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Achieving Reversion: Protest and Authority in Okinawa, 1952–70

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The build-up and development of the Okinawan struggle for reversion to Japanese administration does not figure prominently in the English-language literature on the American occupation of Okinawa, nor does it occupy a central place in Japanese analyses of this subject. Rather there is a tendency to view Okinawa as a subset of US–Japanese postwar relations, and to explain reversion as a process carried through by senior American and Japanese officials, largely governed by high-level diplomatic and military-strategic considerations.[1] There is often only passing mention of the rising tensions within Okinawa itself and, perhaps more importantly, the increasing effectiveness through the 1960s of the indigenous reversion movement centred on the Okinawa Teachers' Association (*Okinawa kyōshokuinkai*). For example, John Welfield's trenchant account of the 'three years of tortuous negotiations' that culminated in November 1969 in an American pledge to return the islands hardly mentions conflicts within Okinawa itself, remarking only that 'the swing to the left' in 1968 foreshadowed major problems for the US if Okinawan demands for reversion were not met.[2]

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[1] Recent examples include Y. Kōno, *Okinawa henkan o meguru: seiji to gaikō* (Tokyo: Tokyo UP, 1994); N. Sarantakes, *Keystone: The American Occupation of Okinawa and US–Japanese Relations* (Austin: Texas A&M UP, 2000).

[2] J. Welfield, *An Empire in Eclipse: Japan in the Postwar American Alliance System* (London: Athlone, 1988), p. 239.

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As well as reflecting a greater interest in Okinawa as a diplomatic-military-strategic issue in US–Japanese relations, this tendency to relegate the internal Okinawan struggle to the sidelines perhaps highlights the continued currency of myths, assumptions and prejudices about Okinawans themselves, epitomized by General Macarthur's comment to George Kennan in 1948 that Okinawans were '. . . simple and good-natured people, who would pick up a good deal of money and have a reasonably happy existence from an American base development in the Ryukyus'.[3] Backed up by his assertion that 'The Japanese looked down on them', the message was clear—namely that these easy-going, docile people with their low expectations would happily tolerate a protracted occupation by the US.

This article contends that the Okinawan reversion movement should occupy a central place in accounts of the 'Okinawa problem', not just because it was the principal vehicle for an expression of Okinawans' aspirations but also because it highlighted the contradictions of US military occupation and forced concessions that increasingly undermined American rule. This article examines the evolving interplay between protest movements and constituted authority—principally the US 'civil administration' but also the Government of the Ryūkyū Islands (GRI) over the period 1952 to 1970. It is periodized according to three stages, namely 'suppression and confrontation' during the 1950s, 'containing the reversion movement' during the period 1960–67 and 'losing control' from 1967 to 1970.

As has been intimated, this deliberate emphasis on the struggle *within* Okinawa is justified by the general tendency amongst historians to stress external factors, to examine the issue of reversion in the context of 'managing an alliance'[4] rather than freeing a resistant populace from alien occupation. The parallels with contemporary developments are striking—rarely are Okinawan demands for a lighter military burden permitted to interrupt the dialogue between the Japanese and US governments over regional security. Indeed, a 'wall of diplomacy' (*gaikō no kabe*) continues to obstruct the realization of Okinawan aspirations,[5] just as it did in the period 1969–71

[3] Conversation between General of the Army MacArthur and Mr George F. Kennan, 5 March 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948, vol. VI, United States* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1974), p. 701.

[4] See I.M. Destler, H. Sato, P. Clapp and H. Fukui, *Managing an Alliance: The Politics of US–Japanese Relations* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution).

[5] S. Smith, 'A place apart: Okinawa and Japan's postwar peace', in A. Iriye and R.A. Wampler (eds), *Partnership: The United States and Japan 1951–2001* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2001).

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(causing Okinawa's Chief Executive Yara Chōbyō to boycott the formal signing of the reversion agreement on 17 June 1971).

Suppression and Confrontation, 1954–60

The 1950s were a decade of harsh military rule in Okinawa, a period in which an embryonic reversion movement was quickly suppressed, when villages were levelled by bulldozers to make way for US military facilities, and, most revealingly, when a democratically elected mayor, Senaga Kamejirō, with radical left-wing credentials, was forced out of office by the American authorities. In short, it was a time of political polarization, caused above all by arbitrary, oppressive military rule. This proved highly counter-productive in the sense of provoking international censure of the military's apparent disregard for civil rights and, more significantly, awakening an indigenous political consciousness that expressed itself in rising support for the radical anti-American stance of the Okinawa People's Party (*Okinawa jinmintō*).

Reflecting on the events of the 1950s, the Okinawan writer Higa Mikio remarked in 1963 that the assumption that 'the basic interests and instincts of this "docile" people can be ignored is to court trouble, as has been discovered by the United States several times in the recent past'.[6] This section of the article examines the sources of contention to which Higa alluded. It begins by outlining the nature and shape of constituted authority during the period and analyses the chief forms of protest, the more important issues around which it coalesced and the reactions which it provoked amongst US officials.

A strong reversion movement emerged in 1951, its popularity being indicated by the fact that in August 1951 72% of the electorate signed petitions for Okinawa's return to Japan. These, it was hoped, would influence US and Japanese representatives at the San Francisco Peace Conference.[7] Unfortunately, this was not the case, Article 3 of the peace treaty granted the US 'the right to exercise all and any powers of administration, legislation and jurisdiction' over the Ryūkyū islands. The framework for that control was clearly defined by the end of 1952, an indigenous Government of the Ryūkyū Islands (GRI) co-existing uneasily with a United States civil administration

[6] M. Higa, *Politics and Parties in Postwar Okinawa* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1963), p. 92.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 8; J.A. Binnendijk, 'The dynamics of Okinawan reversion', in G. Henderson (ed.), *Public Diplomacy and Political Change* (New York: Praeger, 1973), p. 25.

