been the Head of the British Element of the SHAEF G-2 Documents.

Who was Arthur John Marsden? After taking a Ph. D from the University of Bonn, he became a teacher of modern languages and a famous housemaster at Eton. He was famous as a rower too. He won the Wingfield Sculls (a boat race) in 1956 at the age of 41. It is slightly puzzling why Marsden decided to donate these 5,000 books to the two schools of the University of London. As Packman reported, there were good amounts of Japanese books (quality unknown) and Russian and Polish books of some quality in the library of the Japanese Embassy in Berlin. So, John Marsden might simply have decided to donate these books to the respective two schools of the University of London. John Marsden would not have foreseen that Cambridge would chase those Japanese books for their own library.

Or was there a special reason why John Marsden treated the University of London favourably? Was John Marsden related to William Marsden or James Weymouth Marsden? These may be possible speculations, but I could not find any evidence of this. The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) had held the collection of William Marsden, a famous

Orientalist James Weymouth Marsden was a language officer of Japanese, and a British army intelligence officer, who might have held some connection to SOAS.

### **Fate of 20,000 Books**

Apart from the 5,000 volumes of books which were donated to the University of London, there were still 20,000 books remaining in Bad Oeynhausen.

Here, I just would like to point out the time-scale of this issue. Cambridge sent two letters to the Foreign Office in February and March 1946. So, we are focusing on May, June and July 1946. George Peter Hampshire of the Control Office for Germany and Austria wrote to Dr. C. H. Noton of the EPCOM (the Enemy Wartimes Publications Requirements Committee) on 23rd May 1946 that Cambridge University Library would have an opportunity to put in a bid about these books. Cambridge seemed to be interested in sending a librarian to inspect them.

Until then, the person who knew about the provenance of the Japanese Embassy Library the most was Major Kenneth Garside who was working for the Library and Document Centre of the Intelligence Bureau and also belonged to the G.S.I. Library of the BAOR (the British Army of the Rhine). Kenneth Garside was the Deputy Librarian of University College London. His boss, the Librarian of University College London was John Wilks, who was an original member of the EPCOM. Probably he was the second most important member of the EPCOM. Kenneth Garside also became a member of the EPCOM too. John Wilks, the UCL Librarian accompanied J. Packman of the London School of Economics who travelled in Germany in November 1945. I suspect that there was a close relationship between the EPCOM and the University of London. Later Kenneth Garside became Librarian of Kings College London and also Librarian of the Senate House Library at the University of London.

In the memo of 12th July 1946 which was written by Hugh Durham of the Control Office for Germany and Austria the following things became clear. Garside was at the time demobilised and Major Kirkby had taken over Major Garside's role. According to Garside, the remainder of the library was still in Bad Oeynhausen until 10th July 1946. Hugh Durham

phoned Kirkby about the library on 12th July 1946. According to Kirkby, 80% of the remainder had by then been disposed of by absorption into the Library of the Intelligence Bureau Documents Centre and similar agencies. Hugh Durham's note continues as follows: "J.I.C. (Joint Intelligence Committee) Documents Panel and the German Documents Office at J.I.C. (Joint Intelligence Committee) have now dissolved. The IBDC (Intelligence Bureau Documents Centre) have acted on their own authority in disposing of this residue presumably as a matter of expediency since they are moving to Herford today".

Following Hugh Durham's memo of 12th July 1946, George Peter Hampshire of the Control Office for Germany and Austria wrote to Linton Harry Foulds of the Foreign Office the following things on 18th July 1946.

I am sorry to say that we have slipped up about the disposal of the Japanese Embassy Library in Germany, about which I promised in my letter of 4th June that we would let you know in due time that the Cambridge University Library could have an opportunity of bidding for anything they wanted.

As the result of a misunderstanding the balance of the library has now in fact been disposed of; those books which were of use to our Library and Documents Centre have been absorbed by them and the residue which is described by our people as "of no value whatsoever" has been distributed among local German Libraries.

I can express much regret that the books have been disposed of without Cambridge University Library having an opportunity of inspecting them. As you know, however, the pick of the Library went to the Schools of Oriental and Slavonic Studies before Cambridge put in their bid and after our Documents Centre had taken what they wanted there would probably have been little or nothing in the residue which has gone to German Libraries which would have been of any use to the Cambridge University Library.

So, this is the end of the story for Cambridge. 20,000 books is a huge number and it is not so easy for that number to evaporate into thin air, so it is likely that some of them may still

remain in German local libraries. But, fortunately, at least 5,000 went to the University of London. Amongst them are some interesting and valuable books.