

A secret record of Jap. renovation movements, Aug. '38, written for the section for the maintenance of public peace of the Bu. of Police Affairs of the Home Ministry, classified as secret. An official document of the Home Ministry. Excerpts pp. 143 - 146.

The Cherry Society ("Sakura-kai") 1938

The Cherry Society is an organization which has had great influence on the March Incident and the October Incident, as well as up to the present time, and we observe in its membership list the names of persons who now hold important posts in the various departments of the ministry. According to the personal note of Lt. Col. Kiyoshi TANAKA, one of the leading members of the Cherry Society, the (nature of the organization) is roughly as follows:

In the midst of the above-mentioned agitated state of the domestic situation during the first ten days of September 1930, about a score of persons, under the sponsorship of Artillery Lt. Col. (Kin) HASHIMOTO of the Army General Staff Headquarters, Lt. Col. (Yoshi) SAKATA of the War Ministry and (Sue) HIGUCHI of the Garrison Headquarters, met at the Army Club ("Kaikoshu") and decided to establish a research organization on the internal reorganization of the country. Later the name Cherry Society was given to this organization. Its platform was drafted by Lt. Col. Kiyoshi TANAKA, and the purport of its establishment was as follows:

Purpose: This society has as its ultimate objective national reorganization. If necessary for the attainment of this objective, the society is ready to use armed force.

Membership: The membership shall be limited to army officers on the active list with the rank of lieutenant colonel or below who are concerned about national reorganization and have no selfish motives.

Preparations for the achievement of the objective:

- (1) Every means shall be employed to infuse in the national army officers the necessity for a national reorganization.
- (2) The expansion and strengthening of the society's membership (about 105 members by May, 1931)
- (3) The drafting of a concrete plan for national reorganization.

Thus in January, 1931, the work of drafting a concrete plan was begun, and Lt. Cols. SAKATA, NEMOTO, HASHIMOTO and TANAKA and Captains CHO and (Ya) TANAKA were chosen as committee members.

When we reflect on these various facts with an unselfish feeling, we feel ashamed over our blindness and extreme thoughtlessness in regard to the situation prevailing at that time.

We shall have nothing to say even if we are said to have had devoted ourselves solely to the controlling of Communism and to have isolated ourselves from the tides of the times. At that time, there were rumors that a new start in politics was to be made, or that some people of the Social Democratic Party were trying to organize a society within the military, but we almost had no intentions of investigating into them, and of finding out why such studies were being made, and so we had been indifferent to the great tide of the times. In thinking it over, it seems that the health condition of Premier HAMAGUCHI had been the main problem in those days.

Moreover, the judgement of situation by the 2nd Section of the Army General Staff in SHOWA 5 (1930) was beginning to obtain unprecedented decisions. In other words, the judgement of situation by the 2nd Section of the Army General Staff in the past had been solely for contributing to war operations with only the enemy nations in mind. However, since this year, they have come to the conclusion that, in order to settle the Manchurian and Mongolian problems positively, it is inevitable that our nation should first be reconstructed, so we shall go on with the reconstruction.

Of course, this was attributable to the fact that there had been such influential men involved, like Lieutenant-Colonel HASHIMOTO, (Russian group), Lieutenant-Colonel NEMOTO, (Chinese group), and many members of the Cherry Society, but I feel that it should have been fully recognized at that time that the general trend within the military had already come to this point.

Moreover, eleven young officers, radicals among the members of the Cherry Society had met at Kaikosha on the 17th of July the same year, and had organized a Minor Cherry Society. There is a rumor that the members of this society were fifty-three persons including Majors CHO, MIYAZAKI and TERADA, and Lieutenant TANAKA.