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(USCAR) which was effectively a military government in disguise. This was clearly indicated by Civil Administration Proclamation No. 1 (15 December 1950), promulgated at the time of USCAR's establishment. This stated that ordinances and directives issued previously would stay in force—except that 'wherever the words "Military Government" and "Military Governor" appear they will be interpreted to mean "Civil Administration" and "Governor" respectively'.[8] In addition there was an American Civil Administrator, again a military figure, who was the principal point of contact with the GRI. The latter was defined in Civil Administration Proclamation Number 13 (26 February 1952) as 'including legislative, executive and judicial organs', authorized to exercise 'all powers of government . . . subject however, to the Proclamations, Ordinances and Directives' of USCAR.[9]

These administrative details are important because they highlight the overwhelmingly military complexion of USCAR, and the GRI's weak authority vis-à-vis the US military. Its subordinate status was only too clear from the appointment of its head, the Chief Executive (CE), by the governor 'pending the time such office shall become elective' (this did not happen until 1968). The difficulties associated with this seemingly elevated position were apparent from the attempts of successive chief executives to define their role. Higa Shuhei (in office from 1952 to 1956) described the GRI executive as a 'buffer zone', his successor—controversially but perhaps more accurately—characterizing it merely as an 'agency' of USCAR.[10]

USCAR's quintessentially military approach to governing Okinawa in the 1950s, and the conservative, intolerant attitudes that attended it, rapidly affected those involved in promoting the cause of immediate reversion. Yara Chōbyō, whose principal interest in reunification with the mainland was that of a teacher and educator, occupied prominent positions in both the early reversion movement and the Okinawa Teachers' Association (OTA), of which he was a founding member. According to American civil intelligence reports covering the period February 1953 to October 1958, 'involvement in the reversion movement was the beginning of trouble for Yara, and

[8] Gekkan Okinawasha (comp.), *Laws and Regulations during the US Administration of Okinawa 1945–72*, book 1 (Naha: Ikemiya Shokai), p. 90.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

[10] High Commissioner, *Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands: Report for Period 1, July 1964 to 30 June 1965*, vol. XIII, p. 398.

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this came not only from the pro-American Ryukyuan Democratic Party (*Ryūkyū minshutō*) but also from US authorities'.[11]

It was Yara's determination to promote education in Okinawa that led to his being viewed with suspicion by USCAR. In 1953 he went to Japan, where over a period of six months he tirelessly and effectively campaigned for funds to rebuild schools destroyed in the war,[12] thus 'creating the basis for a future reversion movement in Japan'.[13] Yara's successful endeavours met with hostility from American officials in Okinawa, who 'understandably felt their authority in this field [education] challenged'.[14] On his return Yara was labelled a communist and became subject to surveillance by American intelligence agents. 'His passport was withdrawn' and 'on orders from the governor, banks refused to lend him money'.[15] In a letter to Yara dated 24 February 1954, Civil Administrator Charles Bromley cautioned him to say out of politics, insisting that '. . . reversion agitation in Okinawa can result only in confusion for Ryukyuans and comfort to the communists'. Deputy Governor Ogden went further, declaring that OTA members were teaching communism and committed to strengthening the Communist Party.[16] This tendency to equate commitment to reversion with support for communism caused USCAR to adopt at times 'strong arm methods to suppress and intimidate the teachers', thus alienating 'the most influential and prestigious section of local society'.[17]

Harassed and intimidated by the combative, uncompromising stance adopted by USCAR, and concerned at being driven towards the communist-inclined Okinawa People's Party (an ardent advocate of reversion), Yara resigned as chairman of the reversion association in May 1954. He then assumed a relatively low profile for the remainder of the 1950s. By discouraging more moderate elements

[11] Civil intelligence report, entitled 'OTA and Yara', dated Oct. 58 (Okinawa Prefectural Archives/OPA, code U81100543B).

[12] His effective campaign in this regard and the careful preparations that preceded it are covered in Kyan Shinei, *Sengo no Okinawa o tsukutta hito: Yara Chōbyō* (1997), pp. 157–69.

[13] Editorial, *Okinawa Asahi Shimpō*, 24 June 1953.

[14] Report on OTA by Joseph P. Leahy, American Consular Unit, Naha, dated 24 Jan. 1969 (OPA, U81100543B).

[15] Interview with Oshiro Seizō, Yara's secretary, conducted by Binnendijk in July 1970. Quoted in *Public Diplomacy*, p. 26.

[16] Sakanaka Tomohisa, 'The present status of the Okinawan reversion movement', *Japan Quarterly*, vol. XV, no. 1, Jan–March 1968, p. 33.

[17] Report on OTA by Leahy (OPA U81100543B).

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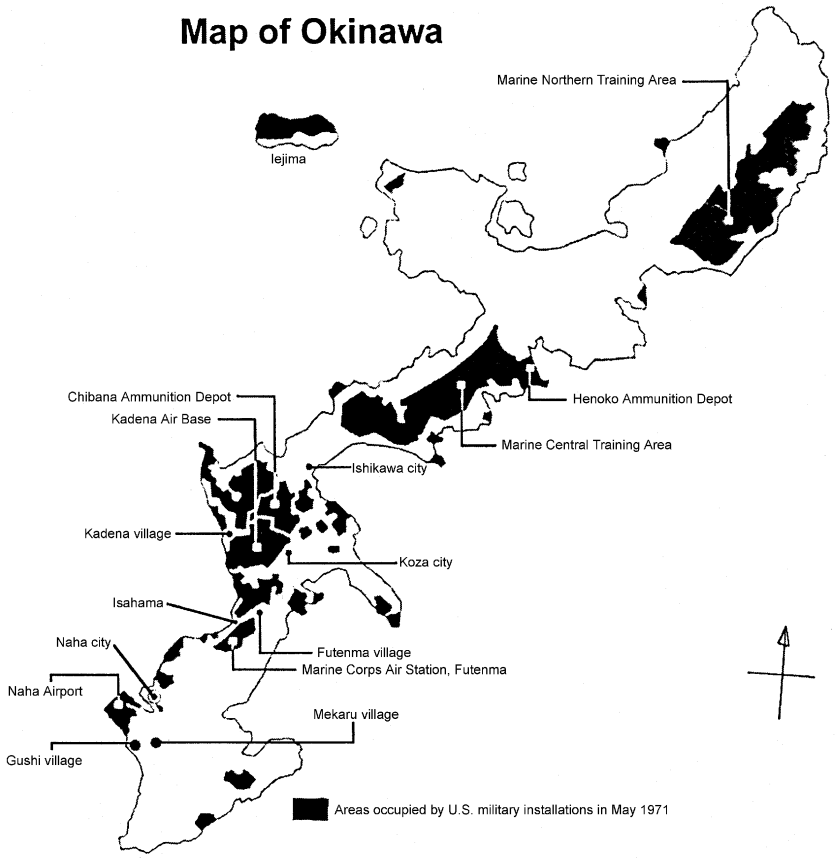
personified by Yara, USCAR effectively polarized the debate over Okinawa's future. USCAR's intransigent position was now mirrored by that of the Okinawa People's Party, headed by Senaga Kamejirō, which demanded 'immediate and unconditional reversion'[18] and in the meantime the establishment of a 'people's government' with absolute autonomy.[19] This rejection of US authority was understandable, given the crude methods used by USCAR to remove democratically elected opponents from office. In April 1953, for example, the election of Tengan Chōkō, a joint candidate of the Okinawa Socialist Masses Party (*Okinawa shakai taishutō*) and the Okinawa People's Party (OPP), was declared invalid on the basis of his having been convicted by a provost court of embezzlement in 1946.

This interference was opposed by the GRI (which had approved Tengan's candidacy) and caused the OPP to form an 'anti-colonization group'.[20] The reaction overall however was muted compared to the furore in November 1957, when Senaga Kamejirō, the democratically elected mayor of Naha, was removed from office by the promulgation of a HICOM ordinance[21] (Number 2, amending City, Town and Village Autonomy Law).[22] One American observer, the literary scholar Edward Seidensticker, quipped that Senaga was 'turned out of office in so dubious a manner that the affair is referred to somewhat sheepishly as "Operation Heave-ho"'.[23]

Remarking flippantly in the same article that Okinawans were 'likely to react to new harshness and neglect . . . with docile resignation', Seidensticker then rather weakened this endorsement of the 'MacArthur line' by alluding to the intense opposition provoked by the US military's expropriation of land for military bases. The pervasive anger engendered by this seeming disregard for the interests of landowners, and the wider failure to understand Okinawan traditions and customs, was undoubtedly a factor in Senaga's triumph in

[18] Senaga Kamejirō, *Minzoku no higeki* (Tokyo, 1959), p. 116.
[19] Higa, *Politics*, p. 64.
[20] USCAR, *Civil Affairs Activities in the Ryukyu Islands: for the period ending 30 June 1953*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 42–3.
[21] HICOM is short for High Commissioner, who replaced the Governor as the supreme military authority in Okinawa following President Eisenhower's Executive Order 10713, dated 5 June 1957.
[22] The crucial amendment permitted the municipal assembly to remove the mayor after a vote in which a simple majority (rather than two thirds) expressed no-confidence.
[23] E.G. Seidensticker, 'The view from Okinawa', *Japan Quarterly*, 1959, vol. 6, pt. 1, p. 38.

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Naha in December 1956. Indeed, it was the issue of land for bases which more than any other dominated the 1950s and around which opposition coalesced.

Following President Eisenhower's announcement in January 1954 that the US intended to maintain her military bases in Okinawa indefinitely, the aims and aspirations of Okinawans regarding the 'land problem' were summed up in the so-called 'four principles', contained in a resolution adopted by the GRI legislature at the end of April. These called for (1) just compensation for use of land (2) payment of land rental on an annual basis (3) opposition to further land acquisition (4) proper compensation for loss and damage to the land, property etc., arising from the acts of US military personnel.[24] This list of demands attracted support across the whole political

[24] Rubuttal to the Price Recommendations, undated (OPA, U81101473B).

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spectrum. It heralded a period of determined efforts in Okinawan government circles to persuade the US to pay due attention to indigenous sensibilities over land, generally viewed by Okinawans as 'an irreplaceable heritage graciously bequeathed to us by our ancestors . . .'.[25]

These endeavours, together with press reports of ugly scenes of confrontation attending military land seizures, culminated in a visit in October 1955 by a special subcommittee of the US House of Representatives Committee of Armed Services, headed by Melvin Price. In its report on the situation in Okinawa, the subcommittee recognized the scarcity and 'unusual importance of land to the age-old agricultural economy of Okinawa . . ., the strong Ryukyuan tradition against relinquishing title to land' and acknowledged the gap of understanding separating the two parties. However, it characterized the Okinawan bargaining position as 'extreme', recommending against 'payment of an annual rental' on the grounds that it would 'merely continue unrest and dissension by reason of inability to agree as to the rental to be paid each time the property was revalued'.[26]

When the subcommittee's endorsement of a lump sum payment for all military requisitioned land was made public on 10 June 1956, it caused an immediate storm of protest amongst Okinawans which belied what the report tactlessly referred to as 'the absence of a belligerent nationalistic movement' throughout the islands. What transpired was an 'island wide struggle' (*shima gurumi tōsō*), typified by mass rallies on 20 June when more than 160,000 Okinawans voiced their protest in fifty-six separate demonstrations throughout the island.[27] However, this was just the beginning of the closing act of a long drama of resistance that ended in the US decision to abandon the lump sum payment plan and double the rate of land rental. The US Secretary of State Dulles admitted with masterly understatement that 'the present policy did not seem to win complete favour among the Okinawans'.[28]

It is no exaggeration to talk of a 'land struggle' from 1953 to 1958. This was played out on the ground in raw conflict that pitted armed soldiers against defenceless landowners. As Rabson contends, 'At several sites large groups of farmers sat down in

[25] M. Ota, *Essays on Okinawa Problems* (Gushikawa: Yui Shuppan, 2000), pp. 245–6.
[26] Prince Recommendations (OPA, U81101473B).
[27] Arasaki Moriteru and Nakano Yoshio, *Okinawa Sengoshi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten), pp. 84–5; Sarantakes, *Keystone*, p. 93.
[28] A. Watanabe, *The Okinawa Problem* (Melbourne: Melbourne UP, 1970), p. 40.

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front of bulldozers defying repeated warnings until forcibly removed by American troops carrying carbines and tear gas'.[29] Acts of resistance by small communities may not have seemed particularly significant in themselves, given the ease with which they were neutralized, but in fact they served to gradually erode American morale. Struggles such as those at Maja and Nishizaki on Iejima (1955), at Isahama (1955), Gushi (1953) and Mekaru (1953),[30] together with reports of beatings at the hands of US military personnel and cases of imprisonment,[31] highlighted and dramatized the direct nature of US military rule in Okinawa and convinced the US occupation authorities of the need to withdraw from these kinds of confrontations and to exercise their power more skilfully and subtly through the agency of the GRI.

Containing the Reversion Movement (1960–67)

Several factors contributed to a greater sense of confidence amongst Okinawans promoting reversion during the late 1950s and early 1960s. The US had conceded ground on the issue of the land problem as a result of widespread dissent. In January 1958 General Moore, the High Commissioner (the new title given the head of USCAR in President Eisenhower's Executive Order 10713 of June 1957), had at last approved the Basic Education Law which permitted Okinawans to be educated 'as Japanese nationals', for which Yara and others in OTA had campaigned long and hard. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), led by the indefatigable Roger Baldwin, was now taking an interest in US military rule in Okinawa; and the Syracuse (University) and Conlon reports on US foreign policy, both written in 1959 at the request of the US Senate, presented US rule in Okinawa as a political liability. The latter stated that 'At some point in the not-distant future it will probably be desirable to return Okinawa to Japanese authorities, with an agreement for the

[29] S. Rabson, *Okinawa: Two Postwar Novellas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 10.

[30] Office of Historiography, Okinawa Prefectural Culture Promotion Foundation, ed., *Bulldozers and Bayonets* (Okinawan Prefectural Board of Education, 1998), pp. 4–19.

[31] For examples, see *Okinawa Shimbun*, 15 June 1955 ('thirty-two Iejima islanders sentenced to three months' imprisonment') and 18 June 1955 ('"We did not beat villagers": Provost Marshal rejects testimonies of Maja representatives').

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retention of American military bases'.[32] Of course, the views expressed in these reports and indeed the concerns of the ACLU reflected the political and diplomatic fall-out from the land dispute and belated acknowledgement on the part of the US government that it could not disregard the sensibilities of ordinary Okinawans.

It was in these propitious circumstances that the reversion movement was relaunched in April 1960 as the Council for the Return of Okinawa Prefecture to the Fatherland (*Okinawa ken sokoku fukki kyōgikai*, more commonly shortened to *Fukkikyō*). In the months preceding its formal launch at a rally on 28 April (the anniversary of the San Francisco Peace Treaty coming into effect) those agencies of USCAR concerned with intelligence worked hard to evaluate the emergent threat. An intelligence report of 16 February 1960 identified the key sponsoring organizations as the Council of Okinawan Prefectural Youth Associations (*Okinawa ken seinen dankyōgikai*), OTA and the Okinawa Government Employees' Labour Union (*Kankōrō*), noting that those behind the new council were determined that it be a broad church, unencumbered by close ties with particular political groupings.[33] Clearly they understood the need to present themselves as politically neutral, focused above all on the primary goal of reversion.

Very quickly USCAR demonstrated its resolve to contain this nascent protest movement. Mr Freimuth of the liaison department (the chief point of contact between USCAR and GRI) contacted influential figures in the Okinawa Liberal Democratic Party (*Okinawa jiyū minshutō*), proposing that they should move at once to try and undermine the new organization, not only for their own party political ends but also 'to prevent an anti-US programme coming out of this'. Freimuth also suggested that the chief executive contact the leaders of the Okinawa Teachers Association to caution them that 'past united reversion campaigns had been stridently anti-US and resulted in major political difficulties which should not be allowed to happen again.'[34] Here was evidence of not just convergent interests between USCAR and Okinawan conservatives but also a softer style of rule, a politics of persuasion that reflected a more moderate political climate, evident from early 1959 when High Commissioner Booth initiated his 'appeasement policy'.[35]

[32] Higa, *Politics and Parties*, p. 15.
[33] Intelligence report, dated 16 Dec. 60; subj: reversion movement (OPA, U81100533B).
[34] Note from E.O. Freimuth on above, dated 15 Feb. 60 (OPA, U81100533B).
[35] Binnendijk, 'The dynamics . . .', p. 45.

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Nevertheless, this did not mean that the *structures* of American rule had undergone significant change, nor were they about to, despite indications to the contrary. In June 1961 US President John F. Kennedy held talks with Japanese Prime Minister Ikeda in Washington, their joint communique stating that 'the United States would make further efforts to enhance the welfare and well-being of the inhabitants of the Ryukyus and welcome Japanese co-operation in these efforts.' The purpose of this new policy was to contain pressure for reversion by improving economic and social conditions, and the Task Force Ryukyus, headed by Carl Kaysen, was sent to the Ryūkyūs in October of 1961 with just such a remit. As a result of the report that followed, President Kennedy amended Executive Order 10713 on 19 March 1962, making just a few minor changes, the most notable of which was that the chief executive was now to be nominated by the legislature and the civil administrator was henceforth to be a civilian. The force of these changes, however, was greatly weakened by the failure to reduce the high commissioner's powers beyond restating his veto power 'to emphasize its restricted purposes'.[36] In short, during the period 1960–67, the nature and shape of constituted authority remained much as before. It was merely the *exercise of power* that underwent some slight adjustments.

USCAR's reluctance to devolve power properly to the GRI—i.e. to recognize the need for greater 'autonomy' as a preparation for eventual reversion—exercised Kaysen and, more so, the leaders of *Fukkikyō*. Indeed, the Task Force Report makes fascinating reading. Its contents caused some disquiet amongst USCAR officials, one of whom stated that 'premature disclosure' of its contents could 'cause embarrassment . . . and undermine the US position . . .'.[37] Written with refreshing candour, the report lays bare the fundamentals of the US position in Okinawa, describing the island as 'predominantly a military base . . . under the administration of an alien military government' and acknowledging 'a widespread but not intense desire to return to Japanese administration . . .'.

Further, whilst it was stated that the majority of Okinawans understood that the 'paradox' of an all-powerful high commissioner exercising control over a 'democratic' Ryūkūyan government was 'necessary as long as the base remains', the report recommended

[36] K. Nakachi, *Ryukyuan–U.S.–Japan Relations 1945–72* (Quezon: Abiva, 1989), pp. 104–8.

[37] Memo for Secretary of the General Staff, dated 11 Jan. 62; subj: Report of the Task Force on the Ryukyus (OPA, 0000000092).

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policy changes that would somehow smooth over the paradox. To this end Kaysen stated that the relationship between USCAR/HICOM and GRI had reached a point when 'it would be desirable and possible within the constraints imposed by our security needs to permit a considerable increase in the degree of autonomy for the GRI in both form and substance'. This effort to 'improve our relations with the Ryukyuans' also required 'movement towards [a] less restrictive policy in the field of civil rights', and in this regard Kaysen argued strongly that 'prior approval of publications, limitations on freedom of travel abroad and the Civil Administrator's labour ordinances' were not worth the resistance they provoked and 'the propaganda use that [they provided] anti-American groups . . .'.[38]

Unfortunately, however, whilst Kaysen felt that these policies of devolution of power and greater liberalization would lessen the pressure for reversion, the new High Commissioner, Paul W. Caraway (February 1961–August 1964) strongly believed that they would increase it. So, to use a classic cold war term, Caraway—with his military mindset—set out to 'contain' the reversion movement by restricting its activities at the same time that Kaysen recommended more liberal policies to make reversion seem less necessary. In any case the battle lines were drawn between *Fukkikyō*, determined to hasten reversion, and USCAR, determined to delay it, and their respective weapons in this clash of interests were resolutions, petitions and demonstrations on the one hand and ordinances, financial appropriations and propaganda on the other. The battle lines were joined on the issues identified by Kaysen, namely travel restrictions, approval of publications and control of labour, amongst others. The first two of these—travel and publications—will be examined here with a view to exposing the contours of US control and the means by which the reversion council traversed them.

Travel to and from Japan was an issue charged with emotion amongst Okinawans for a number of fairly obvious reasons. It was clear to all that the efficacy of any campaign for reversion would depend not only on organizing and mobilizing Okinawans for the cause but also on forging links with their compatriots on the mainland—i.e. success depended on both parties to reversion embracing each other as fellow nationals. Whilst acknowledging that some restrictions on movement were necessary, Kaysen stated that 'the

[38] Report and recommendations of the Task Force Ryukyus, dated Dec. 1961 (OPA, 0000000092).

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present method exacts too high a political price', not just in terms of constant complaints by those active in the reversion movement but also in related expressions of concern by American organizations concerned with civil liberties. Not only was there the inconvenience of applying for permits or 'passports', but in cases where the applicant was considered a possible 'security risk', there was the additional burden of further documentation to submit. Roger Baldwin of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) viewed this 'long form' or supplementary travel application as 'an attempt to trap perjurers rather than obtain necessary information',[39] and Kaysen echoed these sentiments by stating that many Okinawans refused to submit it because 'the questions are seen as too sweeping or too personal, and there is also a possibility that HICOM may interpret the applicant's statement as incorrect, thereby leaving him open to criminal prosecution without appeal rights'.

From its very inception, the new reversion council campaigned for freedom of travel between Japan and Okinawa. For example, in January 1961 Akamine Takeji, chairman of *Fukkikyō*, sent a letter to the high commissioner demanding relaxation of restrictions in this area so that Okinawans were at liberty to 'travel within their own country'. Apart from calling for the abolition of ordinance 125 (Control of entry and exit of individuals into and from the Ryukyu islands), Akamine called for the supplementary application system to be discontinued because 'there are people who submitted this (form) but were not granted permission despite official statements to the contrary'[40] (one such person was Uehara Tetsuo, whose case was described in an intelligence agent's report on 30 January).[41] On 2 February four representatives of *Fukkiyō* visited the liaison department with a view to persuading USCAR to reverse its decision not to permit entry by 59 *Okinawaren*[42] applicants.[43] Not surprisingly the *Fukkikyō* mission met with little success on this occasion as on others, but their failure to exact concessions did not cause campaigners on

[39] Memo for CA, dated 17 Aug. 1959; from: Irving Eisenstein (Legislative and Legal Dept); subj: Issues which may be raised during Baldwin's visit, 18–21 Aug. (U81100523B).

[40] Letter to HICOM Booth, dated 27 Jan. 1961 (U81100533B).

[41] Agent report, 30 Jan. 61 (U81100533B).

[42] The abbreviated version of *Okinawa mondai kaiketsu kokumindō renraku kaigi*, which translates as the Liaison Conference for the National Movement for the Solution of the Okinawa Problem.

[43] Disposition form, dated 2 Feb. 1961; subj: petition for freedom of travel (U81100533B).

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this issue to give up—letters, resolutions, petitions and face-to-face exchanges, usually in the liaison department, continued unabated through the 1960s.

Just how mischievous USCAR could be vis-à-vis its control over travel was revealed just a few months later in May 1961. In a confidential report dated 8 May, Freimuth, the director of the liaison department, detailed USCAR's handling of travel applications by 12 members of *Fukkikyō*, referring at the outset to 'HICOM's memo of 20 April that *all* [my italics] members of the reversion council should receive the "long form"'—a highly questionable policy to be sure. Freimuth, however, proposed the following scale of sanctions: OPP members such as Senaga Kamejirō were to be issued with the 'long form' and in the event that they completed it, 'this group nonetheless be denied authority to travel'; others who were 'decidedly anti-American' but were not members of the OPP, such as Akamine, were to be permitted to go to Japan provided they filled in the supplementary form; as for the rest, they would be authorized to travel after submitting the standard forms.

Although Freimuth knew that 'travel to and from Japan was already an issue and that the recommended actions against the OPP can be expected to raise an additional hue and cry in this area from *Okinawa-ren* sources as well as on the local front', it was his firm belief that the 'recommended actions will be less detrimental to US interests than denying travel to the entire group or granting travel to the entire group'.[44] The expected local reaction occurred just four days later when fifteen members of *Fukkikyō*, accompanied by the press, descended on the hapless Freimuth to demand that the five individuals required to fill in the supplementary form be released from this obligation. Freimuth reported how Senaga refused to fill it in (the desired reaction) and how 'Yara even spoke in support of the Senaga position',[45] rather suggesting that the attempt to 'separate the OPP elements from the rest' (Freimuth's hope) had not worked. *Fukkikyō*'s 'resolution requesting immediate granting of passports', directed to the High Commissioner, accused USCAR—emotionally but not unfairly—of 'malicious intent to frustrate the united action of the delegates and to crush the reversion movement'.

When in April 1961 Roger Baldwin intervened on behalf of several members of the Japan Civil Liberties Union, who had been refused

[44] Subj: travel applications (U81100533B).

[45] Memo from LO, dated 12 May 61; subj: visit by reversion council representatives (U81100533B).

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permission to visit Okinawa, High Commissioner Caraway informed him politely but firmly that 'those seeking entry . . . show a strong pro-communist bias' and belong to an organization that has 'shown no understanding of the security requirement and objectives of the United States in Okinawa'.[46] More than five years later Baldwin was still campaigning on this issue, and although the situation had improved greatly in terms of the amount of human traffic between Japan and Okinawa, he was still expressing concern about discrimination against applicants for travel permits on the basis of their political views. Responding to military assurances that 'in the past year only eight applications for entry into the Ryukyus were refused',[47] Baldwin countered that 'even . . . only eight cases of refusal . . . [are] too many if the grounds were what we assume them to have been in the case of our colleagues', namely 'mere membership in some listed organization suspected of having communist sympathies'.[48] He encouraged his colleagues in Japan to apply again, demonstrating that the application of travel restrictions saddled USCAR with a heavy administrative and public relations burden, which clearly outweighed any attendant political advantage. In the case of controls on publications, these were even more obviously to the detriment of USCAR.

This was clearly demonstrated by a row over a 'song book' that broke in early 1961, an USCAR memo of 18 January describing the proposed publication, compiled by OTA, as containing songs which are 'political and generally identified with the leftist-inspired "utagoe" (singing voice) movement'. Freimuth ended this memo with a classic 'cold war' formulation, stating that 'our Education people' should 'find out from the publisher whether OTA is for the Free World or the Communist Bloc'.[49] A more detailed report was then sent to the civil administrator, explaining that the standard procedures had been followed in this case: Yara, as head of OTA, had submitted an application to the GRI for a permit to publish the song book as was required by the relevant provision of the code of penal law and procedure (CA ordinance 144);[50] then, in accordance

[46] Letter dated 13 April 61 (U81100523B).
[47] Letter from Col. Morgan, dated 15 July 66 (U81100523B).
[48] Letter form Baldwin, dated 30 July 66 (U81100523B).
[49] Memo dated 18 Jan. 61; From: Freimuth, director liaison dept. (U81100543B).
[50] This read as follows: 'Any person who publishes or prints any newspaper, magazine, book, pamphlet or circular without first having procured a permit to do so

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with established procedures, the application had been forwarded by the GRI to USCAR; finally the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) of USCAR had transmitted the application to G-2 (Intelligence) for a routine check of the background of the publisher. G-2 had responded that 'it could not recommend against publication on security grounds', but did propose that 'the contents of the publication be reviewed before issuance of the publication permit to insure that it would not be an organ of political indoctrination of teachers and students'. However, in the absence of appropriate 'machinery' the OPA informed G-2 that it could not examine the contents of a book prior to publication.[51]

Whilst the various interested parties in USCAR were having these discussions, it was discovered that OTA had already published the book, entitled *Aishō Kashū*, without waiting for GRI authorization under the provision of section 2.2.35 of civil administration ordinance 144. Indeed, the book had been printed on 22 December 1960 and had been published on the 24th, the day after GRI had forwarded the application for a permit to USCAR. To add insult to injury, it also transpired that the book was selling extremely well—3000 copies had been purchased by 19 January 1961. When USCAR contacted the GRI about this infringement of the law, the latter replied that 'OTA evidently believed that the book would automatically be approved, and that they would be safe going ahead and printing it'. USCAR was clearly shaken by what had happened. Here was a song book that was 'leftist' and 'pro-reversion', that included a 'great many songs of the type . . . sung at OPP rallies' and that was published by an association of teachers, 'an organisation of people paid from public funds . . .' It was decided that legal action against OTA would be considered, and that the civil administrator would discuss the matter with the chief executive, making the point that the dissemination of this song book could undermine the political position of the Okinawa Liberal Democratic Party.

It seems that action was then taken to stop further distribution of the song book. One of a number of *Fukkikyō* resolutions delivered to Freimuth of the liaison department of 27 February 1961 complained that OTA had been forced to withdraw the song book and copies

from the GRI may, upon conviction, be fined not to exceed ¥5000 or imprisonment not to exceed 6 months or both'.

[51] Memo dated 19 Jan. 61; subj: violation of law by OTA, leftist tendency within OTA; from: director, OPA. This is also the source for the following paragraph (U81100543B).

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were 'presently being collected', clearly demonstrating in the view of the council that there was 'no guarantee of freedom of speech and publication on Okinawa'. Despite USCAR's decision to enforce the relevant ordinance, intelligence reports on *Fukkikyō* rallies and parades throughout the 1960s almost always referred to participants singing the 'reversion song' and remarked on the 'festival-like' atmosphere of 'lantern parades', which presumably involved singing popular songs. As Kaysen had perceptively observed in his report of December 1961, the restrictions on publication that USCAR tried to enforce amounted to '. . . the shadow rather than substance of control', its efforts largely fruitless since the relevant provisions of the ordinance concerned did 'not require the presentation of translated copy for clearance'. In any case, the fact that there was no 'restriction on import of publications from Japan' largely nullified local ordinances (in this connection, Edward Seidensticker had observed, during a trip to Okinawa in 1959, that the left-leaning magazine *Sekai* was on sale everywhere).

Kaysen did not go on to mention the expenditure of time and energy involved in dealing with the barrage of complaints and resolutions directed at the liaison department every time USCAR tried to use the powers at its disposal to contain the expansion of the reversion movement. The latter grew year by year. Indeed, an intelligence report on the annual reversion rally of 28 April 1961—just one year after the council's formation—warned that attendance (estimated at about 5,000) had increased four or five fold compared to the previous year. Whilst it was admitted that the number of people involved fell short of the target set by the rally's sponsors, the level of participation nevertheless clearly indicated that the 'issue of reversion cannot be ignored'.[52] However, there was no need to fear complacency on the part of USCAR. Throughout the period under review it was constantly discussing strategies for weakening or even eliminating the reversion council, focusing its attention in particular on OTA, identified by all concerned as the council's beating heart.

The principal problem regarding OTA was that no one could decide what kind of animal it was. Chameleon-like, it seemed capable of changing from educational association to political organization and back before anyone could react. The dividing line between education and politics is always blurred, involving as it does compet-

[52] Report on reversion council rally and parade for Dept of Army (DA), dated May 61 (U81100533B).

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ing visions of 'nation' and 'citizenship'. Not surprisingly, these issues were particularly problematic in Okinawa during this period. In 1959 OTA defended its strong endorsement of the campaign for reversion by declaring that the 'most important educational problem in Okinawa today is how to carry out the education of Okinawan children as Japanese nationals'. This aspiration—it was explained—was not motivated by 'yankee go home' sentiments but rather by the strong belief that Okinawan children need to 'grow up with a sense of belonging to a nation, to become imbued with a sense of pride in being a Japanese national, and to understand and accept the responsibilities of a good citizen of Japan'.[53] For these reasons, it was argued, the issues of reversion and education were indissolubly linked.

However, an alternative view explained the Okinawan teachers' active engagement with the reversion movement in terms of economic incentives to do with salaries and working conditions. Regardless of their party political affiliation, most teachers regarded educational improvement (in terms of greater resources) and reversion to Japan as one and the same thing. This argument was made very persuasively by William Brun, director of the liaison department in September 1966, when he shrewdly commented that 'only at such a time as the more moderate teachers in the Ryukyus feel that they do not need a militant OTA to secure what they consider to be their economic due will a counter-movement for a truly professional society or organization have a good chance to take root'. By way of substantiation, he claimed that Okinawan teachers' salaries and other remuneration were about 20% below those of mainland Japan.[54] Moreover, in a long report on OTA, written by Joseph Leahy of the American Consular Unit in Naha in 1969, it was noted that OTA's mutual benefit fund was a major inducement to membership, the average teacher owing $800 to the fund.[55]

William Brun's comments of September 1966 were in response to a number of proposals advocated by one Colonel Hicks, chair of an ad hoc committee set up to deal with OTA. Hicks, reporting on a committee meeting that had taken place in January 1966, talked of the need to 'bore into OTA' with a view to causing a split in its ranks. Another approach discussed was to 'compile as much evidence as possible against OTA and try to convince GRI to rescind (its)

[53] Intelligence agent report, dated 26 March 1959 (U81100543B).
[54] Guidance for reasonable elements of OTA, dated 13 Sept. 66 (U81100543B).
[55] Report on OTA by Leahy, American Consular Unit, Naha, dated 24 Jan. 1969 (U81100543B).

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charter'. The problem with this course of action was that it might involve 'intelligence agencies . . . covertly obtaining copies of OTA's minutes, financial records etc'. This would obviously backfire if such activities were detected, but even if they were not and OTA was stripped of its legal status, there was the possibility of another organization 'more objectionable than the existing one' taking its place.[56]

Caught between the two extremes of trying to split OTA on the one hand and attempting to satisfy their economic demands on the other, USCAR watched the reversion movement, centred on the teachers' association, grow in strength and significance until it was no longer capable of being contained. By 1966 the annual reversion rally and parade on 28 April was attracting up to 17,000 participants, the council was agitating for public election of the chief executive and protests were growing against the use of Okinawan bases for US military operations in Vietnam. Bereft of ideas and frustrated by the growing clamour of dissent, USCAR turned on the GRI and demanded action be taken against those deemed to be primarily responsible, namely the teachers. In a bad-tempered meeting with Chief Executive Matsuoka on 7 February 1967, Civil Administrator Warner complained that teachers were defying the law with impunity, remarking with some provocation that 'OTA is (now) running the school system'.

Losing Control, 1967–70

The claim that the GRI was unable to control the reversion movement centred on the OTA was largely substantiated on 24 February 1967 when a major confrontation occurred between the government and opposition over two education bills designed to rein in the political activities of teachers. In this final, decisive battle, representing the culmination of a campaign of eight years' duration, 'demonstrators succeeded in pushing aside the GRI police guarding the legislature building, forcing the speaker to postpone the plenary session and to sign an agreement shelving the two bills'.[57] In the words of one American observer, this highly effective show of strength by

[56] Memo dated 11 Jan. 66; from: Col. Hicks; subj: OTA (U81100543B).

[57] S. Miyasato, 'USCAR policies 1964–1972', *Okinawa Reversion: Its long-term significance in US–Japan Relations* (Tokyo: Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership, 1994), p. 30 (pp. 25–36). The bills were finally shelved on 22 November 1967.

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the teachers and their allies 'very nearly brought the conservative Matsuoka government to its knees'.[58]

This was a situation that obviously caused great anxiety in USCAR circles. In a 'talking paper', written in advance of a meeting between High Commissioner Unger and Chief Executive Matsuoka scheduled for 15 March 1967, much was made of the need to strengthen the Okinawan police to prevent opposition groups from again engaging in successful direct action of the sort just witnessed. Moreover, it was to be made clear to the chief executive that the next attempt to pass the two bills 'must not be made until the police, GRI and Democratic Party as a whole are fully prepared and in a position to be successful without direct US Intervention'.[59] The language and style of the 'talking paper' suggests encouragement and advice rather than diktat or command. Equally revealing is the refusal to countenance the involvement of US security forces, both suggesting that the cause of 'autonomy' or self-rule had been greatly advanced since the days of HICOM Caraway's 'direct rule'.

Certainly progress had been made in this respect, reflecting the determination of High Commissioner Watson (1 August 1964–1 November 1966) and his successor, Ferdinand Unger (2 November 1966–17 January 1969), to rescind ordinances and ensure that GRI legislation, largely modelled on that of mainland Japan, replaced them. As a measure of their success in this regard, it was reported in January 1970 that '73 USCAR legislations were in effect compared to 138 in 1961'.[60] By way of example, the section of ordinance 144 calling for prior approval of publications was rescinded on 5 February 1965. In addition, High Commissioner Watson tended not to interfere with the legislature's work unless a proposed bill was deemed to undermine the US military mission in Okinawa. However, his attempt to accommodate local demands for public election of the chief executive by authorizing direct election by the legislature from December 1965 did not satisfy *Fukkikyō*. Indeed, at an OTA meeting held on 29 March 1966, Yara declared that the 'public election of the CE did not materialise due to the servile attitude of the Democratic Party'.[61] In the same month, Kyan Shinei, chairman of the

[58] Report on OTA by Leahy, dated 24 Jan. 1969 (U81100543B).
[59] Talking paper, dated 14 March 67; subj: HICOM meeting with CE (U81100543B).
[60] Notable improvements made following Kaysen report (0000000092).
[61] *Ryukyu Shimpo*, 29 March 1966.

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reversion council, 'accused the US of being far too nervous about the type of chief executive the Ryukyuans would elect'.[62]

As it turned out, their timidity in this respect was justified. Following Unger's announcement of 1 February 1968 that President Johnson had amended executive order 10713 to provide for the popular election of the chief executive and that the election would take place in November, 'OTA showed no reluctance in assuming leadership of the opposition forces', mobilizing many of its 11,000 members to canvas for Yara Chōbyō. The latter's call for 'immediate, unconditional and complete reversion' proved more attractive than the conservatives' call for *ittaika* (gradual integration). Its appeal is attributable to what Yara referred to in his victory speech as the '. . . pent-up inner voice of the entire people of Okinawa prefecture, which cries out for escape from twenty-three years of rule by an alien people . . .'.[63]

It was Unger's hope that by conceding ground on the central issue of autonomy, he '. . . might momentarily satisfy Okinawan aspirations and thereby give us more time in putting off the day when our freedom of military operations would be circumscribed'.[64] In fact, for a whole host of reasons, his hopes were dashed. The waves of protest and agitation that had brought this concession did not subside, and by the beginning of 1969 'USCAR found itself increasingly losing control over demonstrators'. Indeed, the political situation was so volatile that USCAR was forced to 'maintain its rule through coercive means',[65] further heightening the tension between US military rule and Okinawan democracy.

Finally, the situation spun out of control due to an emotive issue, referred to at the time as 'extraterritorial jurisdiction', that emerged in sharp relief as other issues faded with the extension of autonomy. This was generally acknowledged in USCAR circles, a memo of 29 July 1970 declaring that 'now we have transferred many administrative functions to the GRI and are preparing to turn over others, Okinawan resentments are concentrating on the area where we retain almost undiluted jurisdiction—crimes involving US personnel and

[62] Confidential memo for the record, dated 4 March 66; subj: LO meets with Kyan (U81100523B).

[63] Trend and topics, 'Okinawa's reformist chief executive', *Japan Quarterly*, Jan–March 69, vol. XVI, no. 2, pp. 8–10.

[64] Interview of 29 April, 1975, p. 28. Quoted in Rabson, *Okinawa*, p. 26.

[65] S. Miyasato, 'USCAR policies 1964–1972', p. 33.

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local nationals . . .'. Indeed, it was the acquittal on 11 December 1970 of US Navy Petty Officer Ward, charged with 'involuntary manslaughter' of an Okinawan woman, that served as the principal catalyst for a major riot that occurred in Koza in the early hours of 20 December. United in their opposition to the verdict, which even the US authorities admitted was a 'miscarriage of justice',[66] Okinawan legislators and voters of all persuasions called for the transfer of criminal jurisdiction in such cases from American courts martial to Okinawan courts. This opposition to 'extraterritoriality' and increasing lawlessness on the streets of Koza and Naha brought US military intervention in support of the Okinawan police, which in turn provoked further conflict.

A number of developments at the beginning of this final period signalled the success of *Fukkikyō*'s endeavours. The OTA prevailed against the GRI in the battle over the education bills in February 1967, Senaga Kamejirō was finally permitted to travel to Japan in October 1967[67] and USCAR's offices were transferred from Naha to a US base outside the city in November 1967.[68] With the election of Yara to the office of chief executive in November 1968, USCAR lost its conservative client in government and found itself saddled with a seasoned opponent of US rule. Reflecting on these developments, in April 1969 HICOM Lampert (18 January 1969–14 May 1972) presciently observed that 'we may face an ever-greater demand both in Okinawa and Japan for reversion with a good possibility of increasingly more overt acts and demonstrations'. Seven months later in November 1969 President Nixon and Prime Minister Satō issued a joint communique stating that their two governments would immediately begin negotiations with a view to bringing about the reversion of Okinawa during 1972.

This decision to return Okinawa to Japan reflected a consensus in Washington that had been long in forming. By June 1966, when a special Ryūkyū Islands Study Group was set up in Washington, it was clear that the US was now carefully weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of continued occupation of Okinawa. Chaired by Richard Sneider, the State Department's Japan Country Director, this group benefited from a close working relationship between the new American ambassador in Tokyo, U. Alexis Johnson, and Okin-

[66] Memo dated 4 Jan. 71, thru Acting CA, to HIOM; subject: interview with US Navy Prosecutor—Itoman fatal traffic accident case (U84000745K).
[67] Department of State, *Bulletin*, vol. 54, 10 Jan. 1966, p. 66.
[68] Miyasato, 'USCAR policies 1964–1972', p. 34.

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awa's new high commissioner, Ferdinand Unger. Although Unger's efforts to accommodate the views of Okinawans—over the use of Okinawa-based B-52s in bombing raids on Vietnam, for example—led to 'ceaseless conflict with the United States military bureaucracy',[69] it was clear that the views of those alert to 'the potential of local discontent for disrupting the operations of American bases'[70] were being increasingly heeded. Crucial to convincing Washington of the seriousness of the situation in Okinawa was Sneider's 'Trip Report', dated 24 December 1968, which was written in the wake of Yara's election as Chief Executive.

Conclusion

This survey of opposition to US occupation in Okinawa has challenged assumptions of Okinawans' docility, acquiescence and political immaturity. This caricature served to justify protracted American rule and to belittle the role of Okinawans as active agents of reversion—presenting them rather as recipients of favours proffered by higher authorities. It has been the main contention of this article, particularly regarding the middle section on 'containment', that the long campaign for civil rights, 'autonomy', and ultimately reversion was largely won by 1968, and that the islands' final reunification with Japan was *primarily* on Okinawan achievement. It was the highly organized, effective and unrelenting protests of *Fukkikyō*, centred on the OTA, that forced USCAR to give ground until in 1968 it conceded public election of the chief executive, so providing an opportunity for Yara Chōbyō, active in the reversion movement from its very inception, to make the transition from opposition to government. His victory in the election ensured that the occupation henceforth would be very difficult for the Americans to conduct, both in terms of maintaining internal order and avoiding international censure.

External criticism of American rule in Okinawa as oppressive and 'colonial' largely began with the farmers' struggle against the requisitioning of their land for military bases in the 1950s. It was a number of celebrated cases of resistance to forcible seizures by the

[69] Welfield, *An Empire in Eclipse*, p. 240.

[70] I.M. Destler, H. Sato, P. Clapp and H. Fukui, *Managing an Alliance* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution), pp. 28–9.

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US military that attracted the attention of the Japanese media and certain American groups concerned with civil rights. Likewise, in the decade that followed, American attempts to contain the reversion movement through controls on travel and publication amongst others largely rebounded, underlining the righteousness of the Okinawan cause on the one hand and the illegitimacy of American rule on the other. As for the many and varied issues arising from the military bases, these have not been considered here, largely because they came to the fore once the debate shifted from reversion per se and the benefits it would bring, to the terms of reversion and the attendant problems of integration with the mainland. This latter debate exposed the fault lines running through Okinawan society that are still discernible today.

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